



ISCH COST Action IS1006 SignGram



Work plan for STSM to Bogazici University, Istanbul

Sign action number: IS 1006

Title of the action: Unraveling the grammars of European sign languages: pathways to full citizenship of deaf signers and to the protection of their linguistic heritage

Action short name: SignGram COST Action

Applicant's Name: Dr. Roland Pfau

Affiliation: University of Amsterdam, Dept. of Linguistics,
Spuistraat 210, 1012 VT Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Host Institution: Bogazici University, Istanbul

Comparatives in Sign Language of the Netherlands and Turkish Sign Language

The goal of this one-week STSM is two-fold; one goal is theoretical in nature, the other one is more practical. First, the applicant will set up a research project together with colleagues at the host institution. This research project will focus on comparatives, a grammatical topic that – to the best of our knowledge – has received close to no attention to date in the sign linguistics literature.

The comparison of NGT and TİD is promising, as the two sign languages have previously been shown to pattern differently in various grammatical domains, for instance, with respect to



the expression of negation (Pfau in press), and locative expressions (Özyürek et al. 2010). Before starting the STSM, we will conduct a preliminary small-scale study on NGT comparatives involving a limited number of representative adjectives. At Bogazici University, Emre Hakgüder and Sumru Özsöy already started exploring the topic. As for the first goal of the STSM, the hosts and the applicant also plan to start working on elicitation materials – in a sense, this is a practical goal within the theoretical goal. Clearly, the design of elicitation materials that target concrete (iconic) features is more straightforward than that of materials meant to elicit comparison of abstract features. Both the theoretical investigation and the design of elicitation materials are directly relevant to the SignGram COST Action.

The practical goal of the STSM is more modest and can be sketched in a few sentences. Both the host Meltem Kelepir and I will teach at the next COST SignGram summer school in Barcelona. Although the topics of our courses are clearly different, they both tackle syntactic issues, and the STSM will therefore allow us to coordinate the content and also the level of the classes. In addition, the exchange will help us to scrutinize how to use the Blueprint materials in our courses.

Work plan

Given that the STSM only covers eight days, we do not present a detailed day-by-day work plan. Also, details of the work plan depend on teaching obligations of the host. The period of the applicant's stay covers Monday to Wednesday; however, April 13th will be day of arrival, April 22nd will be day of departure. The two weekend days, the applicant does not necessarily expect to work together with the hosts, but will study relevant literature on comparatives in spoken languages and/or work on the design of the summer school course. During the week, the hosts and the applicant will

- (i) discuss the typology of comparative structures;
- (ii) brainstorm about what types of adjectives should minimally be tested;
- (iii) discuss the preliminary data from NGT;
- (iv) compare the NGT data to TID that either were elicited in a pilot or will be elicited;
- (v) analyze the NGT and TID data;
- (vi) discuss the design of elicitation materials;
- (vii) discuss the content of the courses to be taught at the SignGram summer school.

Roland Pfau.

