Nonmanual components with PALM-UP in Russian Sign Language.

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What is PALM-UP? Where did we start?

A basic form is the rotation of one or both open hands towards an upward palm orientation.

➤ Palm-up gesture is "one of the most frequently used" (Müller 2004: 234) and reported for various cultures (Cooperrider, Abner & Goldin-Meadow 2018; Kendon 2004).

➤ PALM-UP (PU) sign is of gestural origin (Loon, Pfau & Steinbach 2014) & is highly frequent in discourse (McKee & Wallinford 2011).

➤ Major functions as identified for ASL, DSL, NGT & NZSL:

1. **Conversation/discourse regulation** (turn taking, turn opening, turn ending, question particle, backchannel, pause filling)
2. **Connection/coherence** (comment, conjunction, temporal sequence, causal relationship, contrast, focus)
3. **Modal meaning** (uncertainty, obviousness, possibility)
4. Manual frame for unpredictable mouthings (NZSL, McKee & Wallingford 2011)

➤ PU sign has no semantic/pragmatic impact other than signaling a boundary; only the accompanying non-manual signals carry the meaning (Kooij, Crasborn & Ros 2006)

Research question & methods

Annotated data	
Total signs	37658
Tokens of PU	1719
Data videos	132
Signers	37
female	23
male	14

224 PU tokens & the accompanying nonmanual signals were:

– transcribed by a native RSL signer;
– annotated and searched in ELAN software;
– analyzed in terms of discourse functions.

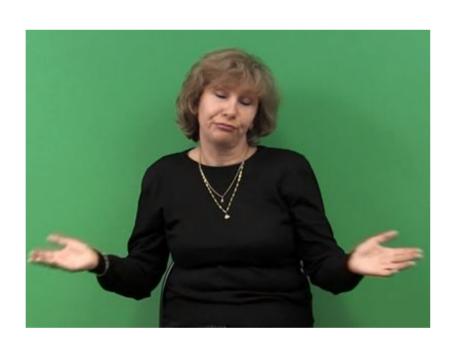**Research question**: Do the accompanying nonmanual components indicate the function of PALM-UP?

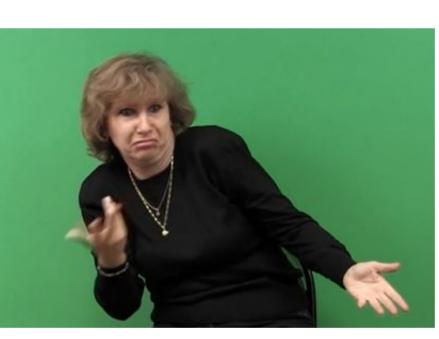## Russian Sign Language (RSL) Corpus

The online corpus of RSL (http://rsl.nstu.ru, Burkova 2012-2015) was made during the project "Corpus-Based Research on Mophosyntax and Vocabulary of the Russian Sign Language" funded by Russian Foundation for Basic Research.

