

Narrative templates and community sense-making: teaching performative differences between Greek Sign Language and spoken/written Greek at B2 level

Narrative templates may follow classic Labovian functional categories but are realized in various ways across cultures, genders and linguistic genres. Narrative pragmatics deal with key points of underlying regularities and organisational patterns that structure the shared everyday understanding and sense-making within a linguistic community.

The present study focuses on GSL narrative templates of B2 videotexts that have proven challenging to teach to students of GSL as L2. Parts of speech, paragraph structure and features of narratives as taught in examination tasks of aural/oral languages do not fully correspond to narrative features of GSL videotexts and do not provide students with adequate tools towards full linguistic understanding and production. For example, the structure of Abstract in narrative often reflects a different linguistic viewpoint in GSL and Complication looks unnatural unless intertwined with Evaluation throughout all phases in the signed modality, whereas regularities in lexical choices of narrative forms in GSL are often quite different from those of spoken / written Greek. These may be due to the communicative use of GSL, its visual-spatial modality and its unwritten/minority status. Nevertheless, teaching narrative forms at B level methodically as part of a syllabus has proven effective towards mastering the target language.