

Introduction

- All languages, spoken and signed, exhibit considerable variation
- For example, in Israeli Sign Language (ISL), there are several different ways of signing the concept 'chocolate' (ISL dictionary, 2020)
- Variation is often systematically constrained by a number of social factors such as region, gender, age, religion (Stamp et al., 2014; Lucas et al., 2001)
- To conduct large-scale sociolinguistic studies, it is important to create a corpus



Israeli Deaf Community

- Israeli Sign Language (ISL) is a young sign language – around 90 years old
- It is known as a deaf community sign language, because it emerged with the formation of the deaf community in Israel in the 1930s
- It is used by around 10,000 people (Meir & Sandler, 2008)
- It is used in a variety of domains, including education, interpreting programs and the media
- Because of the relative youth of ISL, linguists can track the emergence of the language across three or four generations of signers



Aim of the Project

To create a corpus of Israeli Sign Language in order to conduct sociolinguistic investigations.

A special focus on contact situations between:

- Different regional varieties of ISL
- ISL and Arabic
- ISL and Kufr Qassem Sign Language

The project includes participants from 4 areas across Israel:

- Haifa & the North (30)
- Tel Aviv & the Centre (30)
- Jerusalem & surrounding areas (30)
- Beer Sheva & the South (30)



Data Collection

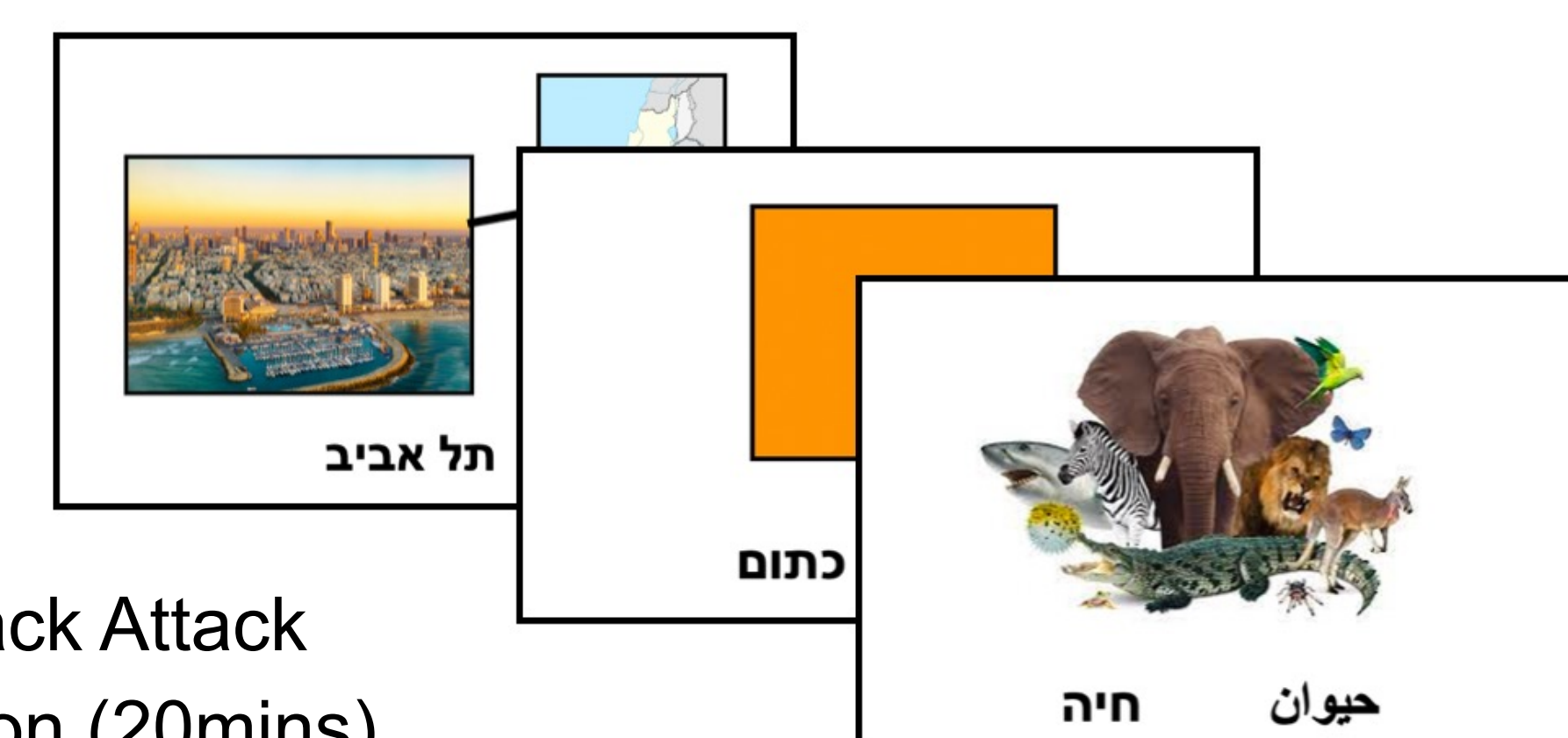


Stage 1: Online


1. Lexical elicitation task
2. Name sign

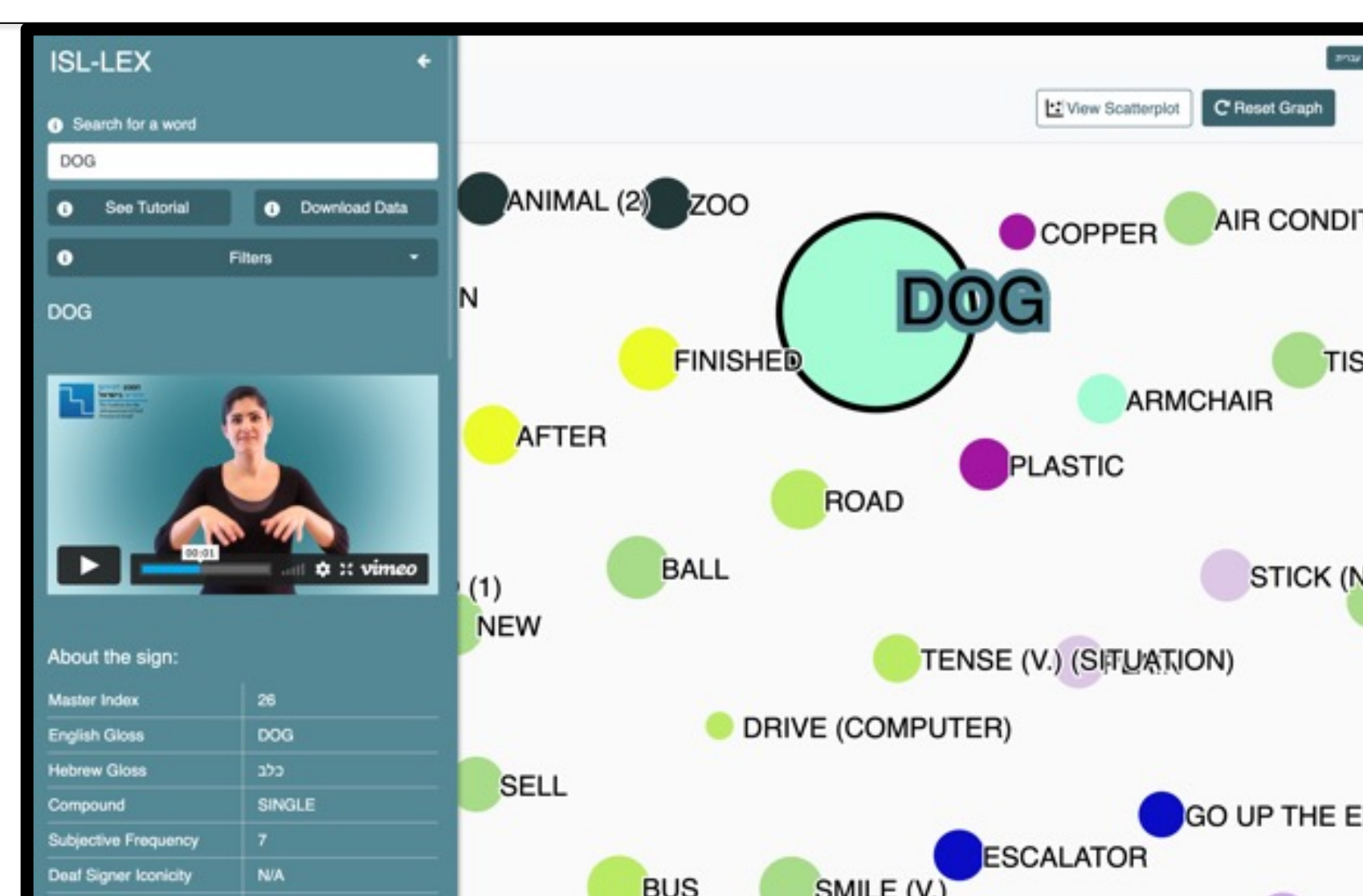
Stage 2: Onsite

3. Narrative (5mins each)
4. Conversation (30mins)
5. Retelling Charlie Chaplin/Snack Attack
6. Interview on language variation (20mins)
7. Retelling of Sylvester & Tweety's Canary Row



Resources

