

Current Issues in Sign Language Linguistics/3

Josep Quer
ICREA-Universitat Pompeu Fabra

I Escuela de Lingüística de Buenos Aires
15-19 February, 2016



LSC Lab
Laboratori de llengua de signes catalana



Pronouns

Pointing Signs: Form

- Handshape: 1-hand
- Movement-hold syllable
- Movement: straight (= default)
- Orientation: radial side up
- Some variation possible; proposal for NGT: role of specificity, politeness

Pointing Signs: Use

- Deictic interpretation
 - Spatial (HERE, THERE)
 - Temporal (TODAY)
 - Reference to individuals
- Grammatical categories
 - Determiner/Demonstrative
 - Pronoun
 - Adverbial

Identifying Pointings



JOAN IX_{3a} BOOK_{3a} GIVE₁ IX_{3a} TELL₁ IX₁ TOMORROW
IX_{3b} EVA₁ GIVE_{3b} BECAUSE IX_{3b} INTERESTED

Pointing by Eye Gaze



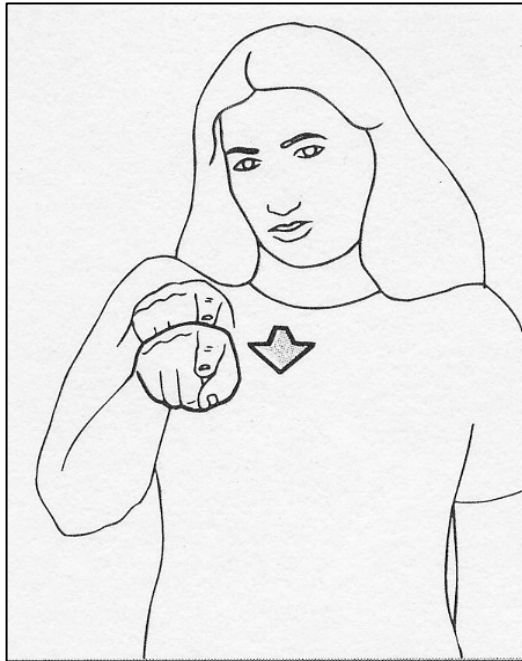
WOMAN WHO

SL Pronouns: Present Referents

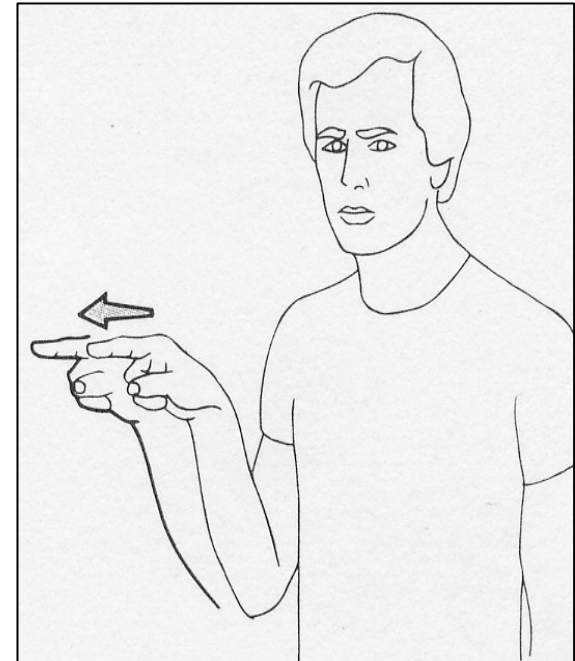
- Crosslinguistically realized by an index pointing to present referents



‘I’



‘you’



‘s/he’

SL Pronouns: Non-present Referents

- Non-present referents are localized in the signing space by
 - a pointing sign (index)
 - eye gaze
 - a sign articulated at a certain point
- An unambiguous referential locus is established
 - (a) *John_i is visiting Peter_j because **he**_{i/j} is sad.*
→ Ambiguous reference
 - (b) JOHN INDEX_{3a} PETER INDEX_{3b} VISIT
REASON INDEX_{3b} SAD
→ Unambiguous reference

Localization and Pronominalization



IX₁ BROTHER IX_{3a}, SOON IX_{3a} PARIS_{3a} GO-TO_{3b} 9

Person Features?

