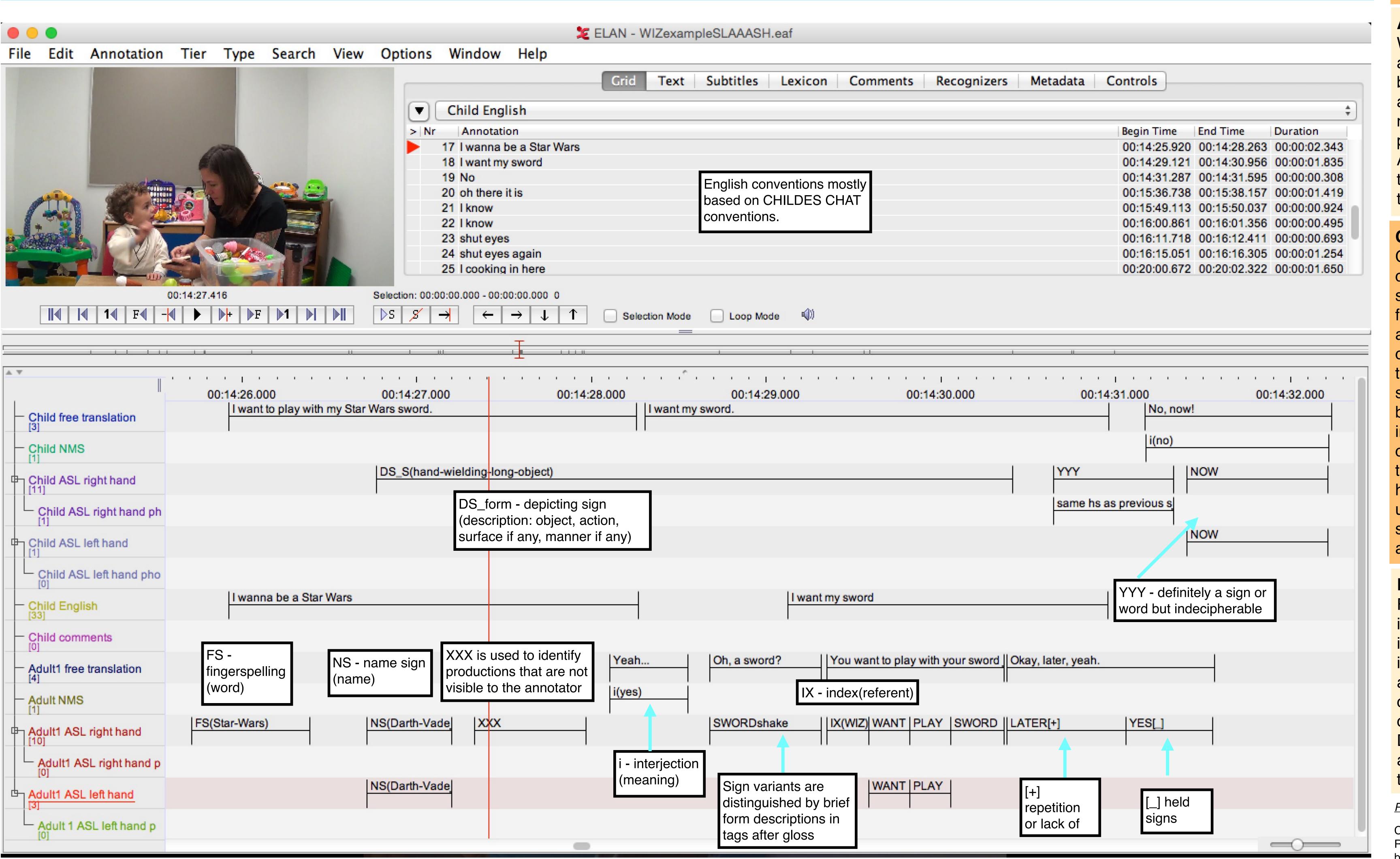# SLAAASh Project ASL Annotation Conventions

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Introduction
These conventions have been developed by a team of researchers at Gallaudet University and the University of Connecticut (GUC). The primary purpose is for the annotation of longitudinal spontaneous production data from Deaf children of Deaf parents and from bimodal bilingual hearing children of Deaf parents. Data collection and annotation is on-going.

Current data set

Group	#	Ages	# sessions	# annotated (sign)	# annotated (speech)
D/D	4	1;05-4;02	224	169	N/A
H/D	10	0;11-8;06	609	81	177
D/D (CI)	6	0;9-8;09	362	14	87

Annotation conventions take into consideration our analysis goals, and our attempt to use a format as consistent as possible with both common sign language annotation symbols and those used in CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000). The initial annotation passes focus on ID glossing of signs and words as well as translations. We are working toward use of an ID Gloss lexicon.

Adapted from Poster for Digging into Signs workshop March 2015
SLAAASh shares many conventions with the BiBiBi research project but there are a few differences. This poster is adapted from the poster for that with SLAAASh-specific conventions and comments here.

Annotator responsibilities
We aim to ask annotators to do as little analysis as possible. Our intention is to include basic information in the sign tiers, with additional details about use of space, non-manuals, etc. left to subsequent analysis passes. This principle guides our decisions. Annotators should use ID glosses and use the translation tier for further information about their interpretation of each utterance.

Capitalization
Capitalization systematically represents a conventionalized sign (e.g., SIGN) or type of sign (e.g., DS (for depicting sign) or FS (for fingerspelling)). Lower case signifies that additional information is presented. For conventionalized signs, the lower case portion that follows the capitalized gloss indicates something about its form when distinguishing between variants (SOONnose, SOONchin). For information enclosed in parentheses following codes, aspects of the meaning expressed by the sign is presented in lower case. From a human-readability perspective, this allows the user to perceive patterns in the data just from scanning. Non-sign communicative acts (when annotated) use lower-case (e.g., show(toy)).

Partly/non-lexical material
Following our principles, upper-case codes identify the type of sign, with lower-case information added, or supplementary information in additional tiers. For example, the annotation for a depicting sign indicates its category (DS), and the additional information conveys a rough approximation to meaning: DS(car-goes-down-street). Pointing signs are annotated using IX(referent). Further analysis takes place independently on separate tiers.

Screenshot annotations:
- English conventions mostly based on CHILDES CHAT conventions.
- DS_form - depicting sign (description: object, action, surface if any, manner if any)
- YYY - definitely a sign or word but indecipherable
- FS - fingerspelling (word)
- NS - name sign (name)
- XXX is used to identify productions that are not visible to the annotator
- i - interjection (meaning)
- Sign variants are distinguished by brief form descriptions in tags after gloss
- IX - index(referent)
- [+] repetition or lack of
- [_] held signs

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