ISCH COST Action IS1006 SignGram

STSM final report

Venice, December 16 2014

Dear STSM coordinator,

This is to notify that the following STSM:

Beneficiary: Matic Pavlič, PhD student at Ca' Foscari, Venice
Host: dr. Roland Pfau, assistant professor at University of Amsterdam
Period: 2014-10-27 to 2014-12-15 (36 days)
Place: Amsterdam (Netherlands)
Reference code: COST-STSM-ECOST-STSM-IS1006-271014-051446

started and finished in the expected dates.

1 Description

During my STSM to Amsterdam I followed the MA class in *Advanced Sign Linguistics* offered by the University of Amsterdam (13 times per two hours in 7 weeks) and attended the linguistic reading group organised by prof. Roland Pfau and dr. Vadim Kimmelman (three times in seven weeks). I annotated a previously collected corpus on Slovenian Sign Language (SZJ) negation, interrogatives, aspect and argument structure. I presented the preliminary results and discussed examples of negation, interrogatives, aspect and argument structure in SZJ with my STSM supervisor dr. Roland Pfau during the reception hours we had regularly (four times per 1,5-2 hours in seven weeks). I studied the relevant literature on negation, interrogatives, aspect and argument structure in sign languages – using the well supplied library at the University of Amsterdam. I attended three ACLC Seminar lectures, PhD defense by Vadim Kimmelman and three small one-day conferences. I had two public presentations on which I presented my work and preliminary results: one on SZJ

argument structure for the above mentioned reading group, and one on SZJ ditransitives on invitation by prof. Enoch Aboch at his MA class on topics in current linguistics research. Furthermore, I also wrote an article that is to be published in Proceedings of the 7th Syntax, Phonology and Language Analysis conference (SinFonIJA 7). Besides all these activities I also prepared the outline, chose the material (examples) and started writing three chapters of my PhD thesis (on the structure of classifier predicate, on negation and NPIs and on polar and content questions in SZJ). I presented this work to my STSM supervisor dr. Roland Pfau.

2 Activities

1.1 MA General Linguistics: Advanced Sign Linguistics

Instructor: Roland Pfau
Credits: ECTS 6
Schedule: Monday 11.00-13.00 in PCH 6.06 and Thursday 13.00-15.00 in PCH 4.34
October 27th 2014 until December 11th 2014

1.1.1 Content of the course:

As in Topics in Sign Linguistics (TSL), we will discuss recent publications dealing with various aspects related to sign language grammar, psycholinguistics of sign languages, and (sign) language evolution. The choice of topics for this module will be diverse, but in contrast to TSL, there will be a guiding theme, namely "Language emergence and language evolution". In discussing the literature, the focus will be on critically evaluating the content, e.g. the research methodology and the theoretical claims made. Prior knowledge of the basics of sign language linguistics is assumed. Students with little background knowledge in that area are required to contact the instructor before the course starts. The language of instruction is English.

1.1.2 Time investment

One EC stands for 28 hours, i.e. 6 EC = 168 hours.
Of these 168 hours, 28 hours are contact hours (14 meetings x 2 hours). The remaining 140 hours are for class preparation and the written assignment. Calculating a maximum of 5 hours preparation per class (70 hours) plus 20 extra hours for the oral presentations, students have 50 hours for composing the written research assignment.

1.1.3 Course program

N	Date	Theme	Title	Literature
1	Mon 27-10	Organizational issues Gesture and language evolution I	Gestures – classification & variation	Kita (2009)
2	Thu 30-10	Gesture and language evolution II	Language evolution	Fitch (2013) Hauser et al. (2014) Bolhuis et al. (2014)
3	Mon 03-11	Gesture and language evolution III	The gestural origin of language	Armstrong & Wilcox (2007) Corballis (2010) Woll (2014)

4	Thu 06-11	Gesture and language evolution IV	Sign language in chimpanzees	Gardner & Gardner (1969) Chalcraft & Gardner (2005)
5	Mon 10-11	Emergence of structure I	Birdsong	Doupe & Kuhl (1999)
6	Thu 13-11	Emergence of structure II	'Oral gestures' and iconicity	Perniss et al. (2010) Shintel et al. (2006)
7	Mon 17-11	Emergence of structure III	Secondary sign languages	Pfau (2012) Divale & Zipin (1977) Meissner & Philpott (1975) Stokoe (1978) Kendon (1984)
8	Mon 24-11	Emergence of structure IV	Homesign Phonology	Brentari et al. (2012) Syntax: Franklin et al. (2011)
9	Thu 27-11	Emergence of structure V	Deixis in Nicaraguan SL	Senghas & Coppola (2011) Pfau (2011)
10	Mon 01-12	Emergence of structure VI	Prosodic and syntactic structure	Sandler et al. (2011) Kastner et al. (2014)
11	Thu 04-12	Emergence of structure VIIa	Sign language agreement 1	Lillo-Martin & Meier (2011) Wilbur (2013) Quer (2011)
12	Mon 08-12	Emergence of structure VIIb	Sign language agreement 2	Meir (2012) Cysouw (2011) Liddell (2011)
13	Thu 11-12	Language diversity	Critique towards UG	Evans and Levinson

