

# 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.<sup>1</sup> ASL sign repetition has been analyzed as reduplication marking plural morphology.<sup>2</sup>

### 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 Project<sup>3</sup>
- 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 words<sup>4</sup>)

### Results



#### Method 1:

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

#### Method 2\*:

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

\* 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



TWO CLASS[+] DS(=come-together)  
"Two classes met together."

Figure 2: Instance of sideward reduplication with modifier



ARTICLE[+] DIFFERENT[+]  
"different articles"

Figure 3: Instance of repeated noun with modifier

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Dryer, M. S., & Haspelmath, M. (2013). Wals online. Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, 96.
- <sup>2</sup> Davies, M. (2008-). *The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA): 560 million words, 1990-present*. Available online at <https://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>.
- <sup>3</sup> 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.*
- <sup>4</sup> Padden, C. (1998). The ASL lexicon. *Sign Language & Linguistics*, 1(1), 39-60.
- <sup>5</sup> 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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