Towards Cephalic Annotation: Do We Turn to Change the Posture?

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Within the framework of our corpus resource “Russian Pear Chats and Stories” (Kibrik, forthcoming), cephalic annotation has some tiers in ELAN with two of them being the most elaborated: tagged head movements and head postures. The head movements are defined on a formal basis of their kinetic production, and tagged like Up, Down, Turn Right/ Left and etc. The head posture in our terminology is a position, preserved for some time period in all three axes or in the local neutral position. The period encompasses various movements (gestures, adaptors and posture change movements) and the motionless or rest states.

We also distinguish the posture changes: they are the movements, aimed at transition of the head from one local neutral position to the other; they differ from each other in changing at least one of the axes. The amplitude of a change facilitates the posture change detection.

Here we present a two-way process how to define a posture and a posture change. On the one hand, we proceed from the components of different channels which can prompt us the boundaries. Thus, the posture changes and the eyes movements seem to correlate, and we may suggest their semantic synonymy as gestures. On the other hand, some particular head gestures do not fall into any other category but a posture change, like head turns. Often the posture is changed when the head turns, which may be due to the change of the communicative situation, or to the turn-taking moment in discourse, or to the physiological needs of the neck.

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