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Towards Conventions for Sign Language Annotation

Aim:

→ Systematic Collection of different Annotation Sets from various Sign Language Research Groups

Corpora Projects:

☞ Small-scale DGS Corpus[1]   (DGS)
☞ ISL Corpus 'Signs of Ireland'[2]   (ISL)
☞ Auslan Signbank, Archive and Corpus[3]   (Auslan)
☞ ECHO Conventions[4] / Corpus NGT[4]   (NGT)
☞ Hamburg DGS Corpus[5]   (DGS)
☞ BSL Corpus …   (BSL)

[1] Herrmann, Annika 2008 (Elan)
[2] Leeson, Lorraine and Brian Nolan 2008, Lorraine Leeson and John Saeed 2005 (Elan)
[3] Johnston, Trevor and Adam Schembri 2007, Johnston, Trevor 2008 (Elan, Sign Bank)
[4] Nonhebel, Annika et al. 2004 / Crasborn, Onno and Inge Zwitserlood 2008 (Elan)
[5] Konrad, Reiner 2009 (iLex)

Excel grid:

☞ Controlled annotation vocabulary of all tiers and categories
☞ Annotation of the actual signing
☞ Grammatical tagging excluded as much as possible
☞ Independent of a linguistic framework or research interest
☞ Automatically identifies identical annotations of a tier
☞ Automatically displays the most frequently used abbreviations

Advantages:

☞ Knowing who is doing what and how !
☞ Comparability of corpus data
☞ Considering the most frequently used identical annotations
☞ Information does not influence potential participants
☞ An overview of the state of the art

Tier / Research Group	Small-Scale DGS Corpus[1]		ISL Corpus 'Signs of Ireland'[2]		Auslan Annotations[3]		ECHO Conv.[4] / Corpus NGT[4]		Hamburg DGS Corpus[5]		BSL Corpus		SUM
	abbreviations	explanations	abbreviations	explanations	abbreviations	explanations	abbreviations	explanations	abbreviations	explanations	abbr.	expl.	most frequent abbreviations
Name:	Translation English		Translation		Translation (lit. and free t/lation)		Translation English						
Translation English	words and sentences	English translation of signed utterances	words and sentences	English translation of signed utterances	words and sentences	translation of signs and utterances (literal and free)	words and sentences	English translation of signed utterances					4, words and sentences
Name:	Translation German						Translation Dutch		Translation German				
Translation foreign language	words and sentences	Translation of signed utterances					words and sentences	Translation of signed utterances	words	translation of signs			2, words and sentences
Name:	Gloss English		Lexical Gloss		ID gloss		Gloss tier / GlosL/R		Lexical Gloss				
Gloss	SIGN	sign, manual gloss	SIGN	sign, manual gloss	SIGN	sign, Annotation	SIGN	sign, manual gloss	SIGN				5, SIGN
					sign1a	Database ID-Gloss							
Gloss	SIGN1,2	lexical variants							SIGN1,2	lexical variants, ID Gloss			2, SIGN1,2
Gloss					SIGN-handshape	sign with different handshape			SIGN1a,1b	phonological variants			
Gloss			OVER-THERE (palm - facing-camera)	sign (+explanations)									
Gloss	SIGN (1h)	1handed sign, that is usually 2handed			SIGN-1h	1handed sign, that is usually 2handed	SIGN (1h)		Hamnoys Notation und Kommentar	Hamnoys Notation und Kommentar			2, SIGN (1h)
Gloss	SIGN (2h)	2handed sign, that is usually 1handed			SIGN-2h		SIGN (2h)						2, SIGN (2h)
Gloss	SIGN (-h)	sign + hold, sign is held longer			+hold	hold, attached to sign	SIGN (-h)	final hold of a sign	$HOLD	hold signs (e.g. buoys)			2, SIGN (-h)
Gloss	SIGN#SIGN	(loan) compound			SIGN^SIGN	compound	SIGN^SIGN	compound					2, SIGN^SIGN
Gloss	N.A.M.E.	fingerspelled name or sign			N-A-M-E	fingerspelled name or sign	#NAME	fingerspelled name or sign	N-A-M-E	fingerspelled name or sign ($ALPHA1)			2, N-A-M-E
Gloss	SIGN-SIGN-SIGN	one sign expressed by more words (ONE-YEAR-AGO)	SIGN-SIGN-SIGN	one sign expressed by more words (TWO-OF-US)	SIGN-SIGN-SIGN	one sign expressed by more words	SIGN-SIGN-SIGN (PUT-UP-WITH) / SIGN_SIGN_SIGN (NOG_NIET)	if gloss has more words					3, SIGN-SIGN-SIGN
Gloss	SIGN (rep, 2,3,4)	repetition of sign (if no extra rep.-tier)			SIGN+rept		see repetition tier						
Gloss	SIGN (rep, a)	rep. (alternating)					see repetition tier						
Gloss	SIGN (rep, u)	rep. (uncountable)					see repetition tier						
Gloss	(g-)xxx	gesture (ex: (g-)pu, (g-)ah well)			G:meaning-text	gesture, meaning not form	(-g)	gesture (ex: (g-)"well" and (g-)pu)	$Gest	gesture, then specified			
Gloss	N.(A.M.E.)	only one letter used for a name/sign	r (NAME SIGN)	name sign by letter			#N	only one letter used for a name/sign	$INT	initialized sign			
Gloss	NAME	name sign							$NAME-...	name sign: ...			
Gloss	(fs-) SIGN	fingerspelled sign					(fs-) SIGN	fingerspelled sign					2, (fs-) SIGN
Gloss	IX-1	index (signer)	INDEX-me	I (signer)	PT-PRO1sg	point pronoun singular	IND	index	$INDEX	index			

⋮

Name:	Head		Head Movement				Head tier						
Head	hn	head nod	Headnod	head nods	hn	head nod	n	nod					2, hn
Head	hn (2x, 3x, 4x)	head nod (..x)											
Head	hs	head shake	Headshake	head shakes	hs	head shake	s	shake					2, hs
Head	ht-l	head tilt left	TILT-sl	head tilted left	ht	head tilt	t	tilt					
Head	ht-r	head tilt right	TILT-sr	head tilted right									
Head	ht-f	head tilt forward	TILT+forward	head tilted forward	htf	head tilted forward							
Head	ht-b	head tilt backward	TILT+backward	head tilted backward	htb	head tilted back							
Head	ht-u	head tilt up			hb	head back							
Head	cb	chin back											
Head	h-r	head moves/turns right	TURN+sr	head turned right									
Head	h-l	head moves/turns left	TURN+sl	head turned left									

⋮

➡ Outlook:

The Excel grid works as a basis that can be used and constantly extended and updated in two ways

1. Research groups add their developed annotation system and abbreviations or update existing sets*
2. Following researchers may
 ➡ either decide for one given set of annotation conventions
 ➡ select the items fitting their needs and/or select the most frequently used items
 ➡ add and extend the grid by missing items and new ideas

We will progressively get closer to a uniform annotation convention that allows comparability !

* Send the annotation conventions to herrmann@lingua.uni-frankfurt.de or ask for the grid, edit it, and send it back with the relevant references.