

# Revisiting Reduplication

Toward a description of reduplication of predicative signs in Swedish Sign Language



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## Questions

- How does reduplication work with predicative signs (dynamic and stative) in SSL?
- How do the manual and oral components interact with regard to reduplication?
- Does reduplication combine with negation?

## Data

- 41 texts (1-17 mins; ≈3hrs total): from the ECHO project<sup>3</sup>, SSL Corpus<sup>5</sup>, and teaching material
- 12 signers (male & female; ≈25-70 yrs old)
- Deaf native signer as a language consultant

## Dynamic predicates

Four meaning types with dynamic predicates (corresponds well to previous findings<sup>1,2,4</sup>):

- *Pluractionality*: plural events or plural referents
- *Ongoing event*: event with some (extra) duration
- *Generic activity*: a nominalization of the event
- *Intensification*: emphasis or effort in an action

The distribution of meanings correlate with number of syllables in citation form (Figure 1)

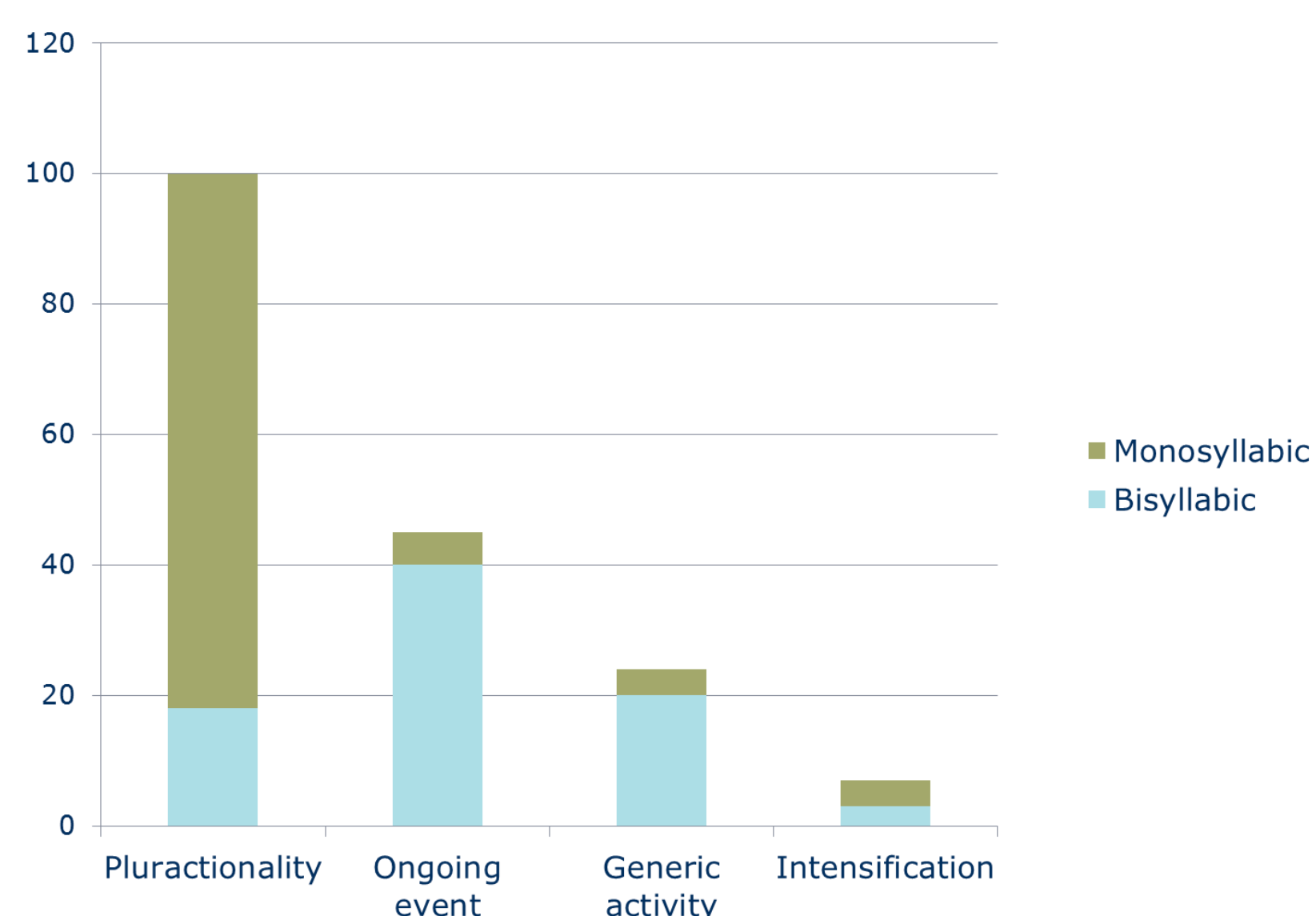


Figure 1. Distribution of meanings with reduplication according to # of syllables in the citation form

## Stative predicates

Two meaning types with stative predicates:

- *Pluractionality*: plural events or referents (BE-TIRED+++ 'be tired often/repeatedly')
- *Intensification*: intense state (BE-COLD+++ 'be very cold')

## Negation

Negation has been said to be incompatible with reduplication in SSL<sup>2</sup>. This study found that:

- Negative signs can be reduplicated (EXIST^NOT++ 'nowhere to be found'; UNDERSTAND-NEG++ 'understand nothing')
- Reduplicated signs can be negated, but then the headshake does not span over the reduplication:

$\text{neg}$   
 ALWAYS HUG++ / NOT g-NO  
 '[We] don't always hug'

