Introduction

My MA thesis presenting a discourse analysis of the turn-taking process in Austrian Sign Language (Österreichische Gebärdensprache – ÖGS) shows a variety of possible signals at the transition relevance place. Among others the two elements “PALM-UP” and “TOUCHING” show interesting features on a phonological level.

The analysed corpus includes 9 dialogues, totaling 52 minutes, with 5 male and 4 female fluently signing deaf people who all come from the same mountain valley (or are related to it) and are in close contact. The setting is two persons per dialogue, standing facing each other while having a conversation about a self-selected topic.

The present work aims at investigating firstly two variations of hf (B-hf and IX-hf) when touching the counterpart and secondly a frequently occurring element with B-hf, back related to it) and are in close contact. The setting is two persons per dialogue, standing facing each other while having a conversation about a self-selected topic.

TOUCHING

Why are there two handforms (B and IX-hf) for touching the counterpart?

1. Hf due to phonological assimilation?

2. Hf due to pragmatic/interactive reasons?

PALM-UP and THAT’S-IT

What are the differences between “PALM-UP” and “THAT’S-IT”?

1. HF due to phonological assimilation?

2. HF due to pragmatic/interactive reasons?

Conclusion / Discussion

In TOUCHING, gaze and the process of turn taking are determining factors for the hfs in touching which seems to fulfill a pragmatic function. A model which includes the counterpart, things like ‘touching’, ‘gaze of the partner’ and so on would be interesting to develop. In dialogue settings this might be an interactive model.

In PALM-UP/THAT’S-IT

“THAT’S-IT” is a separate sign distinct from but similar to “PALM-UP” as described in literature. What further factors does the duration of “PALM-UP” depend on? Are there comparable elements to “PALM-UP” and “THAT’S-IT” in other sign languages considering phonetics, phonology and function?