



Grammar, Gesture, and Meaning in American Sign Language

By Scott K. Liddell

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In the sign languages of the deaf some signs can meaningfully point toward things or can be meaningfully placed in the space ahead of the signer. Such spatial uses of signs are an obligatory part of fluent grammatical signing. There is no parallel for this in vocally produced languages. This book focuses on American Sign Language to examine the grammatical and conceptual purposes served by these directional signs and demonstrates a remarkable integration of grammar and gesture in the service of constructing meaning.

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Review

Liddell's "...non-polemical and carefully reasoned argumentation is a welcome relief in an overheated field...The lucidity of presentation and the cogency of the new analyses lead the reader into exploring rich new territory, rather than into quarrels about assessments of established domains. In the end, I expect that readers of various theoretical persuasions will have a number of "aha experiences" as they slowly come to understand and appreciate [Liddell's] re-mapping of the territory. This is a major contribution to sign language linguistics, and to linguistics generally."

Dan I. Slobin, University of California, Berkeley, Language

About the Author

Scott K. Liddell is Professor of Linguistics and Program Coordinator for the Linguistics Program at Gallaudet University, Washington DC. His publications include *American Sign Language Syntax* (1980), and he is also the author of nearly 40 articles and chapters relating to sign language grammar and the use of sign language in educating deaf students.

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