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## 17. Utterance reports and constructed action

1. Reporting the words, thoughts, and actions of others
2. Early approaches to role shift
3. Role shift as constructed action
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### Abstract

*Signers and speakers have a variety of means to report the words, thoughts, and actions of others. Direct quotation gives (the utterer's version of) the quoted speaker's point of view – but it need not be verbatim, and can be used to report thoughts and actions as well as words. In sign languages, role shift is used in very similar ways. The signer's body or head position, facial expressions, and gestures contribute to the marking of such reports, which can be considered examples of constructed action. These reports also include specific grammatical changes such as the indexical (shifting) use of first-person forms, which pose challenges for semantic theories. Various proposals to account for these phenomena are summarized, and directions for future research are suggested.*

### 1. Reporting the words, thoughts, and actions of others

Language users have a variety of means with which to report the words, thoughts, and actions of others. Indirect quotation (or indirect report), as in example (1a), reports from a neutral, or narrator's point of view. Direct quotation (or direct report, sometimes simply reported speech), as in (1b), makes the report from the quoted person's point of view.

- (1) Situation: Sam, in London, July 22, announces that she will go to a conference in Bordeaux July 29. Speaker is in Bordeaux July 31.

- a. Indirect discourse description:  
Sam said that she was coming to a conference here this week.
- b. Direct discourse description:  
Sam said, "I'll go to a conference there next week."

There are several important structural differences between the indirect and direct types. In the indirect description, an embedded clause is clearly used, whereas in the direct discourse, the relationship of the quotation to the introducing phrase is arguably not embedding. In addition, the interpretation of indexicals is different in the two types. Indexicals are linguistic elements whose reference is dependent on aspects of the context. For example, the reference of 'I' depends on who is speaking at the moment; the interpretation of 'today' depends on the time of utterance; etc. In direct discourse, the reference of the indexicals is interpreted relative to the situation of the quoted context.

It is often thought that there is another difference between indirect and direct discourse, viz., that direct discourse should be a verbatim replication of the original event, whereas this requirement is not put on indirect discourse. However, this idea has been challenged by a number of authors.

Clark and Gerrig (1990) discuss direct quotation and argue that although it "is CONVENTIONALLY implied that the wording [of direct quotation] is verbatim in newspapers, law courts, and literary essays, [...] [it is] not elsewhere." On their account, quotations are demonstrations which depict rather than describe their referents. An important part of this account is that the demonstrator selects some, but not all of the aspects of the report to demonstrate. In addition, they point out that the narrator's viewpoint can be combined with the quotation through tone of voice, lexical choice, and gestures.

Clark and Gerrig (1990, 800) contrast their account with the classical 'Mention theory': "The classical account is that a quotation is the mention rather than the use of an expression". They critique this approach:

It has serious deficiencies (see, e.g., Davidson 1984). For us the most obvious is that it makes the verbatim assumption [...] [M]ention theory assumes, as Quine 1969 says, that a quotation 'designates its object not by describing it in terms of other objects, but by picturing it'. 'When we quote a man's utterance directly,' Quine says, 'we report it almost as we might a bird call. However significant the utterance, direct quotation merely reports the physical incident' (219). But precisely what it pictures, and how it does so, are problematic or unspecified (Davidson 1984). In particular, it makes no provision for depicting only selected aspects of the 'physical incident', nor does it say what sort of thing the act of picturing is.

Tannen (1989, 99–101) also criticizes the verbatim approach to direct quotation. She says:

Even seemingly 'direct' quotation is really 'constructed dialogue,' that is, primarily the creation of the speaker rather than the party quoted. [...] In the deepest sense, the words have ceased to be those of the speaker to whom they are attributed, having been appropriated by the speaker who is repeating them.

Tannen also recognizes that what is commonly thought of as ‘direct quotation’ can be used to express not only the (approximate) words of another, but also their thoughts. She points out (Tannen 1989, 115): “Presenting the thoughts of a character other than oneself is a clear example of dialogue that must be seen as constructed, not reported.”

