

2nd Symposium in Applied Sign Linguistics - Documenting Sign Languages for Learning and Teaching Purposes

Documenting, analysing, involving and informing: the case of the research project on expressing plurality in Flemish Sign Language

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This presentation concerns Flemish Sign Language (Vlaamse Gebarentaal or VGT), the signed language used in Flanders, the northern part of Belgium. We report on two related themes:

1. The cooperation and consultation between sign language teachers and sign language researchers;

And, in part resulting from this,

2. The dissemination of research findings, especially with the aim to inform the sign language community.

From the onset of linguistic research on Flemish Sign Language (i.e. from the early '90s onwards) efforts have been made to make the results of the research as (easily) accessible as possible to both hearing and deaf people. One of the reasons was (and is) that linguistic information on the language is necessary for all those learning or teaching the language. Another reason is related to the low status of the language. We present a number of ways in which the Deaf community was informed on sign language research results. Today, the cooperation and consultation between sign language researchers and Flemish Sign Language teachers have brought about forms of cross-pollination of ideas and methods among them. This is illustrated by the case of the recently finished research project on expressing plurality in Flemish Sign Language