# Using strategic annotations to add value to, and extract value from, a signed language corpus

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#### **Abstract**

This lecture I explain the ways in which multimedia annotation software is being used to transform an archive of Auslan recordings into a true machinereadable linguistic corpus. After the basic structure of the annotation files in the Auslan corpus is described and the exercise differentiated from transcription, then the glossing and annotation conventions are explained. Following this the searching and pattern-matching at different levels of linguistic organization these annotations make possible is exemplified.

I explain why it is important to be clear about the difference between transcription and annotation otherwise at the end of the exercise—despite time consuming and expensive processing of the video recordings—we may not actually be able to discern the types of patterns in our corpora that we had hoped we could. The conventions are designed to ensure that the annotations really do enable researchers to identify regularities at different levels of linguistic organization in the corpus and thus to test, or build on, existing descriptions of the language.

#### Outline

- Contextualization
  - SL corpora at CISL Summer School
  - the case for SL corpus linguistics
  - same basic concepts and principles
  - the Auslan Corpus
- Using strategic annotations
  - Primary processing
    - basic and detailed annotation
  - Secondary processing

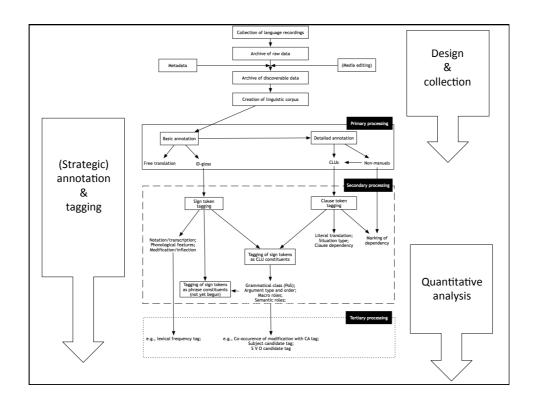
    - sign tokensclause tokens
  - Tertiary processing
    - adding corpus-derived information to the corpus
    - processing annotated data outside of ELAN

- Research using an annotated SL corpus
  - Single sign searchessingle tiermulti-tiers
  - Multiple sign searches

    - single tiermulti-tiers
  - Other operations

    - Annotations from overlapsAnnotation overlap information
    - Preparation for quantitative and multivariate analysis (e.g., Rbrul)
- Conclusion

#### Contextualization



#### What do we want to do?

- empirically ground SL description
- validate previous research
- generate new observations
- document linguistic community
- create teaching/learning resources

### Why do we want to do it?

### The case for SL corpus linguistics

#### **Characteristics**

- · SL using communities
  - minority communities
  - no real location
  - interrupted intergenerational transmission
  - few native signers
  - no written form
  - high number/% of adult L2 users
    - cf notion of 'socio-linguistic typology'

#### Consequences

- · intuitions less useful
  - high degree of variation
  - norms 'less-established'
- · ad-hoc glossing
  - idiosyncratic
  - token/type confusion
  - inaccessible primary data
- corpora needed not just to compensate, but to enable!

#### Why do we want to do it?

- no easily or commonly used written form
- lack of language documentation
  - cf. preservation
- language endangerment
  - cf. maintenance, revitalization
- limits to intuitions and introspection
- unique usage/acquisition environments
- difficult for learners to gain exposure

#### How do we do it?

- create language archives
  - i.e., documentary linguistics
- adopt a corpus-based approach
- value-add to language archives using
  - multi-media annotation software
  - annotation, not necessarily transcription
  - controlled/consistent glossing (ID-glosses)
  - systematic linguistic tagging
- open access for researchers and community
  - learners and teachers
  - peer review

#### The Auslan Corpus

#### As at mid-2014

- 256 signers (approx. 200 hours digital video)
- native or near-native (before age 7)
- >1100 clips of which 459 clips with some basic annotations
  - ID glossing, free translation
- 200 (7 hours) with more extensive annotations

#### Types of detailed annotations

- · clause-like units
- grammatical class
- spatial and directional modification
- aspectual modification
- event and situation type (Aktionsart)
- lexical frequency
- · constituency
  - argument position and macro- and semantic roles
- · clause relationships
  - dependency, embedding

#### Some basic concepts & principles

Notation: more or less a symbol system

Transcription: more or less a writing system

Annotation: something appended to text

Tagging: codes appended to text

#### Transcription ≠ Annotation

- basic annotation vs detailed representation
  - does detailed representation only mean phonetic/ phonological detail ("transcription")?
  - "generation" (i.e. reproduction) not the aim
- morpho-syntax & conventional signs/ constructions
  - type/token relationship
  - form/meaning relationship
    - annotation as tagging for assessing the systematic cooccurrence of certain potential/assumed morpho-syntactic markers with certain types of meanings

#### Glossing & annotation conventions

- The Auslan Corpus Annotation Guidelines
  - downloadable from www.auslan.org.au/about/corpus/
  - only mentioned here in broad and general terms
- This afternoon's workshop
  - annotation discussed in more detail
    - · examples of glossing
    - experimentation with a Czech SL sample
    - · discussion of issues
- More information/justification
  - following references

## Some previous work on SL transcription, SL lexicalization, and SL corpora

Johnston, T. (2014). The reluctant oracle: Adding value to, and extracting value from, a signed signed language corpus through strategic annotations. *Corpora*, 9(2), pages not yet available.

Johnston, T. (2013). Towards a comparative semiotics of pointing actions in signed and spoken languages. Gesture, 13(2), 109-142.

Johnston, T., & Schembri, A. (2013). Corpus Analysis of Deaf Sign Languages. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics. London: Wiley-Blackwell.

Johnston, T. (2013). Formational and functional characteristics of pointing signs in a corpus of Auslan (Australian sign language): are the data sufficient to posit a grammatical class of 'pronouns' in Auslan? Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory, 9(1), 109-15.

Johnston, T. (2012). Lexical frequency in signed languages. Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education. 17(2), 163-193.

Johnston, T., & Schembri, A. (2010). Variation, lexicalization and grammaticalization in signed languages. *Langage et Société*, 131(mars 2010), 19-35.

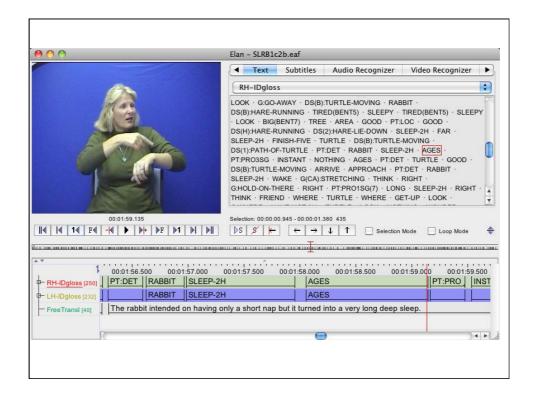
Johnston, T. (2010). From archive to corpus: transcription and annotation in the creation of signed language corpora. International Journal of Corpus Linguistics, 15(1), 104-129. Johnston, T. (2008). Corpus linguistics and signed languages: no lemmata, no corpus. In O. Crasborn, E. Efthimiou, T. Hanke, E. D. Thoutenhoofd & I. Zwitserlood (Eds.), Proceedings of the Sixth International Language Representation and Evaluation Conference (3rd Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages: Construction and Exploitation of Signed Language Corpora) (pp. 82-87). Marrakech, Morocco, May 26-June 1.

Johnston, T., & Schembri, A. (2006). Issues in the creation of a digital archive of a signed language. In L. Barwick & N. Thieberger (Eds.), Sustainable data from digital fieldwork: Proceedings of the conference held at the University of Sydney, 4-6 December 2006 (pp. 7-16). Sydney: Sydney University Press.