Other researchers have investigated ways in which speakers both select aspects of a dialogue to represent, and go beyond representing the actual speaker’s event to add aspects of their own point of view. For example, Günthner (1999, 686) says that a speaker ‘decontextualizes’ speech from its original context and

‘recontextualizes’ it in a new conversational surrounding. In recontextualizing utterances, speakers, however, not only dissolve certain sequences of talk from their original contexts and incorporate them into a new context, they also adapt them to their own functional intentions and communicative aims. Thus, the quoted utterance is characterized by transformations, modifications, and functionalizations according to the speaker’s aims and the new conversational context. Here, prosody and voice quality play important roles. The use of different voices is an interactive resource to contextualize whether an utterance is anchored in the reporting world or in the storyworld, to differentiate between the quoted characters, to signal the particular activity a character is engaged in, and to evaluate the quoted utterance.

In spoken language, prosody and voice quality play important roles in conveying point of view, and in ‘constructing’ the dialogue that is reported. Streeck (2002) discusses how users of spoken language may also include mimetic enactment in their ‘quotations’, particularly those introduced by *be + like*. He calls such usage “body quotation”: “a mimetic enactment, that is, a performance in which the speaker acts ‘in character’ rather than as situated self” (Streeck 2002, 581). One of his examples (Streeck 2002, 584) is given in (2).

- gesture “sticking card into”
- (2) But then they’re like “Stick this card into this machine”

Streeck (2002, 591) goes on to describe enactment further:

During an enactment, the speaker pretends to inhabit another body – a human one or that of an alien, perhaps even a machine, or her own body in a different situation – and animates it with her own body, including the voice. Enactments have the character of samples: They are made out to possess the features of, and to be of the same kind as, the phenomena that they depict. In other words, in enactments, speakers’ expressive behaviors exemplify actions of the story’s characters.

Speakers can thus report the speech, thoughts, and even actions of another, using the syntax of direct quotation. In this way, the speaker’s interpretation of the original actor’s point of view can also be expressed. These observations about reporting can be useful in understanding a range of phenomena in sign languages, discussed next. These phenomena cover the full continuum between reporting the speech (throughout the term ‘speech’ is intended to include signed utterances), thoughts, and actions of another. Previous research has varied between considering the phenomena as quite distinct from each other versus as quite related. It will be argued here that they are indeed related, in ways very similar to the observations just made about spoken languages.

There have been a variety of proposals for how to analyze these phenomena. These proposals will be reviewed, and the chapter will conclude with a suggestion regarding how future analyses might fruitfully proceed.

## 2. Early approaches to role shift

In early research on the structure of American Sign Language (ASL) and other sign languages, a phenomenon known as ‘role shift’ or ‘role play’ was discussed. The idea was that the grammar of these sign languages included a mechanism whereby signers could shift into the role of a character, conveying information from that character’s perspective. This phenomenon is characteristic of particularly skilled signing, and used especially during story-telling.

The descriptions of role shift made it seem like a special way in which sign language could take advantage of the visual modality (Friedman 1975). For example, Mandel (1977, 79–80) said:

It is common for a signer to take the role of a person being discussed [...] When two or more people are being talked about, the signer can shift from one role to another and back; and he usually uses spatial relationships to indicate this ROLE-SWITCHING. In talking about a conversation between two people, for instance, a signer may alternate roles to speak each person’s lines in turn, taking one role by shifting his stance (or just his head) slightly to the right and facing slightly leftward (thus representing that person as being on the right in the conversation), and taking the other role by the reverse position. [...] Similar role-switching can occur in nonquotative narrative. [...] A signer may describe not only what was done by the person whose role he is playing, but also what happened to that person.

Pfau and Quer (2010, 396) expand on the difference between quotational and non-quotational uses of role shift:

Role shift (also known as role taking and referential shift) plays two, sometimes overlapping roles in the grammar of sign languages. First, in its quotational use, it is used to directly report the speech or the unspoken thoughts of a character (also known as constructed discourse). [...] Second, in its nonquotational use, role shift expresses a character’s action, including facial expressions and nonlinguistic gestures. That is, the signer embodies the event from the character’s perspective. This embodiment is also referred to as constructed or reported action.

