Signs of the arctic: Typological aspects of Inuit Sign Language

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Notational conventions

SIGN

Signs are glossed in English small caps. In examples taken from other sources, glosses may be slightly adapted to fit the conventions used throughout this dissertation. This will be mentioned whenever appropriate.

SIGN-SIGN

A hyphen is used when a single sign gloss consists of more than one English word (e.g. LONG-AGO).

SIGN^SIGN

A circumflex is used to indicate a sequential compound, e.g. COLLAR^PRAY ‘priest’.

SIGN_1

A subscript is used to indicate that a sign is inflected for location (cf. Chapter 4). The numbers 1, 2 and 3 represent first, second and third person agreement, respectively; e.g. GIVE_2 ‘give to you’. Subscript letters refer to a location, e.g. GO_a ‘go to location_a’.

PRO_1

Pointing signs representing a personal or possessive pronoun are glossed as PRO, as Inuit Sign Language does not phonologically distinguish between these two functions. The subscript indicates which person is referred to. In some instances, PRO.PL is used, indicating that the pointing sign includes a sweeping movement thus referring to a plural referent.

INDEX-LOC

The sign glossed as INDEX-LOC is a pointing sign towards an actual location. When the location is clear, a subscript specifies the location, as in INDEX-LOC_{Ottawa}. One should keep in mind that IUR makes use of absolute reference (see Chapter 4).

INDEX_3a

There are very few instances in the IUR data where a pointing sign neither refers to a person nor to an actual location. These are glossed as INDEX. In examples taken from the literature, however, INDEX_3a may also function as a pronoun. The subscript refers to a location in signing space.

EC_v

EC refers to an entity classifier, i.e. a handshape morpheme that combines simultaneously with a verb root and that specifies shape characteristics of a referent. In the gloss, the classifier is separated from the root by a colon (e.g. MOVE:EC_v); the subscript indicates which classifier is used (see Chapter 4 for more information).

HC_v

HC refers to a handle classifier, i.e. a handshape morpheme that combines simultaneously with a verb root and that specifies how an object is handled or manipulated. In the gloss, the classifier is separated from the root by a colon (e.g. GIVE:HC_v); the subscript indicates which classifier is used (see Chapter 4 for more information).

SIGN

A line above a gloss indicates the scope (i.e. onset and offset) of a particular non-manual marker. These markers can fulfil grammatical (i.e. phonological, morphological, or syntactic) or affective functions. Below, a list of abbreviations is given. Occasionally, a non-manual marker appears
without an accompanying small-cap gloss; this means that no manual sign accompanies the non-manual marker.

--hold Indicates that the sign is temporarily frozen, while either the other hand continues signing, or a non-manual marker continues.

++ Indicates reduplication of a sign (e.g. in aspectual modulation).

Non-manual markers (in terms of form):

hs headshake
hn headnod
ht headtilt
fr frown: including brows and mouth
ec eyes closed, then opened with emphasis
to tongue out
ch.in cheeks sucked in
ch.pf cheeks puffed
blow pouted mouth, exhaling, like blowing out candles
sad If a non-manual marker is emphatic and/or affective, it is described with the most appropriate emotion.

Spoken language glossing

The glossing of an example taken from the literature may contain slightly different abbreviations than in the original publication. Johns (2007), for instance, uses POSS instead of POSV. I have taken the liberty of changing the abbreviations for consistency.

1 first person PL plural
2 second person PRES present tense
3 third person PST past tense
AGR agreement S subject
CAUS causative SG singular
CL classifier POSR possessor
INDIC indicative POSV possessive
INTR intransitive PLZ pluraliser
LOC locative PROGR progressive
NEG negation PASS passive
O object