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Distribution of unidimensional space in the LSU time lexicon

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Abstract

In signed languages, space can be used to build linguistic analogs for mental images and linguistically support conceptual domains such as time. This research aimed to (i) describe the spatial patterns of the Uruguayan Sign Language (LSU) time lexicon, (ii) test whether variables such as time construal, reference type, and iconicity labeling produce a clear-cut spatial pattern in the LSU time lexicon, and (iii) determine whether the LSU time lexicon might prime the mental timeline for LSU signers. We discuss how we selected a corpus, labeled space according to certain parameters, and characterized signs within unidimensional spaces. We applied a Chi-square goodness of fit test to compare multiple observed proportions among variables. The results confirmed a bias toward the Sagittal space for deictic time and biases for sequential and span time for Hand number and Reference type. We suggest considering these biases in time discrimination with deaf population.