Manuscript, 26 April 2010

Näkökulmia viittomaan ja viittomistoon
[Perspectives on sign and lexicon]

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In preparation for publication with the
Centre of Applied Language Studies
In series
'Theory and practice in applied linguistics'.

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.
Sisällys

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Jantunen: [Introduction: perspectives on sign and lexicon]
This introductory paper discusses the nature of the sign and the composition of the signed language lexicon. The theme is approached both from the perspective of signed language research in general and Finnish Sign Language research in particular. The main aim is to illustrate the varying answers given in the field of signed language research to the following questions: How can the sign be defined? What kinds of signs are there in signed language? What is the relationship between signs and gestures? The specific perspectives of the contributors of the present volume are outlined.
Keywords: signed language, Finnish Sign Language, sign, lexicon, gesture

Ojala: [The effect of rhythm and coarticulation on signing and speech]
Rhythm is the basis of all human action. It is so embedded in everything we do that we do not even stop to think about it unless it is impaired. This study focuses on the relationship between rhythm and coarticulation. Coarticulation is one of the elements of rhythm in speech, whether it be acoustic or optic. Coarticulatory phenomena have been thoroughly studied within the framework of the speech sciences. This study applies speech science research methods to the study of sign coarticulation phenomena. This also brings new insights contributing to research into coarticulation in speech, since the coarticulatory phenomena within signing are visible all the time. This is different from speech, where coarticulatory phenomena are mostly hidden within the oral cavity. The coarticulation in signing occurs on two levels: coarticulation within one hand, i.e. coarticulation between fingers and their movement trajectories, and interarticulation between two hands, i.e. coarticulatory relations between the individual hands and their mutual movement trajectories.
Keywords: coarticulation, sign, speech

Mesch: [The glosses and temporal durations of signs: questions relating to sign language annotation]
In this paper, questions relating to sign language annotation are discussed. ELAN, the computer-assisted annotation tool that has been applied in and tested for sign language annotation since 2002, has already shown its potential in synchronizing sign language texts in video format with transcription. However, during the annotation work two questions have arisen. The first concerns the selection and nature of the gloss for the sign, and the second the duration of the glossed annotation, that is, the question of where the sign begins and ends on a video. These questions have emerged especially from work on the large corpora of sign language texts, and in the teaching of sign language linguistics. The findings discussed here suggest that more unified linguistic transcription conventions should be developed for glossing so that, for example, searching the annotations in ELAN would be easier in the larger sign language corpora made available for researchers and students.
Keywords: sign language, gloss, the duration of an annotation, linguistic transcription convention
**Jantunen: [The main lexical-grammatical categories in Finnish Sign Language]**

This paper deals with the main lexical-grammatical categories (i.e. parts of speech and word-classes) in Finnish Sign Language (FinSL). The paper discusses earlier views regarding the division of FinSL into parts of speech and argues that (1) FinSL has two broad continuum-like and fuzzy lexical-grammatical categories, nominal and verbal; (2) the status of a sign as a nominal or verbal can be unambiguously determined only on the basis of discourse context; and (3) the semantically property-denoting signs with a modifying function do not form an independent lexical-grammatical category of adjective but are distributed along the nominal–verbal continuum. On the strength of the second argument, it is further argued that the creation of future FinSL dictionaries should be based on a large authentic FinSL corpus, not on the investigation of abstract isolated signs.

**Keywords:** Finnish Sign Language, lexical-grammatical category, parts of speech, word-class, nominal, verbal, adjective

**Haapanen & Wainio: [The subdivision of Type 1 and 2 verbals in Finnish Sign Language]**

In this paper an internal classification is presented for two groups of Finnish Sign Language (FinSL) verbals. These are labelled Type 1 and Type 2 verbals by Tommi Jantunen whose general classification and ontological assumptions (concerning, for example, the interplay of morphemic and gestural components) are here followed. Type 1 verbals are composed of a morphemic component alone and are divided into two subgroups: Type 1.1 verbals, produced in contact with the body or head, these being the most fixed type of FinSL verbal signs, and Type 1.2 verbals, produced in neutral space, some aspects of which can be internally modified. Type 2 verbals are composed of both a morphemic and a gestural component, and they fall into four subcategories: Type 2.1 verbals, which are one-handed in their basic form and which can, if needed, have an agent, patient, plurality, duality and reciprocity coded in them; Type 2.2 verbals, which are two-handed in their basic form and can have, for example, an agent and patient coded in them; Type 2.3 verbals, in which the patient is coded before the agent; and Type 2.4 verbals, in which the patient and agent are coded by a change of orientation. The effect the written notation systems (e.g. glosses) have on verbal classification is also discussed.

**Keywords:** sign language, Finnish Sign Language, sign, verbal, verb

**Takkinen: [The lexical and morphological-gestural description of depicting signs: the perspective of sign language teaching]**

The paper discusses how depicting signs should be described in the lexicon and grammar (morphology) of Finnish Sign Language (FinSL), and what would be a fruitful way to introduce depicting signs to learners of FinSL. The paper first looks at depicting signs from the lexical viewpoint. These signs are defined as non-lexicalised constructs without a frozen citation form, still composed of the same parameters – handshape, hand orientation, place of articulation, movement, and a non-manual parameter – as lexicalised signs. Second, the linguistic status of the parameters in depicting signs is discussed. The handshape and the contact movement are defined as morphemes while process movements and depicting movements as well as location, hand orientation, and non-manual parameters are defined as gestural elements. In addition, the function of the
parameters in depicting signs is discussed. The final part of the paper deals with the teaching of sign language in general and depicting signs in particular.

**Keywords:** depicting signs, sign language instruction, Finnish Sign Language, gestural elements of signs

**Hoyer: [Dictionary work on sign languages: at the focal point of language documentation, description, and standardisation]**

This article deals with dictionary work as a part of language documentation and description. Two different aims of dictionary work are discussed: revitalizing sign language and empowering Deaf communities, and attempts at language standardization. Language planning for sign languages has traditionally been controlled from outside the community and with the aim of reducing lexical variation. One of the many challenges in dictionary work is therefore awareness arising within the language community enabling the community itself to take the lead in all language planning processes. The article presents criticism of traditional dictionary work that narrowly focuses only on the core lexicon. Dictionary work is discussed from the perspective of the language learner, since sign language dictionaries are often used for learning, mostly due to the lack of specially designed learning material. Dictionaries shape our concept of a language and electronic presentations of both the lexicon and the grammar could best serve the purpose if the aim is to do justice to the rich diversity of sign language structure.

**Keywords:** sign language documentation and description, standardization, dictionary, lexicography

**Rainò: [Sign collections and linguistic feudalism]**

The lexicon of Finnish Sign Language (FinSL) has often been exploited and distorted in various glossaries and dictionaries produced by non-lexicographers to an extent that can be described in terms of *linguistic feudalism*. In this article two examples are presented, the first of which is a printed picture dictionary targeted at families with deaf children, where the formal, grammatical and syntactic properties of signs are misinterpreted. This is partly due to the fact that the authors were not equipped with adequate knowledge and tools for describing the singular features of the target language. The second case is an electronic dictionary for deaf schools which depicts mathematical signs in FinSL. Here the signed vocabulary turns out to be non-existent or else it describes signs in a defective manner when compared with the elements relating to mathematical processes in a natural signed discourse conducted by native signers of FinSL.

**Keywords:** signed lexicon, lexical representation, mathematical glossaries, linguistic feudalism