Johnston, T. (2001). The lexical database of Auslan (Australian Sign Language). Sign Language & Linguistics, 4(1/2), 145-169.

Johnston, T., & Schembri, A. (1999). On defining lexeme in a sign language. Sign Language & Linguistics, 2(1), 115-185.

Johnston, T. (1991). Transcription and glossing of sign language texts: Examples from Auslan (Australian Sign Language). International Journal of Sign Linguistics, 2(1), 3-28.

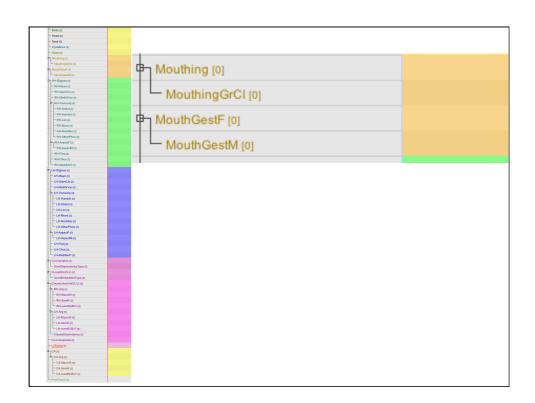


#### The annotation tiers

- Core tiers
  - common to all annotation files in a corpus
  - minimum set?
- Fixed tiers?
  - all corpus files in the same set-up
- Study specific tiers
  - research questions
    - e.g., aspect
  - temporary & derived data
    - co-occurrence information
    - annotations from overlapping annotations

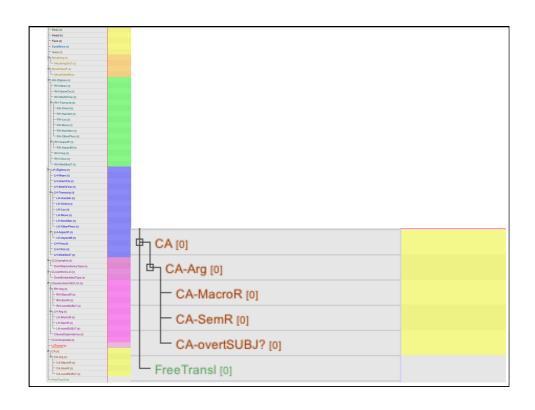


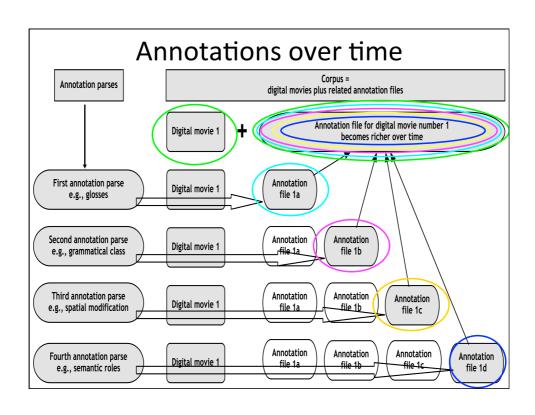






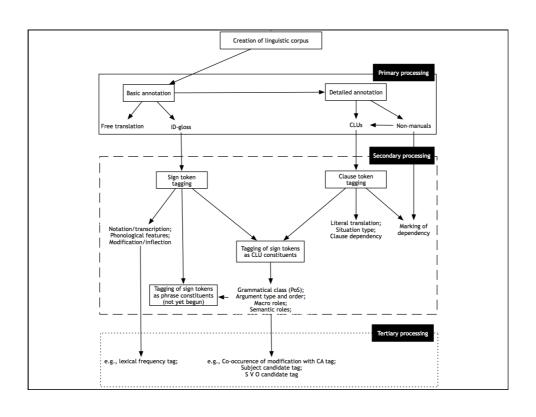






### Using strategic annotations

## in the creation of a linguistic corpus



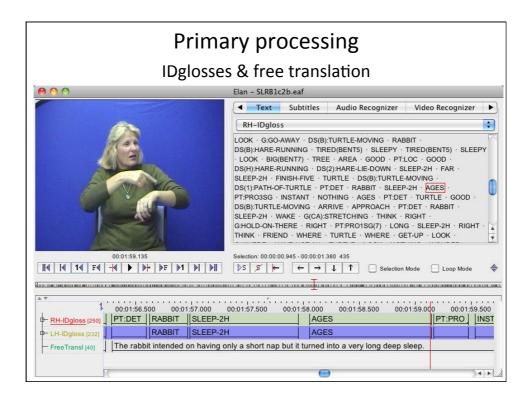
#### Primary processing

#### **Basic**

- Free translation
  - written (preferable as minimum)
    - spoken is a bonus (potentially quicker), but
    - written is immediately searchable
- Tokenization of the signing stream
  - identify and gloss
  - discriminate types of signs

### Additional possible detailed annotations

- Units larger than the individual sign
  - clause-like units (CLUs)
- Identified (provisionally) through
  - delivery (articulatory units)
  - meaning (coherent proposition or 'move' in exchange)
  - form/structure (constructional schema)
- Non-manual features (relates to Delivery
  - body posture, head movements, gaze, facial expressions, mouthing, mouth gestures



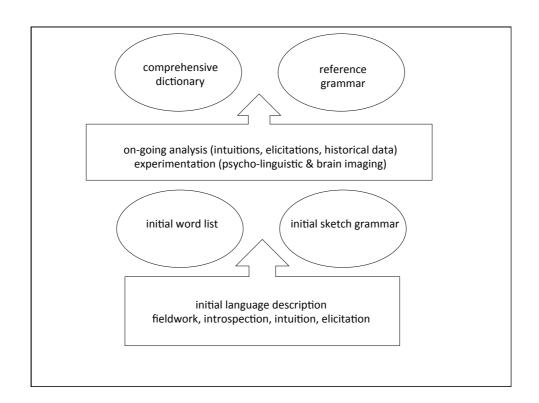
## Basic glossing conventions for different types of signs

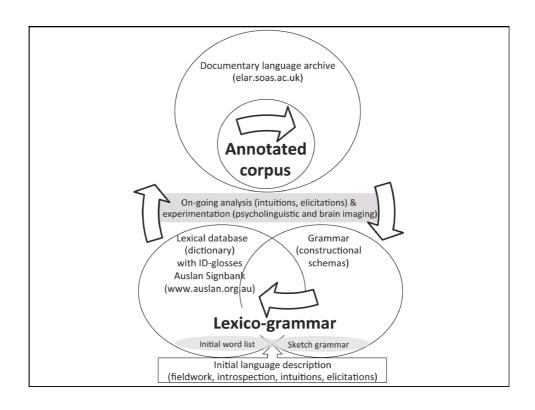
| Sign             | Example                         | Туре      | Type-like    | Token-like              |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|
| type             | Gloss                           | component | component    | component               |
| Fully<br>lexical | WATER                           | WATER     | n/a          | n/a                     |
| Partly           | PT:PRO1SG                       | PT:       | PRO1SG       | n/a                     |
| lexical          | DSM(1-VERT):PERSON-GO-DOWN-HILL | DS        | M(1-VERT):   | PERSON-GO-DOWN-HILL     |
| Non-             | G(5-UPWARDS):WELL               | G         | (5-UPWARDS): | WELL                    |
| lexical          | G:FLAILING-ABOUT-IN-WATER       | G:        | n/a          | FLAILING-ABOUT-IN-WATER |

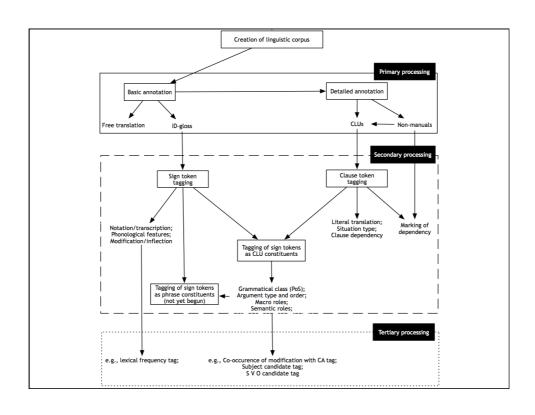
Annotation conventions for different types of signs and for different purposes will be discussed this afternoon in the workshop talk, but for now....

