

Morphological reduplication in Sign Language of the Netherlands

A typological and theoretical perspective

The topic of this dissertation is morphological reduplication in Sign Language of the Netherlands (*Nederlandse Gebarentaal*, NGT). Under reduplication, (part of) a word or sign is repeated, in order to yield a systematic change in meaning. The present study focuses on three of its functions: nominal pluralization, aspect marking, and reciprocal marking. Analysis of naturalistic corpus data is combined with data elicitation.

The findings reveal that, for all three investigated functions, different types of reduplication alternate with zero marking, and that the choice between strategies is influenced by the phonological make-up of the base sign. Moreover, for both aspect and reciprocals, meaning differences are expressed by different reduplication types. Finally, morphosyntactic verb type plays a role in the choice of reciprocal marking strategy. Interestingly, reduplication appears to be optional across functions.

Beyond offering a description of NGT reduplication, this book presents a typological perspective on the phenomenon. A comparison of the present results to findings from previous research on other signed and spoken languages reveals cross-linguistic patterns as well as variation. Moreover, the study shows, once more, that reduplication comes with a modality-specific flavor.

Finally, the dissertation presents a theoretical perspective by offering a formalization of the results in stochastic Optimality Theory (OT). Again, modality of signal transmission turns out to play a role. Given that universality is a hallmark of OT-constraints, we aim to employ modality-independent constraint types. Still, some constraints necessarily refer to modality-specific phonological features. This raises the question to what extent OT-constraints can be truly universal.

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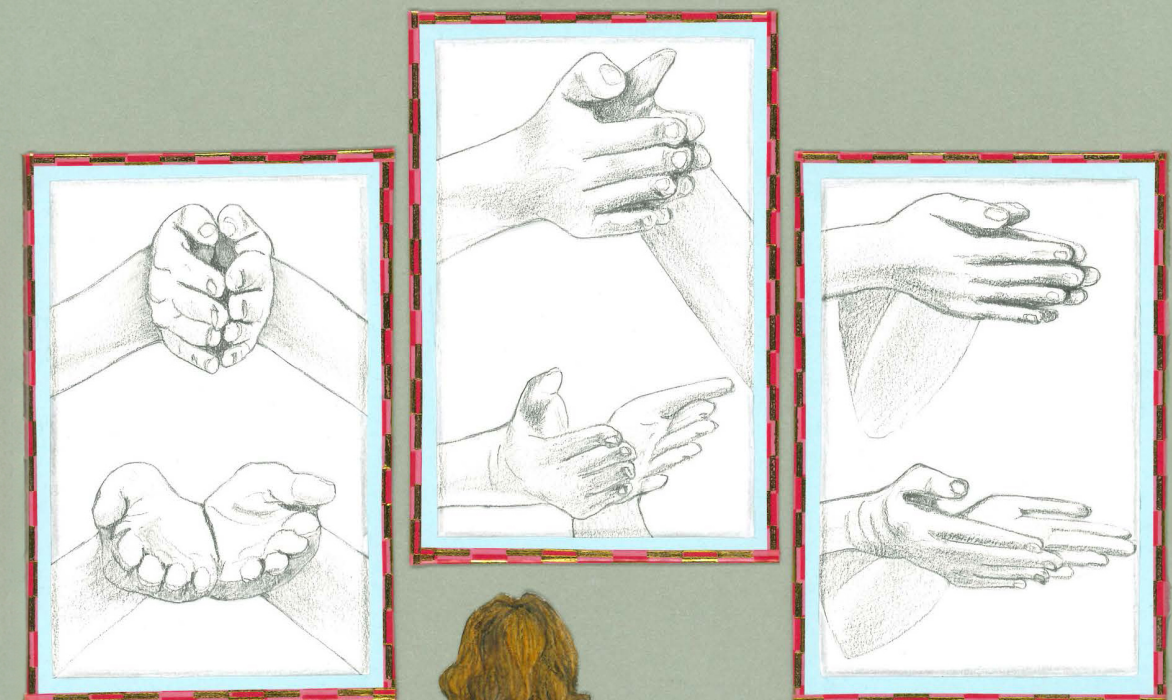


Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics
Landelijke Onderzoekschool Taalwetenschap

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Cindy van Boven

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