Laying the groundwork for a comparative approach to the study of European SLs:
the International Research Network EURASIGN (2019-2022)

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STATE OF THE ART

- Growing **interest in comparative and typological approaches** in SL Linguistics; however, studies mostly focus on comparisons of Western with non-Western and/or non institutionalized SLs (see Hansen 2015)
  - In Europe, home to several unrelated SLs, there is a **lack of fine-grained systematic comparison** based on large-scale corpora (see Vermeerbergen 2006, Slobin 2008)
    - *Studies frequently **limited to comparisons of two SLs** (a.o. Garcia & Meurant 2010, Safar et al 2015, Notarrigo et al 2016, Barberà & Cabredo-Hofherr 2018)*
    - *And/or based on the **same theoretical framework** (e.g. Sallandre et al 2016, Förster et al 2016)*
- ➢ **DIVERSITY OF APPROACHES ADOPTED AND METHODOLOGY USED BY EUROPEAN SL RESEARCHERS AS A MAJOR HINDRANCE TO A BROADER COMPARISON**

AIMS

1. **Comparison of the different theoretical approaches and tenets**, in order to identify potential **similarities** or parallels, beyond the different terminology.

2. **Systematic large-scale cross-linguistic comparison,** based on adult and child learner data, **along two main themes that are also** *at the focus of current controversies:*
   - **THE TWO MAJOR TYPES OF SL UNITS (lexical units and non conventional units),** their internal structure and their interaction, focusing on non-manual parameters used in each type (particularly eye gaze)
   - **THE USE OF SPACE AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF SPACE IN SL DISCOURSE**, more specifically addressed through verb/predicate types in SL and the issue of agreement, person marking and the marking of event participants.

WORKSHOP PACKAGES

YEAR 1 (2019)

FOCUS ON TYPES OF SL UNITS and their interaction in discourse in 9 SLs:

LSF, DGS, LIS, LSC, LSFB, VGT, NGT, RSL, BSL

SL approaches differ in:

(i) the status ascribed to the major **types of units / constructions** identified (linguistic, partially linguistic, non-linguistic)
(ii) the description of their **functions**
(iii) the analysis and interpretation of their **interaction**
(iv) the **place** given to them **in language** (central/peripheral).

➢ **OBJECTIVES OF THE TWO MEETINGS (PARIS, GHENT):**

- Detailed elucidation of the various **descriptive concepts and modes of analysis and annotation** adopted by the network member teams
- Identification of the main **challenges** faced regarding the **information encoded** (e.g. units/constructions, simultaneity, discourse)
- Comparable data from the network's various **corpora** (matched by type, genre, monological/dialogic) used as a basis.
- **Comparison of annotated sequences** in the SLs covered, contributing at least to *a clarification of the modes of analysis used by each team.*

MAIN ISSUES RAISED

- **Segmentation**: driven by form or semantics?
- Basic **transcription** (allowing for data reconstruction) vs. interpretive data (allowing for analysis according to research objective)?
- (Competing) **functions** of eye-gaze.
- **Lexical sign / depicting sign**:
  - How to determine if a sign is lexical or is not?
  - Depicting signs can be entrenched/lexicalised, then can be used in a more productive way again.
  - Degrees of conventionalisation.
- **Constructed action - personal transfer**: identical concepts?
- **Clause as a basis for analysing conventional and no conventional units?** Clause and CA?
- **Depicting and enacting** = what is the difference?

YEAR 2 (2020)
Comparison of the 9 SLs regarding uses of space
➢ *Qualitative comparison of verb/predicate forms and their modifications in context*
➢ *Analysis of comparable discourse sequences extracted from the network's corpora, matching in genre (narrative) and discourse type (monological/dialogical)*

YEARS 3 and 4
—**2021**: extension of analysis to larger extracts, aiming also for a quantitative analysis, to cover a wider range of discourse genres, *i.e.* informative and argumentative genres.
—**2022**: focus on applied issues, e.g. comparison of didactic practices used in teaching translation techniques, focusing on the elaboration of: (i) the linguistic description of the SLs and (ii) the findings of our comparative project (similarities and distinctions across SLs)

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