How does one gloss fully lexical signs? By using the ID gloss.

How does one know what ID gloss to use? By consulting a dictionary of the language.







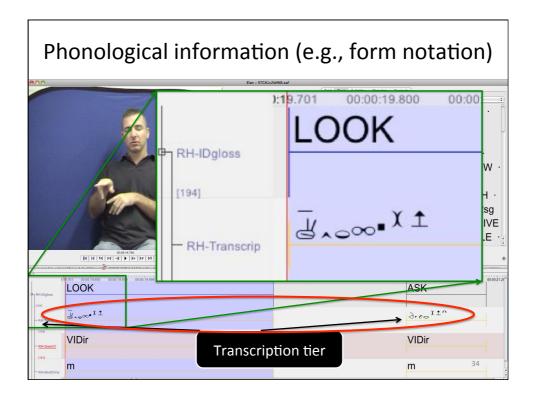
#### Secondary processing

#### Sign token tagging

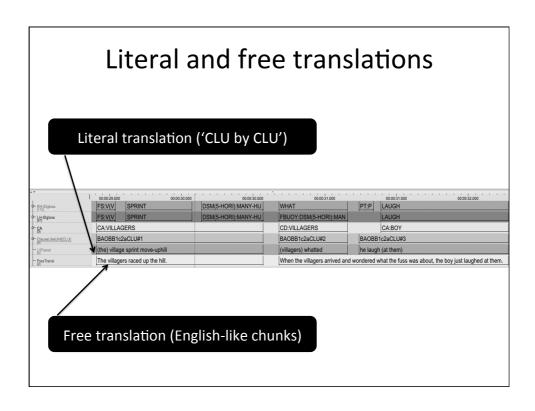
- transcription (with or without dedication notation system)
- phonological features (standard parameter model)
- morphological features
  - direction, location etc.

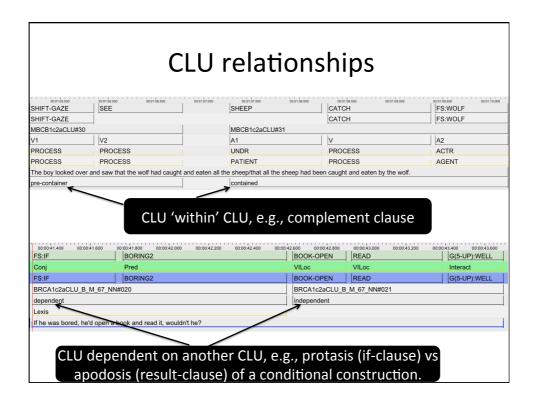
#### **CLU token tagging**

- Literal translation
- Situation type
  - state, accomplishment, achievement, activity
- CLU dependency status
  - independent, dependent, embedded
  - manner of marking of dependency/relationship
    - lexis, intonation contour, none (juxtaposition & context)





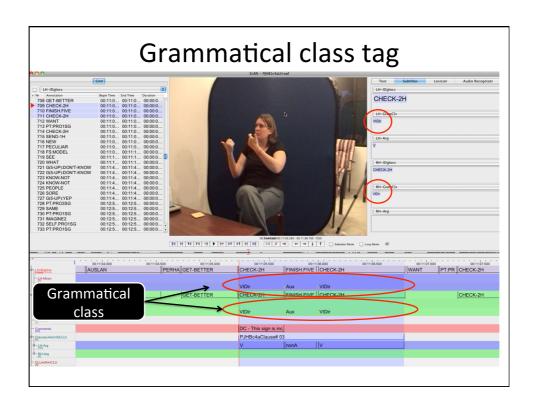


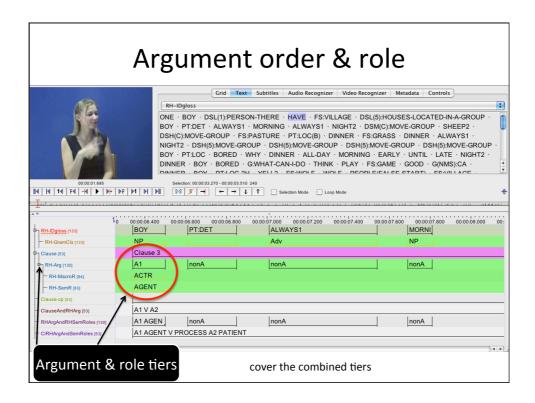


### Secondary processing (cont.)

- Tagging of sign tokens as CLU constituents
  - Grammatical class (PoS)
  - Argument type and order
  - Macro roles
  - Semantic roles

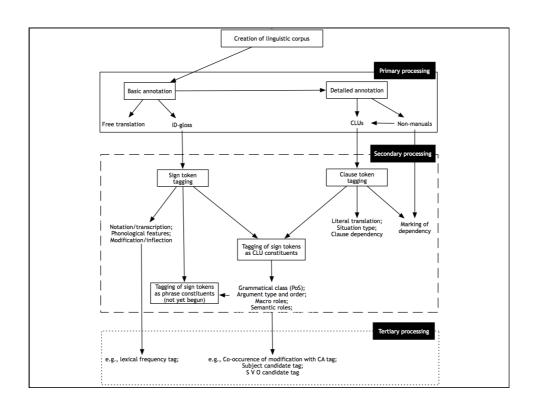
- Tagging of sign tokens as phrase constituents
  - Not attempted yet

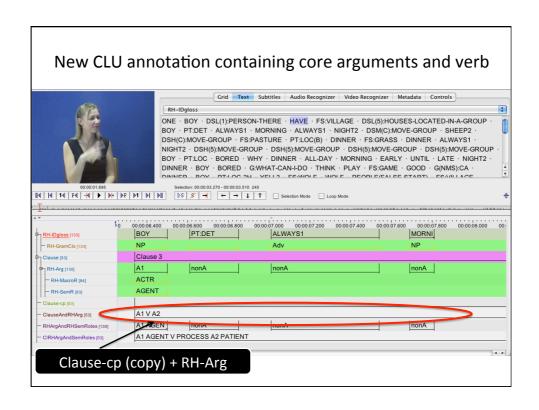


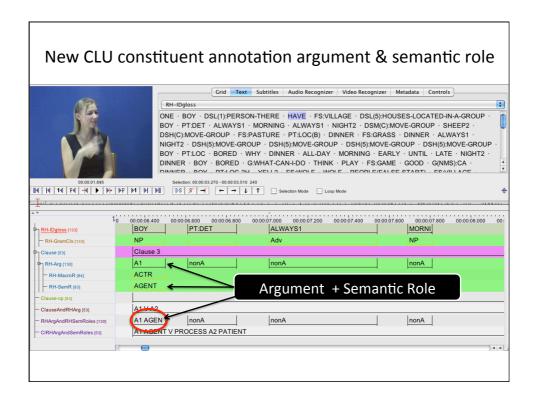


### **Tertiary processing**

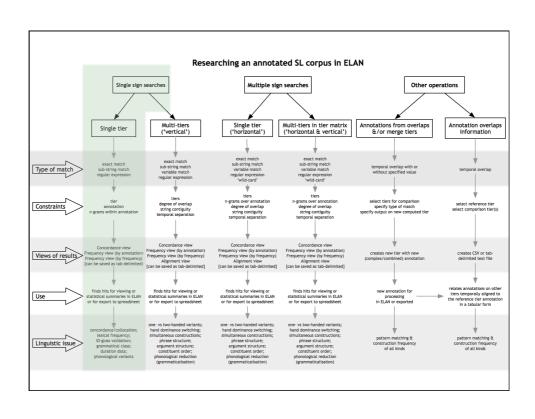
- creating new annotations based on existing annotations
- using the corpus to enrich the corpus by
  - incorporating results of searches, sorting and quantification based on primary and secondary processing into the corpus itself as new annotations
- both enable one to conduct subsequent searches using the newly incorporated annotations as given information or as new constraints







