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THE CATEGORY OF QUANTITY IN SIGNS OF UKRAINIAN SIGN LANGUAGE

КАТЕГОРІЯ ЧИСЛА ЖЕСТОВИХ ОДИНИЦЬ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ЖЕСТОВОЇ МОВИ

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Linguistic features of sign languages are one of the least studied in modern philology. Against this background, there is currently no description of the peculiarities of Ukrainian Sign Language.

One of the important categories of language is the category of number or quantity as a grammatical characteristic of the signs. There are some studies of different sign languages that describe the grammatical category of signs' quantity. In particular, to make plural form of sign there are several tends to changing sign from singular form – to use spatial morphology (spatial modification) or repetition [3, p. 27]. Many researchers describe quantity not as separate grammatical category, but as several strategies that use to express quantity. T. MacHadjah's identified several strategies in signing to show singular, plural, dual, etc.: lexical strategy, morphological strategy, and syntactic strategy [2]. In the context of our study, the first two strategies for creating quantity are important – lexical and morphological, because these strategies can be considered at the level of a single sign rather than a sentence. This separation into a separate group – the lexical strategy from the morphological strategy of quantity creation is not always appropriate, since the authors refer to this group method of quantity creation, which is

used for pluralization through the addition of MANY, ALL, etc. signs [1]. These signs have an independent meaning, which they lose when they are added to other sign to indicate its quantitative features. In these conditions, it is appropriate to consider the sign as composed by morphological structure. That is an integral sign, which has two bases – one is the main meaning of the sign, and the second one is the meaning of quantity. So, it is a morphological strategy for creating quantity, not a lexical one.

In the morphological structure the sign signal that shows quantity of sign some researchers call as quantifiers, quantity markers, number marker or numbering. We use the word “quantifier” to indicate the quantitative characteristics of a sign as a separate unit.

Our study of the grammatical category of quantity in Ukrainian sign language provides a basis for determining two main types of quantitative characteristics of a sign – definite and indefinite quantity.

The type of definite quantity is when we know exactly from the sign what quantity it has (one, two, three, etc.). It is interesting that in Ukrainian sign language the upper limit of the definite quantity depends on the part of speech to which the lexical base sign belongs. Thus, for nouns, the maximum limit for a sign with a definite quantity reaches ten (one month, two months, ... ten months). At the same time, for pronouns, the upper limit of definite quantity can be only up to five. This feature is explained by the specificity of personal pronouns, which are exclusively one-handed signs, while nouns can also be two-handed signs.

An indefinite quantity is when we do not know the exact quantity of the sign, but the presence of the quantity is assumed. For example, this includes signs that clearly belong to the plural category (MONEY, GRASS, etc.). This quantity type also includes signs that have a plural form, which is formed from a sign in the singular form (MAN – PEOPLE are plural from MAN, but the exact number of people is unknown).

It should be emphasized that with a definite quantity type, a sign is formed in several ways: *incorporation* – when the number is borrowed from a numeral through configuration and therefore the shape of the hand changes in the sign (one, two, three, etc. up to ten), for example, signs with an exact indication of the number thousands, months, days, floors, places, etc.); *repetition*, which is usually used in Ukrainian sign language to indicate the number two or three.

The methods of formation to the indefinite quantity type sign in plural from the singular are different. For this type, the method of *incorporation* of the quantity from the numerals is not used. The *repetition* method can be used. In this case, the number of repetition can be from two to three, but the

key differences from signs of definite quantity type are smaller amplitude of movement and the absence of hand fixation during repetition. Another method of forming the plural of an indefinite quantity type is *shifting* of the hand or hands (if the singular is a two-handed sign). This method is used in nouns (signs – BOOKS, HOUSES, etc.), pronouns (signs – THEY, YOU in the plural, etc.) and verbs (HELP THEM, etc.). The next method of creating signs of an indefinite quantity type is *composition*. In this method, the plural signs MANY, A LOT, DIFFERENT, ALL, etc. are added to the sign in the singular form. This method is most often used for nouns (APPLES, CARS, etc.). However, considering that the sign is formed as a composition, the speed of displaying its parts will be higher, without pauses that use for separation signs in a sentence.

In general, the methods described here for showing the grammatical category of quantity in the signs of Ukrainian sign language are not exhaustive and require further research in order to clearly describe the patterns of application of each method of quantity formation.

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