Proficiency and Depiction in ASL

Mary Thumann, PhD
Gallaudet University
Department of Linguistics

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Depiction
(Dudis 2011, 2007)

The visual (spatial) representation of an entity or event ~ by using something other than the actual entity or event (the signer uses space, articulators, face, body...)

(See also Liddell 2003; Dudis 2007; Thumann 2011)

Depiction refers to "any act in which one or a set of concepts are made manifest in the discourse setting..." (Dudis, 2011:4)

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Depiction

Function: *to represent something visually-spatially*

Form: *(Liddell, 2003)*

- depicting verbs (classifiers)
- surrogate (role shifts, constructed dialogue, experiencing |self|...)
- tokens (3-d location in space)
- buoys (list, fragment, ...)
- 2 dimensional abstract (|map|, |calendar|)
- metaphor
- other....?

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Depiction & Proficient signers

- Depict multiple entities simultaneously (partitioning ~ Dudis 2004)
- Variation in size, scale, perspective
- Multiple sequences: switch from one instance of depiction to others in quick succession (Thumann 2010)
- Depiction within depiction
- Metaphor, iconicity
- Eye gaze with depiction
- Anything else?

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Examining the Use of Depiction across American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) Assessment Levels

The aim of this pilot project is to

compare depiction usage between groups of signers at various levels of proficiency

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Research Questions

Examining the Use of Depiction across ASLPI Assessment Levels

1) What **types of depiction** occur in the language use of signers at various levels of proficiency?

2) What is the **frequency of occurrence** of these types of depiction in the language use of signers at various levels of proficiency on the ASLPI?

3) How does **depiction usage compare** among signers of different ASLPI levels?
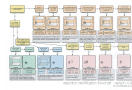
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Depiction Identification Flow Chart 4.9.2

ELAN

Methodology

Using ELAN and Dudis' Depiction Identification Flow Chart 4.9.2, analyze the occurrence of depiction in signers at each level of ASLPI

Qualitative
- describe differences in types of depiction and form of depiction
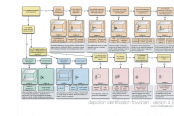
Quantitative
- # of instances of depiction identified in each sample
- # of types of depiction identified in each sample
- compare the number of instances of each type of depiction

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Categories of Depiction
Flowchart 4.9.2 (Dudis, 2014, p.c.)

Organized based on a series of questions:

is there an experiencing |self| in the depiction

is an event depicted without a |self|

are 3-d relationships or dimensions of concrete objects depicted

are timelines, buoys, tokens or vertical planes depicted

(see Depiction Identification Flowchart 4.9.2)

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Possible differences between ASLPI levels

- Frequency of depiction

- Whether or not signer "takes advantage of" opportunities to make things visual/spatial (to depict)

- Number of switches between depiction and depiction types

- Partitioning

- Use of metaphor

- …

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PROFICIENT SIGNERS

High number of instances of depiction: **18 - 23 DPMs**

Frequent **variation in types** of depiction

variation in **vantage point**

variation in **size**, **scale**

varying **types** of depiction

Efficiency & creativity with depictions (e.g. personification)

Easily and frequently **switches** between tokens, surrogates, buoys, etc.

More sequences of depiction; subtle switches, efficient movements and sign production

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Depiction & Proficiency pilot study

Average number of instances of depiction
at various levels of proficiency in
@ 15 - 18 minutes of signing

Depiction	ASLPI 0, 1 and 2	ASLPI 2+ and 3	ASLPI 3+ and 4	ASLPI Level 4+ and 5
average # instances	66 in 15 minutes	126 in 16 minutes	**205 in 17 minutes**	**397** ((18 minutes))
average DPM	**3.9**	**7.7**	**11.5**	**22**

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PRELIMINARY NUMBERS
TYPES AND NUMBER OF INSTANCES OF DEPICTION
@ 15 - 18 minutes of signing

Type of depiction	ASLPI 0, 1 and 2	ASLPI 2+ and 3	ASLPI 3+ and 4	ASLPI Level 4+ and 5
tokens	18	32	80	**162**
buoys	11	11	20	**32**
surrogates	11.3	27	50	**121**
depicting verbs	20	27	25	**71.5**
2-d**	0.5	3	5	**3****

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PRELIMINARY TRENDS IDENTIFIED

Average #s	0, 1 and 2	2+ and 3	3+ and 4	4+ and 5
average # instances of depiction	66 in @15 minutes	126 in @ 16 minutes	205 in @ 17 minutes	397 in @ 18 minutes
average DPM	3.9	7.7	11.5	22
# sequences of depiction	7.3 (sequence of 4)	10 (sequence of 5)	29 (sequence of 5)	75 (sequence of 12- 15)
surrogate	11.3	27	50	121
token space	18	32	80	162
dv	20	27	25	71.5
buoys	11	11	20	32

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SEQUENCES OF DEPICTION

ASLPI Level	Total #	longest sequence	2 in row	3 in row	4 in row	5 in row	6 - 12 in row
0	6	4	3	1	-	-	-
1	13	3	11	2	-	-	-
2	10	5	7	1	2	-	-
3	19	4	13	4	2	-	-
4	40	5	31	7	1	1	-
5	69	12	11	8	2	2	1

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Preliminary Observations

Depiction produced by signers assessed at every level of proficiency.

Even someone assessed at ASLPI 0+ had instances of depiction

· list buoy

· depicting verbs (e.g. |pyramid|)

· role shift (e.g. |teacher|)

· appropriate eye gaze (not consistent)

· produce signs in locations in space (DIFFERENT ++)

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Preliminary observations

Levels 0 - 1

Fewer instances of depiction

in @ 13 minutes of signing, one signer produced 55 instances that *could* be counted as depiction = DPM of 4 per minute

DPM ranges 15 - 20 (Dudis, pc; Thumann, 2010) in 12 minutes = 195 - 260

Types of depiction

tokens, depicting verbs (classifiers), role shift, list buoy, 2-d map

Differences

efficiency of depiction, # of different types, switches...
memorized constructions rather than spontaneous depictions?

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Levels 2 - 3

Differences in

frequency of depiction

varying types of depiction

use of eye gaze (not consistent)

partitioning

efficiency (e.g., role shifts)

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Levels 4 - 5

both have high DPMs

frequent switches, varying types, etc.

Difference in their ASLPI levels might be due to something completely unrelated to depiction.

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ASLPI level 0 - 1

Depiction appears to be limited, perhaps "memorized" constructions of the type learned in beginning ASL classes: classifiers/depicting verbs, some use of space (pointing) and role shifting.

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Examining the Use of Depiction across ASLPI Assessment Levels

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Thumann Excerpts Presentation Depiction and proficiency project - May 22, 2019

Thank you!

mary.thumann@gallaudet.edu

Department of Linguistics

Gallaudet University

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