An illustration of role shift is given in Figure 17.1. In this example, the signer indicates the locus of the wife by her eye gaze and lean toward the right during the sign SAY; then in shifting the shoulders and turning the head facing left she ‘assumes’ the ‘role’ of the wife and the following signs are understood as conveying the wife’s words.

Padden (1986, 48–49) made the following comments about role-shifting:

Role-shifting is marked by a perceptible shift in body position from neutral (straight facing) to one side and a change in the direction of eye gaze for the duration of ‘the role.’ [...] in informal terms, the signer ‘assumes’ the ‘role’ [...]

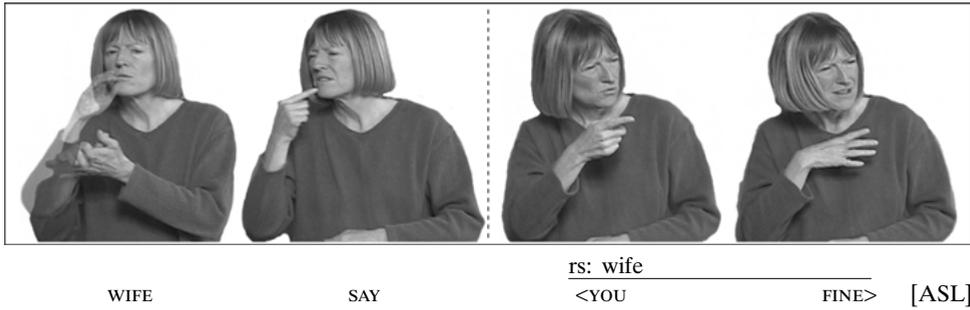


Fig. 17.1: Role shift example

‘Role-shifting’ is perhaps an unfortunate term. It suggests structures which resemble play-acting; indeed, this is how these structures have been described. [...] As it turns out, there are interesting constraints on role-shifting which indicate that its place in the syntactic and discourse system of ASL should be explored further.

Padden (1986, 49–50) provided helpful examples of role-shifting, such as those given in (3) and (4).

- (3) HUSBAND                      rs: husband  
    <REALLY I NOT MEAN>                      [ASL]  
 ‘The husband goes, “Really, I didn’t mean it.”’  
    rs: husband
- (4) HUSBAND                      <WORK>                      [ASL]  
 ‘The husband was like – “here I am, working.”’

In example (3), the husband’s words or perhaps thoughts are reported by the signer. In example (4), Padden uses *be + like* for the English translation. As discussed above, quotations introduced with *be + like* in English frequently represent what Streek (2002) calls “body quotation”. Padden describes the example as not replicating discourse, and offers as an alternative English translation, “The husband was working”. The example may be quoting the husband’s thoughts, but it may be ‘quoting’ just his actions, from his point of view.

Lillo-Martin (1995) also noted that what role shift conveys is very similar to what is conveyed with the colloquial English use of *like*, as in, “He’s like, I can’t believe you did that!” (This use of *like* is to be distinguished from its use as a hedge or focus marker; Miller/Weinert 1995; Underhill 1988.) *Like* need not convey direct discourse, but portrays the point of view of its subject. Researchers have examined the use of *like* as an introducer of “internal dialogue, gesture, or speech” (Ferrara/Bell 1995, 285; cf. also Romaine/Lange 1991). In (5) some natural examples collected by Ferrara and Bell (1995, 266) are given. They could be representations of speech, but may also reflect internal dialogue or attitude, and may well be accompanied by relevant gestures.

- (5) a. I was like, “Who is it?”  
       b. You’re like, “Okay.”



specifically, a role prominence clitic. She proposed that this marker is a subject clitic, and that the NP agreeing with it is interpreted with role prominence – that is, it marks the person from whose perspective the event is viewed.

