Methodological Approaches
in Grammar Description of Sign Languages

This course explores methodological approaches to describing the grammar of sign languages, with a particular focus on conducting analysis on sign languages in sign languages. Delivered over two consecutive sessions, the course examines key aspects of grammar description and the design process.

The first session provides an overview of grammar description, emphasizing how linguistic data collection and analysis inform grammatical frameworks. Different corpus-based approaches will be addressed and examined. This discussion revisits data collection and analysis methodologies, highlighting their implications for grammar description.

The second session delves into the practical aspects of grammar description, addressing the processes and constraints involved, as well as the advantages and challenges posed by cross-modality effects. Through this course, students will gain insights into the theoretical and methodological considerations essential for analyzing and documenting the grammar of sign languages.

References

- Gavrilescu, R., Geraci, C., & Mesch, J. (2024). Content Questions in Sign Language -- From theory to language description via corpus, experiments, and fieldwork. In E., Efthimiou, S-E., Fotinea, T. Hanke, J. A., Hochgesang, J., Mesch, & M. Schulder. (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 2024 11th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages: Evaluation of Sign Language Resources.* ELRA. 298-306 https://www.sign-lang.uni-hamburg.de/lrec/pub/24037.pdf
- Holton, G., Wesley Y. L., & Pulsifer, P. L. (2021). People, ethics, and data. In A., L. Berez-Kroeker, B., McDonnell, E., Koller, & L. B. Collister (Eds.) *The Open Handbook of Linguistic Data Management*. Cambridge: MIT Press. http://gmholton.github.io/files/581-92248_ch04_1P.pdf
- Romanek, P. Z., Rathmann, C., & Pärgma, J. (2025. January 14-17.) *Perspectives and Approaches in Grammar Description of Sign Languages* [paper presentation]. Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research 15

(TISLR 15): Using Sign Language in Future; the Future is Using Sign Language, Addis-Ababa, Ethiophia https://www.etera.ee/zoom/204545/view

- Palfreyman, N. (2022). Managing Sign Language Data from Fieldwork In A., L. Berez-Kroeker, B., McDonnell, E., Koller, & L. B. Collister (Eds.) *The Open Handbook of Linguistic Data Management*. Cambridge: MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/12200.003.0026

- Quer, J., & Steinbach, M. (2019). Handling Sign Language Data: The Impact of Modality. *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*, 483. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00483