- How many person distinctions?
There are no fixed loci for 2nd or 3rd person
- No person distinctions in SLs
 - no pronouns, only demonstratives (Ahlgren 1990)
 - locus features, referential indices are realized overtly (Lillo-Martin & Klima 1990)
 - identity feature (Costello 2016)
- First, second, third (Friedman 1975, Padden 1983/88)
- There are indefinitely many person feature distinctions (Neidle et al. 2000)
- The only relevant distinction is a first/non-first distinction (Meier 1990)
- 2nd and 3rd person can be distinguished by non-manual marking (Berenz 2002; Alibašić Ciciliani & Wilbur 2006)

2nd vs. 3rd Person

- Croatian SL (Alibašić Ciciliani & Wilbur 2006). Libras (Berenz 2002)



INDEX₃



SAY



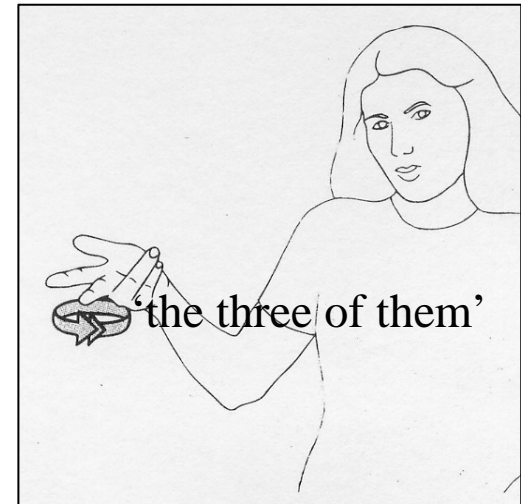
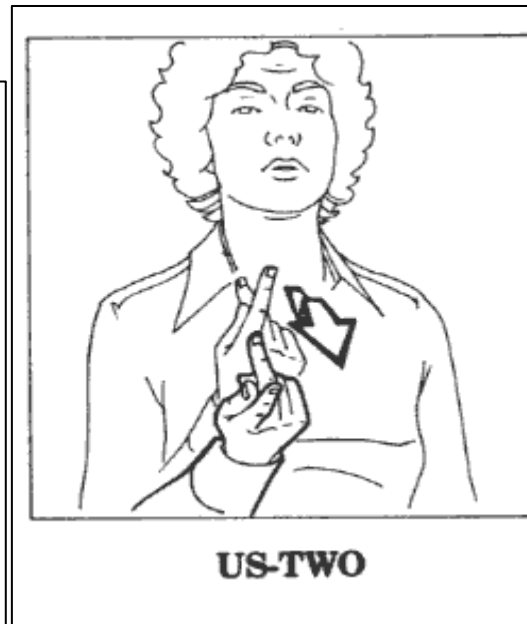
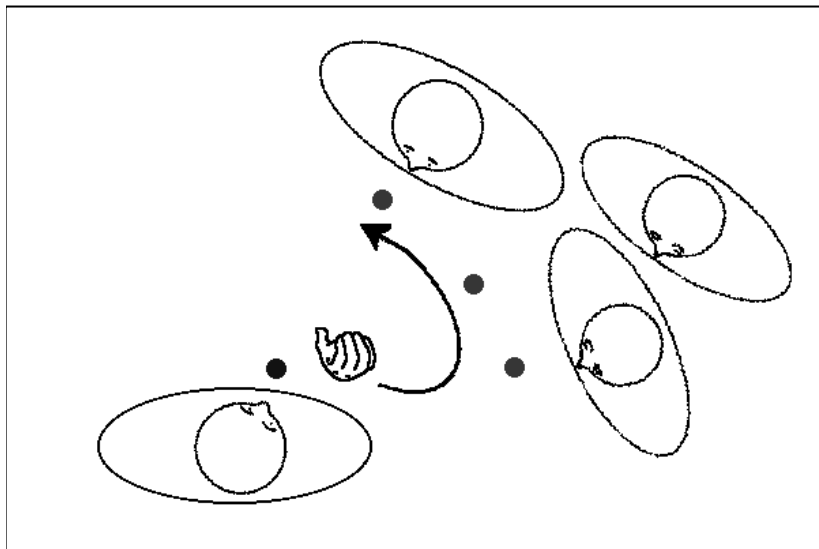
INDEX₂



STUPID

Number Marking

- Unspecified plural realized by arc movement
- Dual/trial etc.: numeral incorporation
- Distinction inclusive vs. exclusive in 1st pl.