### Researching an annotated corpus



Single sign searches: single tier

### Types of matches

- exact match, i.e., "specific string of characters"
- substring matches, i.e., "any part of a string"
- regular expressions, e.g.,
  - .+ = 'any string of characters' (i.e., any annotation)
  - $^ = 'begins with'$

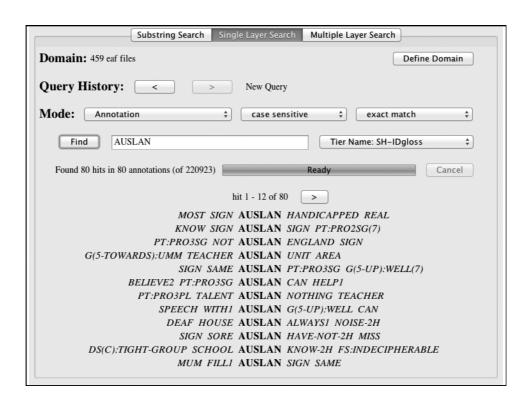
#### Sign type frequency

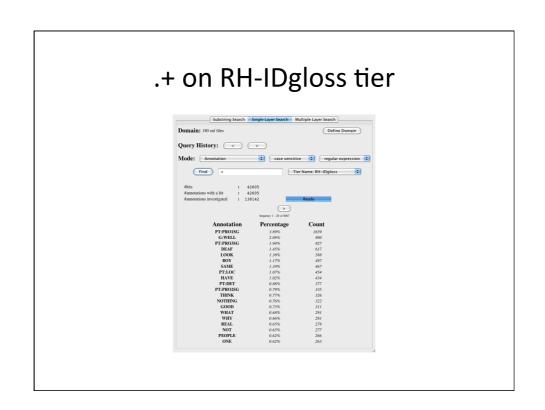
Exploiting distinctions made possible through the implementation of IDglossing conventions

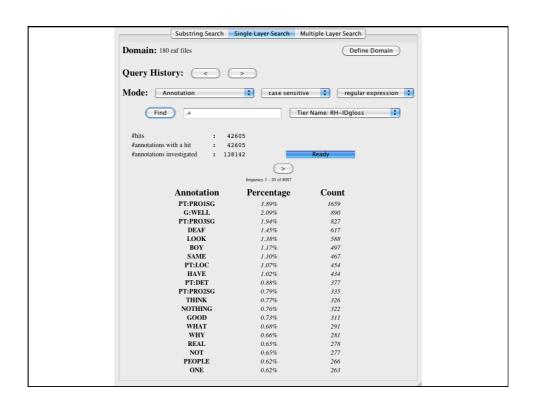
- search all IDgloss annotations on dominant hand (^, or .+, etc.)
- search for sub-type searches for partly- or non-lexical signs
  - points (^PT), depicting signs (^DS), gestures (^G:), fingerspellings (^FS)
- view hits in frequency view for statistics
  - export and sort if desired or conduct sub-searches

#### Three views of search results in ELAN

| Concordance   | Frequency (annotation, percent, count)  | Frequency by frequency (annotation, percent, count)   |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| PAST GO-IN PAST GO-IN PT:DET GO-IN PT:DET COUNTRY PT:DET COUNTRY FAR COUNTRY FAR FS:FARM FAR FS:FARM HAVE FS:FARM HAVE ONE HAVE ONE BOY ONE BOY WHO BOY WHO ALWAYSI | ABORIGINE 0.00% 3 ABORIGINE1 0.00% 1 ABORT 0.02% 23 ABOUT 0.00% 9 ABOUT-NUMBER 0.01% 9 ABOUT1 0.01% 6 ABOUT2 0.10% 97 ABOVE-AVERAGE 0.00% 1 ABSENT-MIND 0.00% 1 ABUSE 0.00% 2 | PT:PROISG         3.64%         3376           G(5-UP):WELL         2.86%         2653           PT:PRO3SG         2.14%         1983           LOOK         1.09%         1009           SAME         1.06%         980           HAVE         1.05%         976           DEAF-AND-DUMB         0.98%         910           PT:LOC         0.92%         850           PT:DET         0.76%         702           BOY         0.74%         687 |  |  |







## Exploiting ID-glossing to generate a frequency list of fully lexical signs

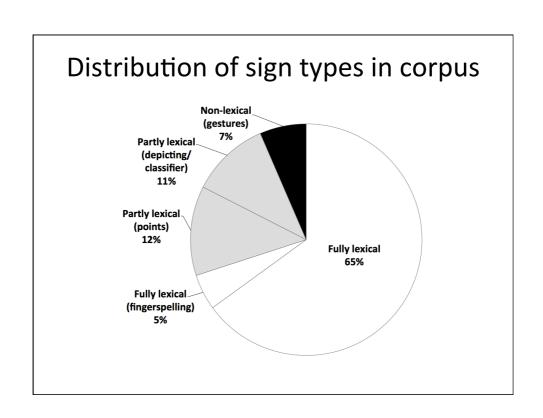
| Regular expression: ^.[^\QPT\E ^\QDS\E ^\QFS\E \QG\:\E ^\QG\(\E)  |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Concordance view  | Frequency by frequency, (i.e., lexical frequency list: annotation, percent, count) |   |  |  |
| PAST GO-IN  PAST GO-IN PT:DET  PT:DET COUNTRY FAR  COUNTRY FAR FS:FARM  FS:FARM HAVE ONE  HAVE ONE BOY  ONE BOY WHO  BOY WHO ALWAYSI  WHO ALWAYSI TAKE-2H  ALWAYSI TAKE-2H PT:DET | LOOK SAME HAVE DEAF-AND-I BOY SAY THINK GOOD DEAF SIGN                             | 1.74%<br>1.69%<br>1.68%<br>DUMB 1.57%<br>1.18%<br>1.13%<br>1.12%<br>1.10%<br>1.09%<br>1.07% | 1009<br>980<br>976<br>910<br>687<br>656<br>648<br>636<br>633 |  |

^.[^\QPT\E|^\QDS\E|^\QFS\E|^\QG:\E|^\QG\(\E)

## Exploiting ID-glossing to generate a frequency list of partly lexical signs

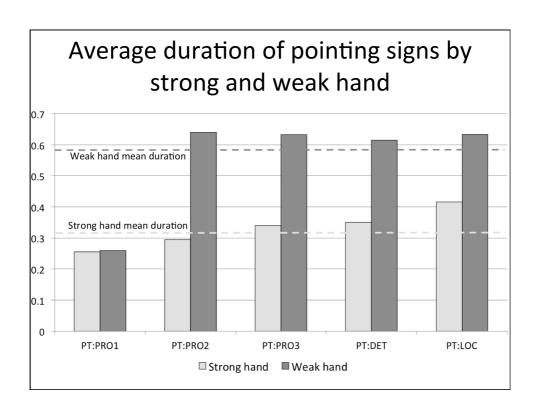
| a 1 :                            | - 11 0 1                   |               |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Concordance view                 | Frequency list of partly   | lexical signs |
| GO-IN PT:DET COUNTRY             | <b>PT</b> :PRO1SG 17.19%   | 3376          |
| TAKE-2H PT:DET SHEEP2            | <b>PT</b> :PRO3SG 10.10%   | 1983          |
| AREA PT:POSS3PL SHEEP2           | <b>PT</b> :LOC 4.33%       | 850           |
| HOME-2H PT:DET ONE               | <b>PT</b> :DET 3.57%       | 702           |
| FS:DAY PT:PRO3SG GET(SE)         | <b>PT</b> :PRO2SG 3.22%    | 633           |
| FS:SO PT:PRO3SG WANT             | <b>PT</b> :PRO1SG(B) 2.54% | 499           |
| WOLF PT:PRO3SG FS:SO             | <b>PT</b> :PRO1SG(7) 2.06% | 404           |
| FS:SO PT:PRO3SG YELL2            | <b>PT</b> :PRO3PL 1.78%    | 349           |
| FROM PT:DET FS:VILLAGE           | <b>PT</b> :PRO3SG(7) 1.01% | 199           |
| HEAR DSM(G):MANY-HUMANS-RUN ONLY | PT:POSS1SG 0.97%           | 191           |

