A Proposition for Typology of Modality Markers in Sign Languages

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Modality Markers have been investigated by Sign Language Linguists for quite some time. However, there seems no study focusing on the Typology of Modality Markers in Sign Languages, at least to my knowledge. This paper aims to propose a classification by mainly focusing on Turkish Sign Language (TİD), Iranian Sign Language (ZEI), Georgian Sign Language (GESL), German Sign Language (DGS), and American Sign Language (ASL).

Modality alters event potential with respect to reality [Figure 1] (Palmer, 2001) and languages can take different approaches to indicate modality [see example (1) and (2)]

TİD is dominantly a head-final language, and basic word order is SOV. (See example 3.)

ZEI is speculated to have head-initial tendencies and can express free word order. (Siyavoshi 2009)

GESL is a poorly studied language and there is no work on basic word order and head complement relations of the language.

DGS is argued to be a head-final language (Fischer 2014) and it is shown by Proske (2019) DGS Signers mainly prefer O-V ordering.

ASL argued to be an SVO language, (Fischer, 2014) however, Valli & Lucas (1995) argues that this language is, at the basic word order, an SOV language.[1]

Typological classification begins with grammaticalization processes, lexical source of the modal marker. There are two subcategories; Language Internal, in which modal markers are derived from lexical signs of the language (figure 2 and figure 3.), and Language Contact, which means language takes the modal sign from the surrounding spoken language. (See example 4), contact may also be in cultural basis (See Figure 4, figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7)

Negation is divided into two separate categories, normal negation, which is using the negation particle in the language to negate a sentence and the modal (See example (6) and Figure 8), and suppletive negation, which uses a new handshape to negate the sentence [See Figure 9, Figure 10 and Example (7)].

Syntactic positioning is an issue I discuss with three subcategories with respect to

[1] One can rely on www.lifeprint.com which is a website of deaf individuals of USA.

where the modal markers occur, Before V head, which is something I expect to see in head-initial languages (See Example 4), After V, a head-final language aspect (See Example 6), and Free Ordering (See Example 8) which some languages can express under certain conditions[2]. (See Example 9)

Non-manual markers are opted out of the in-depth investigation, simply because they can be investigated in three ways, (a) non-manual marking spreading, (b) which part of the body is used, and (c) non-manual marker dominancy[3].

Path-Movement Change is the last category in this paper, this category is not a stand-alone category, path-movement change serves two purposes; (a) Grammaticalization, (b) Suppletive Negation.[4]

(1) a. John work-s.

b. John must work.

c. John might be work-ing.

(2) a. Ahmet çalış-ıyor.

Ahmet work-PROG.3.SG

'Ahmet works.'

b. *Ahmet çalış-malı.*

Ahmet work-should.3.SG

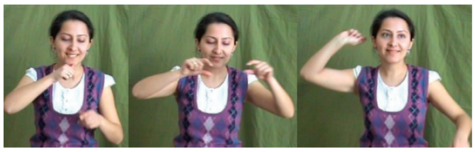
'Ahmet should work.'

c. *Ahmet çalış-abil-ir.*

Ahmet work-POSS-AOR.3.SG

'It is possible that Ahmet work.'

(3) A sentence wit basic word order in TİD (Gökgöz, 2011; 52)



BOY STICK.CL THROW
'Boy throws a stick'

(4) PARENT MOHEM CHILD GROW_UP MOHEM PARENT GOOD TEACH
'Parents should do that. When a child is growing up parents should teach him/her well what to do' [Excerpted from Siyavoshi 2019; 665]

(5) A Sentence with the Modality Marker "LAZIM" at the end.



INDEX TODAY TURKISH LANGUAGE SIGN COURSE GO NEED 'You must go to TİD class today.' [Excerpted from Gökgöz, 2009: 33]

(6) TİD negation marker with "LAZIM"

[2] Wilcox and Shaffer (2006) argue that there is a distribution in modality marker syntax, deontic markers appear before the verb, whereas, epistemic markers appear after the verb. This is because former is perceived as less grammaticalized than the latter one.

[3] Siyavoshi (2019) claims that sometimes manual-modality marker can be dropped, however there is no example sentence given.