Determiner vs. Adverbial in ASL

- Pointings within DP (Neidle et al. 2000, MacLaughlin 1997):
 - prenominal: definite determiner
 - postnominal: adverbial (can be modified)

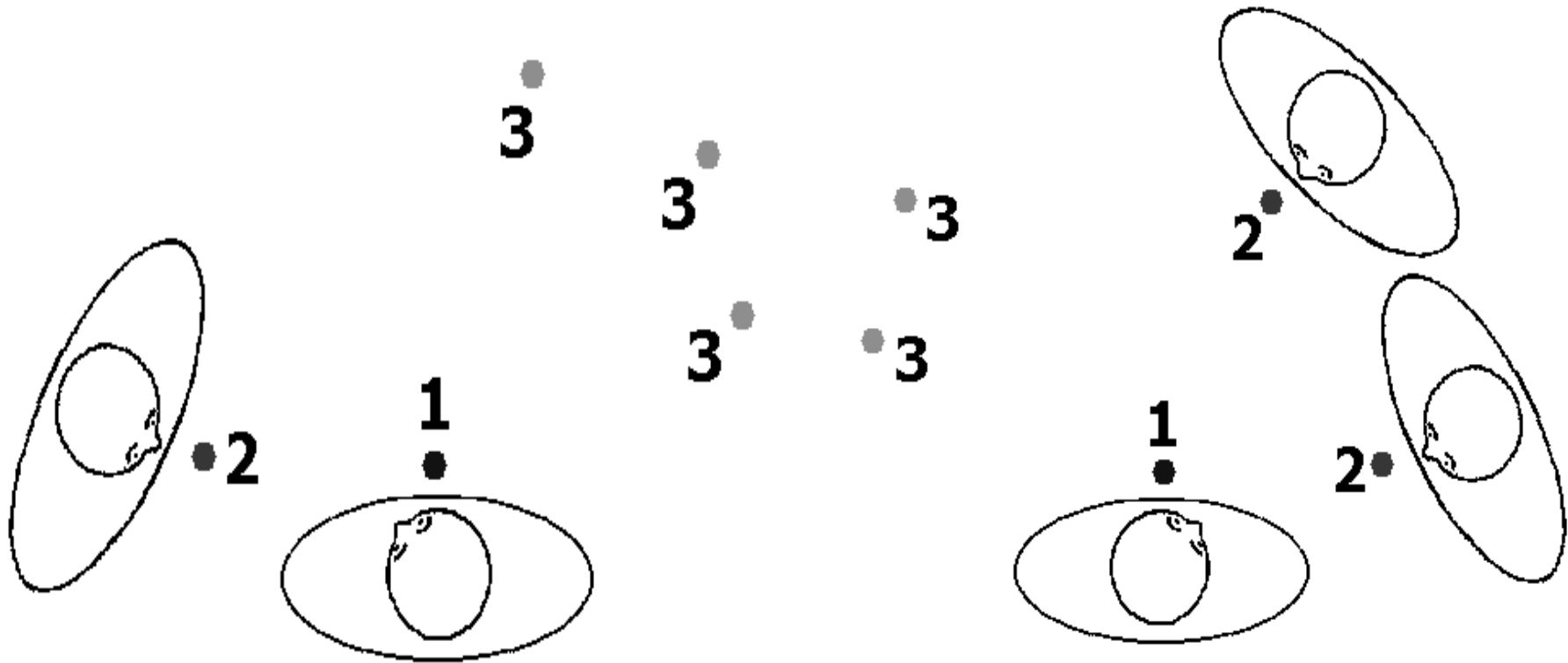
[IX_{det} BOY IX_{adv}] LIKE CHOCOLATE

JOHN LIVE IX_{adv}

What are the Relevant Features?

- How many person distinctions? Potentially infinite number of pronominal forms for 3rd person singular → listability problem
- First/non-first distinction? The role of eye gaze
- Inclusive/exclusive distinction in 1st plural
- Rich system of number marking?
Arguments against treating trial, quadruple etc. as true grammatical number marking
 - Etymological relation to numerals
 - Non-obligatory

SL Pronouns: Features



Striking Properties

- Typological homogeneity/uniformity
 - Morphophonological exclusivity: a subset of phonemes (locations) is used for referential purposes only
 - Highly unusual morphological paradigm
 - High degree of referential specificity: non-arbitrary relation between form & meaning
- Pronominal reference in sign languages is medium-driven: high degree of conceptual iconicity

Alternative Proposal

- Spatial locations used for pronominal reference are not phonologically specifiable
- Pronouns are a combination of linguistic and gestural elements (Liddell 2003):
 - Handshape, orientation, movement describable using discrete linguistic features
 - Direction and endpoint of movement: gestural
- Pronouns are directed toward mental representations (not grammatical ones)

