



METADATA

Title: Short Description of Greek Sign Language

Other Titles: -

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Abstract

Sign languages (SLs), as well as Greek Sign Language (GSL), use motion for expression and vision for perception. Similarly, spoken languages use sound and hearing. The physical articulatory organs of different organ systems of SLs can be simultaneously active, unlike spoken languages; this feature is termed as 'non-linearity' in SLs: different fingers or hands can be active, in various points in physical space, accompanied by activity in the area of eyes, eyebrows, mouth, torso etc. This unique feature results in common cross-linguistic traits among SLs. Comparison of SLs with cross-linguistic traits brings up common features as well as significant differences. Some of the most prominent differences between signed and spoken languages, as well as their repercussions in forming different linguistic systems, in language use and in communication practices expand well beyond a narrow grammatical description into related fields of language studies. For example, SLs make use of larger groups of muscles for their formation,

while their articulators are more visible and mature earlier in life; in SLs eye contact is a requirement for the establishment of communication, etc. These linguistic prerequisites are prominent in SL etymology, in the close relation between morphosyntax, semantics and pragmatics, in stages of language development, in communication practices and norms, in the development of a sociolinguistic identity and worldview among sign language users, as well as in the technical means of linguistic transmission and transcription. The linguistic structure of GSL, as an autonomous language used mainly in the geographical area of Greece, is described in the core grammar part of the book following the classic levels of linguistic analysis. Sociolinguistic issues and issues of historical development of GSL have also played a significant part in its present form. As is apparent, there is special reference of each of the above issues in chapters or subchapters of the present short description of Greek Sign Language.