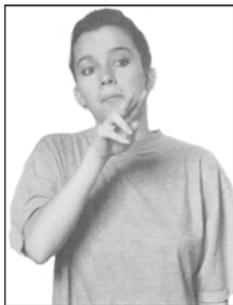
Early researchers concluded that role shift is not the same as direct reported speech, although it is sometimes used for that purpose. Banfield's (1973, 9) characterization of direct speech, which reflected a then widely-held assumption, was that it "must be considered as a word for word reproduction" of the quoted speech, in contrast to indirect speech. As discussed in section 1, some more recent researchers have rejected this view of direct speech. However, earlier analyses of direct speech would not suffice to account for role shift, since it was clear that role shift is not limited to word-for-word reproduction of speech, but is a way of conveying a character's thoughts, actions, and perspective.

Likewise, role shift was early seen as clearly different from indirect speech. One of the important characteristics of quotational role shift is a change in interpretation for first-person pronouns and verb agreement. As in direct quotation, the referent of a first-person pronoun or verb agreement under role shift is not the signer. It is the person whose speech or thoughts are being conveyed. This is illustrated in example (3) above. The signer's use of the first-person pronoun is not meant to pick out the signer of the actual utterance, but the speaker of the quoted utterance (in this case, the husband). Therefore, an analysis of role shift as indirect speech also would not suffice.

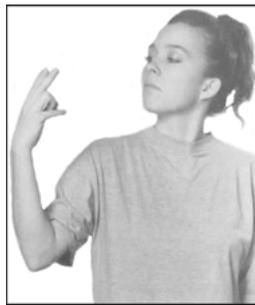
Engberg-Pedersen (1993, 1995), working on Danish Sign Language (DSL), divided role shifting into three separate phenomena, as given in (7) and described in the following paragraph (Engberg-Pedersen 1993, 103). Note that Engberg-Pedersen uses the notation '1.p' to refer to the first person pronoun, and 'locus c' to refer to the signer's locus.

- (7)
1. *shifted reference*, i.e., the use of pronouns from a quoted sender's point of view, especially the use of the first person pronoun 1.p to refer to somebody other than the quoting sender;
  2. *shifted attribution of expressive elements*, i.e., the use of the signer's face and/or body posture to express the emotions or attitude of somebody other than the sender in the context of utterance;
  3. *shifted locus*, i.e. the use of the sender locus for somebody other than the signer or the use of another locus than the locus *c* for the signer.

In shifted reference, which Engberg-Pedersen says is confined to direct discourse, the first person pronoun is used to refer to someone other than the signer; that is, the person quoted. In shifted attribution of expressive elements, the signer's signs, face, and body express the emotions or attitude of another. This may be within a direct discourse, but does not necessarily have to be; it may be within 'represented thought'. Engberg-Pedersen compares shifted attribution of expressive elements to the use of voice quality to distinguish speakers in reported dialogues in spoken languages. The third category, shifted locus, is similar to shifted reference, in that the signer's locus is used for reference to another – but in this case, the signer's locus is used in verb agreement only, not in overt first-person pronouns. Unlike shifted reference, shifted locus is not limited to direct discourse. Furthermore, according to Engberg-Pedersen, shifted locus is not always marked overtly by a change in body position. (Padden made the same observation about examples such as the one in (4).)



a. She looked at him arrogantly  
(woman's point of view) [DSL]



b. She looked at him arrogantly  
(man's point of view) [DSL]

Fig. 17.2: Distinction between shifted attribution of expressive elements and shifted locus (Reprinted from Engberg-Pedersen 1993 with permission)

Engberg-Pedersen shows interesting ways in which these different characteristics of 'role play' are separable. For example, the signer's locus can be used to refer to one character under shifted locus, while the facial expression conveys the attitude of a different character under shifted attribution of expressive elements. An example from Engberg-Pedersen is given in Figure 17.2.

Both panels of Figure 17.2 show the verb LOOK-AT, and in both, the signer's face is used to express the woman's (i.e., the referent of the grammatical subject's) point of view. However, the verb agreement is different in the two panels. In Figure 17.2a, the verb shows regular agreement with the object/goal (the man). However, in Figure 17.2b, the verb uses the first-person locus for the object/goal agreement. This means that while the signer's locus is used to represent the man for purposes of verb agreement (under shifted locus), it is representing the woman for the shifted attribution of expressive elements.

