

Modality-specific and language-specific elements of sign language acquisition: Perfective aspect in Kata Kolok

Dr. Connie de Vos
Associate Professor (UHD)
Tilburg University

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Road map for this talk

- Kata Kolok: a shared sign language
 - Perfective aspect in Kata Kolok
 - A case study of its development (24-36 months)
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- Modality-independent and modality-specific aspects of language development
 - Language development and language emergence

Zeshan & de Vos (Eds.) 2012

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Kata Kolok: a shared sign language



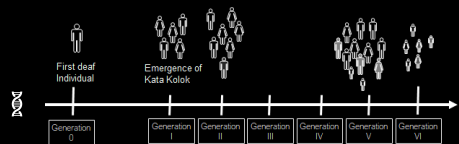
- Incidence of deafness 1-2.2%
- 36 deaf individuals
- 1,200 hearing signers
- Used in all aspects of village life

Marsaja 2008; de Vos 2012; Lutzenberger in prep

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Kata Kolok: an oldish emerging sign language



Winata et al. 1995; Hinnant 2000; de Vos 2012

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Sign language acquisition in a shared signing community

Acquisition setting optimally similar to spoken language acquisition

- Parents are native signers
- Positive attitudes towards deafness and sign language use
- Large numbers of interlocutors
- Varied signing situations

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Kata Kolok child signing corpus (2007-present)



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Kata Kolok child signing sorpus (status 10 May 2019)

Hannah Lutzenberger
Radboud University

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Kata Kolok child signing sorpus

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The Kata Kolok perfective

Used in ritualised greetings

Selected data: 6.6 hours, 13 signers, varied settings

272 tokens of FINISH in 10,106 manual signs; **third/fourth most frequent sign** together with NEGATION (incidence of 2,7%)

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The Kata Kolok perfective: FINISH#pah

POINT IV DRIP+++ FINISH#pah
‘There (at the Singaraja hospital), he was given intravenous fluid.’

1-2-3-4-5 DIE FINISH#pah
After five days, (the deaf Muslim) also died.

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The Kata Kolok perfective: PREDICATE#pah

GO-AWAY#pah GHOST TALK GO-AWAY#pah
‘The ghost went away, (I tried to) talk, (but it) went.’

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The Kata Kolok perfective: POINT#pah

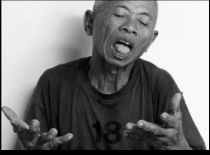
POINT#pah GHOST POINT#pah
‘(It) went along that path, the ghost, and then it stopped.’

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The Kata Kolok perfective

Ungrammatical
*FINISH
*pah

Grammatical forms
FINISH#pah
PREDICATE#pah
(equally frequent)
IX#pah
(few in 1,183 pointing signs)



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The development of the perfective a case study

One deaf child

24-36 months

5.5 hours of recordings (164 min for each half year)

1,119 manual signs

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Acquisition of perfective in spoken languages

- The first instances of the perfective 20 months in typologically similar language
- The first perfective forms occur with telic, resultative verbs
- Comprehension of the perfective does not become adult-like until 5 years

Soriente 2014;

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Acquisition of simultaneous syntax in American Sign Language

Phase I
gestural

Phase II
manual

Phase III
grammatical

Negation
headshake (hs)

Content questions
frown

Negation
NEGATION

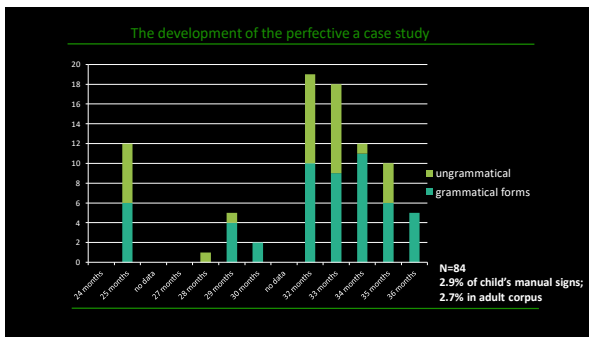
Content questions
WHAT, WHERE

Negation
hs#NEGATION

Content questions
frown#WHAT

McIntire & Reilly 1991; Reilly & Anderson 1997

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The development of the perfective a case study

Phase I ~25-27 months
*pah
PREDICATE#pah
POINT#pah

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The development of the perfective a case study

3.4% of the child's pointings signs is marked by pah, while this form is attested in less than 0.5% of the pointing signs in the adult corpus

Almost all the predicates that attracted the non-manual perfective are resultative: BREAK, THROW, GO-AWAY, FALL, FLASH

EAT is also used but only in response to ritualised questions

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The development of the perfective a case study



Research assistant
NAUGHTY BREAK POINT 'knife'
'You are naughty – you broke it.' (teasingly)

Child (25 months)
BREAK#pah POINT 'knife'
'The knife is broken'

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The development of the perfective a case study

Phase II ~28-31 months

- 28 months first instance of *FINISH
- 29 months first instance of FINISH#pah

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The development of the perfective a case study

Phase II ~28-31 months

- 28 months first instance of *FINISH
- 29 months first instance of grammatical FINISH#pah

Phase III 32-35 months

- from 32 months onwards *pah disappears
- from 35 months onwards *FINISH disappears

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The development of the perfective a case study



33 months first combined use with atelic verb SLEEP

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Revisiting Reilly's generalisations

The main trajectory of
Nonmanual>Manual>Manual#Non-Manual
is maintained

Regardless of its role in co-speech gesture, the face
is prominent in signed conversation

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Conclusions

First language acquisition in shared signing communities is optimally comparable to the native acquisition of spoken languages

The development of perfective follows cross-linguistically robust patterns

Child signers need combine multiple articulators simultaneously leading to modality-specific errors

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Language development and language emergence

Emergence of language in social interaction (ELISA – ERC Starting Grant project)



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FINISH#pah



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Fieldwork on Kata Kolok (2007-present)



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