Mental Space Theory and Icelandic Sign Language

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1. Introduction

Signed languages are articulated in space and this is why the use of space is one of their most important features. They make use of 3-dimensional space and the way the space is organised during discourse is grammatically and semantically significant (Liddell 1990, Engberg-Pedersen 1993). The Theory of Mental Spaces (Fauconnier 1985) has been applied to signed languages and proves to be an especially good method when it comes to conceptual understanding of various aspects of signed languages. This paper is based on an M. Phil (Linguistics) dissertation submitted to University of Dublin, Trinity College, in 2007 and discusses how Mental Space Theory may be applied to Icelandic Sign Language (ÍTM). First I will introduce the Mental Space Theory and how it has been applied to American Sign Language (ASL). I then talk about blending mental spaces and how that can be realized in signed languages. This will include a discussion about metaphors and blending and body partitioning during blending. In chapters three and four, each of the above mentioned phenomena will be discussed in relation to ÍTM and examples to illustrate use will be provided.

1.1 The Data

ÍTM is the first language of approximately 200-300 Deaf people in Iceland (Sverrisdóttir. 2005). The narratives used here are told by three signers and contain the signer’s personal experiences. The signers are all fluent signers and active members of the Deaf community in Iceland. The narratives are recorded and owned by The Communication Centre for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing in Reykjavík.¹

2. Mental Space Theory

Mental spaces can be described as conceptual schematic images that are built up as we think and talk. Fauconnier and Turner talk about “long term schematic knowledge” on one hand and “long term specific knowledge” on the other (2003: 40). The schematic knowledge can be thought of as a frame, for example, a “…frame of walking along a path…” (Fauconnier and Turner 2003: 40). The specific knowledge, on the other hand, contains a memory of a specific event, such as last year’s vacation in Italy.

¹ I would like to thank the Communication Centre for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing in Reykjavík for providing me with my data.
Mental spaces, thus, are conceptual domains of meaning. They contain entities and are interconnected and as are the entities inside them. Once established, both mental spaces and the entities that they contain can be referred to later. Even though this happens through discourse, the mental spaces “...are not a part of the language itself, or of its grammars; they are not hidden levels of linguistic representation, but language does not come without them” (Fauconnier 1985: 1). Fauconnier talks about such linguistic expressions that establish new spaces, or refer to already established ones, as space builders (1985: 17). Words like today, yesterday, in 1977... all function as space builders in a discourse.

Entities inside mental spaces are linked together using connectors which makes it possible to refer to one entity in terms of another one. This means that objects of different nature, such as a writer and his work, can be associated with each other by establishing a link between them. For example, it is possible to say: ‘Plato is on the top shelf’ in order to mean: ‘The books by Plato are on the top shelf’. Here, ‘Plato’ refers to ‘the books by Plato’ (examples from Fauconnier 1985: 4). This reference can be realized using the Identification (ID) Principle, which allows the use of a to identify its counterpart b (Fauconnier 1985: 3). This is also referred to as the Access Principle by Sweetser and Fauconnier (1996). The entities linked by a connector are referred to as triggers and targets where the entity mentioned, is the trigger and the entity being referred to is the target. In the above example, ‘Plato’ is the trigger and ‘the books by Plato’ is the target. When the target and the trigger both function as possible antecedent for a pronoun, the connector is described as an open connector. This way, it is possible to say: ‘Plato is a great author. He is on the top shelf’, and the pronoun, he, refers to the target: ‘books by Plato’. If the target is the primary potential antecedent for a pronoun, the connector is described as a closed connector. This is the case in the next example where ‘the omelet’ refers to ‘a customer in a restaurant’: ‘The mushroom omelet left without paying. It was inedible’. Here, the pronoun it cannot refer to the target: ‘a customer in a restaurant’ (example from Fauconnier 1985: 8).

