Proficiency and Depiction in ASL

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Depiction

(Dudis 2011, 2007)

The visual (spatial) representation of an entity or event ~ by using something other than the actual entity or event (the signer uses space, articulators, face, body...)

See also Liddell 2003; Dudis 2007; Thumann 2011

Depiction refers to “any act in which one or a set of concepts are made manifest in the discourse setting...” (Dudis, 2011:4)

Depiction

Function: to represent something visually-spatially

Form: (Liddell, 2003)
- depicting verbs (classifiers)
- surrogate (role shifts, constructed dialogue, experiencing [self,...])
- tokens (3-d location in space)
- buoys (list, fragment, ...)
- 2 dimensional abstract (map, calendar)
- metaphor
- other....?

Depiction & Proficient signers

- Depict multiple entities simultaneously (partitioning ~ Dudis 2004)
- Variation in size, scale, perspective
- Multiple sequences: switch from one instance of depiction to others in quick succession (Thumann 2010)
- Depiction within depiction
- Metaphor, iconicity
- Eye gaze with depiction
- Anything else?
*Examining the Use of Depiction across American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) Assessment Levels*

The aim of this pilot project is to compare depiction usage between groups of signers at various levels of proficiency.

*This project approved by Gallaudet University IRB*

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**Research Questions**

**Examining the Use of Depiction across ASLPI Assessment Levels**

1) What **types of depiction** occur in the language use of signers at various levels of proficiency?

2) What is the **frequency of occurrence** of these types of depiction in the language use of signers at various levels of proficiency on the ASLPI?

3) How does **depiction usage compare** among signers of different ASLPI levels?

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**Methodology**

**Qualitative**
- describe differences in types of depiction and form of depiction

**Quantitative**
- # of instances of depiction identified in each sample
- # of types of depiction identified in each sample
- compare the number of instances of each type of depiction

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**Categories of Depiction**

Flowchart 4.9.2 (Dudis, 2014, p.c.)

Organized based on a series of questions:

- is there an experiencing [self] in the depiction?
- is an event depicted without a [self]?
- are 3-d relationships or dimensions of concrete objects depicted?

(see Depiction Identification Flowchart 4.9.2)
Possible differences between ASLPI levels

- Frequency of depiction
- Whether or not signer “takes advantage of” opportunities to make things visual/spatial (to depict)
- Number of switches between depiction and depiction types
- Partitioning
- Use of metaphor
  ...

PROFICIENT SIGNERS

High number of instances of depiction: 18 - 23 DPMs
Frequent variation in types of depiction
  variation in vantage point
  variation in size, scale
  varying types of depiction

Efficiency & creativity with depictions (e.g. personification)
Easily and frequently switches between tokens, surrogates, buoys, etc.
More sequences of depiction; subtle switches, efficient movements and sign production

Depiction & Proficiency pilot study

Average number of instances of depiction at various levels of proficiency in
@ 15 - 18 minutes of signing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depiction</th>
<th>ASLPI 0, 1 and 2</th>
<th>ASLPI 2+ and 3</th>
<th>ASLPI 3+ and 4</th>
<th>ASLPI Level 4+ and 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>average # instances</td>
<td>66 in 15 minutes</td>
<td>126 in 16 minutes</td>
<td>205 in 17 minutes</td>
<td>397 ((18 minutes))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average DPM</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRELIMINARY NUMBERS

TYPES AND NUMBER OF INSTANCES OF DEPICTION
@ 15 - 18 minutes of signing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of depiction</th>
<th>ASLPI 0, 1 and 2</th>
<th>ASLPI 2+ and 3</th>
<th>ASLPI 3+ and 4</th>
<th>ASLPI Level 4+ and 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tokens</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buoys</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surrogates</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depicting verbs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-d**</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Preliminary Trends Identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average #s</th>
<th>0, 1 and 2</th>
<th>2+ and 3</th>
<th>3+ and 4</th>
<th>4+ and 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>average # instances of depiction</td>
<td>66 in @15 minutes</td>
<td>126 in @ 16 minutes</td>
<td>205 in @ 17 minutes</td>
<td>397 in @ 18 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average DPM</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># sequences of depiction</td>
<td>7.3 (sequence of 4)</td>
<td>10 (sequence of 5)</td>
<td>29 (sequence of 5)</td>
<td>75 (sequence of 12-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surrogate</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>token space</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dv</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buoys</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sequences of Depiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASLPI Level</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>longest sequence</th>
<th>2 in row</th>
<th>3 in row</th>
<th>4 in row</th>
<th>5 in row</th>
<th>6 - 12 in row</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Preliminary Observations

Depiction produced by signers assessed at every level of proficiency.

Even someone assessed at ASLPI 0+ had instances of depiction:
- list buoy
- depicting verbs (e.g. |pyramid|)
- role shift (e.g. |teacher|)
- appropriate eye gaze (not consistent)
- produce signs in locations in space (DIFFERENT ++)

### Levels 0 - 1

Fewer instances of depiction

- in @ 13 minutes of signing, one signer produced 55 instances that could be counted as depiction = DPM of 4 per minute
- DPM ranges 15 - 20 (Dudis, pc; Thumann, 2010) in 12 minutes = 195 - 260

Types of depiction
- tokens, depicting verbs (classifiers), role shift, list buoy, 2-d map

Differences
- efficiency of depiction, # of different types, switches...
- memorized constructions rather than spontaneous depictions?
Levels 2 - 3

Differences in:
- frequency of depiction
- varying types of depiction
- use of eye gaze (not consistent)
- partitioning
- efficiency (e.g., role shifts)

Levels 4 - 5

both have high DPMs
frequent switches, varying types, etc.

Difference in their ASLPI levels might be due to something completely unrelated to depiction.

ASLPI level 0 - 1

Depiction appears to be limited, perhaps “memorized” constructions of the type learned in beginning ASL classes: classifiers/depicting verbs, some use of space (pointing) and role shifting.

*Examining the Use of Depiction across ASLPI Assessment Levels*

Special thanks to
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Research Assistants

*This project approved by Gallaudet University IRB*
Thank you!

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Reference List


The ASLPI website: http://www.gallaudet.edu/aslides.html


Dudis, P. (2007). Types of depiction in ASL. Downloaded from http://drl.gallaudet.edu


