

13.30 – 14.00

Juhana Salonen: *Perfective Aspect in Finnish Sign Language*

This Master's thesis concerns perfective aspect in Finnish Sign Language (FinSL). The perfective aspect means a bounded event in which some action has been terminated or completed.

I focus on three signs in my thesis: jo ('already'), valmis ('ready') and loppu ('end'). Rissanen has suggested that perfective aspect can be expressed using these signs in FinSL. The aim of this Master's study is to examine can perfective aspect be expressed using the signs jo, valmis and loppu and to determine in what types of situations and sign orders it can happen. There is still a lack of research that examines the functions of perfective aspect in FinSL.

The data of this study comprises 35 minutes of video material (a total of four videos). The videos have been produced by the Finnish Association of the Deaf (FAD) and they were transcribed and analyzed using ELAN and Word. The signs jo, valmis and loppu present in the data have been categorized according to their sign order (in relation to the order of a verbal).

The analysis shows that the use the perfective aspect requires a dynamic situation. The sign jo can be located before or after a verbal or fused into a verbal when expressing perfective aspect. jo expresses past perfective aspect because that sign is used only when expressing events in the past. jo has also other meanings (e.g. to express past time or a meaning of an adverb 'already'). The signs valmis and loppu are located only after a verbal when expressing perfective aspect. valmis and loppu can also refer to future events in addition to past events. Moreover valmis is able to advance narrative time. valmis represents most clearly the usage of the perfective aspect in FinSL. Additionally, the sign closely resembles the sign finish in American Sign Language because of the above-mentioned features.

The signs jo, valmis and loppu have phonological features, lexical variations and other semantic meanings which may influence the reading of the perfective aspect in FinSL. These issues in particular warrant closer examination in future research drawing on larger sets of data.

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