Notational Conventions

As many linguists are not acquainted with the notational conventions for sign languages, they are explained briefly here. Even within the domain of sign linguistics, there is no universally valid convention for sign language transcription. The notational system used in this book is mainly oriented on Prillwitz’s (1985) and Klima/Bellugi’s (1979) notation of sign sequences.

he-own

Sign language glosses are written in capitals. These capitalized glosses refer to the picture of a sign (sequence) as it would be shown in an ELAN screenshot. While sometimes these pictures are actually provided, due to space restrictions this was not possible for all glosses. Lower case letters before or after a gloss indicate additional meanings which are contained in the manual sign. They are joined by a hyphen.

question ?

The upper line of a sentence transcription conveys information on non-manuals like facial expression, movement of the body or mouth actions. They are uttered simultaneously with the manual sign.

e.g. question (interrogative)

negation

affirmation

duration

etc.

The line before the non-manual marker indicates which signs are accompanied by the respective marker. Mouthings are notated in English orthography while mouth gestures are notated using the ECHO conventions which are descriptive of the mouth movements. Although I am aware that mouthings are sometimes notated as phonetic transcripts, I decided against this option, as mouthings are usually voiceless so a system representing the sounds of a language seemed inappropriate here.
INDEX- This symbol marks a manual sign formed by the index finger. References, i.e. referential loci are thus established within the sign space. Additional information like $p_1$ added before or after the hyphen, refers to the system of referential person loci in the signing space.

THREE-WEEK Hyphenated glosses indicate that only one manual sign is formed to express both meanings expressed in the gloss. The meanings of both glosses are merged in one single manual sign.

DRIVE+ A + behind a gloss stands for repetition or reduplication of the whole sign or its movement path. The number of + indicates the number of repetitions of the gloss.

(DA) Glosses in parentheses could be left out.

d.r.i.v.e. Fingerspelt words are represented by letters separated by dots.

DRIVE//RIDE Glosses separated by slashes are part of a compound and are signed in quick succession.

‘drive’ Words in single quotes indicate a) a non-conventionalised sign if they are on the same level as the sign language gloss, or b) the semantic meaning of a sign or sentence if below gloss level.

It should be mentioned that other researchers sometimes annotated their data differently. Diverging notations that are found throughout the text (especially with reference to mouth actions) are:

MOUNTAIN Underlined glosses represent manual signs that are accompanied by the mouthed spoken word.

BESITZEN Single letters beneath a gloss indicate mouthed sounds different from the mouthed gloss.