# METAPHORS IN (E)MOTIONS: THE CASE OF ITALIAN SIGN LANGUAGE
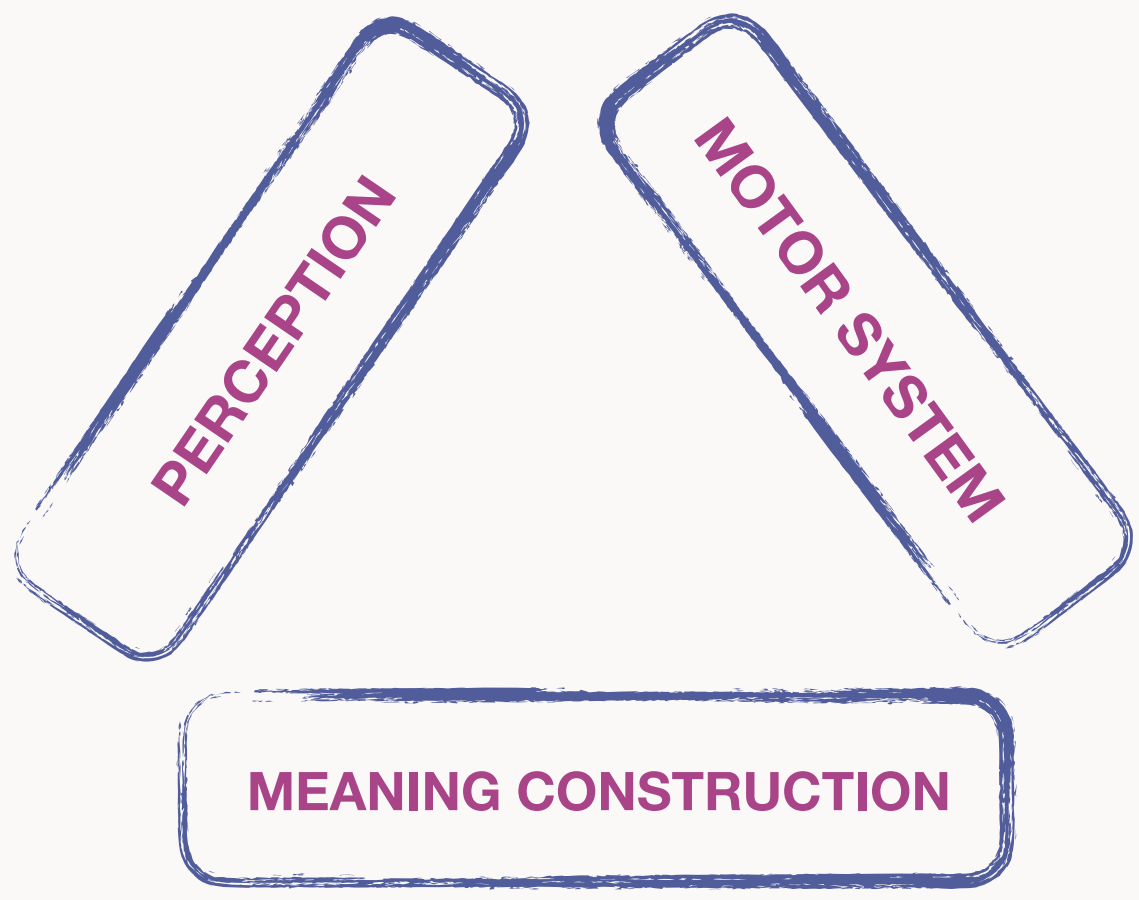