Connectors that link together mental spaces are always open. An established space will always be included in another space which is referred to as its parent space and the established space is referred to as a daughter space. Once a space is introduced in a discourse, the connector has to be able to pragmatically connect it to its parent space. Fauconnier states that connectors are: “…part of idealized cognitive models…which are set up locally, culturally, or on general experiential or psychological grounds” (1985: 10). For this reason, connectors may vary between different cultures, context or even individuals.

2.1 Spaces in American Sign Language (ASL)

Liddell (1995) defines three kinds of spaces in American Sign Language (ASL) based on Fauconnier’s theory of mental spaces (1985). The first mental space is the Real Space, the “…current, directly perceivable physical environment…” (Liddell 1995: 22). This space does not include real physical entities but a person’s conception of the current environment. Thus, this mental space is based on perception. Liddell (1995) also distinguishes between grounded mental space and non grounded mental space. He talks about grounded mental space when “…concepts are given physical reality, including a physical location…” (1995: 22). This applies on real physical objects in our environment like the cup of coffee on the table in front of you. If you are, on the other
hand, remembering the cup of coffee you had yesterday, that cup does not have a physical location and is thus treated as being in a non-grounded mental space. Unlike other mental spaces that are built up during discourse, the Real Space already exists because its existence depends on perception of the physical environment and not on linguistic discourse. Thus, it does not have to be established. (Liddell 1995: 23)

To refer to people and things that are not present signers use what Liddell (1995) calls Surrogate Space. In this space, signers treat entities as they were actually present even if they are not. This kind of reference is very common in signed languages and is used during role shifting (see for example Engberg-Pedersen 1993). This is done for example when quoting people, the signer will take on the role of whomever he is quoting while signing the quoted utterance. Entities within the surrogate space are referred to as surrogates by Liddell (1995, 2003) and he describes them as having “…the properties of being invisible, being normal sized, having body features, being viewed as present with the signer…” (1995: 28). The surrogates can be situated virtually anywhere around the signer; to the side of him, in front, behind, below or above him (Liddell 2003: 154). There are no surrogates in Real space as it only involves real entities.

Signers often use space to “establish an index” where a place in the signing space is associated with an entity. An entity can be established by articulating a lexical sign at a certain location in space or by producing the sign and then point or eye gaze to a location in space (Emmorey 1996). This location is called a locus and represents the established entity. The entity can then be referred to by simply pointing at the place where the index was established. This kind of space is called Token Space. According to Liddell, “tokens are conceptual entities given a manifestation in physical space” (1995: 33). Token space is more limited than Surrogate Space. It is situated in the signing space in front of the signer, circa from waist level up to the signer’s head (Fridman-Mintz and Liddell 1998: 258). The tokens that are established in this space, thus, are not “normal sized” as in surrogate space but fit into the limited physical signing space.

2.2 Blending

By blending mental spaces we can create a new domain of meaning. The spaces that are blended are called input spaces and the blended space, simply, a blend (Fauconnier and Turner 2003: 40-41). When two or more input spaces are conjoined, or blended, a new space is created which holds a meaning that is somewhat different than in the input spaces even though it contains elements from the theses spaces. If one or more of the inputs is a blend from a previous blending process, the final output blend is referred to as a megablend (Fauconnier and Turner 2003).

2.3 Blending in Signed Languages

Liddell talks about the process when “the signer’s body becomes someone or something else” as blending (2003: 152). This kind of blending occurs in surrogate space as mentioned above. Dudis (2004a/b) describes a conceptual blending process in ASL. To create a surrogate blend the signer in the physical real space is mapped onto a person in the event space. (Dudis 2004a: 221) For example, if the signer is describing
someone driving a car he can take on the driver’s role. In this case the surrogate, i.e. the \text{driver}\textsuperscript{2}, is visible because it is mapped onto the signer. The \text{car}, on the other hand, is mapped onto an empty space in the physical real space and, thus, is not visible. In a surrogate blend, the viewpoint of the signer and the counterpart entity is the same, i.e. the viewpoints are blended together.

