Know your terminology: On the relevance of definitions

Common terms are often not defined in research, although scientific and colloquial meaning or understanding may differ. Unspecified terms can be especially challenging for reduplication studies or adapting existing work, as I experienced in my dissertation project on metaphors in German Sign Language (DGS) regarding the umbrella term *cognition*. In this project, I seek to identify metaphors in the domain *cognition* in a pre-existing corpus. For metaphorical signs in the domain *cognition*, previous research suggests that the signs are articulated at or near the signer's head (Rosenstock 2006; Kimmelman et al. 2017; Zeshan & Palfreyman 2019). To identify metaphorical signs in the domain *cognition*, they create lists of potential meanings, amongst other methods.

In line with their approaches, I created a list of potential DGS signs in the domain *cognition*, including signs reported for other signed languages, e.g., TRUST[1] and UNDERSTAND. These signs were then manually searched for in the Public DGS Corpus (Konrad et al. 2020), however, with this method, I only elicited a limited number of signs. In a second step, I reversed the procedure by searching for all lexemes with the head as place of articulation (PoA) in the non-public DGS-Korpus (Hanke n.d.). Signs from other domains were manually cleared from this new list. However, this elimination process proved to be problematic, as some cases were more difficult to allocate to *cognition*, such as DREAM. To understand the term *cognition*, I only relied on my common knowledge and linguistic intuition, instead of questioning the interpretation of *cognition* in previous research. After a thorough research, I defined *cognition* as an umbrella term including many different aspects of mental processing, judgement, awareness, etc. (APA 2020). With this definition, I was able to discard many signs from the second list. However, some were still ambiguous and will be discussed with experts in different settings.

Therefore, in my work, the decision of whether signs belong to the domain of *cognition* or not is as transparent as possible. My plea is to not leave it up to the readership to interpret terminology, but instead, to offer definitions even though the terms might seem to be trivial. Only in doing so, discussions and replication studies that advance science can be encouraged.

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[1] Notational conventions: signs are glossed in small caps.