Engberg-Pedersen's characterization makes an explicit claim about the use of first-person pronouns which needs further consideration. She says that the use of overt first-person pronouns to refer to someone other than the signer is restricted to direct discourse (quotation). However, the signer's locus (i.e., first person) can be used in verb agreement to pick out someone other than the signer in non-direct-discourse contexts. This contrast will be discussed in section 5.

Descriptions of role shift in other sign languages similar to those presented thus far can be found for British Sign Language (BSL, Morgan 1999; Sutton-Spence/Woll 1998), Catalan Sign Language (LSC, Quer/Frigola 2006), German Sign Language (DGS, Herrmann/Steinbach 2011), Nicaraguan Sign Language (ISN, Pyers/Senghas 2007), Quebec Sign Language (LSQ, Poulin/Miller 1995), and Swedish Sign Language (SSL, Ahlgren 1990; Nilsson 2004).

### 3. Role shift as constructed action

Although most discussions of role shift until the mid-1990s differentiated it from reported speech/direct quotation because of the idea that such quotation should be ver-

batim, some sign language researchers were paying attention to developments in the fields of discourse which recognized the problems with such a claim for direct quotation more generally. They adopted the view of Tannen (1989) that direct quotation should be seen as constructed.

Liddell and Metzger (1998), following on work by Winston (1991) and Metzger (1995), describe instances of role shift or role play in ASL as constructed action. Metzger (1995, 261) describes an example, given in (8), in which constructed dialogue is a part of a larger sequence of constructed action. In the example, the signer is portraying a man seated at a card table looking up at another man who is asking for someone named Baker. The example shows the card player's constructed dialogue, which includes his gesture, raising his hand, and his facial expression and eye gaze. It also includes his constructed action prior to the admission, looking up at the stranger, co-occurring with the sign LOOK-UP. The whole example starts with the narrator signing MAN, to inform the audience of the identity of the character whose actions and utterance will be (re-)constructed next.

(8) to addressee    gaze forward to up left    lower lip extended/head tilt/gaze up left  
 MAN    CARDS-IN-HAND LOOK-UP,    "THAT (raise hand) THAT PRO.1"    [ASL]  
 'So one of the guys at the table says, "Yeah, I'm Baker, that's me."'

This flow between narrator, constructed action, and constructed dialogue is characteristic of ASL stories. As we have seen, however, it is not something special to sign languages, or some way in which sign languages are different from spoken languages. Speakers also combine words, gestures, facial expressions, and changes in voice quality to convey the same range of narrative components.

Liddell and Metzger (1998) draw these parallels quite clearly. They aim to point out that parts of a signed event are gestural while other parts are grammatical, just as in the combination of speech, such as "Is this yours?" while pointing to an object such as a pen. They state (Liddell/Metzger 1989, 659), "The gestural information is not merely recapitulating the same information which is grammatically encoded. The addressees' understanding of the event will depend on both the grammatically encoded information and the gestural information." This combination of grammatical and gestural is crucially involved in constructed action.

Liddell and Metzger use the theory of Mental Spaces proposed by Fauconnier (1985), and the notion of mental space blends discussed by Fauconnier and Turner (1996), to account for the range of meanings expressed using constructed actions. In their view, the signer's productions reflect a blend of two mental spaces. One of these mental spaces may be the signer's mental representation of their immediate environment, called Real Space. Other spaces are conceptual structures representing particular aspects of different time periods, or aspects of a story to be reported. In their paper, Liddell and Metzger analyze examples elicited by a Garfield cartoon. Then, the signer's mental conception of the cartoon, called Cartoon space, can blend with Real Space. Using such a blend, the signer may select certain aspects of the situation to be conveyed in different ways. This can be illustrated with example (9) (Liddell/Metzger 1998, 664–665).

