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“Joint attention through shared movements
- analyzing deafblind signers’ expressions in dialogues.”

When signing in the tactile modality, the interlocutors produce signs while holding each other's hand/s. This presentation is based on a comparative study of some specific expressions which are found in videotaped materials of conversations with Swedish and Norwegian signers with deafblindness (Mesch, 2001, Raanes, 2006). In some of the signing expressions in tactile modality, the signer uses her/his own or the other interlocutor’s hand or body part as part of the utterance. The examples point to these expressions as being part of sign language in the tactile modality when the sign refers to objects and activities.

Two different theories are combined in this linguistic study of dialogue material in Norwegian and Swedish tactile sign language. Based on the theory of place of articulation and signing space (e.g., Engberg-Pedersen, 1993; Bergman 1990) and cognitive grammar (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) we present a preliminary study of how joint attention is constructed. The theory of cognitive grammar is brought in to examine how the expressions are formed and how interaction builds on the input given by touch and by involving the interlocutor's body part in the constructions of tactile expressions involved (Rommetveit, 1974; Taub, 2001; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Liddell, 2003; Wertsch, 2003). We discuss different approaches to describe the meaning potential in conversations in the tactile modality.

Our findings point to principles which are as yet not well described on how language may be used and how information may be presented in tactile signing. This study considers expanding the view of possible repertoires for human use of communication and language. We discuss how cognitive grammar may be able to describe the meaning construction in two different sign languages in the tactile modality.

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