Syntax

Basic Word Order

- Two common basic word orders have been described for SLs (Johnston et al. 2007):
 - SVO: ASL, BSL, Libras
 - SOV: LSC, DGS, NGT, LIS, Indopakistani SL
- Search for basic word order is complicated by: simultaneous constructions, doubling, pro drop, pronoun copy (Kimmelman 2012)
- Different word order in locative constructions: ground before figure

Subordination

- Liddell (1980) contra Thompson (1977): ASL does have sential embedded complements.
- Indirect questions
 - DON'T KNOW WHERE GONE
- Indirect speech
 - JOHN SAY IX3 TIRED
- SEE/FEEL/THINK (+ pause)
____t
- GIRL JOHN WANT AVOID
- <IX1 NOT EXPECT IX2 COME IX1>neg

Negation

Negation

- Negation may be expressed by a particle, an affix or an auxiliary
- In some languages, negation comes in two parts (without changing the *polarity* of the sentence)



CAN



CANNOT

Fig. 15.2: LSC pair CAN vs. CANNOT

SL Negation

- In (all?) sign languages, a (optional) manual negation sign may be combined with a non-manual marker (headshake):

MUTTER hs
BLUME++ KAUF (**NICHT**)

- Position of the manual element:

ASL: JOHN **NOT** BUY HOUSE
DGS: JOHN HAUS KAUF **NICHT**

Headshake

- The negative headshake is a prosodic alteration (comparable to a tone change).
- Prosodic alteration accompanying negation in spoken language; e.g. Ógbrû:
Kirî ò búkù òkókò
Kiri ASP ask.for.RES banana
'Kiri has asked for the banana.'
Kirî ó búkù mú òkókò
Kiri ASP.NEG ask.for.RES NEG banana
'Kiri has not asked for the banana.'

Nonmanual spreading

- (1) a. SANTI MEAT EAT NOT $\frac{(\quad (\quad))}{\quad}$ hs [LSC]
b. SANTI MEAT EAT $\frac{(\quad)}{\quad}$ hs
'Santi doesn't eat meat.'
- (2) a. PAOLO CONTRACT SIGN NON $\frac{\quad}{\quad}$ hs [LIS]
'Paolo didn't sign the contract.'
b. * PAOLO CONTRACT SIGN $\frac{(\quad (\quad (\quad)))}{\quad}$

a. JOHN (neg)
NOT BUY HOUSE

b. JOHN BUY HOUSE
'John didn't buy the house.'

c. * JOHN BUY HOUSE

ASL

a. MAN FLOWER BUY
'The man is not buying a flower.'

b. * MAN FLOWER RED BUY

DGS

SANTI MEAT EAT NOT
'Santi does not eat meat.'

LSC

a. MOTHER FLOWER BUY NOT
'Mother is not buying a flower.'