Taub (2001) uses a double mapping system to show how metaphors can be realized in ASL. This is done by mapping together the iconic parts of signs and the metaphorical (i.e. conceptual) parts. Taub points out that signed languages “…have incredible potential for iconic expression of a broad range of basic conceptual structures (i.e., shapes, movements, locations, human actions)” (Taub. 2001: 3). However, not all iconic signs are to be treated as metaphors though, they are only metaphorical when used to describe an abstract concept (Taub 2001: 21).

2.4 Body Partitioning

Dudis (2004a/b) and Wulf & Dudis (2005) describe what they call \textit{body partitioning} during blending. This means that a part of the signer’s body is partitioned off to create a new, distinct blend. When this occurs, one blend might, for example, include the manual articulators and another blend includes the rest of signer. These blends then have to be combined in a megablend in order for the utterance to be understood. This happens frequently during production of polymorphemic verbs\textsuperscript{3}. Liddell (2003) and Dudis (2004b) refer to them as depicting verbs.

By partitioning a signer is able to exhibit various different blends during signed discourse “…and such divisions allow the simultaneous visible representation of different entities in a grounded blend” (Wulf & Dudis 2005: 321). In such multible blends one blend can include the manual articulators and another the signer’s face and yet another the rest of the signer’s body. These kind of blends occur in real space and, according to Dudis, are “…a staple of ASL discourse”, produced to enrich demonstrations of the signed narrative (2004b: 224).

A megablend involving polymorphemic verbs can show two different scenes through one point of view. One scene involves the surrogate blend and the other involves what Dudis (2004a) calls depicting blend (the manual articulators producing a polymorphemic verb).

3. Mental Space Theory and ÍTM

In previous section we discussed mental spaces as they have been described by Fauconnier (1985) and Fauconnier and Turner (2003). We described mental spaces as conceptual domains of meaning and observed that they are not a part of the language itself but rather, they can be thought of as schematic images that are built up as we

\textsuperscript{2} Elements in a blended space are represented in vertical line brackets

\textsuperscript{3} Polymorphemic verbs (also called classifier predicates) are a class of verbs that consist of a movement morpheme and a classifier handshape morpheme. The handshape stands for the referent and the movement and location of the verb represents the movement and location of the referent. They are thus somewhat isomorphic with the real world (Valli and Lucas 1992, Sutton-Spence & Woll 1999).
think and talk (Fauconnier 1985, Fauconnier and Turner 2003). We will now take a look at how the Theory of Mental Spaces may be applied to ITM. Fauconnier’s (1985) mental space theory includes reference to three kinds of space: real space, surrogate space and token space. In this section, we will consider how each applies to ITM, and look at examples to illustrate use.

3.1 Real space

As we discussed in chapter two, Liddell (1995) has defined three kinds of spaces in ASL based on Fauconnier’s theory of mental spaces (1985). The first space to be described here is real space. Because this space already exists, it does not have to be established (Liddell 1995). Real space is based on perception, including the addressee’s perception of the signer in the real physical environment (Liddell 1995). When a signer is referring to entities in the physical environment by, for example, pointing at them, he is referring to entities in real space, a grounded mental space (Liddell 1995, 2003). If a signer is referring to entities that do not have a physical location, he can assign them a location in the signing space and those entities are also considered to be in a grounded mental space (Liddell 1995). An entity that does not have a physical location is understood to be in a non-grounded mental space. A recollection of an entity, for example, does not establish this entity in a grounded mental space. Since it is being remembered, it does not have physical location and, thus, should be treated as being in a non-grounded mental space (Liddell 1995, Liddell 2003).

3.2 Surrogate space

Another space defined in ASL by Liddell (1995) is surrogate space. When a signer shifts reference by taking on the role of another person, this takes place in surrogate space. Here, the signer treats entities as if they were present even when they are not and, thus, surrogates form a part of a grounded mental space (Liddell 1995). In the ITM data, this occurs, for example, when a narrator is describing when she, as a child, came to the Deaf school for the first time: She is walking around, holding hands with her parents and looking around (Figure 1).

