CLS Colloquium Lunch Series

Sign Language Linguistics

Onno Crasborn – A Global Signbank

In order to systematically annotate sign language corpora, various research groups have started up lexical databases documenting the glosses that are used for signs in language X. The NGT Signbank was thus set up to ensure consistency of annotation of the Corpus NGT, for Sign Language of the Netherlands. This presentation outlines the structure of NGT Signbank, and discusses the ongoing expansion to a ‘Global Signbank’, where data from many different languages can be stored. This will enable us to advance the study of lexical distances between sign languages, which even though there are few family relationships between sign languages, can be smaller than expected because of the similar impact of iconicity on the formation of lexical items.

Connie de Vos – Turn-timing in sign language emergence

Social interaction is the primary ecological niche for languages to evolve and to emerge. Looking at such settings in sign language emergence enables us to study the selection pressures involved in vivo. Spontaneous conversation is remarkably rapid across typologically diverse spoken languages as well as the Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT) with most turns timed ~200ms after the prior (Stivers et al. 2009; de Vos et al. 2015). This study investigates whether the time pressure of turn-taking remains constant across language emergence by looking at the three most recent generations of the emerging sign language Kata Kolok (KK). Initial analyses indicate that NGT (Mean = 307, Mode = 227, N= 210) and KK (Mean = 261, Mode = 230, N =22) are strikingly similar in terms of turn-timing when all generations are grouped together. Further analyses are focused on comparing the different generations of KK signers to age-matched NGT signers to identify intergenerational, rather than age-related differences.

When: Tuesday 19 September, 2017
12:45-13:30

Lunch is provided! To register, please send an email to:
clscolloquium@let.ru.nl

Where: E2.54 (Erasmus Building)

For more information, see www.ru.nl/cls