

Holiday

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Worksheet

Introduction

Most users of a spoken language understand a sentence by processing the order that the words happen in. In the sentence 'Jamil was laughing' we know that it was Jamil who laughed, because the name 'Jamil' came before the word 'laughed'. However, in signed languages, learners have to open their minds to a grammar that relies on a 3D space, not a chronological order. They have to alter their thinking from, "What sign comes next?" to "What sign moves where?"

Activity Aims

This activity will encourage you to examine the way that British Sign Language (BSL) uses the signing space to convey grammatical information. It will help you to recognise different types of placement and how subtle changes in movement and pace can influence meaning.

Level

Intermediate Plus

Time needed

Approx 3 hours +

Pre-task activity

1) In groups or on your own, write down all the associated vocabulary that you might expect to see used (or you may have used) when talking about a holiday e.g. booking flights, destinations, hotels etc.

2) Watch the BSL clip first and write down the main concepts/ ideas of the story. Watch the clip again.

Don't worry if you don't get all the information first, second or even the third time. We will be working through the meaning in the activity.

Tip: This activity is very useful as it will help you prepare for what you are about to watch. It can also help you to recognise new signs or finger-spelling.

LANGUAGE AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

1 Fingerspelling

a) Read and rewrite the sentence below:

“I smetmes feel that I do nt undrstnd words tht are fger-splt. I nw knw tht I cn use cultural knowledge to fl n the gps. I need to look for pptrns in wrds and frequently ocuring ndings”

Tip: Even though some words may not be easy to understand your brain fills in the gaps. You'll find that it is the same with fingerspelling. So instead of trying to capture each individual letter, look for the first couple and any other common patterns (e.g. I. N. G., or G.H.) and then let the context and your brain fill in the gaps for you.

b) List the 2 instances when the signer uses incomplete or inaccurate fingerspelling

Name	Actual fingerspelling	Timings

Tip: Although information may not always be spelt correctly is it clear what is meant because we can use our contextual or cultural knowledge to determine the meaning.

c) What strategy does the signer use to give us the name of the hotel? (2.07).

Tip: This technique is used to create a sign name in order to avoid finger-spelling the name over and over again. It may also be used to aid the receivers in case the finger-spelling was not picked up or unclear.

2 Verb Behaviour

a) Some verbs can convey extra information by their hand-shape or movement. For example, we know *where* the signer goes, because the verb GO moves towards his destination. Look at the table below for further examples, and use the video clip to help you fill in the blanks.

Can the verb below change to show:	Subject / Object (see glossary)	Tense (when, e.g. I go, I went)	Number (How many, e.g. Six of us went)	Location (Where things are happening, e.g. I walk from home to work.)	Explain how the verb changes to show these features (Use examples from the clip or from your own knowledge).
GO				✓	Subject / Object: Tense: Number: Location: The start and end point of the sign GO can give information about location. This is only grammatically correct if the verb movement uses the locations placed within the signing space (1.02)
TEXT		X			Subject / Object: Tense: N/A Number: Location:
FLY					Subject / Object: Tense: Number: Location:
CONFIRM			X		Subject / Object: Tense: Number: N/A Location:

Tip "A few verbs in some BSL dialects differ depending on whether the action is in the past or present e.g. WIN/WON, SEE/SAW, ..." (Sutton Spence and Woll 1998:116). Other verbs don't change to show tense so you need to add a separate sign, for example, LAST YEAR'. We could also use the same principle to show the future – 'NEXT YEAR I GO'. This adverb of time often comes at or near the start of the BSL sentence.



b) If the verb does not change to show number, tense, subject or location then how can you convey that information? Translate the following examples into BSL:

- i. My friend flies from Manchester to Jamaica. (subject)
- ii. My friend flew to Jamaica. (past tense)
- iii. I text from work (location)
- iv. I send lots of texts. (number)
- v. We confirm the flight. (subject)
- vi. I confirmed my train ticket. (past tense)

Now based on your observations, complete the following sentences:

Subject

If the verb does not show the subject by its movement, then you need to

These alternative handshapes are known as classifiers in sign linguistics and are very common in BSL.