![Figure 1](image-url)

By shifting into the role of herself as a child, the signer creates a surrogate space in which she performs or acts out her own reaction at the time. The school for the Deaf is understood to be of actual size and the signer - as a child - is inside the building. Thus,
this surrogate space is all around signer, mapped onto the real physical space around her. The signer’s parents are understood to be present and one of them is situated in the space to the right of the signer, holding her hand. The parent holding her hand is inferred as being of normal size and taller than the child due to the fact that the height that the signer’s right hand is located at suggests that she is holding hands with a taller person, i.e. one of her parents. The fact that they are holding hands suggests that the surrogates have body features. It can only be inferred from context that the signer is accompanied by her parents. It is not until later in this scene that the mother is assigned a locus on the signer’s right side, holding her hand. The school, on the other hand, is assigned a locus on the signer’s left side at the beginning of the scene. In this surrogate space, the school is invisible as it is mapped onto real space, as are the signer’s parents. The child, on the other hand, is visible because it is mapped onto the signer’s body: the signer ‘is’ the child.

3.3 Token space

The third space we will describe here is token space. Token space is different from surrogate space in that entities articulated in token space are not considered to be of real size (Liddell 1995). Rather, they are situated in the small physical signing space in front of the signer from waist level to head level (Fridman-Mintz and Liddell 1998). As discussed in Chapter 2, the signer can establish an entity in the signing space and this location in space is subsequently associated with that entity. An entity of this kind is referred to as a token (Liddell 1995, Fridman-Mintz and Liddell 1998, Liddell 2003). Once a signer has established an entity, it can be referred to again by pointing (Liddell 1995). Much like surrogates, tokens are a part of a grounded mental space (Liddell 1995, Liddell 2003).

Fridman-Mintz and Liddell (1998), note for ASL that when a sign is directed at a location in space where a token has been established, that location refers to any entity that is associated with this token. For example, one ÍTM signer begins a narrative by locating the Deaf school in the space on her left side. Later on, she refers to a conversation that she had in school with her classmate where they decided that the classmate would accompany her on a visit to her parents. This whole discourse is signed in the space on the left where the Deaf school had been established (Figures 2a-d). It is thus clear (from the fact that the conversation with her friend is co-referential with the locus for the school) that the conversation takes place in the Deaf school without the signer having to explicitly mention it. Thus, it is possible to refer to particular events associated with a token by signing at the location in space where the token was established.

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4 Note that lexical signs are glossed using capital letters.
4. Blending in Signed Languages

In the last section, we noted that mental spaces can be applied to a sign language discourse as well as a spoken language discourse. We will now observe how mental spaces can be blended together to create a new domain of meaning (Fauconnier and Turner 2003). The spaces that are blended together are referred to as input spaces. When spaces are blended, this results in a new space being created with a meaning somewhat distinct from the input spaces. This new space is referred to, simply, as a blend (Fauconnier and Turner 2003). Sometimes one of the input spaces is also a blend from a previous blending process. When this occurs, the final output blend is called a ‘megablend’ (Fauconnier and Turner 2003). In order to explore the ways in which this occurs in ITM, we will first have to consider several other notions, including, indicating verbs, blending and metaphors. We will then take a look at how signers can create a megablend by partitioning off parts of their body.

4.1 Indicating verbs

Verbs that are directed at entities in space are referred to as indicating verbs (Liddell 2003). These verbs have also been referred to as agreement verbs (Liddell 1990, Engberg-Pedersen 1993, Sutton-Spence & Woll 1999). Indicating verbs bear
information about the sender and the receiver of the verb. These entities are included in
the verb’s semantic pole where the sender is the trajector and the receiver is the
landmark (Liddell 2003). In order to understand these two entities it is necessary to
create mappings between entities in real space and mental space entities (Liddell 2003).
If signing I-INFORM-YOU, for example, the trajector (I) has to be mapped onto the
signer in real space while the landmark (YOU) has to be mapped onto the receiver in
real space. On the other hand, if signing I-INFORM-HIM and the landmark (HIM) is
not physically there, then the landmark has to be mapped onto an abstract entity in
mental space. This entity is not visible and in order to understand the utterance, the
addressee must know which entity the landmark corresponds to.

