

The head takes it all! Functions of head and body movements in Austrian Sign Language (ÖGS)

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Methodology:

An empirical and inductive approach was followed. First, head and body movements recorded in narratives and lectures from 13 fluent ÖGS signers were identified by various Deaf annotators and compared. These movements were described with regard to their form, meaning, context of occurrence and co-occurrence with other markers.

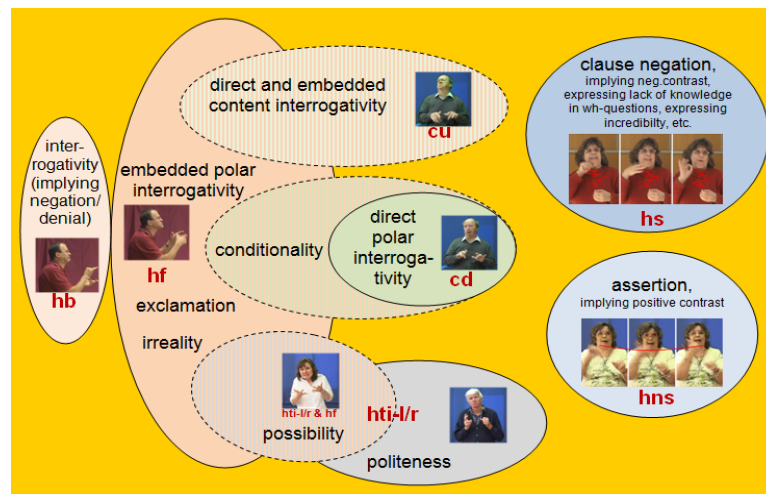
Results: 3 classified groups of identified head and body markers:

1st classified group

Characteristics

- regularity / uniformity in the movement production
- can only be produced by the head (no spatial indicators such as those of the 2nd class)
- not guided by the signing space

Markers: forms and coded functions

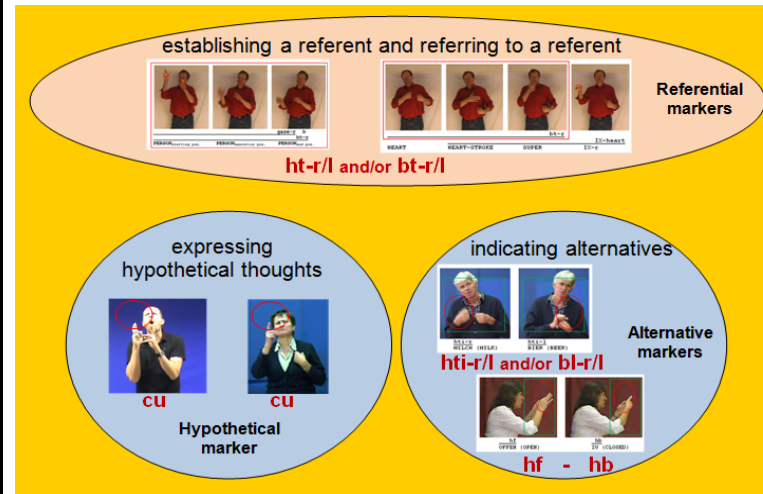


2nd classified group

Characteristics

- are spatial indicators: can be produced by head, torso, entire body and others (e.g. gaze) depending on language-internal and/or -external reasons
- hypothetical and alternative markers are directed by absolute values of the signing space (i.e. up, front, back, lateral)

Markers: forms and coded functions

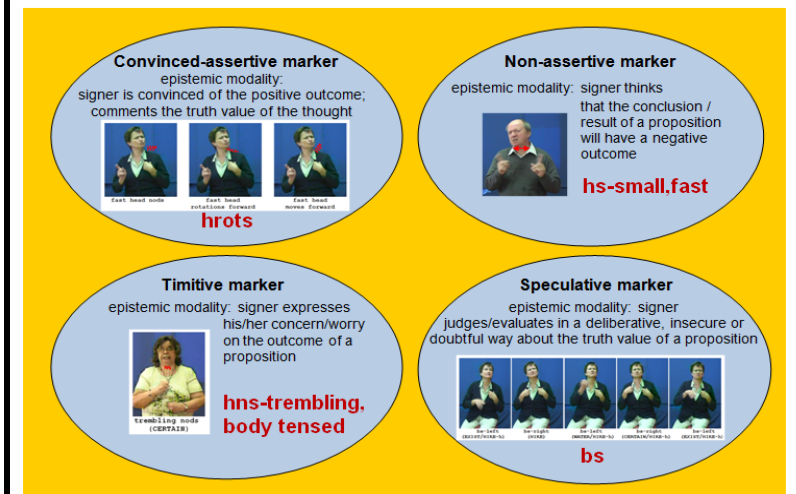


3rd classified group

Characteristics

- irregularity / non-uniformity in the movement production
- not directed by the signing space
- each marker can only be produced by the same articulator (no spatial indicators)

Markers: forms and coded functions



Ongoing research:

Identifying further head and body movements (e.g. one or more head nods or body straightening up) in ÖGS texts which function as segmentation and/or structuring cues in natural discourse data – implemented in the Project on Segmentation and Structuring of ÖGS-texts cues, funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF)

Additions:

Poster preparation / presentation supported by Bernadette Auersperg, Xenia Dürr, Wolfgang Puschnig & Nikolaus Riemer

Abbreviations:

cu – chin up	cd – chin down
hf – head forward	hb – head backward
hs – headshakes	hn – head nod/s
ht-r/l – head turn to the right/left	bt-r/l body turn to the right/left
hti-r/l – head tilt to the right/left	bl-r/l body lean to the right/left
bs – body sways	hrots – head rotations forward/upward