RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. How many types of sentence topic exist and how they are realized?
2. How is information managed among signers and reintroduced to the discourse?
3. Which is the syntactic distribution of sentence topic types?

IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA
"Topics have been identified as those entities which were previously introduced into the discourse, except for scene-setting topics which establish the framework within which the sentence is interpreted."

DATA COLLECTION (2002 items)
- Spontaneous data: Story-telling (1171 ABT, 274 SaT items).
- Monologue (406 ABT, 64 SaT items).
- Elicited sentences (89 ABT, 120 SaT, 60 CT items).
- 9 native signers from the northern part of Italy (mean age 26, range 21-32).
- Annotation software BLAN, statistics EXCEL, "B".

ABOUTNESS TOPIC (AbT): An entity already shared between signer and interlocutor about which the sentence adds something new.

HUB ABOUTNESS TOPIC (AbT):
heritage

NON-MANUAL MARKERS
- 24% Raised eyebrows (rw).
- 32% Squinted eyes (sq).
- 8% Raised eyebrows (ro) & squinted eyes (sq).
- 10% Head nod (hn).
- 10% Eye-blinks (eb).

RESULT: Unmarked AbT: 31%

CONTINUED TOPIC AND SHIFTED TOPIC

SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

SCENE-SETTING TOPICS (StT): Frame setters which establish the background in which the main predication holds.

CONTRASTIVE TOPICS (CT): They split an issue in sub-issues, by creating a parallel opposition between two or more entities.

SELECTED REFERENCES

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