b. * MOTHER FLOWER BUY NOT

DGS

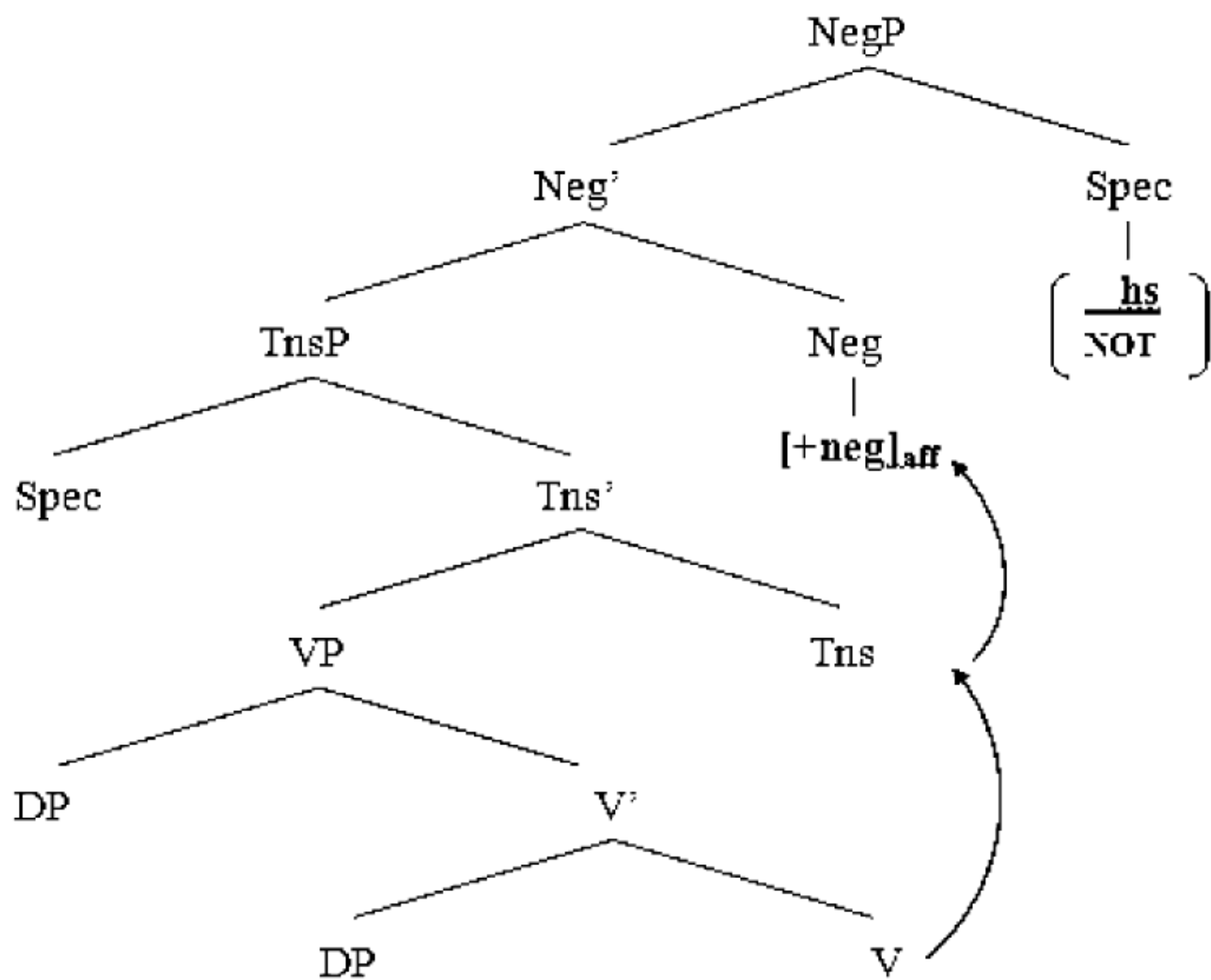


Fig. 15.8: DGS negative structure, with negative marker NOT and obligatory V-movement to Neg.

Interrogatives

Non-manual Marking

(Pfau & Quer 2010; Cecchetto 2012)

- Syntactic non-manual markers for
 - negation (mostly headshake)
 - yes/no-questions (eyebrows up, head forward)
 - wh-questions (mostly eyebrows down)
 - topicalization (eyebrows up, head back)
 - relative clauses (eyebrows up)
 - conditionals (eyebrows up, head thrust)

Minimal Sentence Pairs

- LSC, DGS...: declarative sentence (a), negated sentence (b), yes/no-question (c).

a.	MAN INDEX _{3a} BOOK BUY	
	‘The man buys a book.’	
b.	MAN INDEX _{3a} BOOK BUY	<u>hs</u>
	‘The man doesn’t buy a book.’	
c.	MAN INDEX _{3a} BOOK BUY	<u>er</u>
	‘Does the man buy a book?’	

Interrogatives

(Zeshan 2004a, 2006)

- Yes/no-questions:
 - Non-manuals: raised eyebrows & eyes open; head slightly back
 - manual: question particle, final INDEX
- Wh-questions:
 - Non-manuals: furrowed eyebrows; head slightly forward/slight head shake
 - manual: wh-sign/movement, particle

Yes/No Questions

- Nonmanuals:
 - raised eyebrows
 - eyes open
 - head slightly moves forward



Wh-Questions

- Nonmanuals:
 - furrowed eyebrows
 - squinted eyes
 - slightly forward head lean/slight head shake



ISL

ASL: Position of Wh-Sign

- Three options: base position (b), sentence-final (c), or doubled (d) (Petronio & Lillo-Martin 1997; Neidle et al. 1997; Sandler & Lillo-Martin 2006)

(a) PETER BUY **CAR** YESTERDAY

wh

(b) PETER BUY **WHAT** YESTERDAY?

wh

(c) PETER BUY YESTERDAY **WHAT**?

wh

(d) **WHAT** PETER BUY YESTERDAY **WHAT**?

Indopakistani Sign Language

(Aboh, Pfau & Zeshan 2005)

- Only one wh-sign (G-WH) which always appears in sentence-final position → q-particle

	(_____)	<u>wh</u>
a.	CHILD ANGRY	G-WH
	‘Why is the child angry?’	
	(_____)	<u>wh</u>
b.	INDEX ₂ BUY	G-WH
	‘What did you buy?’	
	(_____)	<u>wh</u>
c.	INDEX ₂ FRIEND SLEEP	G-WH
	‘Where does your friend sleep?’	

