Miscellaneous unclaimed papers round-up

presented by Kie Zuraw, 11 Feb. 2020

We'll see how this goes—my idea was to go through four or so unclaimed papers from old topics each week and just pick a couple of highlights.

Jantunen & Takkinen 2010

keywords: syllable, American Sign Language, ASL, Finnish Sign Language, FinSL, diachronic change

1. Some Finnish Sign Language words have undergone diachronic change to be at least one syllable

Figure 3. The old (left) and modern (right) form of the FinSL sign LÄMPÖ 'heat'. The old form is produced pantomimically by blowing "warm air" to the palm. The modern form includes a straight sequential phonological movement, and a Finnish mouthing. (Photographs from Hirn 1910 and Malm 1998; by permission of FAD.)

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2. FinSL words whose only movement is non-manual are well-formed (top row of figure below)

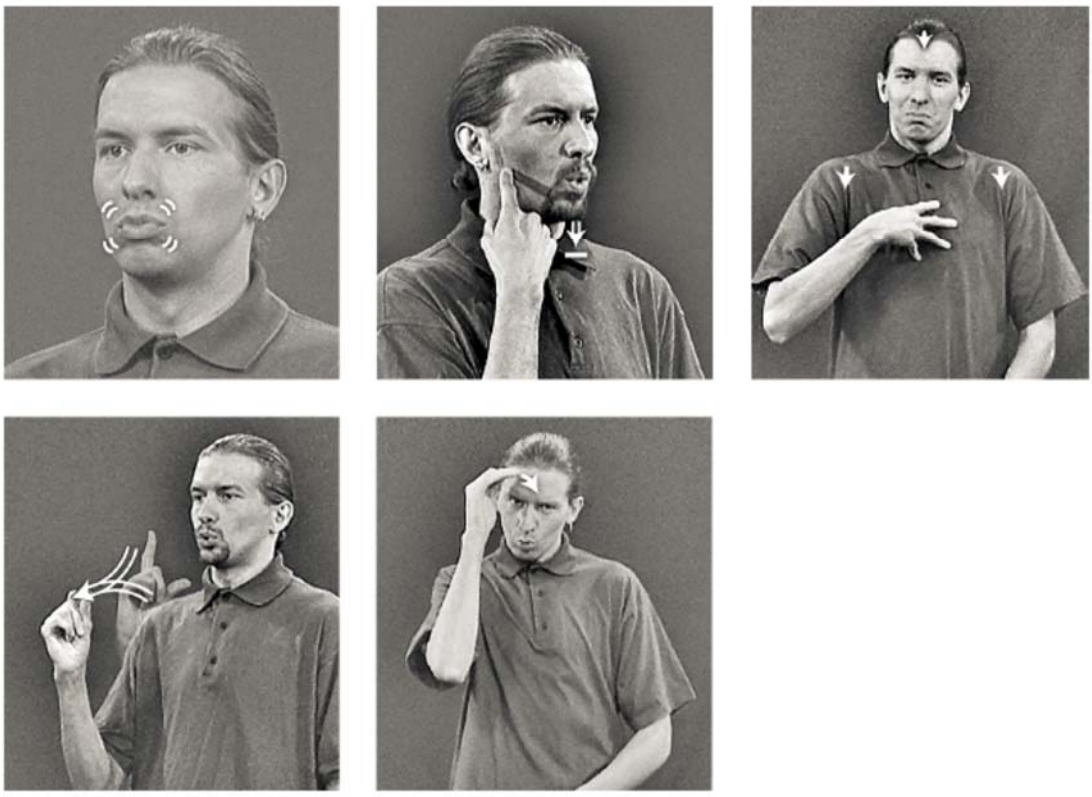

Figure 7. FinSL signs KYLLÄ 'yes' (top left), ON-KUULLUT 'has/have heard' (top centre), MUKAVA 'nice' (top right), LÄHTEÄ 'to go' (bottom left), and UJO 'shy' (bottom right). The sign KYLLÄ is a simple repeated mouth gesture (cf. kissing gesture). The sign LÄHTEÄ includes a mouth gesture resembling spoken sequence [viu]. All other signs are produced with a Finnish mouthing. (Original photographs from Malm 1998; by permission of FAD.)[17]

