

A photograph of a man with dark hair and a serious expression, wearing an orange polo shirt with a black collar. He is making a mouth gesture with his hand raised near his face. The background is a textured, grey wall.

Mouth gestures in Kata Kolok

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Kata Kolok: a rural sign language

+ 5 generations of native signers

Deaf education, liturgy, politics, medical care in
Kata Kolok

48 Deaf signers - 1,200 hearing signers

150 hours of raw data; 4.5 hours translated and
transcribed

The mouth in sign languages

Mouthings (m-type): full or partial articulation during a sign's production of the corresponding spoken word (usually voiceless)

Mouth gestures: mouth movements which are not related to speech and may or may not be derived from the co-speech gestures of the wider hearing community.

- *adverbials (a-type)*
- *echo phonology (e-type)*
- *enactment (4-type)*
- *holistic facial expression (w-type)*

Boyes-Braem & Sutton-Spence 2001; Crasborn et al. 2008

Overview

- Mouth gestures in Kata Kolok
 - Completive marker - FINISH#pah
 - Negative completive marker (not yet) – protruded tongue
 - Intensification – pursed lips (& squinted eyes)
 - Interjection – Beeh + negative headshake
 - Evidential marker – stiffened upperlip
- Grammaticalisation of mouth gestures
- Methodological issues

pah! Completive aspect

FINISH#pah is the third most frequent sign in the corpus with an incidence of 2.7%

Used in narratives to mark topic completion

Used in greeting sequences

Non-manual component may occur with verbs, and predicative points



pah! with predicative pointing sign



Video available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/hdl:1839/00-0000-0000-0016-40D1-9>

protruded tongue - negative completive aspect



Video available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/hdl:1839/00-0000-0000-0016-7EF5-D>

Intensification – pursed lips



GRUE 'green-blue'

<http://hdl.handle.net/hdl:1839/00-0000-0000-001C-CB60-C>



GRUE#INTENS 'saturated green-blue'

<http://hdl.handle.net/hdl:1839/00-0000-0000-001C-CB5F-C>

Intensification

- pursed lips
- squinted eyes
- enlarging, repeating and speeding up of manual components

Interjection - “Beeh” & headshake



Video available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/hdl:1839/00-0000-0000-001C-CB61-4>

Evidential/assertative marker – stiffened upperlip



Grammaticalisation of mouth gestures in Kata Kolok

- Mouth gestures in unrelated sign languages may occasionally draw from similar sources of iconicity, yet distributional differences allow us to assess whether they are part of the same word class or not
- With regards to the protruded tongue in Kata Kolok, multiple functions are attested in some but not all signers, and sometimes the distinction remains unclear; this may reflect ongoing grammaticalisation.
- The evidentiality/assertative marker only appears to occur when there is a clear epistemic asymmetry between addressee and current signer (Heritage 2001)

Methodological issues

- Do existing typologies need to be revisited?
- What criteria to assess the grammaticality of mouth gestures?
- Could existing variation (e.g. intergenerational) contribute to our understanding of the grammaticalisation processes involved?
- How to elicit different types of mouth gestures effectively?

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