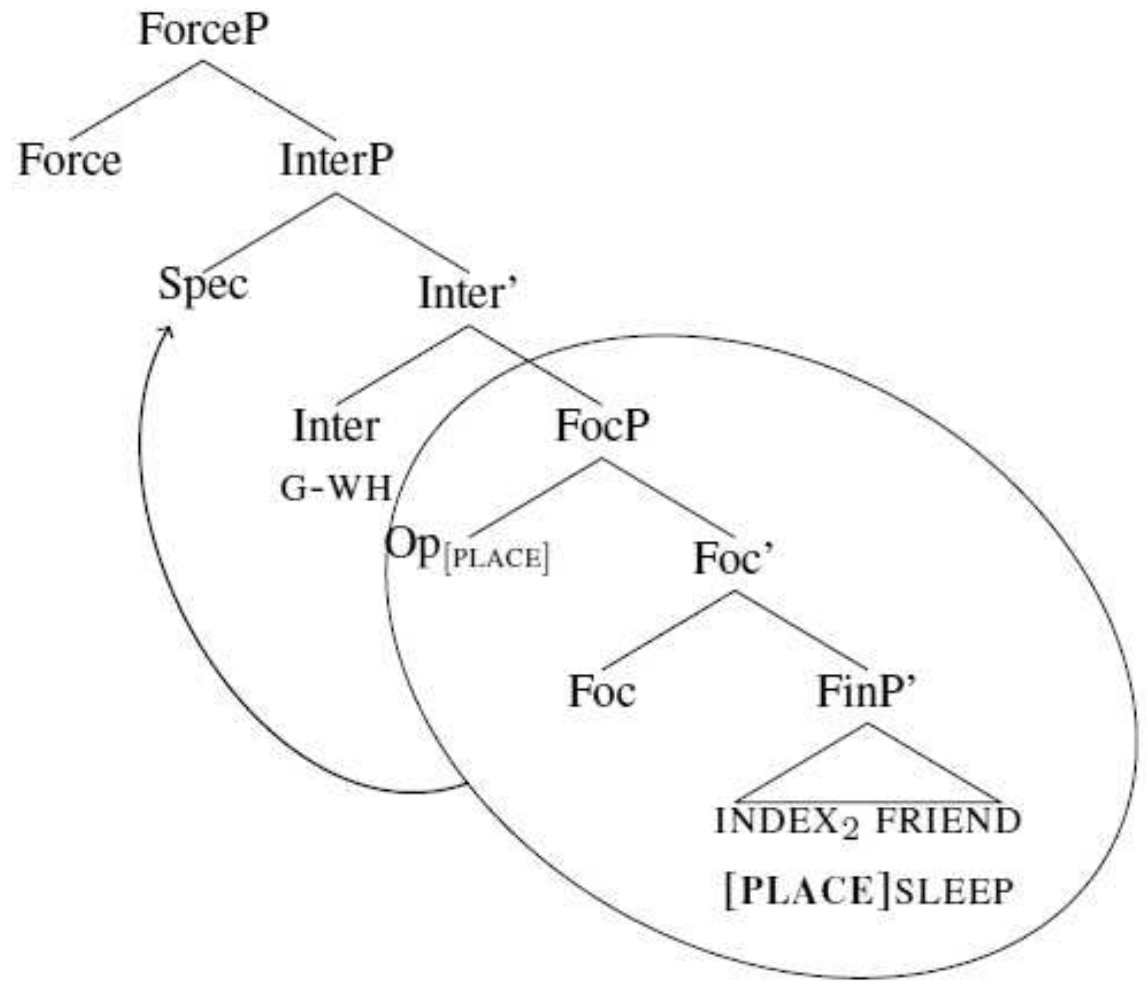


INDEX₂ FRIEND PLACE SLEEP G-WH

INDEX₂ FRIEND SLEEP PLACE G-WH

‘Where does your friend sleep?’

