

# Language-learning of the deaf child: the lexical and grammatical aspects of Brazilian Sign Language

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## Abstract

The object of study of this research pertains to psycholinguistics and investigates the acquisition and processing of language. More specifically, it addresses the acquisition of the aspectual category in a deaf child who is learning Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) as his first language. Considering that the generative theory has been the foundation, in large part, of the research on language acquisition of deaf children who are learning Libras as their first language, and that this research proves that the stages through which deaf children pass until they reach a certain grammatical level of the language are analogous to the hearing child, and that the descriptions of its grammatical structure have increased greatly, we ask: What are the hypotheses that can explain the process of acquiring the aspectual category by a deaf child? Does the deaf child, in the process of learning Libras as his first language, differentiate between tense and aspect? Reflecting on this, let us consider the general linguistic theory, which adopts Comrie (1976) and the linguistics of Libras, which follows Finau (2004). In both of these, the considerations reflect a lexical and grammatical context and the aspectual difference between the perfective and imperfective. In this regard, it is the naturalistic,

longitudinal, and spontaneous research that governs this analysis. The subject under investigation is a deaf girl with the pseudonym of ANA, the daughter of deaf parents who was learning Libras as her first language. ANA was filmed from the age of 8 months until 4 years – more than three years of data. The corpus used is the domain of the research group on the acquisition of Brazilian Sign Language of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, directed by Ronice Muller Quadros, and, when solicited by researchers, the data is available, dealing with different means of analysis in order to serve as the corpus for the distinctive objects of inquiry. The model for transcription used was the System of Notation of Words that was created and developed by the researcher, Tânia Amara Felipe, in 1998. In this analysis it is seen that the child principally produces the lexical perfective aspect, a phenomenon which is analogous to the hearing child learning the spoken language. The presentation of the grammatical aspect is also found in the use of verb inflections. These inflections occur through morphological alterations or movements, and are mostly in the perfective order, just as is presented in the theories of the grammatical acquisition of oral languages.

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