**TISLR13**

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## background

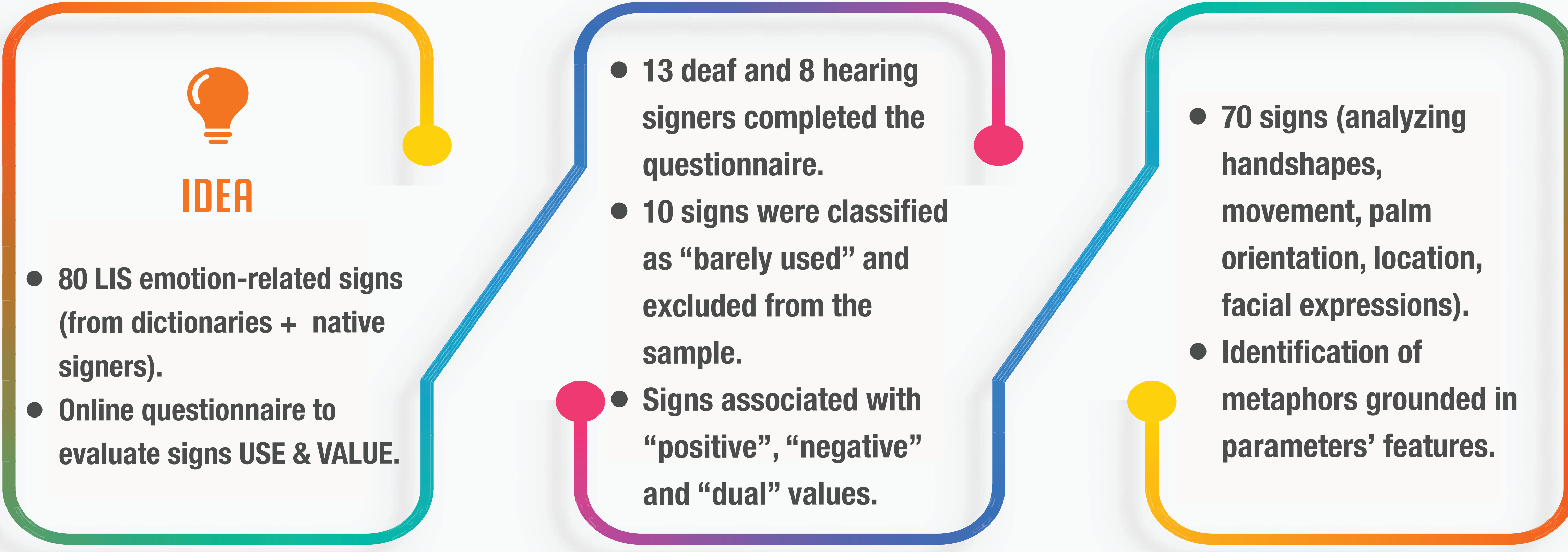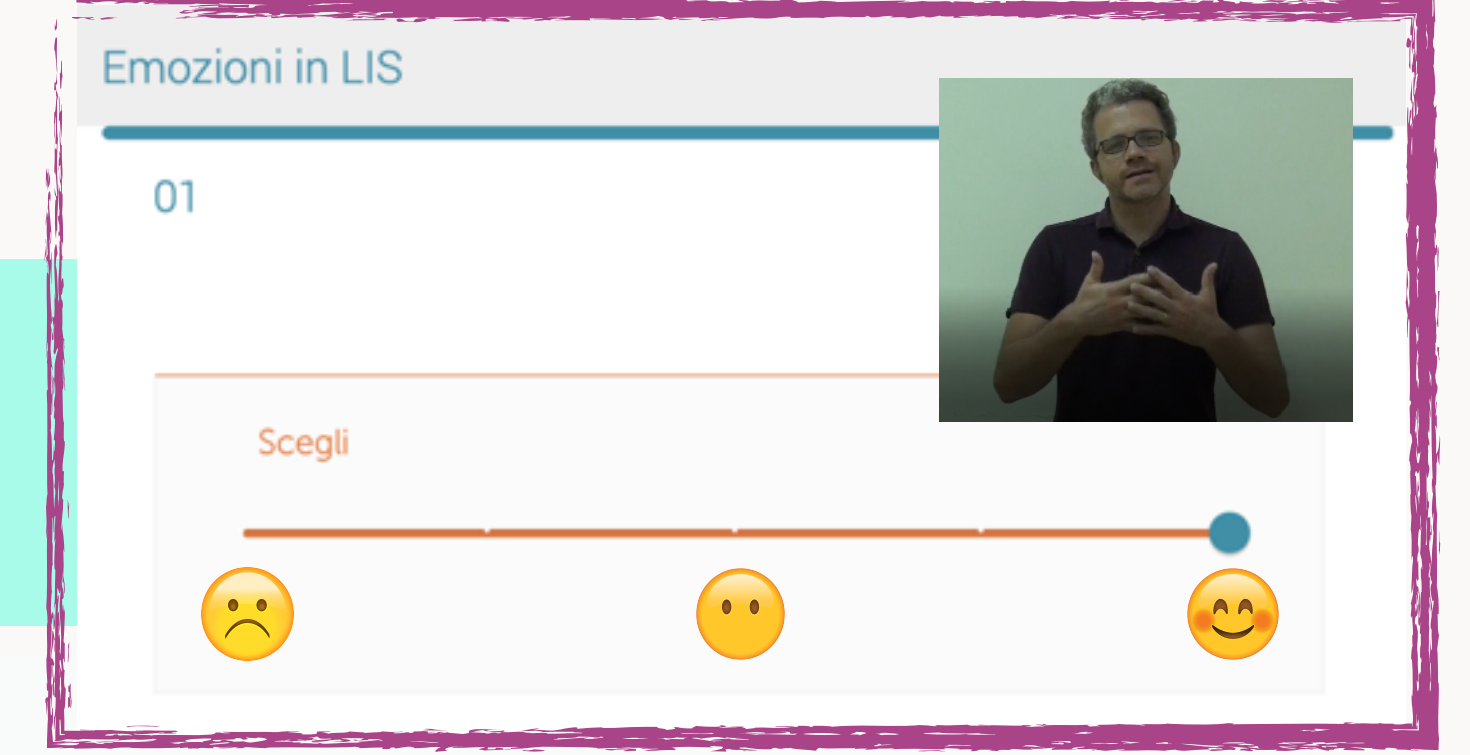