

Non-manual markers in Russian Sign Language: three case studies

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Study 1: Non-manual marking of quotation

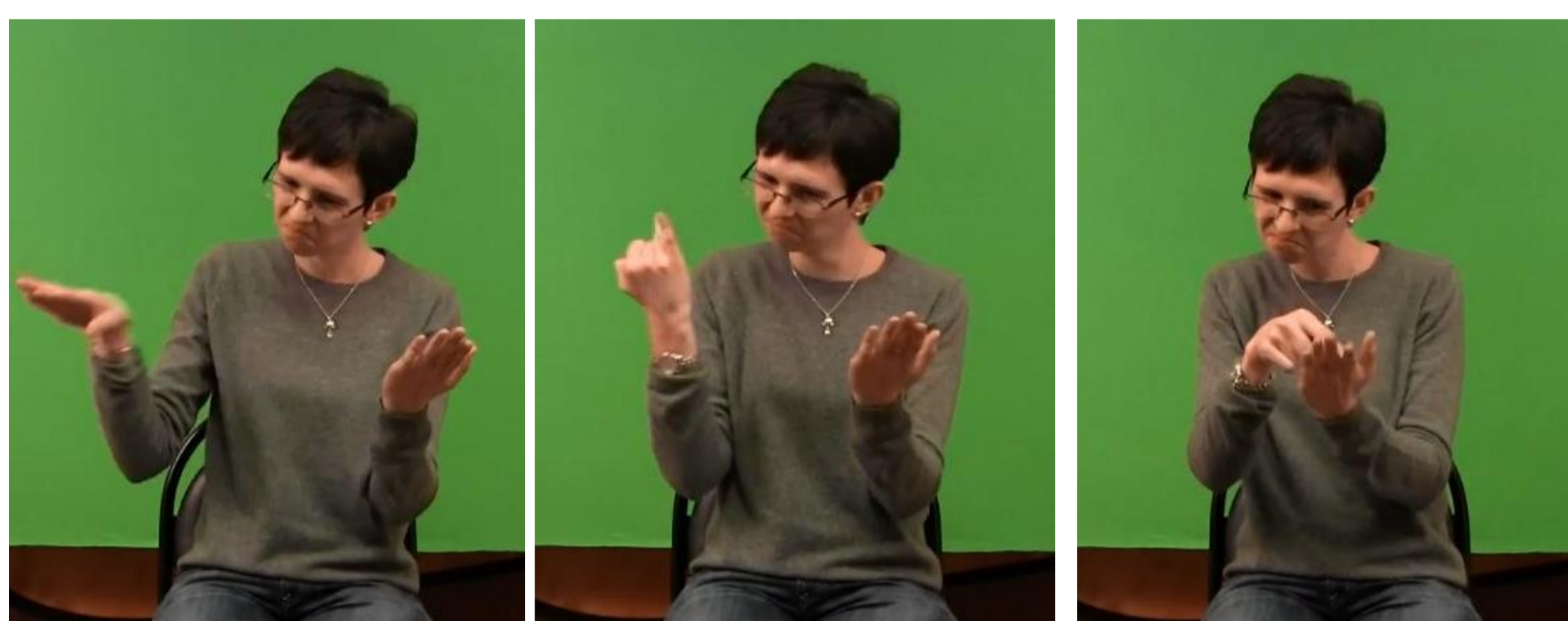
Quotational construction:

Source - Matrix Predicate - Quotation

(1) IX-1 SAY IX-1 YES VIA MOSCOW GO.BY.TRAIN
'I say: yes, I go by train via Moscow.'

➤ Quotation in sign languages marked by role shift (Lillo-Martin 2012, Herrmann & Steinbach 2012):