➤ over 180 texts filmed from 59 RSL signers – men and women (18 to 63 years) with varying degrees of deafness: deaf, hard-of-hearing and CODA.
➤ Novosibirsk & Moscow.
➤ spontaneous speech (narratives and dialogues), texts on the basis of stimulus materials (cartoons retelling, picture based storytelling) & some elicitation data.
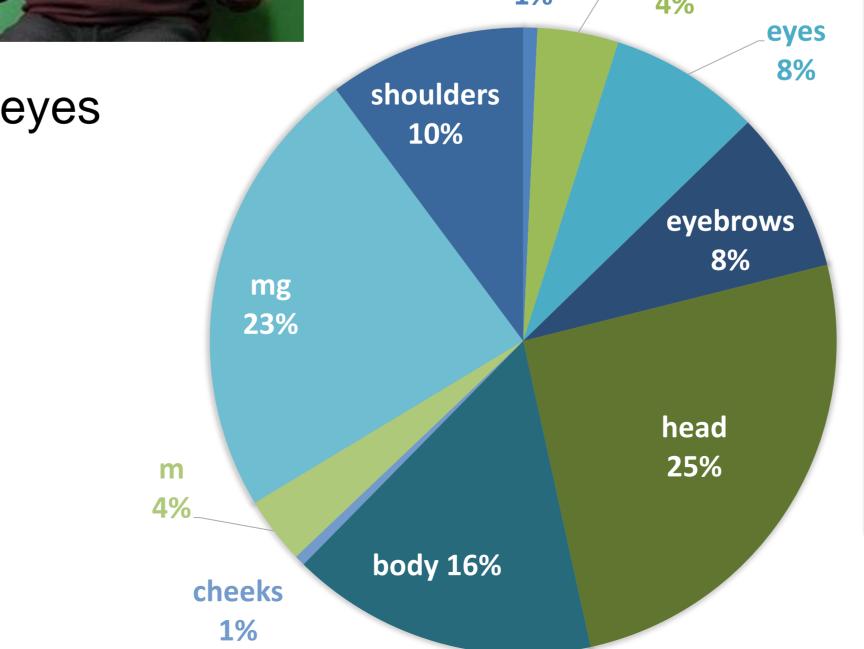
Which nonmanual signals accompany PU in RSL?
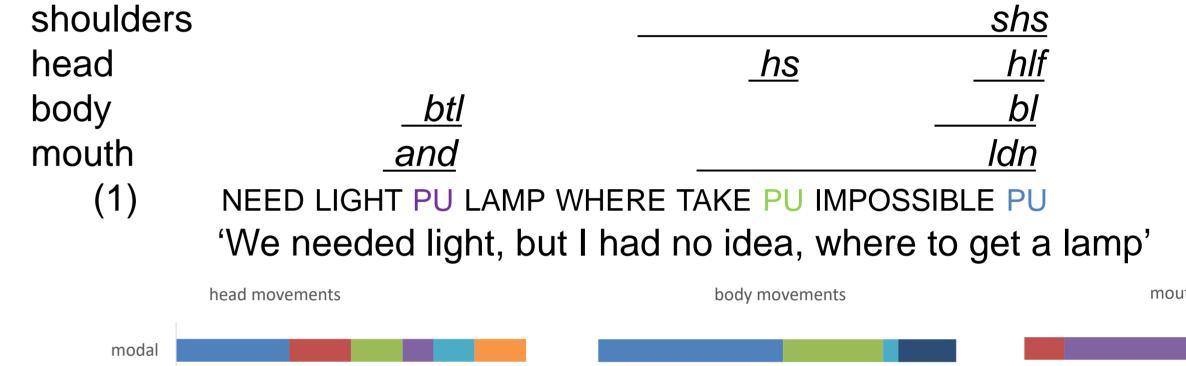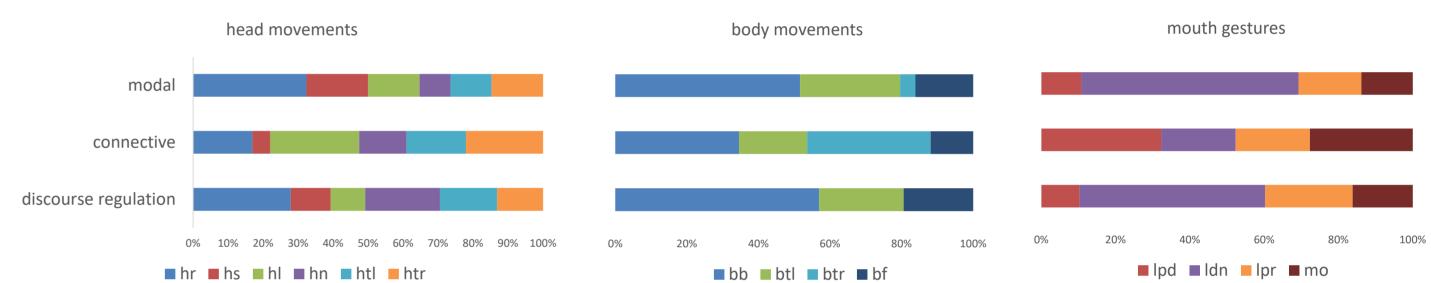

head movements   mouth gesture   body movements

shoulder shrug   eyes

eyebrows

PU CO-EXPRESSION WITH NONMANUALS

nose 1%
eyegaze 4%
eyes 8%
eyebrows 8%
head 25%
body 16%
cheeks 1%
m 4%
mg 23%
shoulders 10%

Results

Three main functions were identified in the RSL data (as in (1)):

- discourse regulation (49%)
- modal meaning (28%)
- connection (23%)

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shoulders                              shs
head                         hs        hlf
body                btl                bl
mouth               and                ldn
(1)  NEED LIGHT PU LAMP WHERE TAKE PU IMPOSSIBLE PU
     'We needed light, but I had no idea, where to get a lamp'
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hr (head turn to the right); hs (head shake); hl (head turn to the left); hn (head nod); htl (left head tilt); htr (right head tilt); bb (body lean backwards); btl (body shift to the left); btr (body shift to the right); bf (body lean forwards); lpd (lips pushed forward); ldn (corners of the mouth lowered down); lpr (lips pressed together); mo (mouth open)

➤ PALM-UP is a multifunctional discourse marker in RSL
➤ Nonmanual components accompanying PU are not indicative of its functions (complex behaviour of similar nonmanual signals)
➤ Functions appear to be predictable in terms of syntactic role
➤ Frame for mouthing is not regarded a function here (only 4% of PU were accompanied by mouthing (e.g. AND, HERE, ALL, OK, IF, HOW etc.)

syntactic position of PALM-UP

References

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