


No evidence of reduplication as plural morphology in ASL corpus search.

Absence of reduplication in American Sign Language nominal plural morphology

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Background

Reduplication marks spoken language plural morphology.¹ ASL sign repetition has been analyzed as reduplication marking plural morphology.²

Research Questions

- Do signers spontaneously use sign repetition to express plural morphology?
- Should repetition expressing plural meaning be considered parallel processes in spoken and signed languages?

Methods (see Figure 1)

- 6 adult participants
- 39,382 signs from SLAAASh Project³
- Manual **check** of video data for reduplication as plural morphology prompted by:

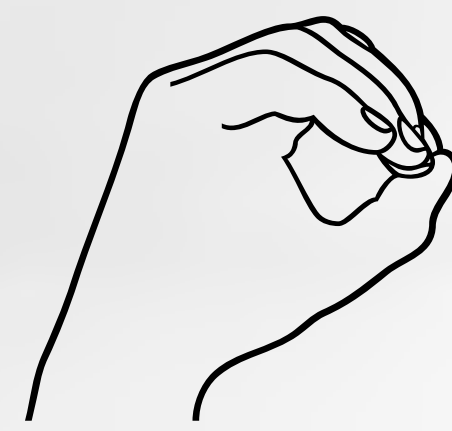
Method 1:

- Non-citation form **repetition** marked by annotators [+] and **plural meaning** on free translation tier

Method 2 (in progress):

- **plural noun** on free translation tier (s-final nouns and all (9) irregular plurals in 1,000 highest frequency English words⁴)

Results



Method 1:

Nouns marked as repeated [+]	291
Repeated nouns translated as plural	34
Repetition alone as plural morphology	0
Repetition with modifier and/or sideward movement as plural morphology⁵? (see figure 2)	1(?)

Method 2*:

English plural nouns on free translation corresponding to ASL nouns	155
Repetition alone as plural morphology	0
Repetition with modifier and/or sideward movement as plural morphology? (see figure 3)	1(?)

* checked 14 sessions

Conclusions & Discussion

- Repetition may be used to mark plural if accompanied by modifier and/or sideward path movement.
 - * Sideward reduplication may fall under spatial morphology, differentiating it from spoken language reduplication.
- What phonological and/or semantic criteria restrict sideward reduplication?
- Which modifiers can co-occur with repetition as plural marking?

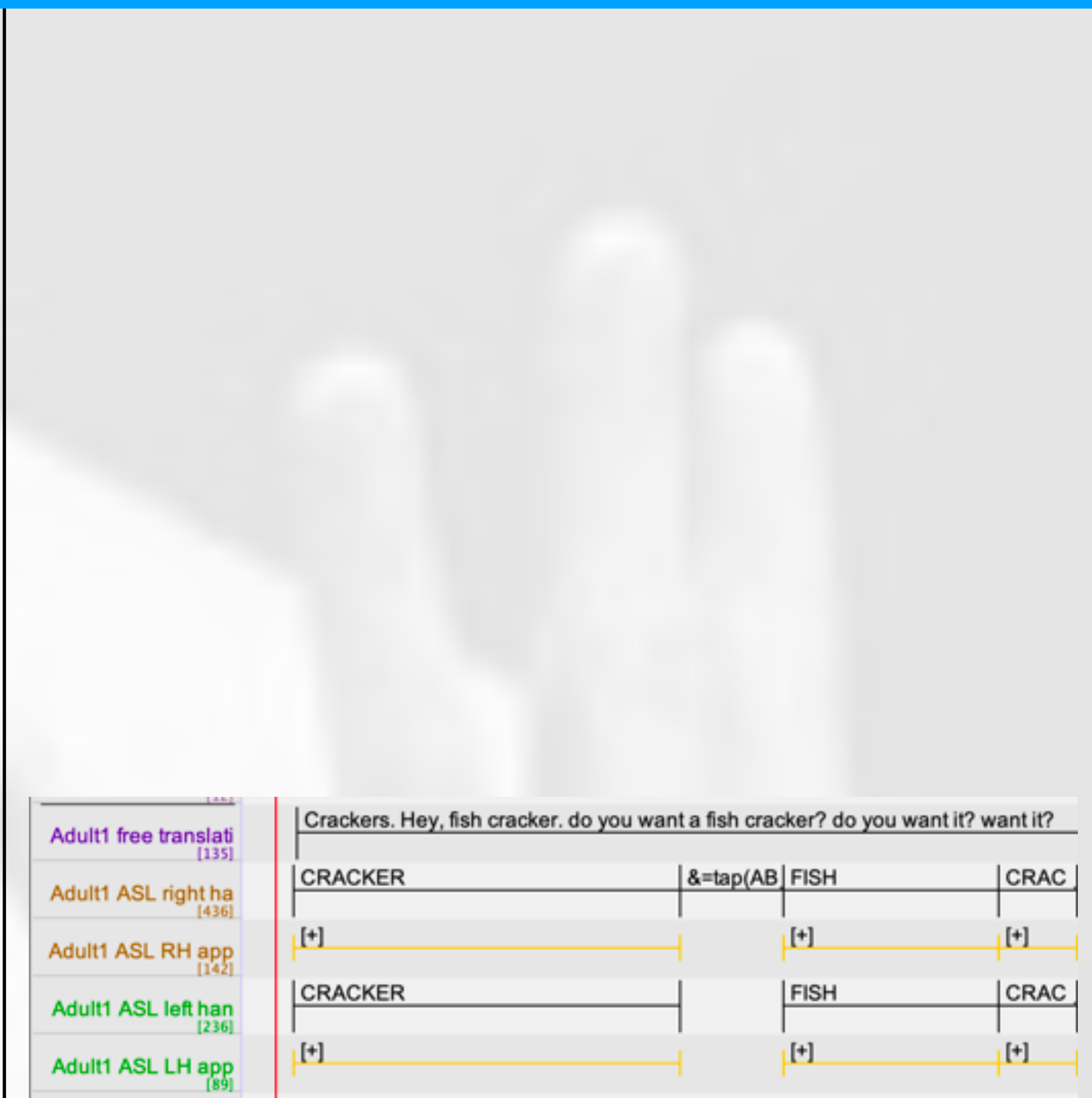


Figure 1: SLAAASh annotation



Figure 2: Instance of sideward reduplication with modifier



Figure 3: Instance of repeated noun with modifier

References

- ¹ Dryer, M. S., & Haspelmath, M. (2013). Wals online. Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, 96.
- ² Davies, M. (2008-). *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): 560 million words, 1990-present*. Available online at <https://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>.
- ³ Lillo-Martin, D., L. Prunier, J. Hochgesang, & D. Chen Pichler (2017, April). *Sign Language Acquisition: Annotation, Archiving and Sharing - Status Report: Poster presented at the 8th UConn Language Fest, UCONN.*
- ⁴ Padden, C. (1998). The ASL lexicon. *Sign Language & Linguistics*, 1(1), 39-60.
- ⁵ Pfau, R., & Steinbach, M. (2005). Plural formation in German Sign Language: Constraints and Strategies. *Gebärdensprachen: Struktur, Erwerb, Verwendung*, 111-144.

POSTER, VIDEO EXAMPLES AND ABSTRACT AVAILABLE HERE 

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