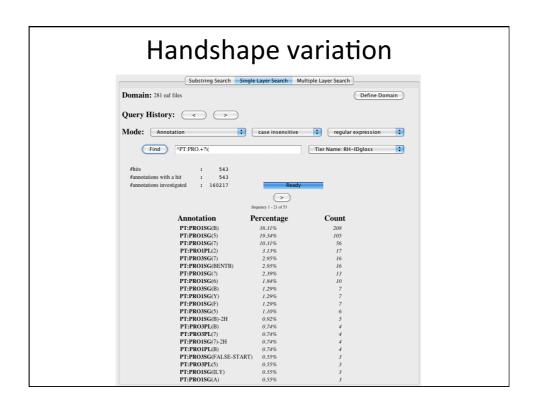
Note: the coding in parentheses at the end of the gloss indicates variant handshapes



### Distribution of signs by type & text type

| Sign type       | Narrative | Interview | Retell | All texts |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| Lexical signs   | 64%       | 70%       | 61%    | 65%       |
| Fingerspelling  | 6%        | 5%        | 5%     | 5%        |
| Gestures        | 6%        | 9%        | 5%     | 7%        |
| Points          | 16%       | 15%       | 7%     | 14%       |
| Depicting signs | 7%        | 2%        | 21%    | 4%        |



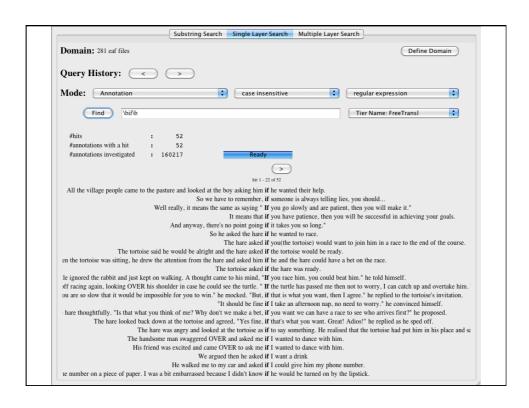


## Translation equivalents used to locate types of data (1): conditionals

- How is conditional marked?
  - non-manual brow raise?
    - what order the clauses?
  - lexical 'if'
    - · what order the clauses?
  - no marking
    - · context only

Search for \bif\b





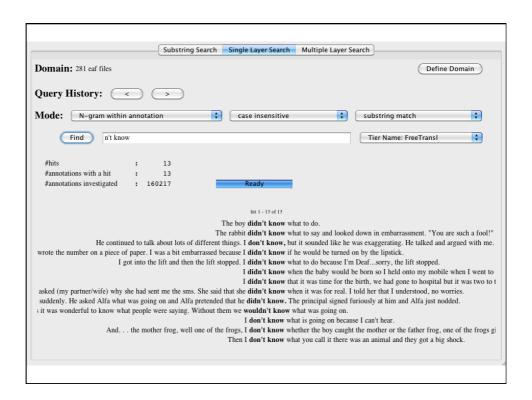
## Translation equivalents used to locate types of data (2): negation

- Is negation of KNOW
  - suppletive negative incorporation (KNOW-NOT)?
  - lexical NEG KNOW (or KNOW NEG)?
  - non-manual, i.e. with headshake?

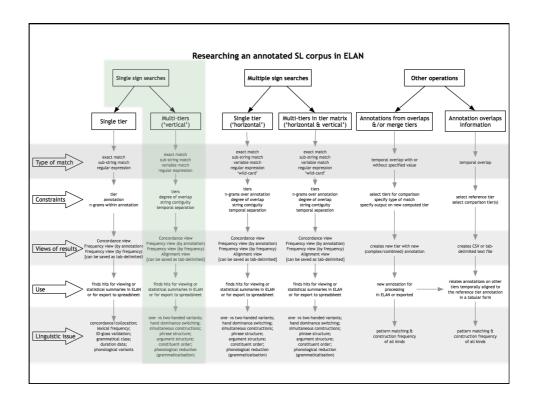
Search for

"n't know"



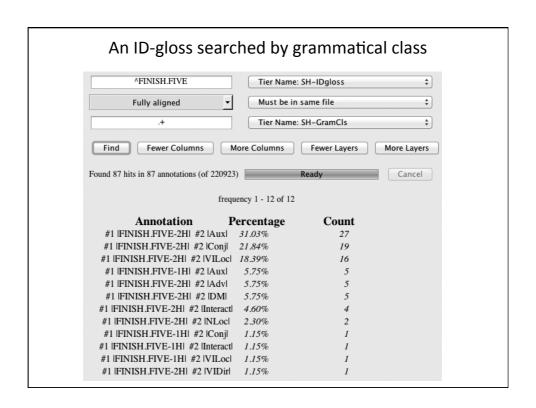


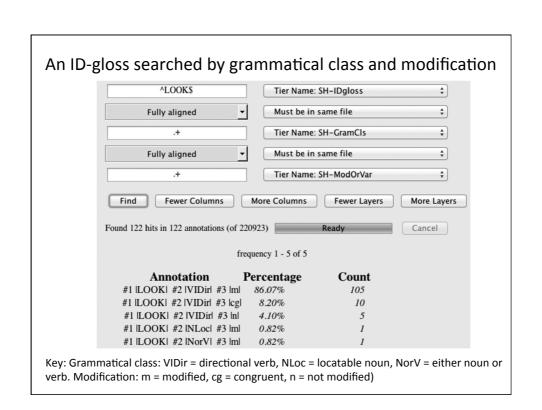
Single sign searches: multi-tier



### Examples of secondary searches

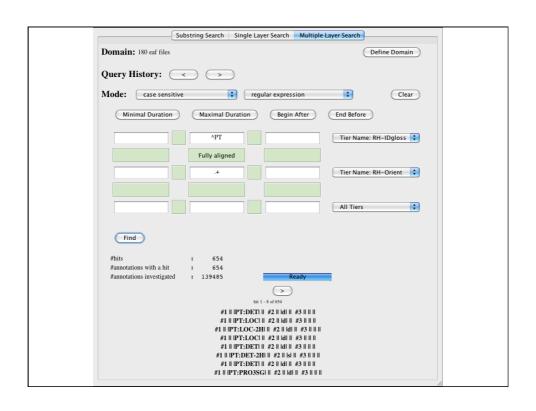
- Lexical frequency by grammatical class
- Points (PT)
  - palm orientation and PT-type
  - eye-gaze and PT-type
- Clause types
  - number and order of overt arguments
  - semantic role of argument in position

