Introduction

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The seven papers in this volume represent a selection of works, primarily theoretical in spirit, presented at the FEAST Colloquium in Reykjavik, Iceland, 2017. The papers vary in both scope and goals, each examining a different sign language: Spanish Sign Language (LSE, Gutierrez-Sigut et al.), French Sign Language (LSF, Hauser & Geraci), Russian Sign Language (RSL, Kimmelman), Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT, Oomen et al.), Slovenian Sign Language (SZJ, Pavlic), American Sign Language (ASL, Wilbur et al.), and Catalan Sign Language (LSC, Zorzi). Just as wide-ranging are the set of phenomena discussed in the papers.

Gutierrez-Sigut et al. explore the difference in reading strategies between hearing deaf readers. They administered a phonological processing task with masked priming to hearing and deaf users of Lengua de Signos Española (LSE). They found that while both groups exhibited a priming effect, the deaf group followed a different route to lexical access than the hearing one.

The second paper in the volume is by Hauser & Geraci and examines relative clause structures in LSF. In particular, it offers new empirical data and an analysis of the sign PI, which the authors gloss as the relative marker occurring both in internal and external relative clauses. In a similar vein, Wilbur et al. describe a lexical item BEAT - a verbal comparative of the sort one typically finds in African languages. Since the discovery (for the theoretical literature) of BEAT is novel, the goal of the paper is to articulate the various environments in which BEAT is found as well as propose an analysis.

The last four papers provide accounts of four different phenomena. Relying on corpus data, Oomen et al. argue for a particular account of negation in NGT — one that classifies NGT as a Negative Concord language with two negative phrases (high and low) which undergo Agree. Kimmelman argues for an account of the null arguments in RSL which accommodates the fact that the licensing mechanism appears to rely on classifiers and role-shift — i.e. demonstration a la Davidson (2015). Pavlic analyzes the behavior of the non-dominant hand in SZJ during perseveration occurring in locative constructions as engaging in a separate measure movement on the same geometrical axes. Finally, Zorzi compares an LSC structure, which at first glance resembles VP-ellipsis, to gapping. She articulates a number of comparison points and shows that the gapping analysis wins.

Overall then, the volume contributes to the theoretical understanding of a variety of phenomena occurring in sign languages (including argument and predicate omission, comparatives, negation, locatives) as well as how the individuals who use such languages learn other languages across the bounds of modality.

References

Davidson, Kathryn (2015). "Quotation, demonstration, and iconicity". In: *Linguistics and philosophy* 38.6, pp. 477–520.