Markers of (dis)fluency across signers’ profiles in French Belgian Sign Language (LSFB). A comparative analysis between Native, Near-Native and Late Signers
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1. Research question
- 3 groups: Native, Near-Native and Late Signers
- Several linguistic criteria involved in (Dis)Fluency → Different behaviour according to language background?

2. Background
- Impact of a delayed L1 Acquisition at the level of Proficiency and Comprehension (Mayberry 1991)
- Lack of studies at the level of Fluency and Production

3. Theoretical framework
Componential approach of (Dis)Fluency (Götz, 2013)
- Combination of measurable markers (fluencemes)
- Not only interruptions of the flow of speech, hesitations
- But also strategies to manage the discourse

4. Methodology
3.1 Data selection on extra-linguistic criteria
4 min/signer of unprepared semi-interactive discourse
- Deaf signers of LSFB
- Parents status: Deaf, Hearing
- Age of LSFB acquisition: From birth, Before 6, After 9
- Education: With Deafs, With Deafs, With Hearings

3.2 Annotation of linguistic criteria in ELAN
Markers of (dis)fluency (fluencemes):
- Palm-ups
- Stops of the hands between signs
- Word search gestures
- Truncations
- Gaze directions
- Co-occurring non-manuals

3.3 Data analysis in Excel and SPSS
- Speed and use of both hands
- Frequency and Ratio of fluencemes
- Mean comparison and correlation

5. Results
- Fluenccemmes that do not distinguish groups
- Why?
  - No influence of above fluencemes
  - No influence of break time
  - Maybe different articulation strategies
    - Track: activation of one or two hands
- Native Signers are the fastest
- Native Signers activate more often one hand
- Co-occurring Non-manuals (Notarrigo & Meurant 2014):
  - Native Signers prefer modality and phatic functions
  - Near-Native and Late Signers prefer using emphasis
  - Slight tendency: Native Signers do more truncations (4/min vs 3/min) than Near-Native and Late Signers

6. Summary
- No distinction in the frequency of linguistic criteria involved in (Dis)Fluency between signers with different language background
  → That is for palm-ups, stops between signs, word search gestures, and floating gazes
- Except for rate of articulation: Native Signers (LSFB from birth) versus Near-Native/Late Signers (delayed LSFB) slower
  → And therefore, for the number of hands involved in the number of addressed/spatialized gazes (positive correlation p<0.05)

7. Discussion
- Relative impact of L1 delayed acquisition on Production and Fluency
- Acquisition of some markers of (dis)fluency locked in time
- Acquisition of some other markers of (dis)fluency achieved at any time

8. Further issues
- Holds of hands
- Repeated signs
- Phonological economy (Pariset & Villeneuve 2007)
- Combinations of fluencemes → Functions of fluencemes
  - Additional signers

REFERENCES

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