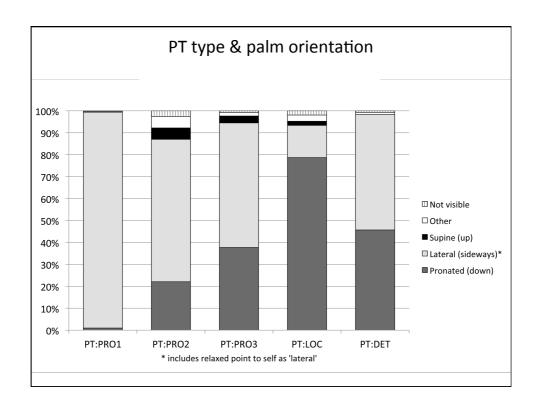




#### Palm orientation and PT type

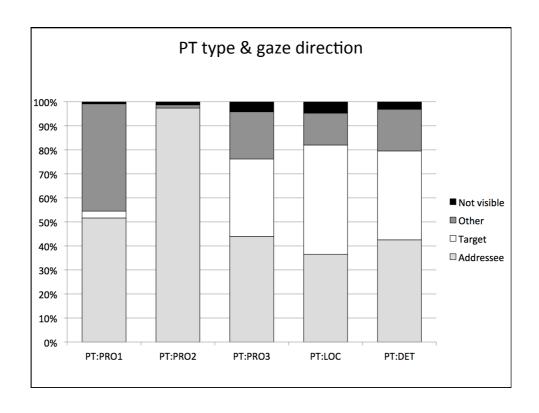
- Is there a relationship with palm orientation and type of point?
- Search for all pointing signs and determine the distribution of their palm orientations
  - IDglosses being with "PT" (^PT)
  - IDglosses overlap an orientation annotation (.+)
  - Export hits into a database, sort and extract statistics
- Answer: strong apparent relationship between palm orientation and point type





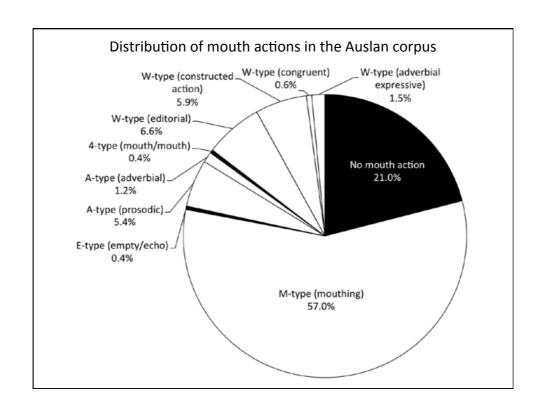
### Eye gaze and PT type

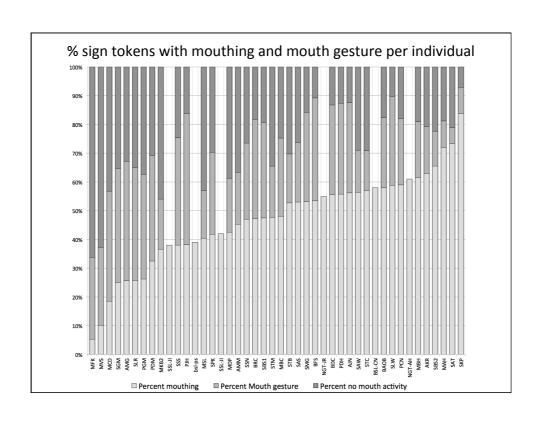
- Is there a relationship with direction of eye gaze and type of point?
- Search for all pointing signs and determine the distribution of the co-temporal eye gaze
  - IDglosses being with "PT" (^PT)
  - IDglosses overlap an eye gaze annotation (.+)
  - Get annotation/hit statistics or export hits into a database, sort and extract statistics
- Answer: strong apparent relationship between eye gaze and point type



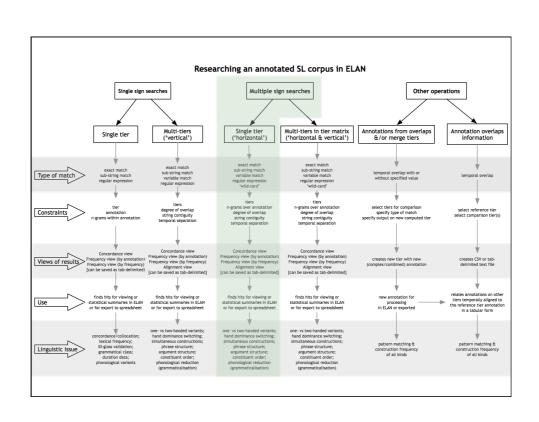
#### Mouth actions in Auslan

- What is the rate of mouth actions per signs
  - by kind (mouthing, mouth gestures, none)
  - by sign type
  - by person
  - by text type
- Search for all sign tokens
  - any IDglosses (.+)
  - overlaps with any mouth action annotation (.+)
  - Get annotation/hit statistics or export hits into a database, sort and extract statistics





# Multiple sign searches: single tier ('horizontal')



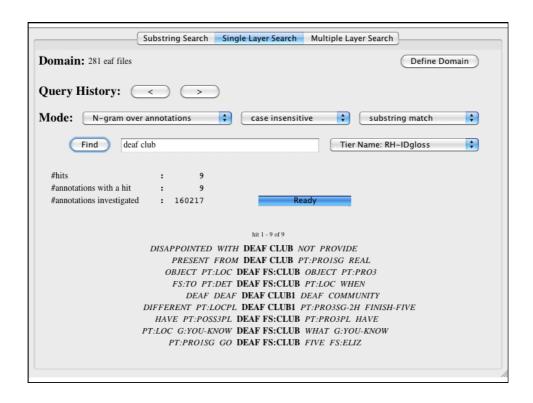
### A search for a sequence of two specific annotations separated by an unspecified annotations

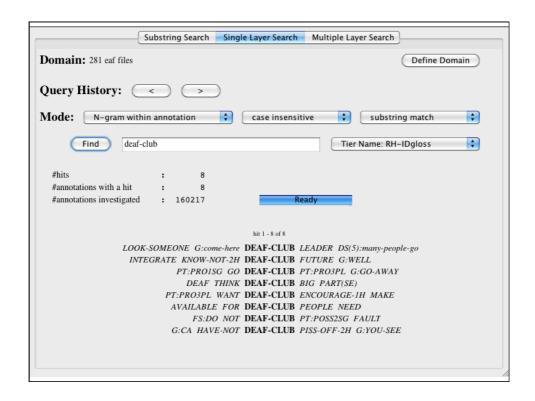


- ID-gloss validation & compounds/blends
- Established compounds given their own ID-gloss in Auslan Corpus
  - 'tomato' is TOMATO, not RED+BALL
  - compounding elements information entered in dictionary
  - criteria for compound/blend status (semantic shift, reduction in form, different mouthing, inseparability of elements)

#### Collocation or compound: DEAF CLUB?







### Phonology: handshape assimilation

- PT:PRO
  - when default 1 handshape is overridden

Search for ^PT:PRO.+?\(

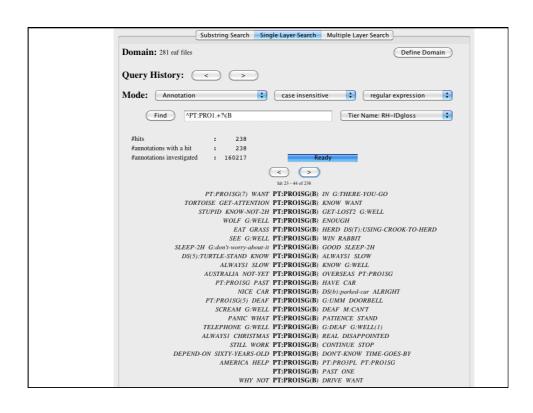


### Handshape assimilation 2

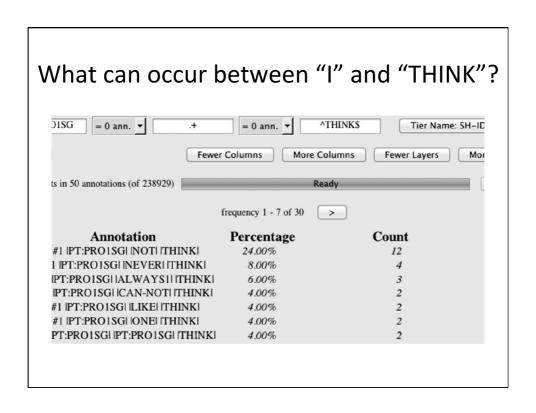
 In what environments is PT:PRO1 1 handshape replaced by B handshape?

