1. BACKGROUND

- Traditional linguistic vs. affective nonmanuals dichotomy in SL linguistics
- However, difficulty in differentiating between grammatical, prosodic and gestural signals (e.g. Pitau & Oure 2010; Herrmann & Steinbach 2011)
- Need for a wider semiotic approach? (see e.g. Ferrara & Hodge 2018; Capirci 2018)

A semiotic typology of head & body movements on the basis of 1 h 52 min of FinSL data
- Corpus narratives & dialogues (12 signers)
- Synchronized motion capture & video recordings of dialogues (2 signers)
- All prosodic/grammatical/gestural signals of the head or body seen as semiotic signs (see Perce 1903; Enfield 2009; Kockelman 2005)
- Involve strategies that differ in how something is interpreted as standing for something else: iconicity (perceptual analogies), indexicality (spatial, temporal or causal proximity) and symbolicity (a social norm)

2. A SEMIOTIC TYPOLOGY OF SIGNERS’ HEAD AND BODY MOVEMENTS

Fig. 1. A typology of signers’ head and body movements according to semiotic strategies.

2.1 Enacting

Fig. 2. An example of sideways head and body movements that enact discourse referents.

2.2 Time-metaphoric

Fig. 3. An example of a backward movement of the head and body visualizing a time-related metaphor.

2.3 Indicating referents

Fig. 4. An example of contrastive sideways movements of the head and body that indicate a referent (cf. Wilbur & Patschke 1998).

3.3 Discussion & conclusion

- Indexical strategies are central in all head and body movements
- Iconicity is present as well: may depict referents but this is mostly enactment
- Symbolicity is as prominent: rarely form types for tokens, rely more on association of analogies and spatio-temporal proximity - but still they are significant

3.4 Conventional types for tokens

Fig. 5. An example of a backward movement of the head and body that indicates discourse structure by parsing together a stretch of signing (cf. e.g. Sander 2012).

Fig. 6. An example of head and body movements indicating an exclusive (Wilbur & Patschke 1999; van der Kooy et al. 2006) reaction to something: in this case, a referent’s reaction is enacted by the signer.

Fig. 7. An example of a more conventional head movement, a headshake, that changes the meaning of a sentence from affirmative to negative together with the facial expression.

3.5 Contextual association is important: emphasize, complement or connect to other co-occurring signals in composite utterances (Enfield 2009)

- Differ from signals of the face and hands in their semiotic repertoire
- Modal affordances: possibilities and restrictions of the human body for conveying meaning (e.g. Wagner et al. 2014), e.g. capacity to imitate visible features in the world
- Need for a theory of language that embraces less symbolic, unconventional elements instead of pushing them to the periphery

BIBLIOGRAPHY: 