[[[INDEX₂ FRIEND t_z SLEEP]_i PLACE_z t_i]_j G-WH t_j]



Wh-Questions

- In contrast to ASL, the (object) wh-word may not remain in its base position in DGS:

DGS: *MAN WHAT BUY?^{wh}

ASL:TEACHER LIPREAD WHO YESTERDAY?^{wh}

TEACHER LIPREAD YESTERDAY WHO?^{wh}

Wh-nonmanual spreading ASL

- _____wh
t_i HATE JOHN WHO_i

- _____wh
t_i HATE JOHN WHO_i

Wh-nonmanual spreading ASL

_____wh

- WHO HATE JOHN

____wh

- *WHO HATE JOHN

Wh-extraction ASL

(_____) wh

- TEACHER EXPECT [t PASS TEST] WHO

_____ wh

- *WHO TEACHER EXPECT[t PASS TEST]

Wh-Phrases ASL

(_____) _____ wh

- t BREAK-DOWN [WHO POSS CAR]

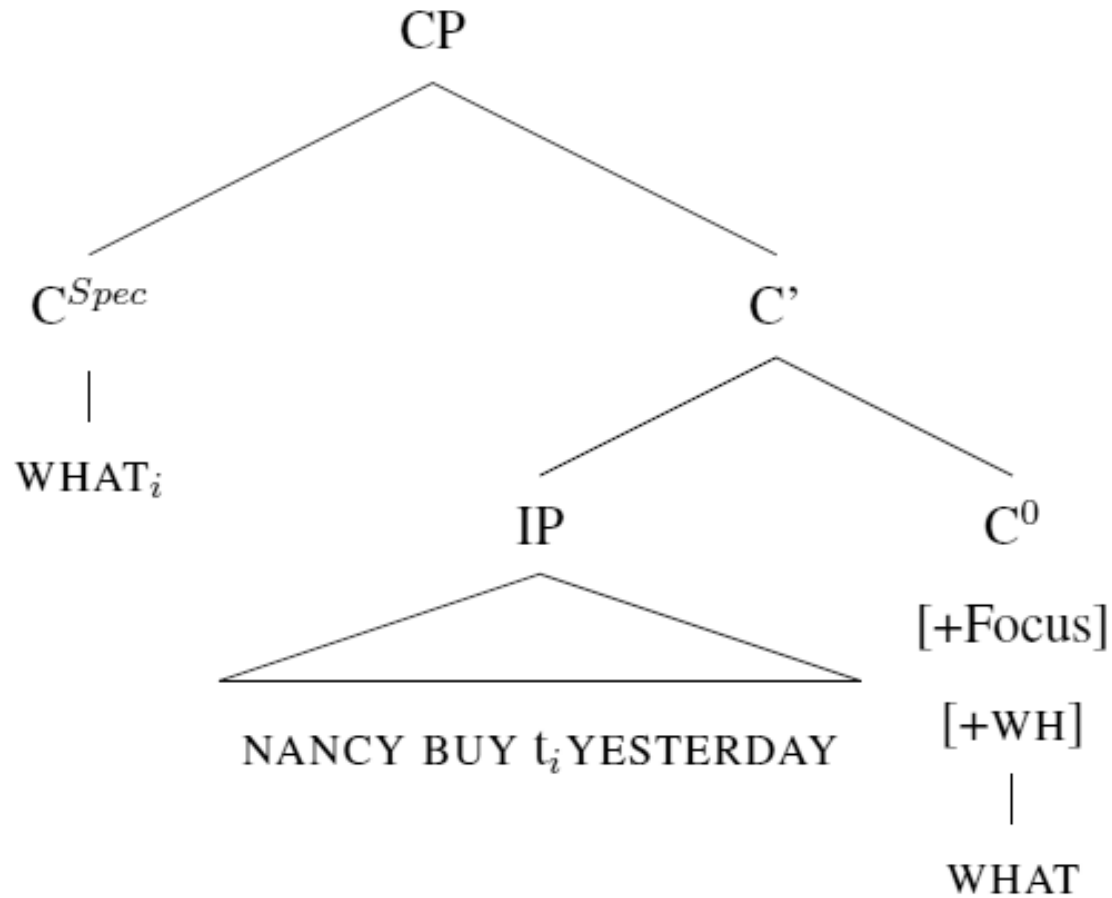
‘Whose car broke down yesterday?’