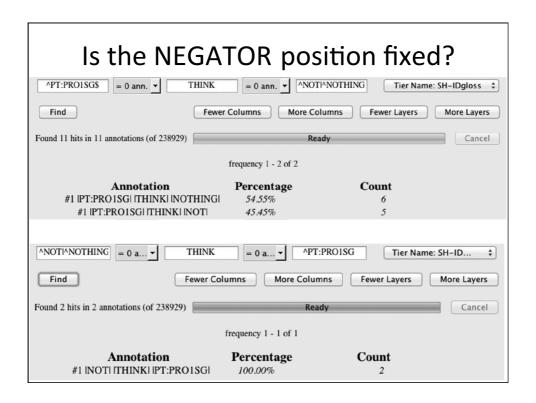
Search for ^PT:PRO1.+?\(B

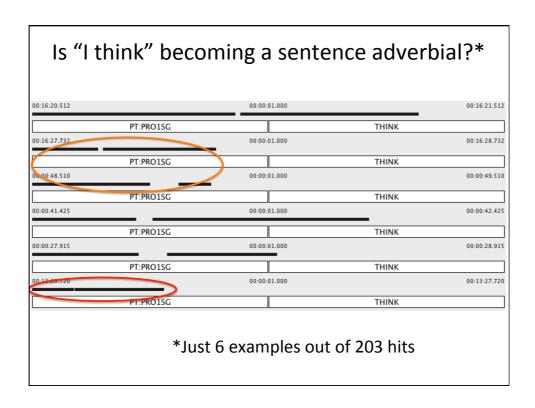




```
PT:PROISG(7) WANT PT:PROISG(B) IN G:THERE-YOU-GO
  TORTOISE GET-ATTENTION PT:PROISG(B) KNOW WANT
      STUPID KNOW-NOT-2H PT:PRO1SG(B) GET-LOST2 G:WELL
             WOLF G:WELL PT:PRO1SG(B) ENOUGH
               EAT GRASS PT:PROISG(B) HERD DS(T):USING-CROOK-TO-HERD
              SEE G:WELL PT:PROISG(B) WIN RABBIT
SLEEP-2H G:don't-worry-about-it PT:PRO1SG(B) GOOD SLEEP-2H
  DS(5):TURTLE-STAND KNOW PT:PRO1SG(B) ALWAYSI SLOW
            ALWAYSI SLOW PT:PRO1SG(B) KNOW G:WELL
        AUSTRALIA NOT-YET PT:PROISG(B) OVERSEAS PT:PROISG
          PT:PROISG PAST PT:PROISG(B) HAVE CAR
                NICE CAR PT:PRO1SG(B) DS(b):parked-car ALRIGHT
        PT:PRO1SG(5) DEAF PT:PRO1SG(B) G:UMM DOORBELL
           SCREAM G:WELL PT:PRO1SG(B) DEAF M:CAN'T
              PANIC WHAT PT:PROISG(B) PATIENCE STAND
       TELEPHONE G:WELL PT:PRO1SG(B) G:DEAF G:WELL(1)
       ALWAYSI CHRISTMAS PT:PROISG(B) REAL DISAPPOINTED
              STILL WORK PT:PROISG(B) CONTINUE STOP
DEPEND-ON SIXTY-YEARS-OLD PT:PROISG(B) DON'T-KNOW TIME-GOES-BY
            AMERICA HELP PT:PROISG(B) PT:PRO3PL PT:PROISG
                          PT:PRO1SG(B) PAST ONE
                 WHY NOT PT:PROISG(B) DRIVE WANT
```

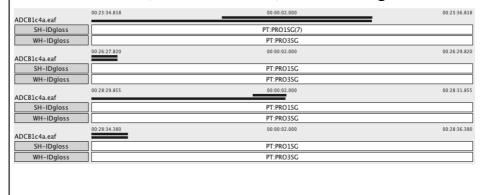




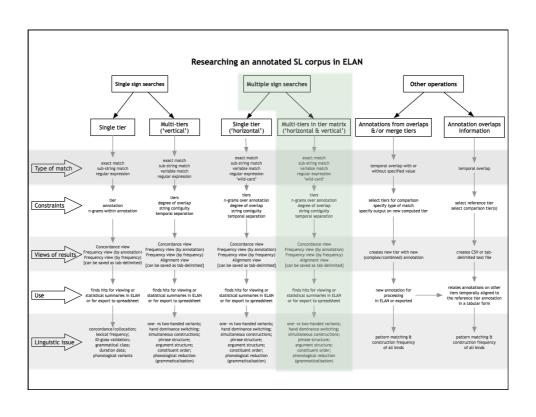


#### Simultaneity

 e.g., when points co-occur are they double articulations, co-articulations, or something else?

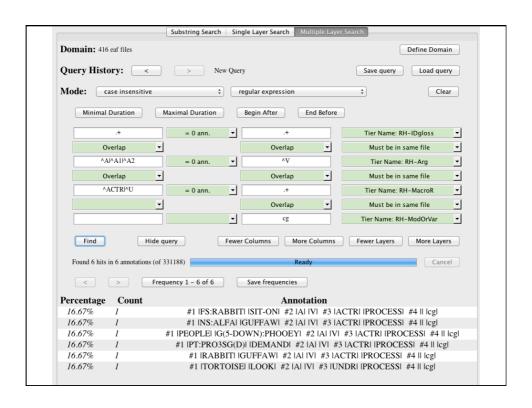


# Multiple sign searches: multi-tier ('horizontal & vertical')





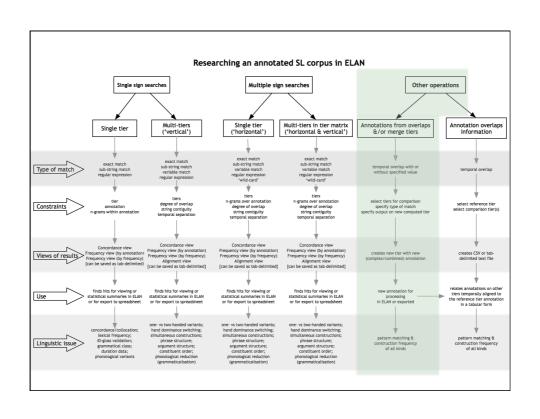


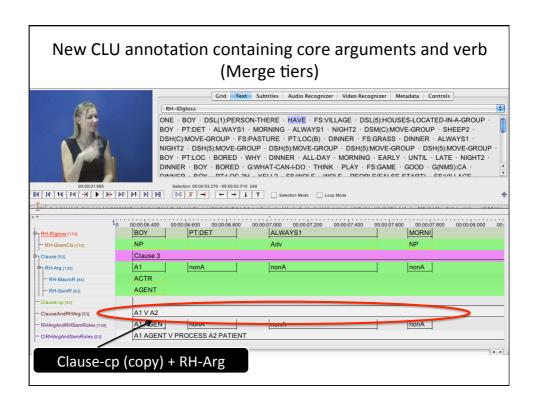


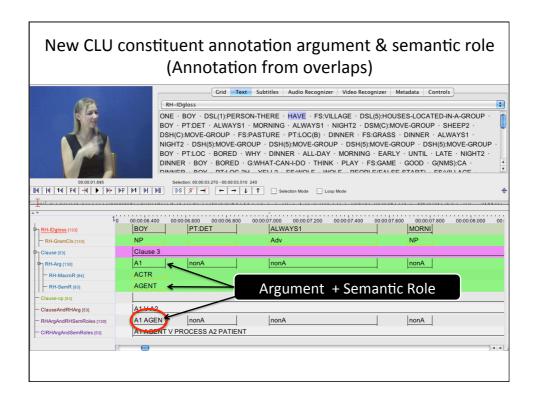
#### What's missing?

