

Placements and locations

BSL is a 4 dimensional language thus we use placements and locations as well as time to show movements within the signing space.

Placement:

This is used for objects, people, animals; and ideas. By placing these within the signing space and in different positions we can sign phrases like:

‘the window looks over the river’

‘the organisation has a Management Committee and 3 sub Committees’

Referents:

When something or someone has been placed or established within the signing space we can then refer back to these by pointing with the index finger. This help to prevent repetition of the concerning item as long as both the signer and observer remembers what and where these sources are.

Eye Gaze:

Sometimes eye gaze is enough to refer to the established source without having to use pointing. Or it may be possible to point at one thing and look at the other thus refer to two sources at once.

Enumeration:

Ideas, events, people, and objects can be listed on the fingers and referred back to it e.g.

‘I have 3 brothers – Mark, Ian, and Tom’

Simultaneity:

Within spoken languages it is only possible to say one word at the time which means the language is 1 dimensional. In sign language by using both hands, it is possible to sign several ideas simultaneously e.g.

‘get on the bus/train’

‘3 year old child,

There are two types of signing space – **Syntactic and Topographic** space.

Topographic space means recreating a map of the real world. This is a spacial layout in signing space of things as they really are.

e.g. 'If the church is opposite the fruit shop, and the fruit shop is next to the post office, then we place them that way in signing space. If we place the signs somewhere else, or we do not attempt to place them at all, then it is ungrammatical'

Syntactic space uses grammatical structures which move in space between grammatically defined points.

e.g. 'I gave my Aunt a book' – the real aunt does not have to be where the signer placed her for this sentence (the signer could have posted it to her from London to Tokyo) but the grammatical location of the aunt is the same and that is where the book is directed'.

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