

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – June 14 – 18, 2010

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This is the last DCQW for the 2009-2010 school year. Last day of school for WSD students is June 18th. Have a great, restful summer. Read, read, read.....

When a person uses a classifier like CL:1 to represent a person in a signed sentence what function is it serving?

- a. Adjective (description of a noun)
- b. Adverb (modifying a verb)
- c. Verb phrase (predicate)
- d. Subject (who or what the sentence is about)

Here is a simple ASL discourse using a classifiers. Maybe it will help you answer the question.

BOY CL:1-move-to-me. HE SMILE. CL:1-turn-around-go-away-from-me.
WEIRD!

Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: "c" Verb phrase (predicate). Classifiers in ASL function as verb phrases (technically called predicate phrases). The predicate phrase in a sentence is the part of the sentence that tells you what the subject does.

If the ASL discourse above is translated you can see how the classifier is functioning as the predicate phrase. The bolded and colored parts in both passages below show the classifiers in the ASL discourse and the predicate phrases in the English sentences.

BOY **CL:1-move-to-me**. HE SMILE. **CL:1-turn-around-go-away-from-me**.
WEIRD!

A boy **came up to me**. He smiled. Then **he turned around and walked away**.
Very weird behavior indeed!