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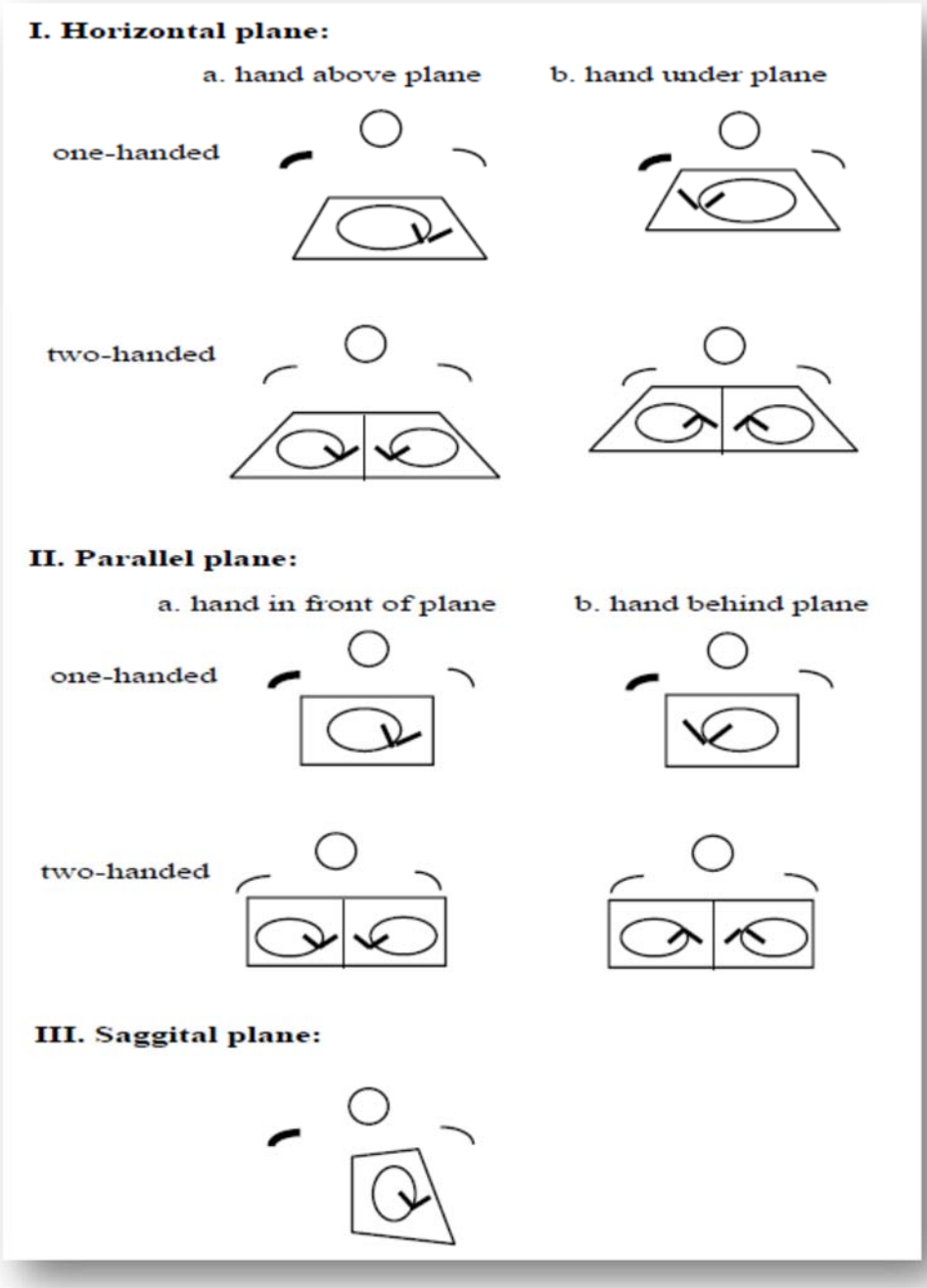
3. Bottom row of above: FinSL signs with obligatory non-manual movements

keywords: Sign Language of the Netherlands, SLN, circling signs, contact, Weak Drop, variation, mouthing, typology