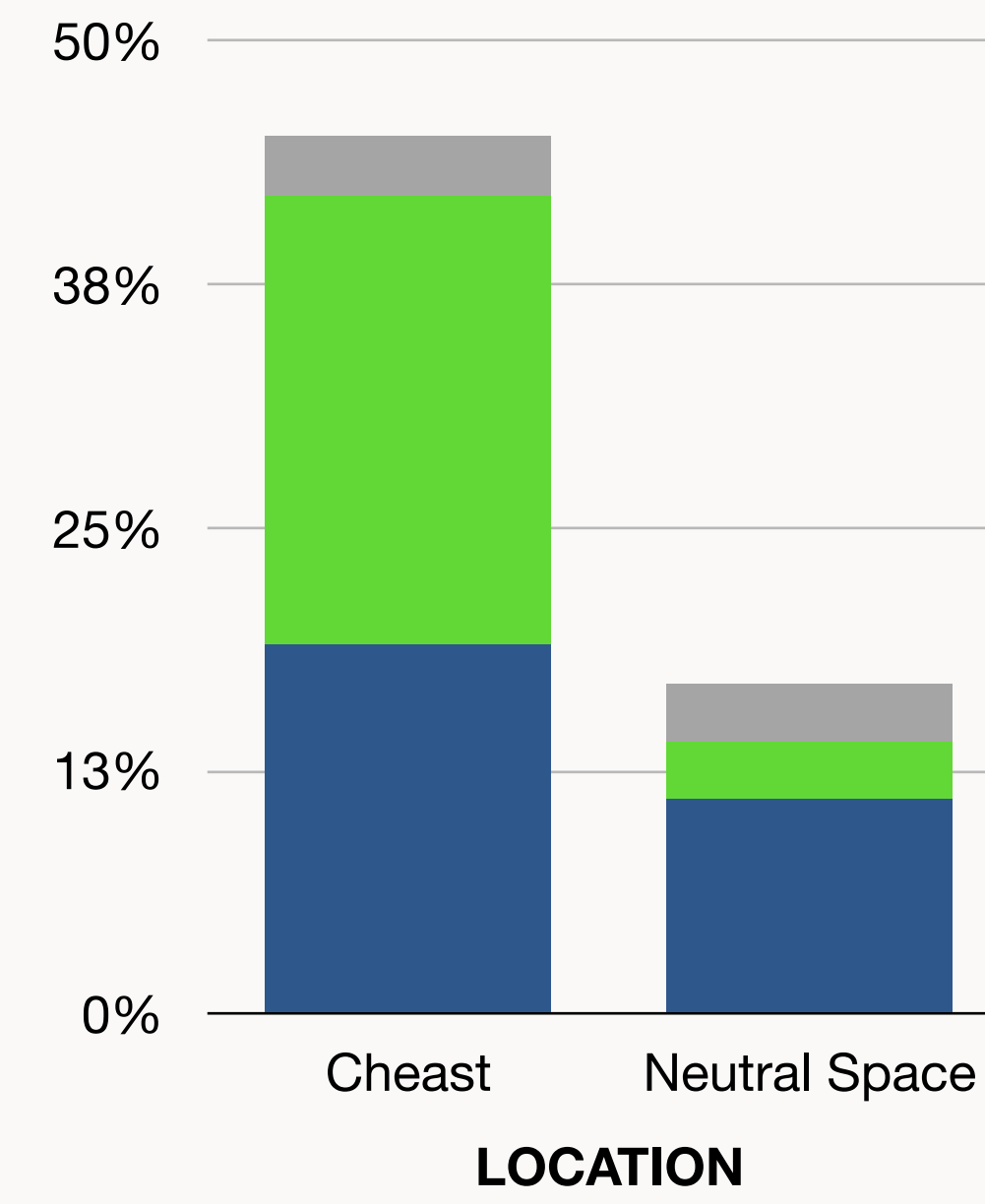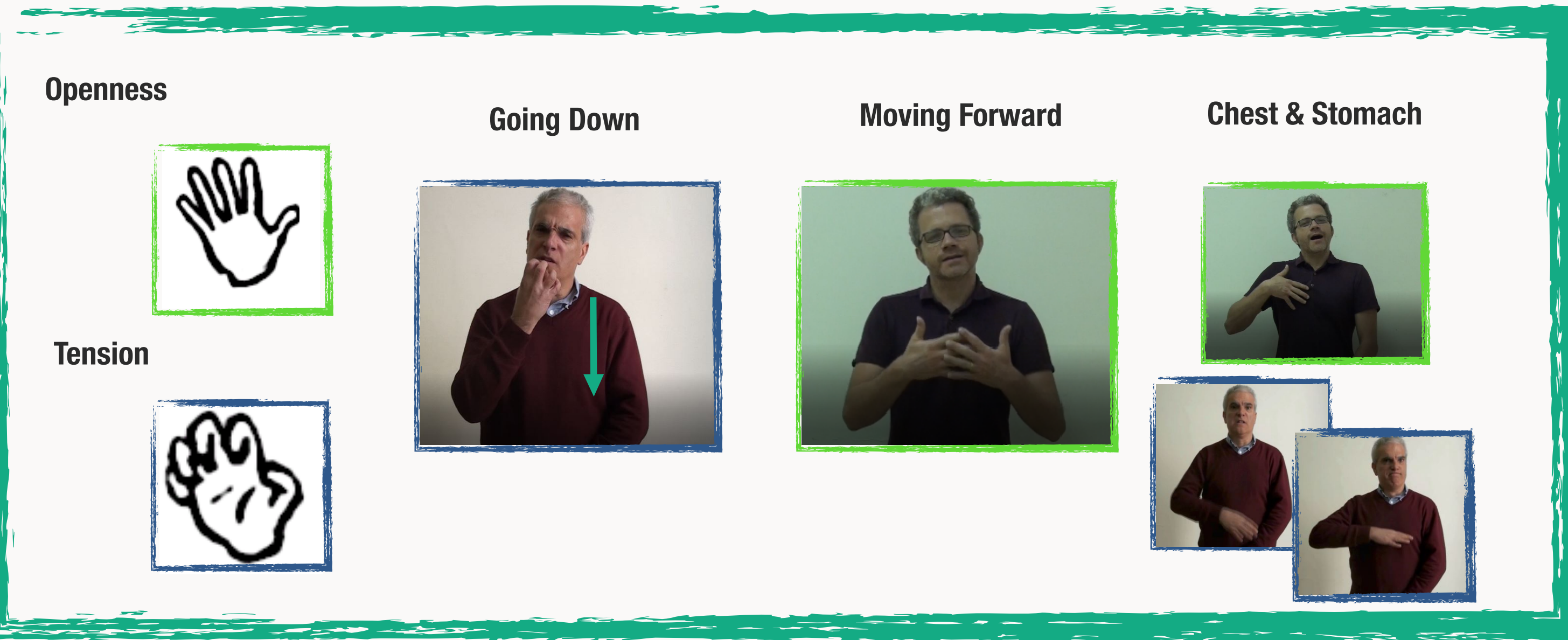