4.2 Blending in ÍTM

As discussed above, the phenomena of the signer shifting his role occurs in surrogate
space. By doing this, the signer is blending different spaces. Take for example the
surrogate event discussed above where the signer is in the role of herself as a child
coming to the Deaf school for the first time accompanied by her parents (Figure 1,
shown again below).

Figure 1

Here, one input space includes the signer herself in real space, the empty physical space
around her and the present time. Another input space, the event space, consists of the
child, the parents and the Deaf school.\(^5\) This space also includes the time of the event
being described, in this case, the day that the child went to the Deaf School for the first
time. These two spaces blended together create a third space, the blended space, which
has a meaning on its own, different from the two input spaces. This space contains \{the
child, the parents, the Deaf school\} and the time of the event, \{the day that the child
got to the Deaf School for the first time\}. The fourth space needed to complete the
blending process is a generic space. According to Dudis (2004a: 222), this space
“...serves to guide the counterpart mappings between the two inputs.” It includes
entities from both the input spaces at a schematic level without the blending process
being completed. In this case, the generic space includes two individuals, an object and
the time of the event. The blending process is shown in Figure 3. The blend described
above, is seen from the addressee’s point of view. In the real space input, the only
visible element accessible is the signer as conceptualized by the addressee. According

\(^5\) Entities within the event space are italicized
to Dudis (2004a) the event space is established by the signer during production of linguistic expressions. Liddell (2003) refers to a blend that includes surrogates as a surrogate blend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real Space</th>
<th>Event Space</th>
<th>Generic Space</th>
<th>Blended Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signer</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Individual C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty physical space around signer</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Individuals M and D Object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present time</td>
<td>Deaf school</td>
<td>Time of the event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(past) the day that the child went to the Deaf School for the first time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3

4.3 Metaphors and blending

A conceptual blending process may be used to understand metaphors in sign languages (Taub 2001). By mapping together the iconic and conceptual parts of signs, a metaphorical meaning emerges. The metaphor that will be discussed here is the one that Reddy (1979) calls the conduit metaphor, which says that: COMMUNICATING-IS-SENDING\(^6\). That also involves that ideas are to be treated as objects and linguistic expressions as containers (cited in Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 10). The conceptual metaphor COMMUNICATING-IS-SENDING that can be found in spoken languages, such as English, is also realized in ASL (Taub 2001, Wilcox 2004). Taub (2001) discusses various signs in ASL that describe communication by using an iconic representation that corresponds to sending an object to a receiver, i.e. communicating.

This metaphor is also found in ÍTM. The sign x-INFORM-y\(^7\) is produced with a CL.Flat-o\(^8\) on the dominant hand. This sign always begins with a location on the signer’s forehead but the latter part of the sign changes according to the location of the receiver (Figures 4a-b). If the signer himself is the one being informed, the sign still begins with a location on the signer’s forehead and then ends at the signer’s chest (Figures 5a-b). Thus, the giver’s locus always coincides with the signer’s locus, even though the signer himself is not the originator of the idea. This occurs because the sign is body anchored in its citation form. The receiver’s locus, on the other hand, is changeable and can either coincide with the signer’s locus or be anywhere in the signing space.

The initial location corresponds to what Brennan (1990) noted for BSL, namely that the forehead as a location for signs is strongly associated with cognitive processes such as thinking. Wilcox (1993) noted that in ASL, the metaphor THE-LOCUS-OF-THOUGHT-IS-THE-HEAD localizes signs related to thoughts on the head, especially the forehead (cited in Taub 2001). Other signs in ÍTM that are connected to thought also have a location on the forehead, for example, REMEMBER (Figure 6a) and KNOW (Figure 6b).

