Classifiers that Show Plurality

In his description of the various items sold at Home Depot, Lon uses many examples of classifiers that show plurality. There are several ways to indicate plurality in ASL: using cardinal numbers to specify how many (i.e., two, three, four); using quantifier signs to indicate a few, some, or many; or using classifiers.

You can use a specific type of classifier called *plural classifiers* to represent an unspecified number of objects. Or, classifiers that show the location of a noun can be *repeated* to show a plural number of things. Both plural classifiers and repeated classifier signs not only indicate plurality, but also may show the location, shape, or orientation of the objects they represent (i.e., whether they are upright, face down, arranged in rows, etc.).*

Clips from the dialogue are shown again in slow motion. Notice the classifiers Lon uses and watch how he uses them to show how the various items are arranged.

Example 1: The classifier in this segment represents stacks of flat or thin objects. Lon uses it for stacks of lumber, but it could also be used for stacks of newspapers, books or plates, piled-up boxes of VCRs, large bags of dog food piled on top of each other, etc. (repeated classifier)

* The English language has classifiers for representing plurality of a noun, for example, a *handful* of marbles, a *bunch* of bananas, a *herd* of cows. A few English classifiers also indicate the arrangement of things the noun represents (i.e., *stacks* of lumber, *rows* of plants) without indicating location.

Example 2: The classifier in this segment means rows of tall, upright objects. Lon uses the classifier to represent rows of different kinds of moldings, but it could also be used for a row of trees, telephone poles lined up close together, fishing poles lined up against a wall, a pocketful of pens. Signed with palm-down orientation, it could be used for an array of paintbrushes, chopsticks, etc. (plural classifier)

Example 3: This is another example of the classifier used in Example 1. This time Lon uses it to represent large bags of cement and stucco, as well as stacks of bricks, rock, or other masonry materials. (repeated classifier)

Example 4: The classifier in this segment is used to indicate a wall of objects, in this case a wall of different kinds of paint. It could be also be used for shelves filled with books from floor to ceiling, a wall covered with pictures, rows of cups lining a wall, etc. (plural classifier)

Examples 5 and 6: In these two segments Lon represents objects with the same general shape (doors and windows) by using the same classifier; he indicates that they are stacked upright, front to back. This classifier could also be used for books or records on a shelf, videocassettes lined up on a shelf, etc. (repeated classifier)

Example 7: This is a classifier for bowl-shaped objects. Lon uses it to represent many models of toilets displayed in a section of the store. (repeated classifier)

Example 8: This classifier represents a variety of a certain kind of object in an area. Lon uses it to represent a large selection of different tools. It could also be used for many different foods in a buffet, many different kinds of furniture in a showroom, a variety of art supplies or computer equipment on display, etc. (plural classifier)