Buoys in the "LSFB sea": their coordinates and their neighbours

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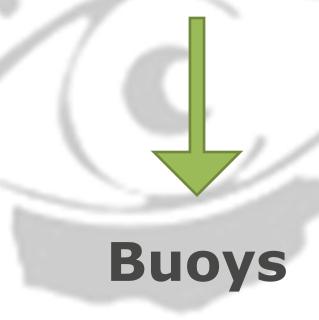
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Agenda

Introduction

PhD on discourse markers in French Belgian Sign Language (LSFB) and Catalan Sign Language (LSC)

Buoys

Buoys: definition

"(S)igns produced with the weak hand that are held in a stationary configuration as the strong hand continues producing signs. Semantically they help guide the discourse by serving as conceptual landmarks as the discourse continues" (Liddell 2003:223)

Buoys: classification

- **The first classification** (Liddell 2003)
- List buoy
- Theme buoy
- Fragment buoy
- Pointer buoy
- Depicting buoy

- **Two new ones**
- Point buoy (Vogt – Svendsen and Bergman 2007)
- Delimit buoy (Mesch and Wallin 2013)

Buoys within the discourse: first steps

• According to Gabarró-López and Meurant (2013), buoys have:

• Different frequency of appearance depending on the type of text

• Different discourse functions which are the same for a particular category except for **LIST-BUOYS.**

Buoys within the discourse: first steps

- **Next questions:**

- What place do list buoys occupy in the discourse? Does their function affect the position in which they emerge?

- What is their immediate context? Is there a repeated pattern for every category or function within the discourse?

Methodology

- 1 hour corpus of 1 deaf native LSFB signer

- Already used in Gabarró-López and Meurant (2013, 2014)

- Balanced in terms of discourse type

- Including different degree of preparedness, media coverage and work-relatedness (Crible et al. 2014) as well as aimed at different publics

Methodology

Discourse type	Abrev.	Number of speakers	Degree of preparedness	Degree of media coverage	Category of work-relatedness	Public
Argumentative	A1	Monologue	Prepared (there is a parallel written version)	Media	Non-professional	Deaf Community
	A2	Monologue	Semi-prepared	Media	Non-professional	Deaf Community
Explicative	E1	Monologue	Semi-prepared	Media	Non-professional	Deaf Community
	E2	Monologue	Prepared (there is a pre-existing written version)	Not media	Professional	Deaf participating in the LSFB Corpus as informants
Metalinguistic	M1	Monologue	Prepared	Not media	Professional	Hearing and deaf LSFB learners
	M2	Dialogue	Spontaneous	Not media	Non-professional	Deaf interviewer
Narrative	N1	Monologue	Semi-prepared	Semi-media	Professional	Deaf Community
	N2	Monologue	Semi-prepared	Not media	Professional	LSFB teachers and researchers

Results

- There are no list buoys in the 2 narrative productions we studied.

- List buoys have 2 different functions in our corpus:
1. **Enumerative**
  1.1. Local enumeration (E2 and M2)
  1.2. Organisation of the discourse (A1 and A2)
2. **Cohesive** (E1 and M1)

- The enumerative function is linked to the cohesive because of the property of coherence, i.e. an enumerative list buoy can become a cohesive list buoy if anaphoric reference takes place later.

Place in the discourse

Discourses segmented following a set of guidelines (Gabarró-López and Meurant 2014)

Position of buoys as regards the resulting discourse segments:

- Beginning position
- Middle position
- End position

Place in the discourse

Discourse	Number of list-buoy markers	Beginning position	Middle position	Final position	
A1	15	7	5	3	**ORGANISATION OF DISCOURSE** (enumeration)
A2	1			1	
E1	28	8	15	1 (end) 4 (end – beginning)	**COHESION**
E2	18	1	17		**LOCAL ENUMERATION**
M1	19	13	5	1	**COHESION**
M2	14	1 (beginning – beginning)	12	1	**LOCAL ENUMERATION**

Place in the discourse

1. **List-buoys with enumerative function**

1.1. Local enumeration

The markers usually appear in middle position

E2: **94.4% middle** (17) and 5,6% end position (1)

M2: **85.7% middle** (12), 7.1% end (1) and 7.1% beginning – beginning position

1.2. Organisation of discourse

Results vary from one discourse to another

A1: **46.6% beginning** (7), 33.3% middle (5) and 20% end position (3)

A2: 1 list-buoy in end position (hesitation when annotating: is it an ordinal or a list buoy?)

Place in the discourse

2. **List-buoys with cohesive function**

The markers tend to appear in beginning position and seem to overtake the number of markers in middle position.

M1: **68.4% beginning**, 26.3% middle and 5.2% end position

E1: **42.8% beginning** (markers "beginning" + markers "end-beginning"), 53.5% middle and 3.5% end position

✓ Number of markers in beginning position (8) inferior to those in middle position (15), but the addition of "beginning" and "end-beginning position" (12) is close to the general trend.

✓ Furthermore, some markers in middle position are anticipations or false starts.

Place in the discourse

Therefore:

•Similar position of list buoys depending on their function with only one exception: list buoys that organise the discourse.

Why? Different degrees of preparedness in A1 and A2

•The degree of preparedness influences the extension of list buoys when they organise the discourse or when they have a cohesive function.

•A1 and M1 show the most striking difference between beginning and middle position because both videos have been edited and there was another deaf signer present when they were produced.

•M1 counts on the highest number of list buoys in beginning position because of the public it is aimed at and its objective (teaching LSFB).

Immediate context

- Signs surrounding list buoys found within the same discourse unit:

- Beginning position: a maximum of 3 signs right after the marker

- Middle position: a maximum of 3 signs before and 3 after the marker

- End position: a maximum of 3 signs before the marker

Immediate context

Grammatical class categories (based on Johnston (2013) and later adapted):

- Adjective (Adj)
- Adverb (Adv)
- Buoy
- Conjunction (Conj)
- Determiner (Det)
- Discourse marker (DM)
- Depicting sign (DS)
- Noun (N)
- Predicate (Pred)
- Preposition (Prep)
- Pronoun (Pro)
- Rhetorical question (RQ)
- Salutation
- Verb (V)
- WH-Q (Wh-Question)

Immediate context

Results:

•There is not a still collocation or combination of signs before or after list buoy markers of any kind.

•List buoys with an enumerative local role show collocations where the immediate context is mainly composed of nouns and buoys

Not surprising because coordination takes place and it tends to involve nouns more often than verbs.

•The most repeated collocation (5 occurrences) is "Buoy N" in beginning position and they all belong to the same discourse (M1) that contains 5 points to be developed.

Conclusions

- The position of list buoys in the discourse seems to be affected by their function:

1. **Enumerative**

1.1. Local enumeration: middle position

1.2. Organisation of the discourse: more data is needed

2. **Cohesive**: beginning position

- There is no still combination of signs before or after every list buoy marker regardless of the list buoy function within the discourse.

Further research

- Tackling the same issues with a larger sample and more signers

- What about pauses?

- What about self-repairs, false starts?

- What about sign holds?

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THANK YOU!

Questions?

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