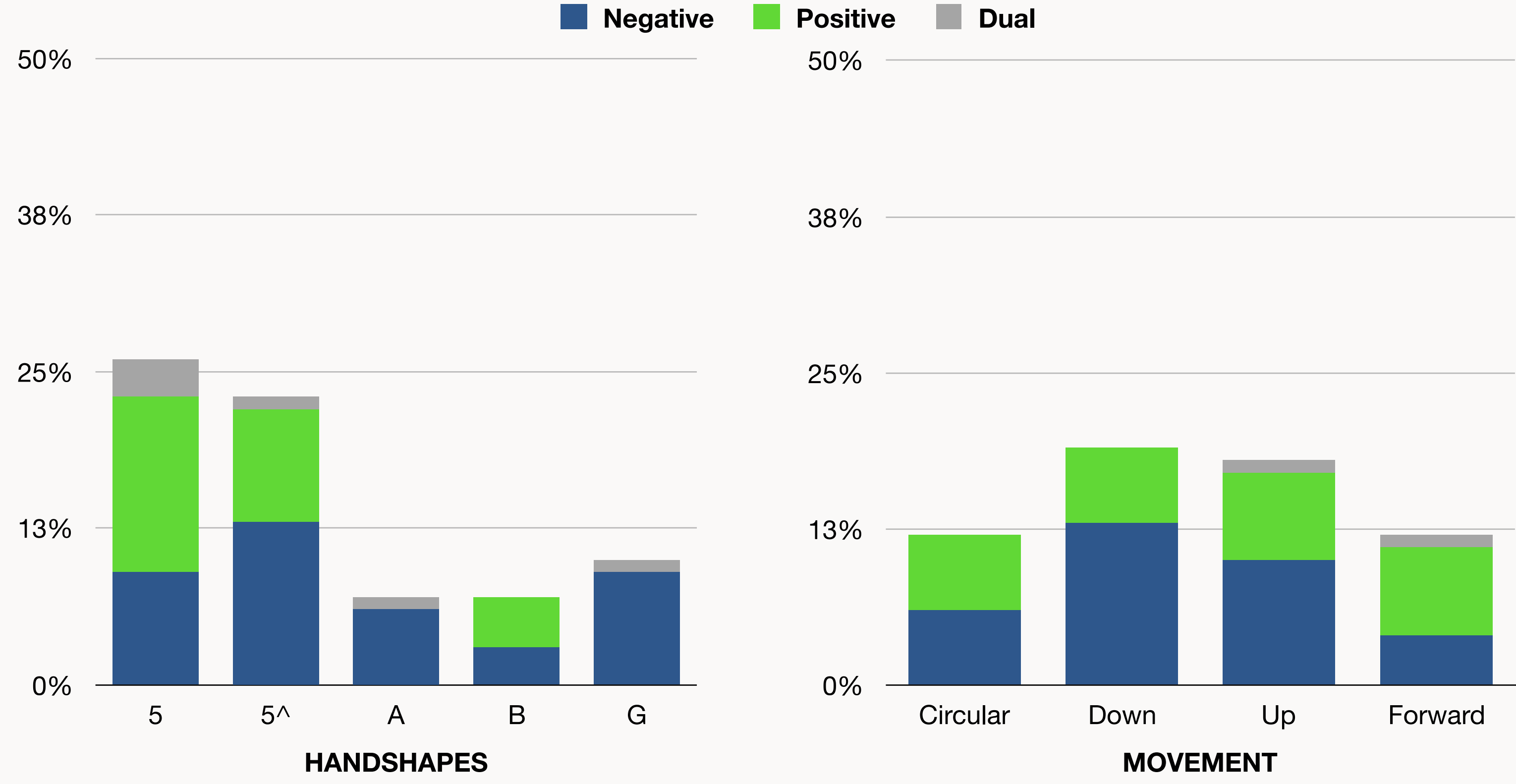PERCEPTION — MOTOR SYSTEM — MEANING CONSTRUCTION