- (9) CAT LOOK-UP “OH-SHIT” CL-X(press remote control) [ASL]  
 ‘The cat looked up at the owner. He thought, “Oh shit” and pressed the remote control.’

As with Metzger’s (1995) example given in (8) above, this example includes the narrator’s labeling of the character, the character’s constructed action (both in the signer’s looking up and in his signed description LOOK-UP), and the character’s constructed dialogue (his thoughts). Liddell and Metzger point out that the signer’s hands do not represent the character’s hands during the sign LOOK-UP, but that they are constructing the character’s signs during the expletive “OH-SHIT”. Of course, the cat Garfield does not sign even in the cartoon, but the signer is ‘constructing’ his utterance – just as speakers might ‘speak’ for a cat (Tannen 1989 gives such examples as part of her argument for dissociating constructed dialogue from verbatim quotation).

To illustrate the range of meanings (generally speaking) expressed by different types of constructed action, Liddell and Metzger (1998, 672) give the following table:

Tab. 17.1: Types of constructed actions and their significance

Types of constructed actions	What they indicate
Articulation of words or signs or emblems	What the  character  says or thinks
Direction of head and eye gaze	Direction  character  is looking
Facial expressions of affect, effort, etc.	How the  character  feels
Gestures of hands and arms	Gestures produced by the  character

The analysis presented by Liddell and Metzger emphasizes the similarity between constructed action in sign language and its parallels in spoken languages. As discussed earlier, speakers use changes in voice quality, as well as gestures, to ‘take on a role’ and convey their construction of the actions, thoughts, or words of another. These changes and gestures occur together with spoken language elements. It seems clear that the main difference is that, for signers, all these components are expressed by movements of the hands/body/facial expressions, so separating the gesture from the grammatical is more challenging.

Other authors have made use of the cognitive linguistics framework account of constructed action proposed by Liddell and Metzger and have extended it in various ways. For example, Aarons and Morgan (2003) discuss the use of constructed action along with classifier predicates and lexical signs to express multiple perspectives sequentially or simultaneously in South African Sign Language.

Dudis (2004) starts with the observation that the signer’s body is typically used in constructed action to depict a body. But he argues that actually, not all parts of the signer’s body will be used in the blend, and furthermore, different parts of the signer’s body can be partitioned off so as to represent different parts of the input to the blend. For example, Dudis discusses two ways of showing a motorcyclist going up a hill. In one, the signer’s torso, head, arms, hands, and facial expression all convey the motorcyclist: the hands holding the handles, the head tilted back, looking up the hill, the face showing the effort of the climb. In the second, the signer’s hands are ‘partitioned off’, and used to produce a verb meaning vehicle-goes-up-hill. But the torso, head, and face

are still constructing aspects of the motorcyclist's experience. As Dudis (2004, 228) describes it:

A particular body part that can be partitioned off from its role in the motorcyclist blend, in this instance the dominant hand. Once partitioned off, the body part is free to participate in the creation of a new element. This development does not deactivate the motorcyclist blend, but it does have an impact. The |motorcyclist's| hands are no longer visible, but conceptually, they nevertheless continue to be understood to be on the |handles|. This is due to pattern completion, a blending operation that makes it possible to 'fill in the blanks'.

Dudis shows that in such multiple Real Space blends, different perspectives requiring different scales may be used. One perspective is the participant viewpoint, in which "objects and events [...] are described from the perspective of the [participant]. The scalar properties of such a blend, as Liddell (1995) shows, are understood to be life-sized elements, following the scale of similar objects in reality" (Dudis 2004, 230). The other perspective is a global viewpoint. For example, when the signer produces the verb for a motorcycle going uphill, the blend portrayed by the hands uses the global viewpoint. As Dudis (2004, 230) says:

The smaller scale of the global perspective depiction involving the |vehicle| is akin to a wide-angle shot in motion-picture production, while the real-space blend containing the participant |signer as actor| is akin to a close-up shot. It is not possible for the |signer as actor| and the |vehicle| to come into contact, and the difference in scale is one reason why.

