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## Looking for Sign Language Universals in JSL Modals

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### ABSTRACT

Bross & Hole (2017) (hereafter BH) proposed that the universal modality ordering observed in spoken languages as argued for by Cinque & Rizzi (2008) could be extended to signed languages. BH's examination of German Sign Language (DGS), an SOV language, leads them to propose that the wider the scope of the modal, the higher the articulator that articulates it. That is, raised brows are higher than cheeks, mouth is higher than hands, etc. Further, intermediate-scope modals take scope left-to-right, and lowest-scope modals take scope right-to-left.

This hypothesis has already been preliminarily tested for Turkish Sign Language (TİD) (Karabüklü & Wilbur, 2018), also an SOV language. In this they found support for the right-to-left modal sequencing but not for left-to-right sequencing. There were also complications for the predictions such as what it meant if/when the same articulator was used, viz. the eyes, for multiple modalities that are predicted by BH to be distinct.

In this study we will present preliminary results of testing this hypothesis for Japanese Sign Language (JSL) with five JSL Deaf signers. JSL is an SOV language also, and it requires all modal signs to occur sentence finally. Ichida (2010) describes the use of the face for many speech-act-indicating operators, and Matsuoka et al. (2016) describe the restrictions of ordering the multiple modals that occur sentence finally. Our research examines whether the systems already proposed by these authors fit into BH, and/or whether BH provides new predictions and explanations for the systems already described.

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