Free on-line database for all!

Leda Sila
Lexical Database for Sign Languages

This database offers all interested parties the chance to document and/or analyse any sign language. LedaSila is available on the Internet without charge: http://ledasila.uni-klu.ac.at/. Beside the documentation and/or analysis of signs, the program can be used to search for specific signs.

Invitation

We would like to extend a special invitation to deaf researchers to use this database for the documentation and/or analysis of their national sign language(s). Naturally, this offer is also addressed to all other interested parties. A first impression of LedaSila can be gained at http://ledasila.uni-klu.ac.at/. For further information, please contact Ms. Klaudia Krammer at the Center for Sign Language and Deaf Communication (klaudia.krammer@uni-klu.ac.at). If you enter sign language data into the database, you have to accept that your data will be shared with all of the signing community.

Multilingual application

Any language using the Latin alphabet can serve as application language (labels for input fields, menu items and buttons) and analysis language (language, in which the categories, values and specifications will appear, as well as entries into, e.g. the field of "semantics"). Currently, users may choose between a German and an English version. Adding a new language for international projects, e.g. French, is a rather simple task. On request, the respective project team will get a list (in German or English) from the ZGH, containing all the words and phrases in the database. The translated list will be sent back to the ZGH, who will then integrate the translations into the database. Further small modifications can be done by the project team themselves. If the English labels for the input fields, etc. do not pose a problem for the project team, only the categories, values and specifications will have to be translated into the new language.

Login

How to enter the sign language documentation and project administration

In order to be able to work with the documentation part of the program, users will need an authorisation. This authorisation is free and will be assigned by the ZGH. To apply for an authorisation, you will have to do the following:

- We set great store by the fact that all the work within the database is done in accordance with the respective national deaf associations. Therefore we would ask any po-

tential users to provide an informal endorsement from a regional or national deaf association, authorising them to work with the database.

- The project co-ordinator contacts the ZGH (klaudia.krammer@uni-klu.ac.at). In cooperation with the ZGH, a new project will be created. The project co-ordinator will get a user name and a password allowing them to enter the sign documentation and the project administration.
- A project co-ordinator has certain authorisations: They can add new users to the project (including user names and passwords). They may also enter signs into the database and analyse them; they are authorised to edit and delete signs that have been entered by other users from this project. However, they are not authorised to add new categories, specifications or values or to delete existing ones. Should a new category be required, this has to be requested from the administrator who will then add it. The role of administrator is taken on by a collaborator of the ZGH. The central administration of this function serves to avoid inconsistencies and multiple entries.
- The project co-ordinator will assign certain roles to their collaborators within the project. Normally, this will be the role of analyst. Analysts cannot access the project administration; they may enter signs, analyse them or delete them. However, a project co-ordinator may also assign the same rights they have to their collaborators.

Sign documentation and sign analysis

This database has the advantage that that there is neither a fixed number of entries nor a fixed order when entering data. Therefore, users may adapt the entries according to their own requirements. In order to create a "simple word list", entering the meaning of the sign and the respective video will be sufficient. If the user wants a complex linguistic description of the signs, information on semantics, pragmatics and morphosyntax may be given in addition to the analysis of manual and non-manual features. For semantics, pragmatics and morphosyntax, videos can be used to give examples and provide context, together with a written translation. Moreover, a sign may be assigned to a certain word field; the region where the sign is used and the name of the signer may be entered as well. It is up to the users which entries are made and in which order. There is only one restriction: the search function is designed in a way that corresponding entries in the field "semantics" are searched. Therefore, an entry in this field is compulsory. A sign may also be edited at any time.

Searching for signs

The database offers a simple search and an extended search. For a simple search, the users may choose from six criteria which may be combined in any possible way. For an extended search, criteria may be chosen and combined by the user.

Help function

Help is available in German and in English. If required, the texts may be integrated in additional languages as well. Each text is also available in video form, namely in Austrian Sign Language (OEGS) and in International Sign (IS).

Technical requirements

The administration and the use of the web framework of LedaSila require the use of a computer with a central memory of 256 MB. The website and the additional applications were designed for a resolution of at least 1024 x 768 pixels. Users who administrate the application will need broadband Internet access. For searching for signs or analysing them, ISDN access is sufficient.
The database was designed for Internet Explorer 5.5 and higher. This browser enables an optimal use of the search function. This version of the browser is also a requirement for entering data. As video format, Apple QuickTime® video (.mov) is recommended, because it offers the best size-quality ratio. The use of other formats is possible; however, QuickTime videos can be played directly on the webpage.

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