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SIGNING ABOUT SIGNING
Sign metalanguage in LSF and LSFB
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1. Theoretical background

Metalinguage approached through the theoretical notion of *autonomy* (Authier-Revuz 1995; Autonymic expressions refer to themselves, not to their referent in the world. e.g.: London is a six-letter word

**Autonymic Expression**

Study conducted in the Enunciative Linguistics framework (Jakobson 1963; Benveniste 1966, 1974)

Special attention given to the gaze in SLs (Cuxac 2000; Meurant 2008)

Linguistic approach including so-called *productive signs* being fully involved in the linguistic structure of SLs (i.e. Structures de grande iconicité, Cuxac 2000: Transferts de taille et de forme, transferts situationsnels and transferts personnels)

2. Results (common to LSF and LSFB)

1. Autonymic expression (AE) is supported by:
   - fixed gaze directed at the addressee (but see 2.6 and 3) + neutral facial expression, head and chest motionless
   - AE is frequently accompanied by several processes of phatic control varying in combinations and intensity, depending on the signer's degree of concern that the AE is accurately understood:
     2.1 sharp mouthing patterns during AE
     2.2 repetition (up to 6 times) of the AE*
     2.3 bracketing structure: *AE paraphrase AE*
     2.4 spelling of the translation of AE between two occurrences of the AE
     2.5 nodding of the head after the AE
     2.6 brief focus of the gaze on the hands(s) at the beginning of the articulation of the AE

   * Hypothesis: the repetition of the sign is reinforced when the sign is anchored on the signer's body

2. AE may be referred to specifically for its *signifier form* (= this sign with this handshake, movement, etc.). In this case it is marked by:
   - a gaze directed at the hands(s) articulating the AE
   - an index sign directed at the articulated AE

3. Conclusion

Gaze behaviour distinguishes between the use of signs to refer to themselves as whole signs and the use of signs to refer to their signifier form. The simultaneous use of the hands and linear arrangement of signs (i.e. repetition of the sign, bracketing structure) as well as non-manual components (mouthing, nodding, etc.) participate in the marking of metalinguistic use of signs.

3. Data collection procedure

LSF Creagest project methodology (Garcia 2010) extended to LSFB corpus:
- Semi-directed interviews between Deaf interviewer and Deaf (native or non-native) informant (LSF: n=4; LSFB: n=4)
- Interview part I (45 min.); elicitation of spontaneous metalinguistic discourse; part II (45 min.) elicitation of explicit metalinguistic reflection
- 3 cameras filming: informant, interviewer, interaction

4. Further investigation

Extension of the study to *autonomous modalization*; i.e. the use of an expression both in usage and to refer to itself (your *princess* is waiting for you at the hotel). Focus on the role of facial expression in marking autonomous modalization.

Comparison with the sign conventions established between Deaf and interpreters: during the interpretation, and during international exchanges between deaf signers using different SLs.

Description of the ways of referring to a previous autonymous expression later in the discourse.

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