1.2 Reading group meetings

Date: Tuesday November 11, 13.00-15.00
Place: room 3.02, Bungehuis
Topic: Paper presented by Marloose Oomen
Benedicto, E. & D. Brentari. 2004. Where did all the arguments go? Argument-changing properties of classifiers in ASL. Natural Language & Linguistic Theory 22: 743-810.

Date: Friday December 5, 15.00-17.00
Place: room 3.02, Bungehuis
Topic: Two papers, presented by Vadim Kimmelman
Benedicto, E., S. Cvejanov & J. Quer (2007), Valency in classifier predicates: A syntactic analysis. Lingua 117(7), 1202-1215.
Grose, D., R. Wilbur & K. Schalber. 2007. Events and telicity in classifier predicates: A reanalysis of body part classifier predicates in ASL. LinIgua 117, 1258–1284.

1.3 PhD Defence

Date: November 14, 10.00-13.00

Place: Agnietenkapel (Oudezijds Voorburgwal 229-231

Topic: Vadim Kimmelman will defend his thesis entitled "Information structure in Russian Sign Language and Sign Language of the Netherlands"

1.4 Conferences

1.4.1 Symposium, where members of Vadim's defense committee will present research

Date: November 14, 14.00-17.00

Place: room K02, Bungehuis

Topic: The program is as follows (for abstracts see: http://aclc.uva.nl/news-and-events/events/events.html):
14:00 Opening
14.05-14.50 Diane Lillo-Martin "Information structure in sign language acquisition"
14.50-15.35 Malte Zimmermann "Scalar particles as alternative-sensitive expressions"
15.35-15.45 Break
15.45-16.30 Markus Steinbach "The interaction of gesture and grammar in reported speech and reported action"
16.30-17.00 General discussion

1.4.2 NAP dag – "Nieuw" Amsterdams Peil Symposium

Date: November 21, 10.15-18.00

Place: room 0.14, Bungehuis

Topic: The NAP-dag is a day on which junior researchers predominately from the Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication (ACLC) present their work. **Program:**
10:15: room open
10:30: opening; introduction of the jury
10:45 -11:15: Sterre Leufkens: Degrees of transparency - why some languages maintain their historical junk.
11:15 - 11:45: Konrad Rybka: The language of vanishing ecotopes.
11.45 - 12:00: coffee break
12:00 - 12:30: Jasmin Pfeifer: Congenital Amusia and pitch memory.
12:30 - 13:00: Joey Weidema: Through the looking glass: an investigation into specific and music-specific mechanisms of pitch processing.
13:00 - 14:15: lunch break
14:15 - 14:45: Mirjam de Jonge: Neural reflections of privative phonological features.
14:45 - 15:15: Klaas Seinhorst: Learning preferences in plosive segment inventories.
15:15 - 15:30: coffee break
15:30 - 16:00: Patrick Schetters: Accuracy in the written production of proficient learners of Dutch as a second language with L1 German.
16:00 - 16:30: meet the new PhDs: Sanne Berends, Jeroen Breteler, Hernán Labbé Grünberg, Anne Mercuur, Rosalinde Stadt.
16:30 - 16:40: closing
16:40 - 18:00: drinks and jury report

1.4.3 Master class organized by the KNAW (Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie voor Wetenschappen) and Utrecht University

Date: Saturday December 13, 10.00-14.00

Place: University of Amsterdam

Topic: 4 world-renowned speakers: <u>Stephen Crain</u> (Macquarie University), <u>Susan Goldin-Meadow</u> (Chicago) and <u>Robert Berwick</u> (MIT). More information can be found on the following website: http://biologyoflanguage.wp.hum.uu.nl/registration/

1.5 Seminars

1.5.1 ACLC seminar dr. Jenny Audring (UvA)

Date: Friday November 7, 15.00-16.30
Place: room 420, Bungehuis
Topic: The texture of the lexicon - Revisiting morphological theory
Recent advances in theoretical and experimental linguistics suggest that we revisit our theory of complex words. This talk touches on a number of time-honoured issues: the structure of words, the nature of rules and the architecture of the lexicon. We sketch the first outlines of a theory of morphology that builds on the foundations of the Parallel Architecture (Jackendoff 1997, 2002) and strives to articulate with what we know about processing, acquisition and general cognition.