(_____) _____ wh

- JOHN BUY t YESTERDAY WHICH BOOK

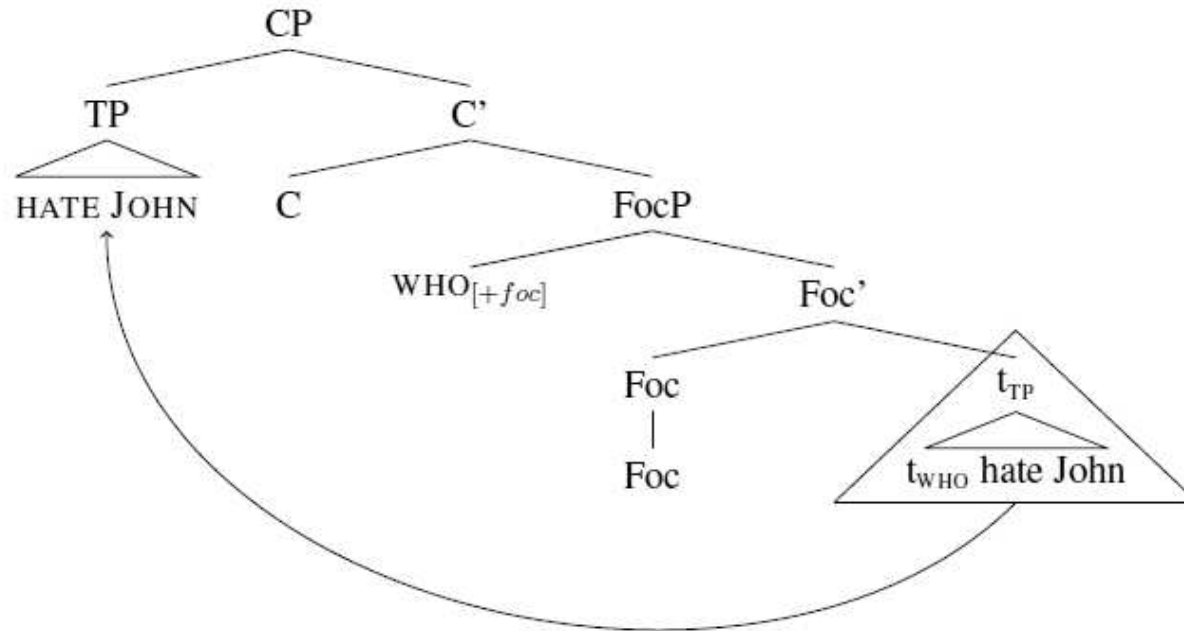
‘Which book did John buy yesterday?’

Petronio & Lillo Martin 1997: Leftward Wh-Movement

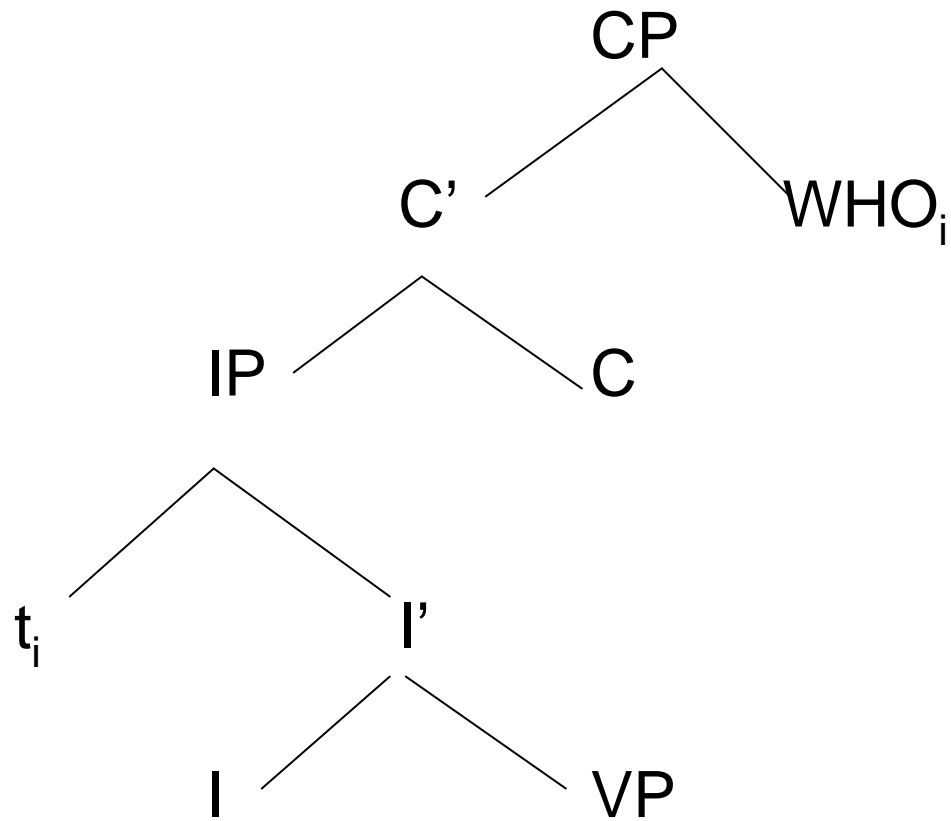


Chung 2011

Leftward Wh-Movement



Neidle et al.: Rightward Wh-Movement



Cecchetto et al 2009 (LIS): Rightward movement

