**Overview**

- **New observation:** Sign languages tend to have distributive concord but not negative concord.
- **Explanation:** Sign languages have an iconic pressure to represent discourse referents in space. This conflicts with negative concord.

**Semantic Typology**

**Negative concord (−)**

1. **Maria non ha visto nessuno.**
   - Mary not has seen nobody.
   - ‘Mary didn’t see anybody.’ (Italian)
2. **Every(os) subject child brought one-os subject book.**
   - ‘Every child brought one book.’ (Hungarian)
3. **# Every child read one book.**
   - (English)

**Distributive concord (+)**

**Semantic typology:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>−DC</th>
<th>+DC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (some dialects)</td>
<td>Hungarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American S.L.</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French S.L.</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian S.L.</td>
<td>French (Côte d’Ivoire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German S.L.</td>
<td>Russian S.L.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sign languages frequently have negative concord with non-manuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>NOT UNDERSTAND.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>NOBODY CONTRACT SIGN (‘NOT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discourse reference**

**Hypothesis:** Concord is fundamentally linked to discourse reference.

(7) I saw a man in the road. He was whistling.

**Distributive concord (+)**

- **Distributive concord** is licensed only in environments that generate a plurality of discourse referents.

(8) Each professor nominated a student. They could each win a 100 euro prize.
(9) Minden gyerek hozott egy-egy könyvet. (Hungarian)

- The word egy-egy flags the fact that, later in the derivation, the discourse referent will be a plurality.

**Negative concord (−)**

- **Negative concord** is licensed only in environments that block the introduction of discourse referents.

(10) a. I didn’t see a student in the room. He was studying hard.
    - He was studying hard.
   - b. I went to the party without a date.
(11) a. Maria non ha visto nessuno.
    - ‘Mary didn’t see anybody.’ (Italian)
    - b. Ci sono andato sensa nessuno. (Italian)

- The word persone flags the fact that, later in the derivation, the set of discourse referents will be empty.

**SIGN LANGUAGE**

- Discourse reference in sign language uses space.
- Individuals and sets are iconically represented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(12)</th>
<th>a. JOHN ENTER, HE HAPPY.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. MY FRIENDS ENTER, THEY HAPPY. (ASL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The use of space in sign language**

**Distributive concord (+)**

- Sign languages not only have distributive concord, but are similar in how it is morphologically expressed.
- The movement of the numeral iconically expresses the plural discourse referent.
- Spatial association iconically expresses semantic association.

(13) **BOY THEY READ ONE-ARC BOOK.**
- ‘The boys (each) read one book.’

**Negative concord (−)**

- Here, there’s a conflict!
  - **The meaning of negative concord:** Signals that the set of discourse referents is empty.
  - **Iconic impulse of sign language:**
    - Discourse referents are represented in space.
  - **You cannot demonstrate the non-existence of an entity by pointing at something.**
  - **This pressure only holds for non-manual signs.**
  - **Recall:**
    - Negative concord involving non-manuals = frequent.
    - Negative concord involving manual signs = rare.

- **Why?**
  - Non-manual signs do not use space.
  - No iconic pressure!

**Note:** these are biases, not absolutes.

- **When addressing typology, we talk about pressures:**
  - What is it easy for this language to do?
  - What is it hard for this language to do?
- **I claimed:** discourse reference is central to concord.
- **Quirky sign language typology is explained based on what it’s easy and hard to represent in space.**