1.5.2 Victoria Nyst (Leiden University)

Date: Wednesday November 19, 15-30-16.30
Place: room 3.02, Bungehuis
Topic: Cross-linguistic variation in iconic gestures: size and shape gestures in Dutch and Anyi (Côte d'Ivoire)

1.5.3 ACLC Seminar dr. Bert Meuffels

Date: Friday December 12, 15.15-16.30
Place: room 0.04, Bungehuis
Topic: Conceptions of Reasonableness
In this lecture an overview of the empirical results of a 13 year lasting project, entitled Conceptions of Reasonableness will be presented. In this project 50 experiments were carried out, in which the (un)reasonableness of 24 pragma-dialectical fallacies were investigated. The emphasis in this lecture is not so much on the theoretical-argumentational aspects of this project, as on empirical-methodological issues pertaining to internal, external and ecological validity.

3 Assignments

1.6 Reception hours with STSM supervisor dr. Roland Pfau

1.6.1 Introductory meeting: presentation of my work on SZJ word order

Date: Monday November 27, 9.30-10.30
Place: room 3.53, Bungehuis

1.6.2 Classifiers and the argument structure of classifier predicate in SZJ

Date: Wednesday December 5, 9.00-11.00
Place: room 3.53, Bungehuis

1.6.3 Polar and content questions in SZJ, Negation and NPI in SZJ

Date: Tuesday December 11, 13.00-15.00
Place: room 3.53, Bungehuis

1.6.4 Agreement auxiliary in SZJ

Date: Friday December 8, 12.00-15.30
Place: room 3.53, Bungehuis

1.6.5 Evaluation of the work

Date: Monday December 15, 11.30-12.00
Place: room 3.53, Bungehuis

1.7 Public presentations

Date: Monday December 15, 15.00-16.30
Place: room k.04, Bungehuis
Topic: Ditransitives in SZJ
Goals of the talk/research questions:

- What type of verbs are found in ditransitives (plain/agreeing)?
- What is the agreement pattern since there are three arguments in ditransitives -and only two points in space available for agreement?
- \item What is the relative word order of direct and indirect object in SZJ Ditransitives?
- Is it possible to use any of the standard tests to verify it?
- Any non-basic word orders?
- How many structures surface as ditransitive in SZJ (Low applicatives/High applicatives/Prepositional Dative Constructions)?

Date: Monday December 15, 10.00-12.00
Place: room k.04, Bungehuis
Topic: Clasifiers and the strucutre of classifier predicate in SZJ

1.8 Written paper

1.8.1 Title: Sharing space in Slovenian Sign Language

1.8.2 Abstract:

The meaning of a sentence is not composed only of the lexical meanings of the predicate and its arguments. To understand the sentence, it is essential to distinguish the syntactic relations between the constituents involved. An example of a mechanism that relates arguments to their functions in the sentence is verb-argument agreement marking. In sign languages, it is primary the use of space (in addition to hand-shape orientation and non-manual markings) that plays a key role in this process. The place of articulation of some verbs varies with respect to the place of articulation of their arguments. Verbs that are signed in neutral signing space change their form according to their arguments and are thus considered agreeing verbs. On the other hand, verbs that are signed on the body cannot adapt their articulation to their arguments and are thus referred to as plain verbs. This distinction characterises virtually all sign languages studied so far and also holds true for Slovenian Sign Language as it will be shown in this paper.

1.8.3 Conclusions:

In this article SZJ transitive sentences were examined with respect to verb-argument agreement. Two parameters were manipulated: the location of the arguments (body-anchored versus space-anchored) and the verb type (plain versus agreeing).

Regarding the SZJ examples of verbal arguments that I provided, it can be concluded that there exist two types of arguments in SZJ: space- and body-anchored. Besides merging body-anchored sign either with space-anchored sign (classifier) or pointing sign (index sign, signers can also localise a body-anchored argument in space by simultaneous use of nonmanual markings (such as head lean or eye gaze). Furthermore, I have shown that body-anchored signs that have can be signed either on lateral or contra-lateral side may also obtain r-locus per se. I also noted that animacy of the arguments does not influence agreement pattern in SZJ such that only animate arguments would agree overtly.

Regarding the SZJ examples of verb that I provided, it can be concluded that there exist two types of verbs in SZJ: plain and agreeing. I have stressed that neither agreeing nor plain verbs need to express agreement with their arguments overtly in SZJ. Besides manual agreement, additional mechanisms for showing overt verb-argument agreement exist in SZJ. Surprisingly, it is the agreeing verbs, that employ them rather then plain verbs. On contrary, I concluded that SZJ plain verbs may can also agree overtly with an argument, that is realised in the same locus on the body that they are realised in; or (ii) by merging with a space-anchored verb into a serial verb construction. Note that this findings could be understood as the evidence that all SZJ verbs enter the agree relation with both their subject and object but do not always encode agreement overtly.

All the best,
Matic Pavlič
Venice, December 16, 2014