SLLG is a multidisciplinary school brought to you by the Department of Linguistics at the University of Geneva, with the aim of fostering sign language research and discovery of deaf culture and languages across disciplines. For its first edition, it will bring together students and scholars alike for a four-days teaching program consisting in six classes and workshops, during which our guests instructors will provide participants with an array of theoretical and practical tools commonly used within the field of sign language studies.

The school will take place both online and on-site and will feature hands-on workshops aimed at developing specific skills in sign language linguistics, such as corpus-based analyses, elicitation methods, experimental design and computational-based methods for sign language studies.

The event is open to students, researchers, and teachers from every discipline and does not require any background, nor previous knowledge of, sign languages. For further information, please contact David Blunier.

**Featured workshops**

- **Cindy van Boven** (Universiteit van Amsterdam):
  *Corpus-based analyses for sign languages*

- **Bastien David** (Université de Genève):
  *Case studies from NLP research in sign languages: BabelDr and JASigning Avatar projects*

- **Evgeniia Khristoforova** (Universiteit van Amsterdam):
  *Experimental design for sign language research*

- **Vadim Kimmelman** (Universitetet i Bergen):
  - Analysis of lexical variation using a database of Russian Sign Language
  - Using Computer Vision for linguistic analysis of sign languages

- **Giorgia Zorzi** (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen):
  *Elicitation methods for sign languages*
Organization

David Blunier, University of Geneva, Dpt of linguistics

Venue

November 16 - 19, Université de Genève, salle Denis de Rougemont

The school will take place in a hybrid format, both online and on-site in Geneva. All the instructors will be teaching live and classes will be broadcasted on Zoom. Important note: due to the sanitary situation, the school is limited to 30 on-site participants. All participants will be asked a valid sanitary pass in order to attend the school, following restrictions currently enforced in Switzerland.

Unfortunately, due to several shortcomings brought about by the current sanitary situation, we are unable to provide a live translation in ASL or ISL. Please contact the organizers if you are impacted by this setup.

Tuition, accommodation and travel expenses

There is no tuition to be paid for the school, attendance is free of charge. Travel expenses and accommodation are guaranteed to be reimbursed for students coming from Swiss Universities. Foreign students, please contact David Blunier.

Registration

Send an email with your name and affiliation, including a brief motivation paragraph explaining why you would like to attend the school to David Blunier.

Workshops abstracts

Cindy van Boven (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Corpus-based analyses for sign languages

After a general introduction on sign language data collection, this workshop will focus on one specific type of data: corpus data (to put it broadly: studying the language based on large collections of data). It will be demonstrated what exactly a corpus is, and we will discuss the (dis)advantages of collecting corpus data. We do this by means of looking at corpus data from Sign Language of the Netherlands as well as Russian Sign Language. In the practical part of this class, we practice with searching in a corpus using ELAN, providing you with a step-by-step guide of using a corpus to answer your research question(s).
Bastien David (Université de Genève)

**Case studies from NLP research in sign languages: BabelDr and JASigning Avatar projects**

After an introduction to the FTI projects on sign languages, this presentation will focus on the use of translation avatars developed in the framework of the BabelDr project. We will start with a theoretical presentation on the evolution of translation avatars and notation methods. We will present the different steps involved in the creation of a translation avatar in JASigning. We will also discuss the place of translation technologies of sign languages in the medical environment, as well as its advantages and drawbacks compared to other methods.

In the practical part of this presentation, we will learn how to animate a JASigning avatar using the HamNoSys language. We will create a prototype of multi-variables grammar from a medical video corpus. Finally, we will generate our virtual character in order to obtain an example of a medical corpus.

Evgeniia Khristoforova (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

**Experimental design for sign language research**

In this class, we are going to dive into quantitative experimental methods such as acceptability judgment tasks and comprehension assessment tests. These techniques allow to probe even deeper into language phenomena and therefore perfectly complement corpus investigation and elicitation methods. We will look at acceptability judgment tests developed to study agreement in Russian Sign Language, as well as a test developed to assess comprehension of relative clauses in Italian Sign Language, French Sign Language, and Catalan Sign Language. We will also discuss various technicalities concerning experimental set-up, on-line vs on-site modes of data collection and interaction with participants. As a practical part, we will develop our own acceptability judgment experiment and briefly discuss how to treat the results obtained by this method.
Vadim Kimmelman (Universitetet i Bergen)

**Analysis of lexical variation using a database of Russian Sign Language**

Sign languages like all natural languages vary in space, time, and society. The same concept can be expressed by different signs, and the choice of the variant sign might depend on the region, age of the signer, as well as on sign-language specific factors, such as the school they attended, and the age of acquisition of the sign language. In this workshop, we will use a newly created database of lexical variation in Russian Sign Language which contains more than 19,000 sign tokens by more than 250 RSL signers. Participants will be able to try hands-on research on patterns of variation and possible factors that can explain this variation.

**Using Computer Vision for linguistic analysis of sign languages**

Annotation of sign language data is extremely time-consuming and requires a lot of training. Computer Vision might offer a solution by automatizing measurement extraction for at least some phonetic aspects of signed speech. In this lecture, I will discuss case studies of extracting phonetic information concerning nonmanual markers in Kazakh-Russian Sign Language. I will show that Computer Vision can be used for such analysis, but that a lot of work is still required to make this instrument accessible and useful to researchers.

Giorgia Zorzi (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen)

**Elicitation methods for sign languages**

This class aims at providing an introduction to qualitative elicitation methods in sign language research. We will explain what they consist in and list the advantages and limitations of working with this type of data, compared to corpus data in different areas of linguistics. We will focus on the methodology used to elicit sign language data, and how to annotate the data collected. In the practical part of this class, we will learn how to use the software ELAN to annotate and gloss actual sign language data practicing on video examples from Catalan Sign Language and Italian Sign Language.
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<td>Participants welcome, online check&lt;br&gt;12:00 Introduction</td>
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