Tense

Very few BSL verbs change to show tense, so you need to

Number

If the verb does not change to show number then you need to



Location

If the verb doesn't give information about location by where it moves to and from, then you need to

Tip: For example, if you were flying from Scotland to London, in which direction would the sign fly go? Consider where your locations are and how you would refer to them in the signing space after setting them up.

c) At (1.43) and (1.45), the signer uses the same handshape and movement to express different meanings. What are these meanings?

- i. 1.43 _____
- ii. 1.45 _____

3 d) How does the signer differentiate between the meanings?

Tip: Manner in BSL is shown through the use of Non Manual Features. In English we may say 'I walked slowly' using a separate word (adverb) to explain how we walked. In BSL this is done simultaneously using non manual features.

e) What is your sign for PLANE? In the signed sentence "We got off the plane" (1.47), how does the signer's handshape for plane change from what you know?

f) Take a look at 3.24 and 2.00 for further examples of this. Why do you think his handshape changes from the original sign? What does it allow him to show?



Tip: Even though there are specific signs for SLOW, GREEDY, and QUICK, consider whether you need them. Is there another way to convey the information?

g) Think of a journey you have been on and set up the places within your signing space. Now, using the signs FLY and then DRIVE, describe how you got there. Consider using a visual map in your signing space and place the locations according to where they are in real life. How would you sign TAKE OFF, LAND,

4 BOARD, DISEMBARK, etc. ?

5 Manner

a) What extra information does the signer convey about manner through his non-manual-features (NMF's) at the following points:

- i. Receiving a text message (1.22 – 1. 28)
- ii. Seeing the children with no shoes (5.02)
- iii. Eating (2.53)

b) Look at the following sentences and consider how you would add the adverb of manner in BSL.

- i. read slowly
- ii. eat greedily
- iii. sign quickly



6

Pace

a) Pace can be used in BSL to add impact. How does the signer use it within the following examples?

- i. Fly - Manchester to Jamaica (1. 38)
- ii. Rain - (4.02)
- iii. Running home (4.07)



Translation Task

(a) What phrases or words might be used in English to express the downpour?

(b) What other idiomatic expression is used within the clip in relation to the heat (1.50)? How would you express this in English?

(c) Practise translating the following idiomatic expressions into BSL. Consider the meaning. What non manual features would you incorporate? Do any of these translate into BSL quite literally?

- i. My sister likes to beat around the bush.
- ii. I'm hitting my head against a brick wall.
- iii. I eat chocolate once in a blue moon.
- iv. My boyfriend drinks like a fish.

7 Ask your BSL tutor or a fluent sign language user for advice.

Placement and Visual Representation

a) Within the section (1.30 – 1.34) of the clip, how do we know that the signer is still referring to Jamaica?

b) Draw the Hotel Complex (from 2.12). (Note: building, number of floors, how it's built, what is around it and behind it, where are the restaurants, etc.)



8 (i) How does the signer show that the hotel overlooks the pool? (2. 22)

(ii) Using your drawing, sign the hotel complex. Consider the techniques that the signer uses in the video and try to incorporate them in your version.

c) Think of a place you have visited or a place you would like to visit, e.g. a holiday complex. Using the same language features as the signer describe the place you have in mind. Consider different heights, distances, sizes, use of placement, non manual features, manner etc.

Distance

How does the signer indicate distance in the following examples?

9 Section	Examples of distance
Plane flight from Manchester to Jamaica (1. 38)	
Referring to the sea (3.34)	
In relation to sailing (3.28)	
Talking about running home (4.08)	
Distance to sea (3.06)	



What strategies does the signer employ to show number?

Concept/ time on the clip	Answer of how number is shown
Animals (4.49)	
Houses (4.52)	
Food types (2. 31)	
Brothers and sisters going to Jamaica (0.22)	
Trees (1.54)	
The family have grown up... (4. 46)	

Vocabulary

Do you know any variations of the following signs? Ask around at the deaf club or your BSL class for any regional or generational differences:

Sign Used within the clip	variation
Mother (0.29)	
Slavery (5.08)	
Africa (5.05)	(perhaps an old sign)
Holiday (0.13)	
Blue (3.14)	
Miles (3.28)	
£800 (0.50)	
£100 (1.08)	
White (relating to sand) (3.09)	