1. The corpus website, which will house the openly-accessible data, is currently under construction
2. A copy of the elicitation materials is found on Open Science Framework: 
3. A citation form of each sign found in the corpus is stored in a lexical database hosted by Global SignBank
4. The corpus will serve as the source data for future versions of an online lexical database known as ISL-LEX (Caselli et al., 2022)



Lemma ID Gloss English: DOG, Hebrew: כלב, Arabic: كلب

Annotation ID Gloss (Arabic) كلب

Annotation ID Gloss (English) DOG

Annotation ID Gloss (Hebrew) כלב

Translation Equivalents for Arabic -

Translation Equivalents for English -

Translation Equivalents for Hebrew -

Annotation instructions

Word class



Progress

- Data will be collected as part of a four-year Israeli Science Foundation (ISF: 205729) funded project, from a total of 120 deaf signers across Israel
- Data collection commenced in 2021. We successfully filmed 70+ participants as part of Stage 1, and 38 participants in Stages 1 and 2
- It will serve as a valuable resource for the deaf community, as well as interpreters, educators, teachers and students, to understand the present state of sign language use in Israel
- Follow our progress and 'like' us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: 

References

- [1] ISL dictionary (2020). <https://isl.danfishgold.com/#he> [2] Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania. [3] Lucas, C., Bayley, R., Valli, C. (2001). *Sociolinguistic Variation in American Sign Language*. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press. [4] Meir, I. & Sandler, W. (2008). *A Language in Space*. London: Taylor & Francis. [4] Stamp, R., Schembri, A., Fenlon, J., Rentelis, R. & Cormier, K. Woll, B. (2014). Lexical Variation & Change in British Sign Language. *Plos One*. 9(4), pp.1-14.