## References

- <sup>1</sup>Bergman, Brita. 1983. Verbs and adjectives: Some morphological processes in Swedish Sign Language. In: Kyle, James & Woll, Bencie (eds.). *Language in sign: An international perspective on sign language*, pp. 3–10. Dover, NH: Croom Helm Ltd.
- <sup>2</sup>Bergman, Brita & Dahl, Östen. 1994. Ideophones in Sign Language? The place of reduplication in the tense-aspect system of Swedish Sign Language. In: Bache, C., Basbøll, H. & Lindberg, C.E. (eds.). *Tense, Aspect and Action. Empirical and Theoretical Contributions to Language Typology*, pp. 397–422. New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.
- <sup>3</sup>Bergman, Brita & Mesch, Johanna. 2004. ECHO data set for Swedish Sign Language (SSL). Department of Linguistics, Stockholm University. URL: <http://www.let.ru.nl/sign-lang/echo>.
- <sup>4</sup>Fischer, Susan. 1973. Two processes of reduplication in American Sign Language. *Foundations of Language* 9, pp. 469–480.
- <sup>5</sup>Mesch, Johanna. 2011. Swedish Sign Language Corpus Project. Department of Linguistics, Stockholm University.

## Oral reduplication

- Oral reduplication combines most often with a pluractional meaning (Figure 2)

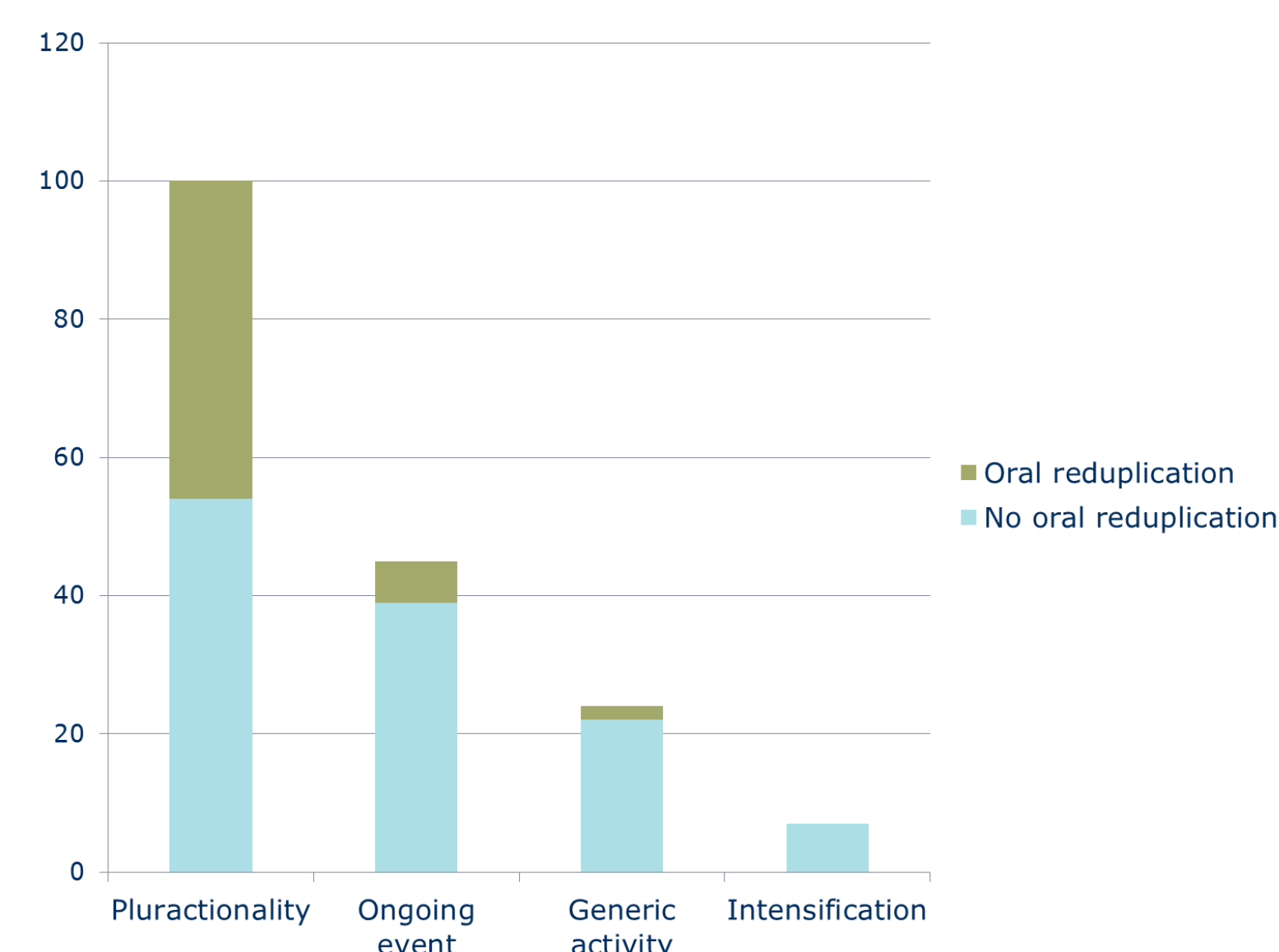


Figure 2. Simultaneous oral reduplication for different meanings (dynamic predicates)

- When a telic predicate has oral reduplication *without* manual reduplication, the meaning seems to be one of an ongoing process (Table 1)

Table 1. Interaction between manual and oral reduplication

	Oral reduplication	No oral reduplication
Manual reduplication	Pluractional	Ongoing process (atelic)
No manual reduplication	Ongoing process (telic)	Basic meaning

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