- * body turns
- * head turns
- * eye gaze shift



_____role shift
(2) CALL-3 INTERESTING THIS
'I call her: this is interesting!'

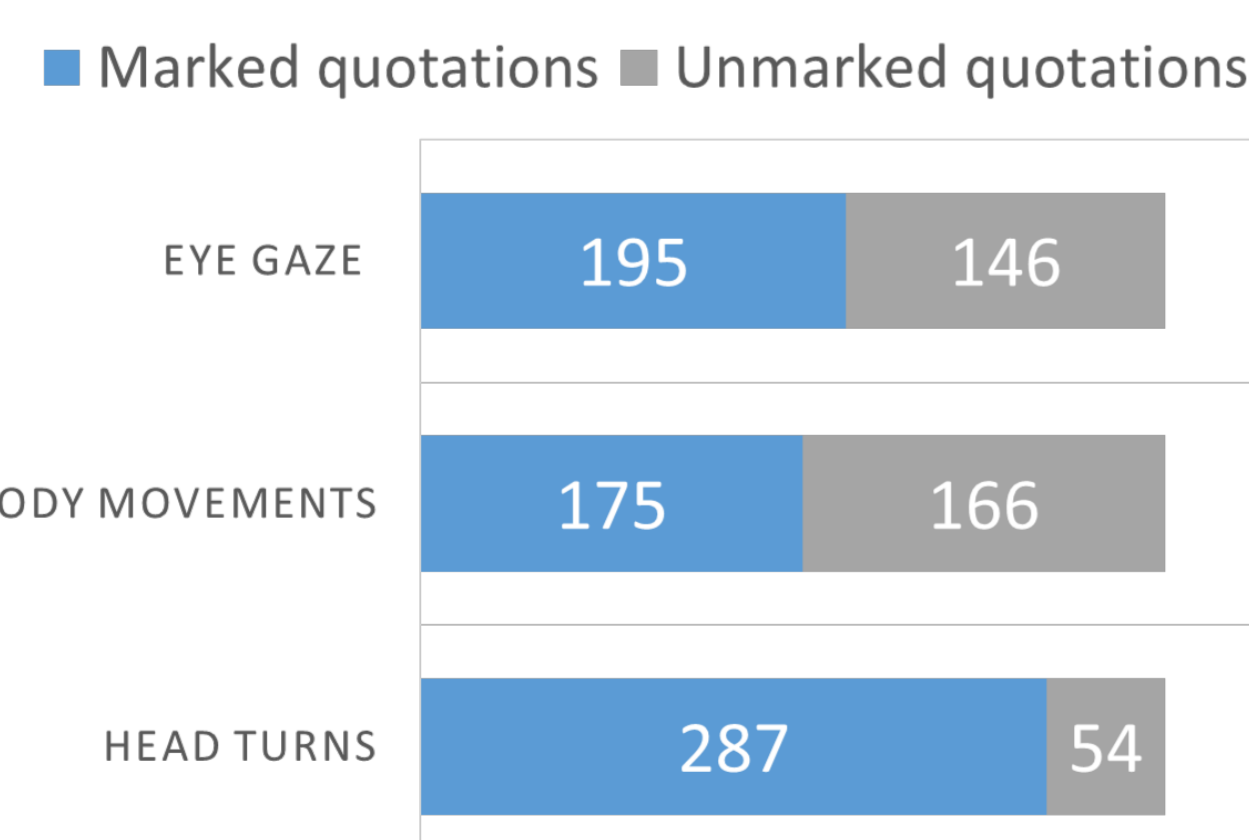
Is quotation systematically marked by role shift?

Methods:

- Sub-corpus of corpus RSL
- 11 signers from Moscow
- Personal stories

Results:

- 341 quotations
- source and quotation predicate often absent
- complex behavior of non-manuals



Russian Sign Language Corpus

The online corpus of RSL (<http://rsl.nstu.ru>, Burkova 2012-2015) was made during the project "Corpus-Based Research on Morphosyntax and Vocabulary of the Russian Sign Language" funded by Russian Foundation for Basic Research.

- over 180 texts filmed from 59 RSL signers – men and women (18 to 63 years) with varying degrees of deafness: deaf, hard-of-hearing and CODA.
- Novosibirsk & Moscow.
- spontaneous speech (narratives and dialogues), texts on the basis of stimulus materials (cartoons retelling, picture based storytelling) & some elicitation data.

Study 2: Non-manual marking of conditionals

Two NMMs, "raised eyebrows" and "head thrust", regularly occur in the dependent conditional clauses. The rb is the initial sign of the clause or the entire clause.

_____rb
(3) IF I WAVE.HAND / IMMEDIATELY CLF:2PS:PERSON:MOVE:1PS
'If I wave my hand, immediately come to me.'

"Head thrust" accompanies the final sign of the dependent clause, most typically – its slowing-down phase.

_____hth
(4) IF INDX NEIGHBOR COME:LOC / I TOMORROW SEE:REC BE:FUT
'If the neighbor has arrived, I will see him tomorrow'.

Which NMM is systematically used to mark conditionals?

- no NMMs is specialized to express the conditional meaning, the latter rather results from a combination of the two NMMs; each of them contributes in its own way to the structural and semantic frame of the conditional construction:

_____rb
_____hth
(5) HURT DECREASE NEG / MORE ONE TAKE.PILL
'If it still hurts, take another pill'.

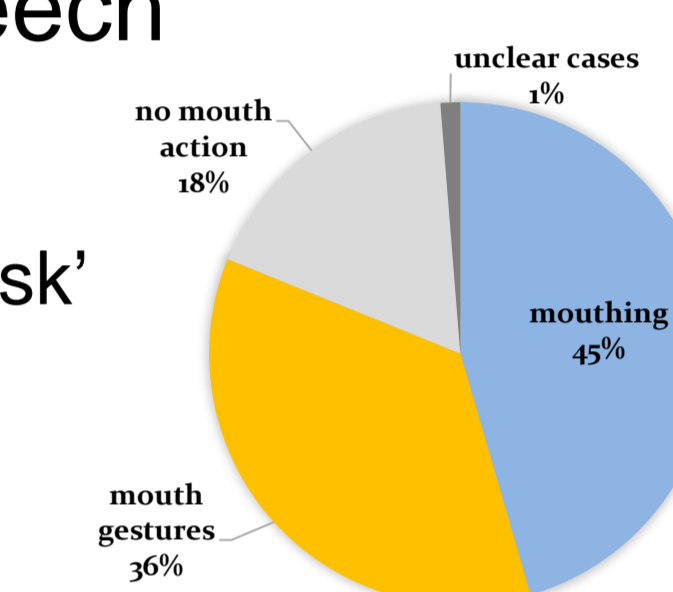
Study 3: Mouthing - a salient and multifunctional NMM

