

**Individual Paper Session 2**  
**Others**  
**Tuesday, July 4**  
**10:00-10:30am**

**The second language acquisition of referential cohesion in Australian Sign Language (Auslan)**

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In this paper, we discuss the second language acquisition of referential cohesion in Australian Sign Language (Auslan) narratives. We report on the results of a process-product study investigating possible relationships between instructional differences and learning outcomes in a communicatively-based Auslan teaching program. Seventy-eight hours of classroom observation data were collected from four control groups of students from two classes of adult advanced-level learners (Diploma in Auslan level, or DOA) and two classes of adult intermediate-level learners (Certificate III in Auslan level, or CIA) and from two experimental groups composed of one class of adult advanced-level students and one class of adult intermediate-level students.

This study employed a systematic observation tool (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching observation scheme). Both quantitative and qualitative analyses of data identified the instructional orientations used as (1) functional-analytic, (2) structural-analytic and (3) experiential.

To determine whether these instructional differences contributed to variation in improvement, data collected from both a pre-test and post-test of students' referential cohesion production were analysed using VARBRUL multivariate statistical software. The results indicated a significant difference in accuracy: students from both of the CIA and DOA experimental groups instructed using a functional-analytic approach scored significantly higher for the accurate use of referential cohesion than students from both of the CIA and DOA control groups using either structural-analytic or experiential approaches.

A number of other factors appeared to be significant. Students appeared to do better with the use of pronouns and determiners than with agreement and spatial verbs, and better with explicit anaphoric reference than other types of referential cohesion. Implications are discussed in terms of the second language acquisition of referential cohesion in signed languages and the need to include functional-analytic orientation in signed language teaching.