- Sign languages are a special window in exploring the route from perception to concept construction, as they allow to visualize linguistic embodiment of perceptual experiences.

- Iconicity shows congruence of semantic and phonological structures, revealing a common conceptual space grounded in cognitive abilities of language users and connected to their wordly perception and interaction.

- Studies highlight the presence of visual metaphors in signs supporting the importance of embodiment and perception of the surrounding world in the construction of meanings.

Emozioni in LIS
01
Scegli

**AIM: TO INVESTIGATE LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATIONS OF EMOTIONS IN ITALIAN SIGN LANGUAGE (LIS) FOCUSING ON VISUAL METAPHORS SUBSUMED AT THE SUBLEXICAL LEVEL.**

### IDEA

- 80 LIS emotion-related signs (from dictionaries + native signers).
- Online questionnaire to evaluate signs USE & VALUE.

- 13 deaf and 8 hearing signers completed the questionnaire.
- 10 signs were classified as "barely used" and excluded from the sample.
- Signs associated with "positive", "negative" and "dual" values.

- 70 signs (analyzing handshapes, movement, palm orientation, location, facial expressions).
- Identification of metaphors grounded in parameters' features.
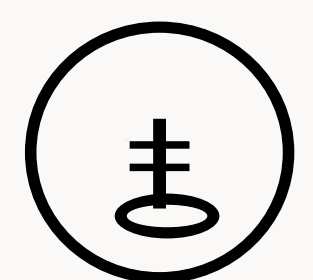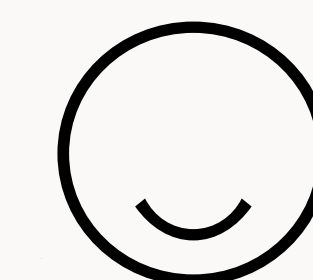
## results

- Findings highlight a series of parameters dedicated to specific emotion types.

- Metaphors linked these parameters to specific and diverse semantic areas (e.g., downward movement as a spatial metaphor for negative emotions).

Legend: ■ Negative ■ Positive ■ Dual

**HANDSHAPES** (5, 5^, A, B, G)

**MOVEMENT** (Circular, Down, Up, Forward)

**LOCATION** (Cheast, Neutral Space)

**FACIAL EXPRESSION**

- Nose Wrinkler in signs for negative emotions.

- Lip Corner Puller in signs for positive emotions.

Openness

Going Down

Moving Forward

Chest & Stomach

Tension

## conclusions

**Identified visual metaphors reveal the importance of the body in world perception and in the process of building meaning.**
**Improvements in cognitive approaches to language may need to pass through an investigation of the tight metaphorical relation between form and meaning in emotion-related lexicon.**

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