[4] Grammaticalization is just a logical possibility, the reasoning behind is that sign languages can use movement change in derivation processes in lexical categories. Suppletive Negation function can be due to cliticalization of the negation particle. (Zeshan 2004)



HAYIR	BU	AKŞAM	ÖDEV	HAZIRLAMAK	LAZIM	DEĞİL
no	this	evening	homework	prepare	need	not

'No, there is no need to prepare homework this evening.' (Excerpted from Gökgöz, 2011: 56)

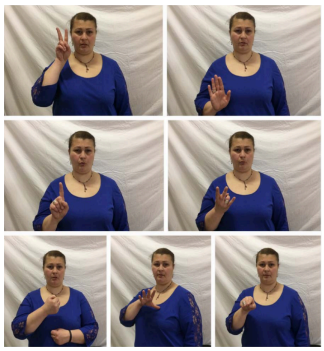
(7) Past tense use of suppletive "KNOW". (Excerpted from Makharoblidze, 2017)



DO-NOT-KNOW NOT IF DO FUTURE FOR-SURE THIS.

'I did not know that he/she would do this.'

(8)



DO-NOT-KNOW NOT THAT SHOULD DO SUBJUNCTIVE-MARKER.

'I did not know (that) I was to do (it)'.

(9) [LIBRARY HAVE DEAF LIFE]-top [SHOULD]-bf/hn

'The library should have Deaf Life/I'm sure the library has Deaf Life.'

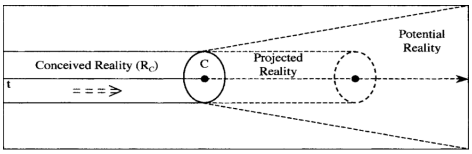


Figure 1. Reality Depiction. [Excerpted from Langacker, 2008: 306]



Figure 2. ZEI signs "RAHAT" and "MOHEM" [Extracted from Siyavoshi 2019: 663-664]



Figure 3. TİD sign "Serbest" [Excerpted from Karabüklü et. al. 2018: 86]



Figure 4. ASL "MUST" [Wilcox and Shaffer;2006]



Figure 5. LSF "IL FAUT" [Girod, 1997, as cited in Wilcox and Shaffer,2006]



Figure 6. Old LSF "IL FAUT" [Brouland, 1885, as cited in Wilcox and Shaffer, 2006]

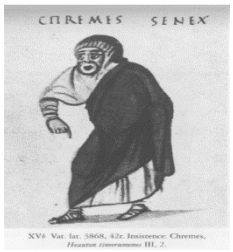


Figure 7. Roman Gesture "insist" [Dodwell 2000, plate XVb, as cited in Wilcox and Shaffer, 2006]



Figure 8. ASL "DON'T-NEED" [taken from www.lifeprint.com]

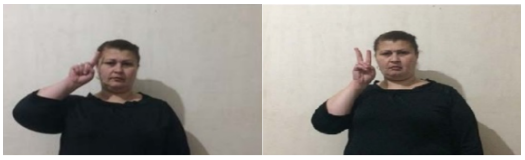


Figure 9. GESL "KNOW" and "NOT.KNOW" [Excerpted from Makharoblidze, 2017]

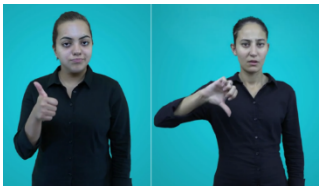


Figure 10. TİD "OLUMLU" and "OLUMSUZ" [http://tidsozluk.net/tr/Olumlu?d=0086, http://tidsozluk.net/tr/Olumsuz?d=0167]

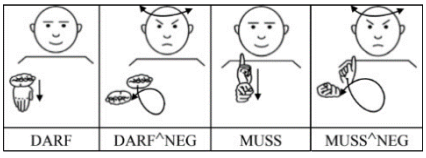


Figure 11. DGS modal signs "DARF" and "MUSS" [Excerpted from Pfau and Quer, 2007]

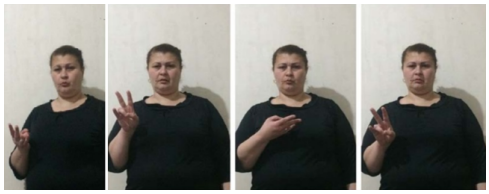


Figure 12. GESL "SHOULD" and its negated counterpart.

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