- The ability to combine data dispersed across several tiers into a single complex annotation that can then be the target of a search constrained by other factors
- Any indication that the sequences identified are CLU-specific
  - i.e., they occur within CLU constructions (and are thus potential schemas), rather than being unrelated juxtapositions of annotations (they span clause boundaries)

# Other operations: merge & annotation from overlaps



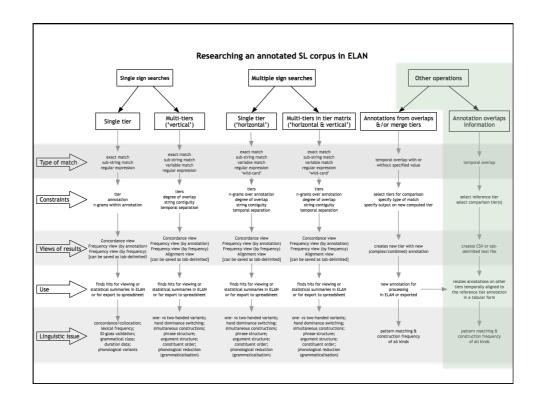




# Results can be tagged rather than merged

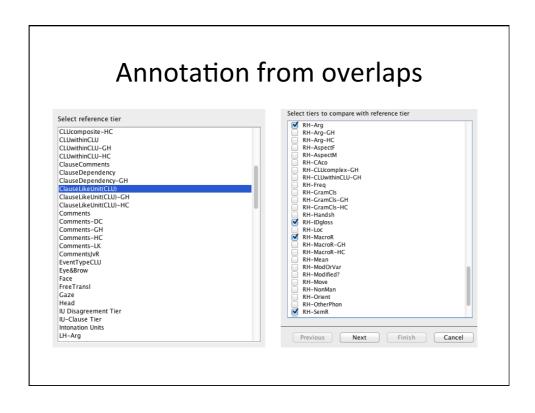
- tag as 'potential subject'
- tag as 'potential passive construction'
- whatever the research interest is...

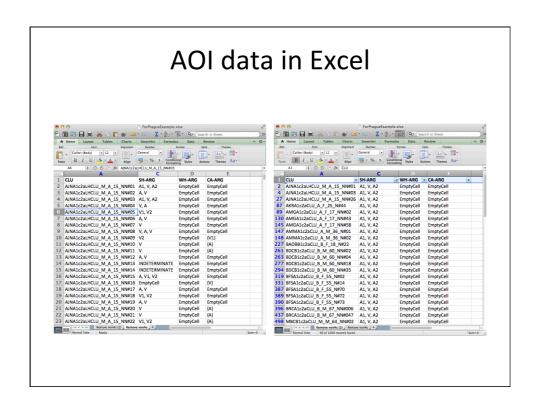
Other operations
Annotation overlaps information
(export only)

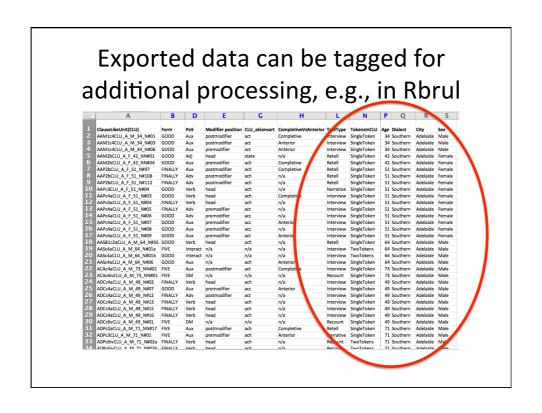


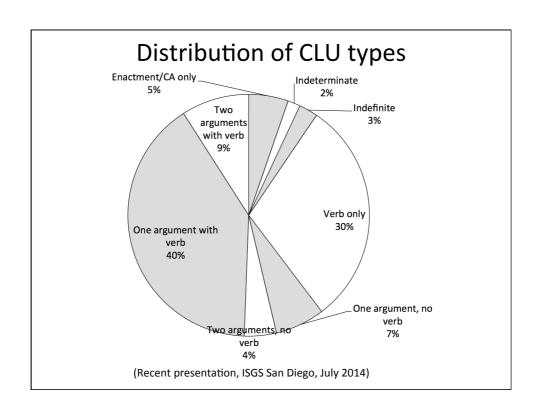
#### Annotation overlaps information

- Like "annotations from overlaps" except that
  - the output does not alter the ELAN annotation file itself (by creating a new tier with the merged information)
  - the results are automatically exported as CSV files which can be opened and further processed in databases, such as EXCEL (the results cannot be viewed in ELAN)
- Advantages of "Annotation overlaps information"
  - better at processing overlaps that involve a temporally larger domain (e.g., CLUs) overlapping multiple temporally smaller domains (e.g., sign tokens)
    - thus excellent for analyzing constituency
  - each reference tier annotation is exported with file identifying information and token identifying information
  - exported data can be subjected to multiple sorting, searching, and filtering operations (especially recursively on found sets) than is possible within ELAN
  - $-\,$  exported data can be easily tagged with codes for multivariate analysis (e.g., in Rbrul)









### Structure of CLUs

| CLU by argument type    | % of each type with a constituent which is |           |                         |          |                                      |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|-------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|
|                         | enacted                                    | depicting | enacted or<br>depicting | pointing | enacted,<br>depicting or<br>pointing |
| Constructed action only | 100%                                       | n/a       | 100%                    | n/a      | 100%                                 |
| Indeterminate           | 75%  | tbc       | >75% (tbc)              | tbc      | +>75% (tbc)                          |
| Indefinite              | 50%  | tbc       | >50% (tbc)              | tbc      | +>50% (tbc)                          |
| Verb only               | 19%  | 12%       | 28%                     | 6.5%     | 35%                                  |
| One argument, no verb   | 4%   | 1%        | 5%                      | 23%      | 23%                                  |
| Two arguments, no verb  | 4%   | 12%       | 16%                     | 58%      | 58%                                  |
| One argument with verb  | 17%  | 8%        | 23%                     | 40%      | 49%                                  |
| Two arguments with verb | 16%  | 20%       | 20%                     | 60%      | 75%                                  |

(Recent presentation, ISGS San Diego, July 2014)

#### Argument patterns

(Recent presentation, ISGS San Diego, July 2014)

| Phenomenon        | Comment   |
|-------------------|---|
| One argument CLUs |   |
| A V = 70%         | pre-verbal argument twice as frequent as post-verbal  |
| V A = 30%         |   |
| Two argument CLUs |   |
| A1 V A2 = 83%     | A1 V A2 by far the most frequent construction   |
| V A1 A2 = 17%     |   |
| A1 A2 V = 0%      | A1 A2 V only unattested because of task/genre<br>Johnston et al 2007 has multiple examples from 3<br>SLs (Volterra picture task, spatial) |
| *V A2 A1 etc. n/a | cannot exist by definition (1 and 2 refer to 'order of appearance', not syntactic role)   |

(Recent presentation, ISGS San Diego, July 2014)

#### Conclusion

