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Buoys in the LSFB sea? Their coordinates and their neighbours

Gabarro-Lopez, Silvia

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Buoys in the “LSFB sea”? Their coordinates and their neighbours

Sílvia Gabarró-López



Agenda



1. Introduction
2. State of the art
 - 2.1. Buoys: definition and classification
 - 2.2. Buoys within the discourse: first steps
3. Methodology
4. Results
 - 4.1. Place in the discourse
 - 4.2. Immediate context
5. Conclusions
6. Further research

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
- **2 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 (in press), 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 (2014, in press)
- 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	Abbrev.	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 the other.

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, i.e. a prepared or semi-prepared discourse is more likely to contain list buoys that organise the discourse or that 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.

Immediate context

- Unlike local enumerative list buoys, discourse organising or cohesive list buoys may be surrounded by:
 - ✓ Other discourse markers (THIS IS, PALM-UP, OK and APART)
 - ✓ Rhetorical questions (WHAT and HOW)
- The most common discourse marker within the immediate context of cohesive and organising list buoys is THIS IS followed by the PALM-UP.
- THIS IS is discourse dependent, i.e. always appears in E1 (explicative discourse), whereas other discourse markers as well as rhetorical questions are distributed unequally across the other discourses containing organising and cohesive list buoys.

Conclusions

- Genre does not make a difference as regards the function of list buoys.
- 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
- No still combination of signs before or after every list buoy marker, but the type of surrounding signs will be different according to the list buoy function within the discourse.

Further research

- List buoys:
 - ✓ Tackling the same issues with a larger sample of discourses and more signers
- Discourse markers:
 - ✓ How do other DMs interact with list buoys?
 - ✓ Study of 2 other DMs:



PALM-UP



SAME

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THANK YOU!



Questions?

silvia.gabarro@unamur.be

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