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\(^6\) Metaphors are represented in small capitals to differentiate them from sign glosses.

\(^7\) x-INFORM-y = subject-INFORM-object

\(^8\) CL-flat-o represents the classifier handshape.
Wulf and Dudis point out that the metaphor is visible already on the articulatory level: “…the physical structure of the sign represents a schematic version of a prototypical scene from the source domain” (2005: 325). Furthermore, they state that the iconic articulatory features that are being used have been chosen in relation to what they are supposed to represent. The CL.Flat-o in x-INFORM-y, for example, represents an object being held, in this case, an idea. Literally the sign shows an object being taken out of the signers head. An English sentence like “I can’t get this out of my head” has the same realization where an entity, an idea, can physically be taken out of one’s head. The second part of this sign is not arbitrary either. It expresses an object being handed over to someone, which is exactly what is happening on the iconic level: the signer takes an object out of his head and gives it to a receiver. On the metaphorical level however, it is understood that an addressee, i.e. a communicator, is expressing an idea to an addressee. Thus, it is clear that this sign incorporates the conceptual metaphor COMMUNICATING-IS-SENDING.

Figure 4a-b, x-INFORM-y ‘he informs the person beside him’

Figure 5a-b, head: NEG--------
dh: x-INFORM-c⁹
‘I was not informed’

⁹c stands for the signer’s locus.
The two inputs in this blend are the articulators in real space and the source elements, the giver, the receiver and the object being given. The output, the target, is the conceptual realization of Communicating-is-sending. Only when we run the blend here does it capture the metaphorical meaning of the sign: “…composition of elements from the inputs makes relations available in the blend that do not exist in the separate inputs.” (Fauconnier and Turner 2003: 42)

Figure 6a, REMEMBER

Figure 6b, KNOW

This is the case here: the two inputs of articulators and source elements do not on their own bear the meaning of x-INFORM-y and thus, the iconic map on its own could not carry the meaning of this sign. Looking at this blend, we see that it occurs between real space and the conceptual elements from the source domain (Figure 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articulators</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[empty space]</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forehead</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Mind (locus of thought)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand forming a CL. Flat-o</td>
<td>An object being held</td>
<td>Considering an idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL. Flat-o moves towards addressee’s locus</td>
<td>Giving an object to receiver</td>
<td>Communicating an idea to someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signer’s locus</td>
<td>Giver</td>
<td>Communicator of an idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressee’s locus</td>
<td>Receiver</td>
<td>Person that receives an idea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Body Partitioning

When blending occurs during signed discourse, signers are able to partition off parts of their body and by that create a new, distinct blend (Dudis 2004a/b, Wulf & Dudis 2005). During body partitioning, one blend might, for example, include the manual articulators while the other blend includes the rest of the signer’s body (Dudis 2004b). This results in the final output being a megablend but as discussed briefly in chapter two, a megablend occurs when one of the input spaces is also a blend from a previous
blending process (Fauconnier and Turner 2003). In signed languages this occurs frequently when using polymorphemic verbs: the signer's manual articulators are partitioned off while producing the verb and this serves as one input in the megablend.

ÍTM signers also make use of body partitioning, for example, as seen in Figure 8. In one blend, the real space input includes the signer’s body apart from her non-dominant hand, i.e. her left hand, which has been partitioned off. The event space includes the child, the parents and the Deaf school. In the second blend, the only visible entity is the signer’s non-dominant hand in real space. This kind of blend is referred to as depicting blend by Liddell (2003). In the depicting blend, the signer uses a classifier predicate to show her and her parents walk up a circular staircase. The blended space here includes the signer and her parents.

Figure 8 shows how the signer partitions off three body parts to create a megablend. In the narrative, the signer (as a child) is traveling in a car with her parents. They make a stop and the scene described in Figure 9 is one of the mother helping the child to pee on the grass. In this scene we have two blends: first, the signer’s non-dominant hand, i.e. the left hand, represents the hand of her mother holding the child upright. Second, the signer’s dominant hand represents the stream of pee and the signer’s mouth represents the sound of passing urine. The rest of the signer's body stands for the signer as a child.

