

Effatha gebaren: The emergence of a sign language dialect

Joni Oyserman, Ingeborg Groen, Joe Mackenzie, Monika Baar (LUIH), Victoria Nyst (LUCL)

Effatha gebaren is an endangered dialect of Nederlandse Gebarentaal. It emerged in the protestant deaf school Effatha that was established in Leiden in 1888 and later moved to Dordrecht, Voorburg and Zoetermeer. This project aims at identifying, documenting and analyzing Effatha gebaren and its early history.

Research questions

- What are Effatha gebaren and how did they emerge?
- What do elderly Effatha students remember about the repertoire and use of Effatha gebaren?
- How many and which Effatha gebaren have been documented in dictionaries so far?

Methodology

No access to archives => so, plan B:

- Oral history interviews
- Digitization and analysis of dictionaries

Dictionaries

- 1) *Handen uit de Mouwen* (Dovenraad/NSDSK, 1988)
 - 2) *Gevoelsgebaren* (NSDSK, 1993)
 - 3) *Online woordenboek NGT* (NGc)
- => Differences in iconicity
=> Loan translations in Effatha gebaren, cf. DOODSBANG
=> Concept not found in other variants: PIETJE-PRECIES

	van Dale	HudM	Gevoel	Overlap	Total
Unieke Effatha varianten	12	24	29	1	64
Effatha variant gedeeld met 1 andere variant	10	16	34	2	62 (R'dam =27)

* in 14 cases is a sign marked as Effatha sign the same as the proposed standard sign (STABOL).



doodsbang-1
schouder optrekken; zeer angstige mimiek

[Standard]



doodsbang-2
krachtige en snelle beweging zeer angstige mimiek licht naar binnen zuigen

[Amsterdam]



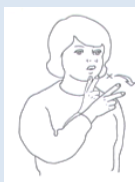
doodsbang-3

[Effatha]

Interviews with 4 former Effatha students, schoolperiod 1938-1956 (total recorded: 150 min.)

- Use of pictures, 15-items questionnaire list, signs and younger former pupil as interviewer to trigger memories
- Annotation interviews using ELAN software
- Deaf history embedded in signs, e.g. VADER: story of boarding school "father", who threw his cigar on the wooden floor in anger. The floor then caught fire.
- Documentation of school name signs (different from adult name signs)
- Name signs generalized to lexicon, e.g. VADER, MOEDER
- Signs sometimes substantially different in form or not documented in dictionaries, e.g. MEISJE, WEEKEND
- Hand alphabet not allowed for pupils and teachers to use. Pupils learned it as adults after leaving school

VADER



Dictionary & interview (CIGAR + FLING_DOWN)

MEISJE



MEISJE: standard & Effatha



Interview setting

Preliminary conclusions

- * More discussion on archival access for Deaf history => long term goal: Deaf History Archive.
- * Interviews find new & different variants => large scale oral history interviews needed.
- * New information about etymology and use of signs

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