

**Theoretical issues**

Describe the marking of the metalinguistic use of signs in LSF and LSFb

Spot the invariant processes of marking metalanguage between both SLs

Consider whether gaze plays a role in the marking of the metalinguistic use of SLs

**Theoretical background**

Metalanguage approached through the theoretical notion of 'autonymy' (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**

$$AE = \frac{\text{Signified}}{\text{Signifier}}$$

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' as being fully involved in the linguistic structure of SLs (i.e. Structures de grande iconicité, Cuxac 2000: Transferts de taille et de forme, transferts situationnels and transferts personnels)

**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 reflexion
- 3 cameras filming: informant, interviewer, interaction

**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

**2** 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 hand(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

**3** AE may be referred to specifically for its signifier form (≈ this sign with this handshape, movement, etc.)

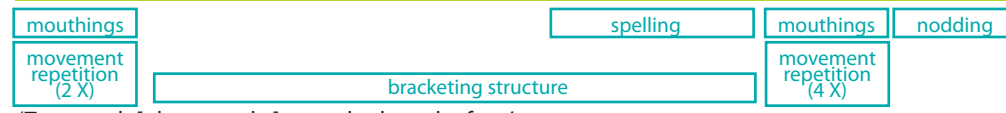
In this case it is marked by:

a gaze directed at the hand(s) articulating the AE and/or an index sign directed at the articulated AE

**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.

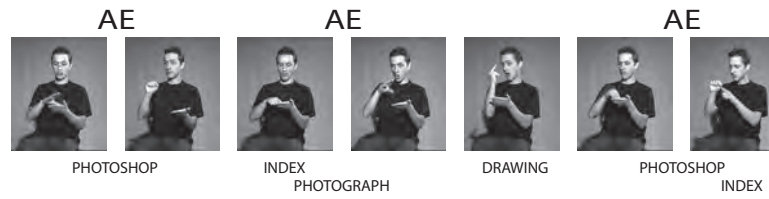
The simultaneous use of the hands and linear arrangement of signs (i.e. repetition of the sign, bracketing structure) as well as non-manual components (mouthings, nodding, etc.) participate in the marking of metalinguistic use of signs.



'To retouch [photographs], namely clean the face.' [LSFB]



'Deaf rhyme, that is which is typical to sign phonetics' [LSF]



'In the sign for Photoshop, you have the sign for photo (or drawing), but this S handshape is disturbing' [LSFB]

- 1** Basic markers of the metalinguistic use of signs
- 2** Multiple processes of phatic control
- 3** Processes marking that reference is made to the signifier form of the sign

**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 autonymic expression later in the discourse.

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