4. SLN movement is usually clockwise (80% of sample from database)



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- The exceptions were mostly one-handed and in the horizontal or parallel plane
- The sagittal-plane exceptions were all two-handed and all have opposite meanings from a clockwise counterpart
    - e.g. clockwise RIDE A BICYCLE, counterclockwise RIDE A BICYCLE BACKWARDS
    - e.g. clockwise TO HAPPEN-present/future, counterclockwise TO HAPPEN-past

5. Nice examples of different types of contact (which is argued to be non-contrastive)

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6. Which two-handed signs allow Weak Drop in SLN?

- Recall that Weak Drop is a rule, common in many sign languages, whereby in a two-handed sign the weak hand can optionally just do nothing (rest position)
- There are restrictions on which types of two-handed signs allow Weak Drop
- van der Kooij asked consultants whether various signs could undergo Weak Drop

balanced, symmetrical

90% allowed Weak Drop

balanced, alternating

55% (mostly those with abstract, non-iconic meanings)

unbalanced, same handshape

? but **< 75%**

unbalanced, different handshape, weak hand is not B

? but **< 75%**

unbalanced, different handshape, weak hand is B

75%

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- also found that continuous contact on weak hand suppressed Weak Drop
  - 57% of these signs allowed Weak Drop, vs. 71% of signs with contact overall
- Conjectures that the reason SLN allows more Weak Drop than ASL is that SLN has more Dutch mouthing than ASL has English mouthing
  - in SLN, lots of Dutch mouthing even when all participants in conversation are Deaf

keywords: movement, Hong Kong Sign Language, HKSL, repetition

7. Minimal word constraint laxer in HKSL than in ASL

- Unlike ASL, HKSL allows signs with no movement

Figure 1. TOILET

I think this is also a cross-linguistically unusual handshape?

van der Kooij talks about Chinese sign Language (related to HKSL) as being unusual in allowing index+middle+little fingers to be selected

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8. Nice illustrations of movement types and repetition types:

