

# BiBiBi Project ASL Annotation Conventions

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## Introduction

These conventions have been developed by a team of researchers at Gallaudet University and the University of Connecticut (GUC). The primary purpose is for the annotation of longitudinal spontaneous production data from Deaf children of Deaf parents and from bimodal bilingual hearing children of Deaf parents. Data collection and annotation is on-going.

## Current data set

Group	#	Ages	# sessions	# annotated (sign)	# annotated (speech)
D/D	4	1;05-4;02	224	169	N/A
H/D	10	0;11-8;06	609	81	177
D/D (CI)	6	0;9-8;09	362	14	87

Annotation conventions take into consideration our analysis goals, and our attempt to use a format as consistent as possible with both common sign language annotation symbols and those used in CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000). The initial annotation passes focus on ID glossing of signs and words as well as translations. We are working toward use of an ID Gloss lexicon.

## Tier hierarchy

Our tier hierarchy starts with the ASL Utterance, with automatic tokenization for the ASL Individual tier based on spaces between annotations. RH/LH are used only when necessary (simultaneous constructions). This provides information from annotators about utterance groupings, and saves time compared to annotation of all two-handed signs twice.

## Annotator responsibilities

We aim to ask annotators to do as little analysis as possible. Our intention is to include basic information in the sign tiers, with additional details about use of space, non-manuals, etc. left to subsequent analysis passes. This principle guides our decisions. Annotators should use ID glosses and use the translation tier for further information about their interpretation of each utterance.

## Capitalization

Capitalization systematically represents a conventionalized sign (e.g., SIGN) or type of sign (e.g., DS (for depicting sign) or FS (for fingerspelling)). Lower case signifies that additional information is presented. For conventionalized signs, the lower case portion that follows the capitalized gloss indicates something about its form when distinguishing between variants (SOONnose, SOONchin). For information enclosed in parentheses following codes, aspects of the meaning expressed by the sign is presented in lower case. From a human-readability perspective, this allows the user to perceive patterns in the data just from scanning. Non-sign communicative acts (when annotated) use lower-case (e.g., show(toy)).

## Partly/non-lexical material

Following our principles, upper-case codes identify the type of sign, with lower-case information added, or supplementary information in additional tiers. For example, the annotation for a depicting sign indicates its category (DS), and the additional information conveys a rough approximation to meaning: DS(car-goes-down-street). Pointing signs are annotated using IX(referent). Further analysis takes place independently on separate tiers.

## References:

Chen Pichler, D., Hochgesang, J.A., Lillo-Martin, D., & de Quadros, R. (2010). Conventions for sign and speech transcription in child bimodal bilingual corpora. *Languages, Interaction and Acquisition*, 1(1), 11-40.

MacWhinney, B. (2000). *The CHILDES Project: Tools for analyzing talk*. 3rd Edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The screenshot shows the ELAN software interface with the following components:

- Video Player:** Displays a scene with a child and an adult. The current time is 00:14:27.292.
- Annotation List:** A table listing English utterances with their corresponding begin and end times.
 

Nr	Annotation	Begin Time	End Time	Duration
16	it's a birdie	00:14:13.611	00:14:16.020	00:00:02.409
17	I wanna be a Star Wars	00:14:25.920	00:14:28.263	00:00:02.343
18	I want my sword	00:14:29.121	00:14:30.936	00:00:01.815
19	oh there it is	00:15:36.738	00:15:38.157	00:00:01.419
20	I know	00:15:49.113	00:15:50.037	00:00:00.924
21	I know	00:16:00.861	00:16:01.356	00:00:00.495
22	shut eyes	00:16:11.718	00:16:12.411	00:00:00.693
23	shut eyes again	00:16:15.051	00:16:16.305	00:00:01.254
24	I cooking in here	00:20:00.672	00:20:02.322	00:00:01.650
25	not like carrots	00:22:01.485	00:22:03.003	00:00:01.518
26	I bite it	00:22:38.214	00:22:39.204	00:00:00.990
27	it's a lemon	00:24:03.684	00:24:05.202	00:00:01.518
- Timeline Tiers:**
  - Child free translation:** "I want to play with my Star Wars sword." / "I want my sword."
  - Child ASL utterance:** DS(hand-wielding-long-object) [10]
  - Child ASL individual:** DS(hand-wielding-long-object) [2]
  - Child ASL right hand:** [0]
  - Child ASL left hand:** [0]
  - Child English utterance:** "I wanna be a Star Wars" / "I want my sword"
  - Child English individual:** [0]
  - Child English pho:** [0]
  - Child comments:** [0]
  - Adult1 free translation:** "FS - fingerspelling (word)" / "NS - name sign (name)" / "XXX is used to identify productions that are not visible to the annotator" / "g - gesture (meaning)" / "Sign variants are distinguished by brief form descriptions in tags after gloss" / "IX - index (referent)" / "[+] repetition or lack of" / "[ ] held signs"
  - Adult1 ASL utterance:** FS(Star-Wars) / NS(Darth-Vader) / XXX / g(yes) / SWORDshake / IX(WIZ) WANT PLAY SWORD / LATER[+] / YES[ ]
  - Adult1 ASL individual:** FS(Star-Wars) / NS(Darth-Vader) / XXX / g(yes) / SWORDshake / IX(WIZ) | WANT | PLAY | SWORD / LATER[+] / YES[ ]