

Skill Development Activity: IMPROVING SPATIAL STRUCTURING Classifier Use - English Texts

Classifiers fall into a variety of classes. According to the Signing Naturally (2014) curriculum, published by Dawn Sign Press, there are eight.

1. Semantic Classifier

Semantic classifiers are proforms that function as "pronoun" that replaces a noun (or as noun and verb combined). Some examples of semantic classifiers are: cl-1 (e.g. a person), cl-2 (e.g. two persons), cl-2-upside-down (a standing person), cl-2-bent (e.g. an animal), etc.

2. Descriptive Classifier

7. Body Part Classifier

Body part classifier is a symbol that refers to a part of the body beyond the frame of the signing area -- e.g. legs, back, feet, etc. For example, you utter the ASL word #foot and then use its classifier (e.g. the passive hand) to represent the foot. Or, you would use an CL-S handshape to represent a head shaking no. Or, you would use the CL-index finger of both hands, crossed, to represent legs crossed.

8. Plural Classifier

Plural classifier is a plural symbol of a noun or subject. Some examples are a) CL-open-hand, horizontal, palm down for "many birds flying in the sky" or b) CL-horizontal 3-handshape representing a car parked in a lot, held, while the non-dominant hand replicates and moves that handshape across the lot, would show multiple cars parked in the lot.

1. Instrument CL:C handshape could be used to show us holding a can off a shelf in a grocery store. We could elaborate on this by holding cans in each hand for comparison, or by picking up one can, reading the label, putting it back on the shelf, picking up another can/different brand, etc. We could identify one can as beer and one as soda.
2. Descriptive CL:G handshape could be used to show the front section that has the brand logo/name and number of ounces of liquid, then turn the can to the back to check the label on the can with the calorie information.
3. Descriptive CL:open-B handshape to show changing size of a torso to indicate fluctuating weight and/or the desire to keep the torso lean/slim for the section on watching weight.

Part of the application of these classifiers is the use of

Step 6. Conduct a self-assessment. Were you successful in applying the classifier constructions you intended? What would you do differently to make it more effective? Share the recording with a mentor and/or peers for further feedback.

Step 7. Incorporating your own self-assessment and feedback from your mentor and/or peers, redo your translation and filming of it.

Step 8. If time permits, give the final translation in ASL to a peer unfamiliar with the text and your translation and have them back-translate it into English. How representative is the back-translation of the original English text? How might you improve your translation further to make it more equivalent?

Repeat this process with other texts. With regular practice, review, and revision, this strategy will

there are great cracks in the rocks below ground. The rocks on each side of the crack suddenly slide past each other. This makes the ground shake.

Q: Where do you think the Great Canyon is? (10)

Exercise C: Expressive Use of Classifiers

Select English texts that are descriptive in nature - layouts of a house, descriptions of types of equipment or machinery and how they operate, geographic / scenic locations, physical appearances of people, animals, buildings, locations, etc.

Isolate the items that would require the use of a classifier in ASL.

Make a list and practice describing each of the items on the list.

Work with the items in isolation for as long as needed, until you feel confident that you can effectively discuss the items by using signs and classifiers. If needed, discuss items on the list with a Deaf mentor or a colleague, asking for suggestions and ideas.

Once you have identified and practiced how to sign each item on the list, generate the items in context by re-telling the English text in ASL.

If possible, record yourself signing the re-telling of the text and ask a colleague or Deaf mentor to review the product and give you feedback on the effectiveness of the classifiers.

Re-do the re-telling of the text on the basis of feedback.

Exercise D: Journal

Maintain a journal of English items that emerge as part of your daily work that you need to express in ASL by way of classifiers. Review your entries with a Deaf mentor or colleague to identify additional ways in which you could express the information.

Resources

Free Online Materials

ASL [ASL] G [T] E T Q q [0] W * n B T F 2 3 G [T] E T Q q [2] B e f * E M C P M C I D 2 B D C S E T Q B D C S E T Q B D C S E T Q B D C S E

Purchasable Materials

The following resources may be available for use from your local interpreter education program or through your public library. If the library does not have them, request that they purchase them for community use.

Interpreter Practice Materials from Sign Media (www.signmedia.com)

Set of 33 DVDs includes 12 simultaneous texts, 12 consecutive texts, 7 one-to-one situations, 2 small groups, 6 ASL texts and 6 English texts.

Excellent for individual, study group, or classroom skill development exercises.