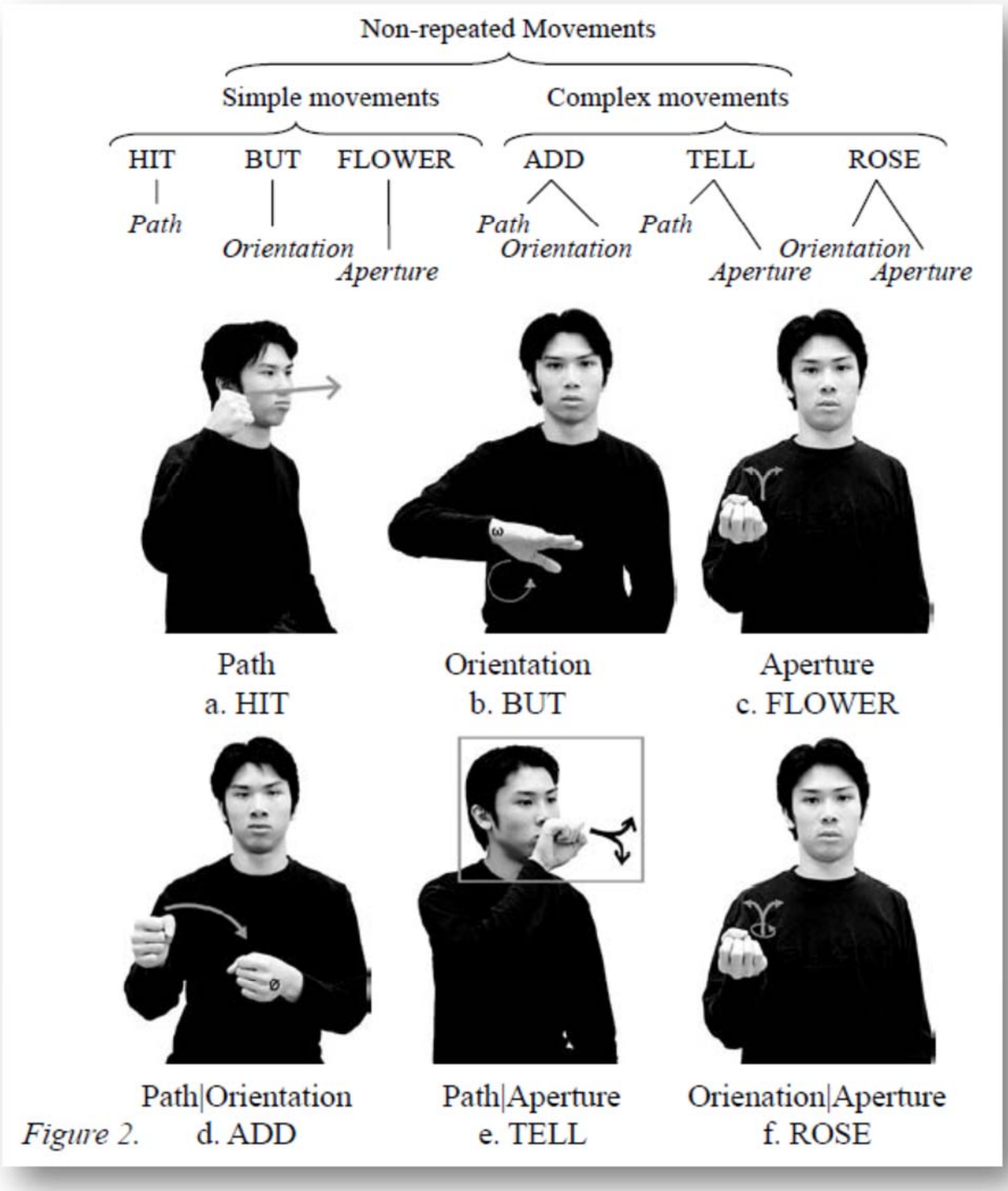

Figure 2.

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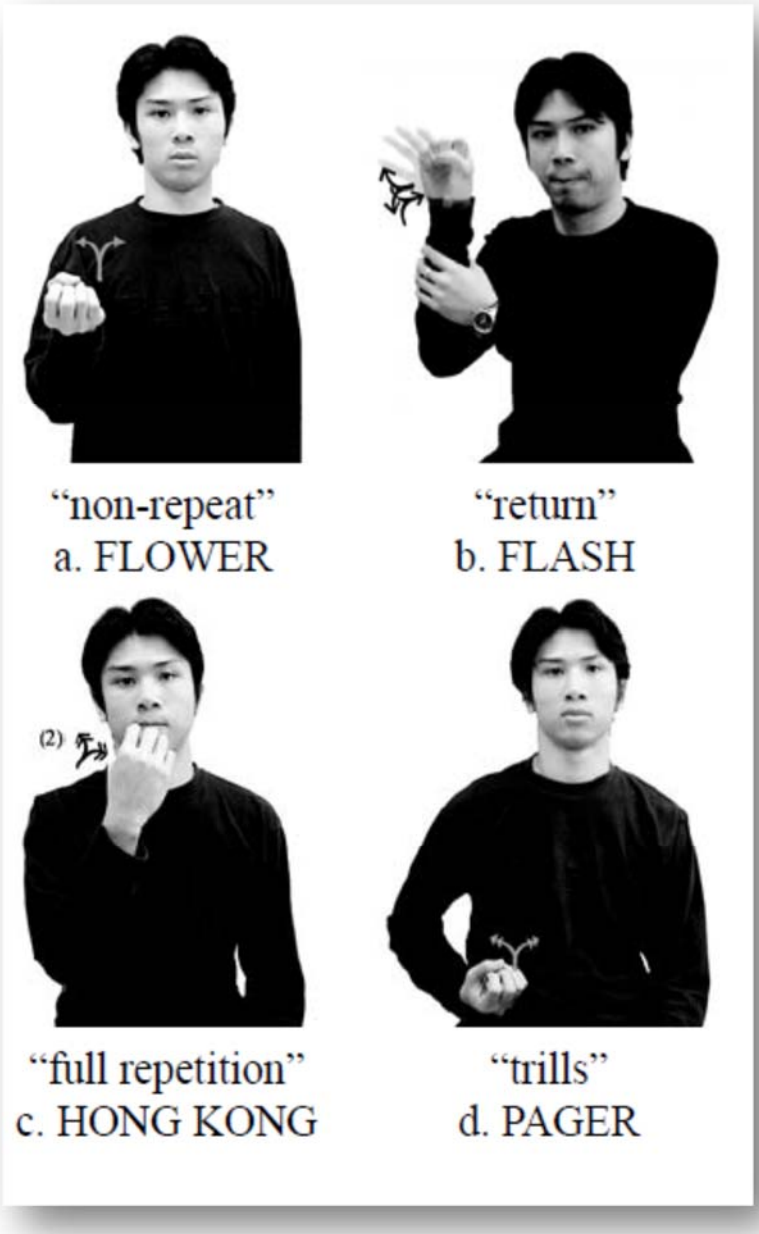
"non-repeat"
a. FLOWER
"return"
b. FLASH
(2)
"full repetition"
c. HONG KONG
"trills"
d. PAGER

