

OVERVIEW

- **New observation:** Sign languages tend to *have* distributive concord but *not have* 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) a. Mary saw **nothing**.
b. Mary didn't see **nothing**. = 'Mary *did* see something.'
(Standard English)

Distributive concord (∇)

- (3) **Minden** gyerek hozott **egy-egy** könyvet.
Every(DIST) child brought one-DIST book.
'Every child brought one book.' (Hungarian)
- (4) # **Every** child read one book **each**. (English)

Semantic typology:

	-NC	+NC	
-DC	English German Dutch	Italian French Portuguese English (some dialects)	■ = Spoken ■ = Sign
+DC	Kaqchikel American S.L. French S.L. Italian S.L. German S.L. Catalan S.L.	Hungarian Russian Japanese French (Côte d'Ivoire) Russian S.L.	

Sign languages frequently have negative concord with *non-manuals*.

- (5) IX-1 ^{neg}NOT UNDERSTAND.
'I don't understand.' (ASL)

But negative concord with *manual signs* is less frequent.

- (6) **NOBODY** CONTRACT SIGN (*NOT).
'Nobody signed the contract.' (LIS)

Why are sign languages mostly in that bottom-left corner?

DISCOURSE REFERENCE

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

- (7) I saw **a man** in the road. **He** was whistling.
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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.
b. I went to the party without **a date**.
??**He** was wearing a tuxedo.
- (11) a. Maria non ha visto **nessuno**.
b. Ci sono andato senza **nessuno**. (Italian)
- The word *personne* flags the fact that, later in the derivation, the set of discourse referents will be empty.

SIGN LANGUAGE

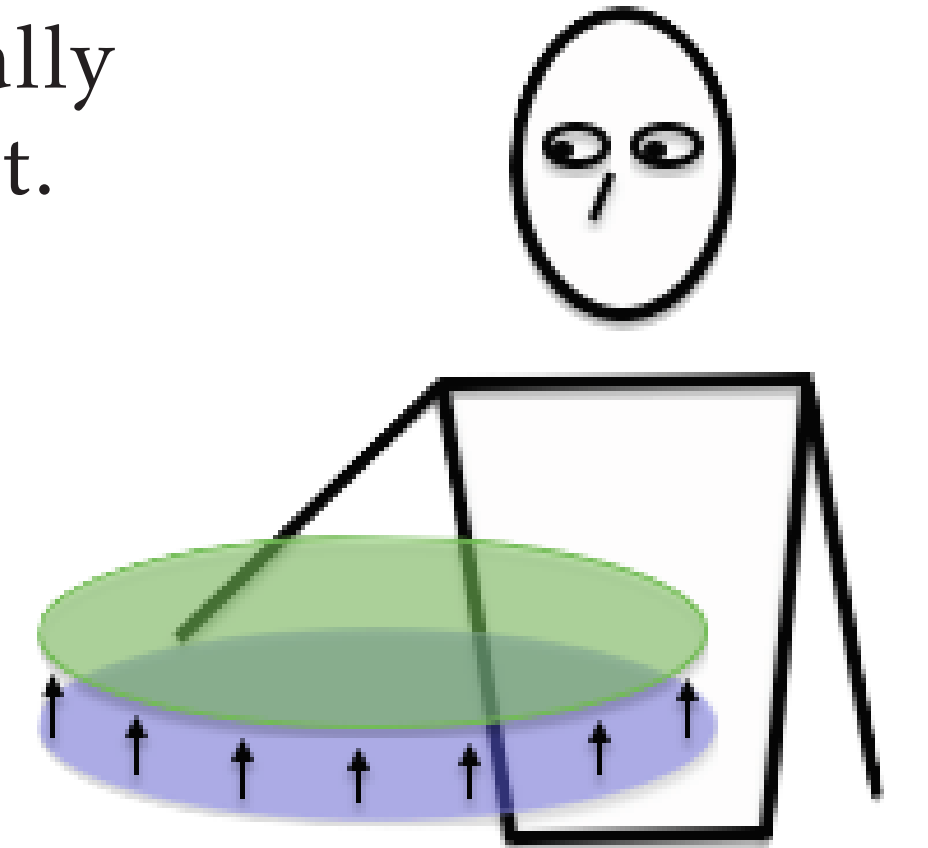
- Discourse reference in sign language uses space.
- Individuals and sets are iconically represented.

- (12) a. JOHN ENTER.
HE HAPPY.
- b. MY FRIENDS ENTER.
THEY HAPPY.
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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 *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.