Thus, here we have one blend that includes the child which is mapped onto the signer and the mother which is mapped onto the signer’s non-dominant hand as well as the empty physical space. In this blend the signer’s non-dominant hand has been partitioned off to represent the hand of the mother. Thus, the mother’s hand is mapped onto the signer’s non-dominant hand while the rest of the mother is mapped onto the empty physical space. Dudis (2004b: 231) has noted for ASL that a manual articulator may be partitioned off to stand for a second visible element of the same blend.

The second blend in Figure 9 includes the signer’s dominant hand which has been partitioned off to represent the stream of urine. The signer’s mouth has also been partitioned off here to create an onomatopoeic item representing the sound of peeing. The two body parts partitioned off here, the mouth and the dominant hand, are a part of the same blend. Only when these two blends are combined in one megablend, can the meaning of the utterance be understood.
Dudis (2004a) observes for ASL that two different viewpoints are available in a megablend like the one described above, where one blend includes the signer as a surrogate and the other blend a depicting verb. In such a megablend, the surrogate blend shows the participant’s viewpoint while the blend that includes the depicting verb shows the event from a more global point of view (Dudis 2004a).

In Figure 10 we see an example of two scenes being seen from one viewpoint using polymorphemic verbs. In this scene, the signer is describing having jumped on a ship and she is now hanging on the side of the ship, holding the handrails, her legs dangling on the outside of the gunwale. The signer’s non-dominant hand represents the signer as a surrogate, with her hand holding the handrail of the ship. The signer’s dominant hand is producing a CL.legs handshape representing the signer’s whole body hanging on the outside of the gunwale. The rest of signer is conceived in the role of the narrator. Here, we have two different perspectives from one point of view. The surrogate blend shows the signer’s perspective while the depicting blend with the classifier handshape represents a global point of view.

10 CL.legs and CL.bent-B stand for the classifier handshapes and the semantic information are shown after the + symbol.
5. Summary

We have now seen that Fauconnier’s theory of mental spaces can be applied to ÍTM. The three kinds of spaces that Liddell defined for ASL, based on Fauconnier’s theory, are also realized in ÍTM. Real space includes the signer in the physical environment as perceived by the addressee. We saw that surrogate space occurs in ÍTM when signers shift reference by taking on the role of another person. When this occurs, the signers act out the behaviour and reaction of this person and entities are treated as present in the situation. Entities in a surrogate space are considered as being of actual size and persons therefore considered to have body features. We also noted the use of token space in ÍTM. Signers locate entities in space and, unlike the surrogates, these entities are not considered to be of actual size, but these entities may be referred to later in the discourse. Furthermore we have seen that it is possible to refer to an event associated with a token by producing a sign in the same location in space where the token was established. We saw that in ÍTM, mental spaces can be blended together in order to create a new domain of meaning. When a signer shifts his role, this occurs in a surrogate space and the counterpart entity is mapped onto the signer’s body. Entities may also be mapped onto the empty physical space around the signer.

By using a double metaphorical mapping where the iconic part of the sign and the metaphorical correlates of that sign are blended together, it is possible to realize a metaphor in ÍTM. We saw that the articulators in real space and the source elements can not, on their own, bear the meaning of a metaphorical sign. The meaning of the sign is not realized until the double metaphorical mapping process is completed. During blending, ÍTM signers can partition off parts of their body to create a new blend. They can partition off the manual articulators to represent various entities or they can partition off a part of their face, e.g. their mouth, to create an onomatopoeic item. The parts that are partitioned off have to be combined in a megablend so the meaning of the utterance can be understood. Finally, we observed that ÍTM signers can show two scenes from one viewpoint when producing a surrogate blend and a depicting blend simultaneously. The surrogate blend shows the signers perspective and the depicting blend represents a global point of view.

References