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keywords: Dispersion Theory, Optimality Theory, inventory, handshape, Hong Kong Sign Language, HKSL, American Sign Language, ASL, Swiss-German Sign Language, DSGS, diachronic change, Old French Sign Language, OFSL

9. Brief background

- Flemming 1995 proposes tableaux where each candidate is an entire phoneme inventory (or subject)
- Some constraints penalize an inventory if it has members that are too close together perceptually
- Others require the inventory to be a certain size

10. Inventory of selected-finger combinations in HKSL

Don't select ring finger unless it has same configuration as middle and little

Don't have non-adjacent selected fingers

Example constraint ranking for HKSL

		MAXSF	*RING	ADJAC
a. → (HKSL)		✓ 9	**	*
b. (ASL)		✓ 6 !		*
c. (DSGS)		✓ 5 !		

Don't have few selected-finger combinations

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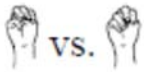
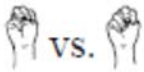
11. Deriving an optimal handshape contrast

Ranking representing the older handshape for ASL's DOCTOR (vs. NURSE), borrowed from OFSL's initialized sign MÉDICIN.

			IDENTSF	*RING	MINDIST = SF:2
 'M' 'N'	a. → (OFSL)			*	*
	b. (ASL)		* !		

Have at least two differences in selected fingers between the two signs

Re-ranking representing the more recent handshape for ASL's DOCTOR (vs. NURSE) as a core sign.

			*RING	MINDIST = SF:2	IDENTSF
 'M' 'N'	a. (OFSL)		* !	* !	
	b. → (ASL)				*

Be faithful to selected fingers of input fingerspelling M & N

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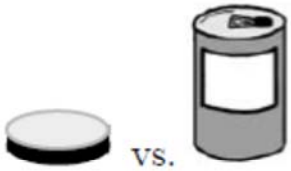
12. Role of iconicity constraints

Surface Size Identity (IDENTSS): Corresponding elements between external referent contrasts and output contrasts should have comparable amounts of space between outside edges of their continuous surfaces.

Selected finger combinations representing the surface-size contrast of a coaster vs. a soda can.

			IDENTSS	*RING	MINDIST = SF:3
 vs.	a. →				
	b.				* !
	c.			* !	
	d.		* !		

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Selected finger inventory for ASL representing possible real-world surface-size contrasts.

			*RING	MAXSS CONTRASTS	MINDIST = SF:2
infinite number of object thicknesses	a. (not attested)		* !	✓ 4	***
	b. → (ASL)			✓ 3	*
	c. (DSGS/ HKSL)			✓ 2 !	

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References

Eccarius, Petra. 2011. A constraint-based account of distributional differences in handshapes. In Rachel Channon & Harry van der Hulst (eds.), *Formational Units in Sign Languages*, 261–284. 1st edn. De Gruyter. (1 January, 2020).

Flemming, Edward S. 1995. *Auditory Representations in Phonology*. UCLA.

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Kooij, Els van der. 2002. *Phonological Categories in Sign Language of the Netherlands: The Role of Phonetic Implementation and Iconicity*. (1 January, 2020).

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