Mouthing is the most frequent mouth action type in RSL & appears to have various functions:

- disambiguation (TO-WORK VS. TO-DO; UNCOMFORTABLE VS. IMPOSSIBLE) – seldom
- marker of morphosyntactic information (case as in (7))
- introducing actants, new topics, reported speech

_____school.acc _____novosib _____lear
(7) IX SCHOOL GRADUATE ENTER NOVOSIBIRSK LEARN
'I graduated school and entered the university in Novosibirsk'

_____house
(6) CL:HIGH HOUSE CL:HIGH
'There is a high building'



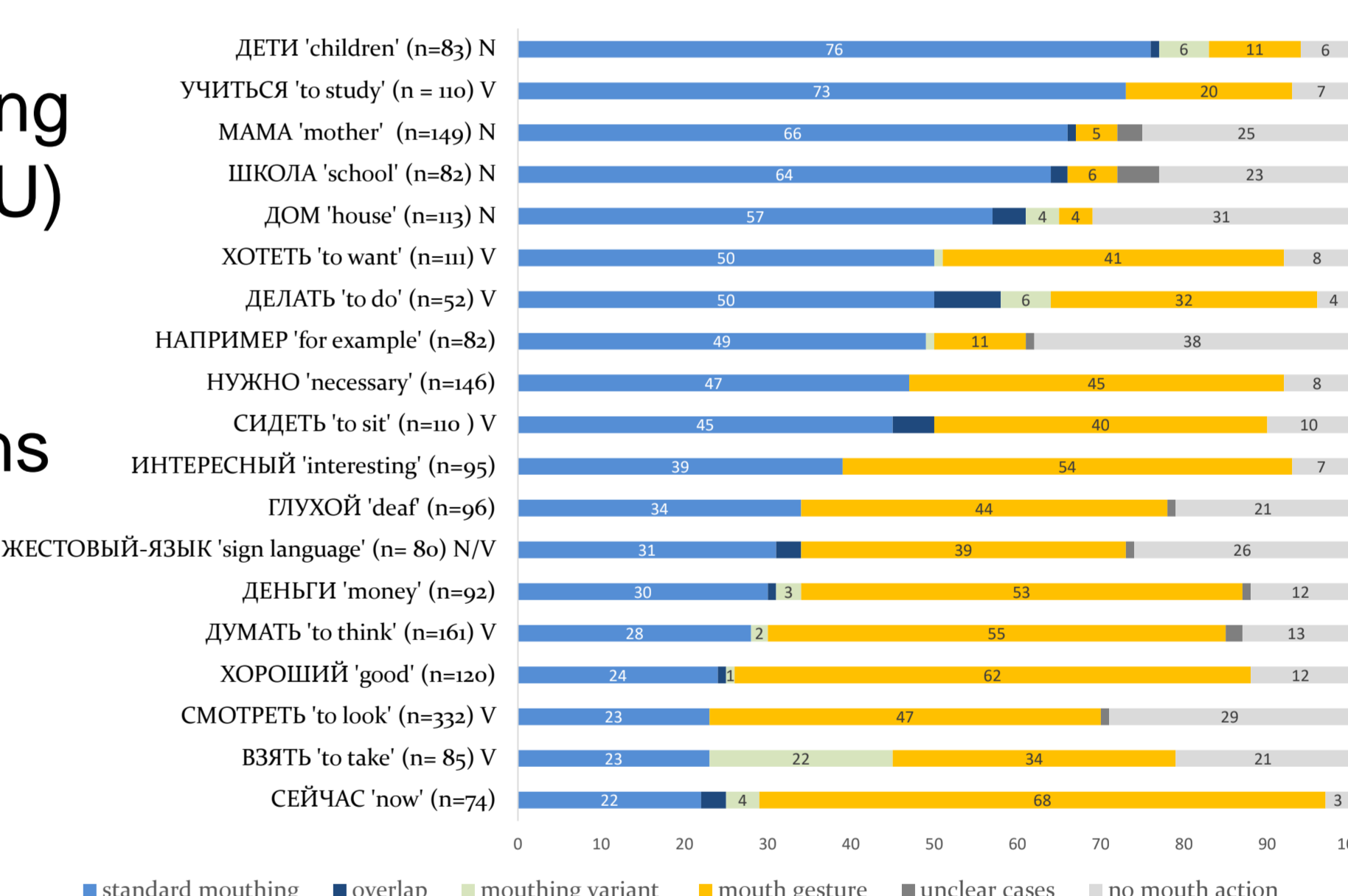
Is there variation in selection of spoken Russian lexical items?

Methods:

- 20 frequently occurring signs (excl. IX and PU)
- 2251 tokens

Results:

- little variation => signs occur with **standard mouthing**
- large individual & mouth action type variation



References

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