Janzen (2004) adds some more important observations about the nature of constructed action and its relationship to presenting aspects of a story from a character's perspective. First, Janzen emphasizes a point made also by Liddell and Metzger (1998), that there is not necessarily any physical change in the body position to accompany or indicate a change in perspective. To summarize (Janzen 2004, 152–153):

Rather than using a physical shift in space to encode differing perspectives as described above, signers frequently manipulate the spatially constructed scene in their discourse by mentally rotating it so that other event participants' perspectives align with the signer's stationary physical vantage point. No body shift toward various participant loci within the space takes place. ... [T]he signer has at least two mechanisms – a physical shift in space or mental rotation of the space – with which to accomplish this discourse strategy.

Because of the possibility for this mental rotation, Janzen (2004, 153) suggests, "this discourse strategy may represent a more 'implicit' coding of perspective (Graumann 2002), which requires a higher degree of inference on the part of the addressee." This comment may go some way toward explaining a frequent observation, which is that narratives containing a large amount of constructed action are often more difficult for second-language learners to follow (Metzger 1995). Despite the frequent use of gesture in such structures, they can be difficult for the relatively naïve addressee who has the task of inferring who is doing what to whom.

Janzen also argues that constructed action does not always portray events from a particular perspective, but is sometimes used to indicate which character's perspective

is excluded. To indicate perspective shifts towards and away from a character an alternate character might be employed, but the choice of alternate character may be less important than the simple shift away. In fact, Janzen claims that these perspective shifts can also be used with unobserved events, indicating (e.g., by turning the head away) that a character is unaware of the event, and not involved in it. In such cases, body partitioning such as Dudis describes is needed: the head/eyes show the perspective of the non-observer, while the hands may sign or otherwise convey the unseen event.

#### 4. Formal approaches

The description of role shift as a type of constructed action recognizes that many components of this phenomenon are analogous to the use of gestures and changes in voice quality during narration in spoken languages. However, some researchers have nevertheless been interested in pursuing a formal analysis of certain aspects of role shift, particularly the change in reference for the first-person pronoun.

Lillo-Martin (1995) compared shifted reference of first-person pronouns with the use of a logophoric pronoun in some spoken languages. In languages such as Abe, Ewe, and Gokana, a so-called ‘logophoric pronoun’ is used in the embedded clause of certain verbs, especially verbs that convey another’s point of view, to indicate co-reference with a matrix subject or object (Clements 1975; Hyman/Comrie 1981; Koopman/Sportiche 1989). In the example in (10a) (Clements 1975, 142), *e* is the non-logophoric pronoun, which must pick out someone other than the matrix subject, Kofi. In (10b), on the other hand, *yè* is the logophoric pronoun, which must be co-referential with Kofi.

- (10) a. Kofi be e-dzo [Ewe]  
       Kofi say pro-leave  
       ‘Kofi<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>j</sub> left.’  
       b. Kofi be yè-dzo  
       Kofi say Log-leave  
       ‘Kofi<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> left.’

Lillo-Martin (1995) proposed that the ASL first-person pronominal form can serve as a logophoric pronoun in addition to its normal use. Thus, in logophoric contexts (within the scope of a referential shift), the logophoric pronoun refers to the matrix subject, not the current signer.

Lillo-Martin further proposed that ASL referential shift involves a point of view predicate, which she glossed as *pov*. *pov* takes a subject which it agrees with, and a clausal complement (see Herrmann/Steinbach (2011) for an analysis of role shift as a non-manual agreement operator). This means that the ‘quoted’ material is understood as embedded whether or not there is an overt matrix verb such as *SAY* or *THINK*. Any first-person pronouns in the complement to the *pov* predicate are logophoric; they are interpreted as co-referential with the subject of *pov*. According to Lillo-Martin’s (1995, 162) proposal, the structure of a sentence with *pov*, such as (11), is as in (12).



may appear". In other words, we understand indexicals based on the context, but their reference does not change once the context is established. Consider the examples in (14)–(15), modified from Schlenker (2003).

- (14) a. John thinks that I am a hero.  
       b. John thinks that he is a hero.
- (15) a. John says that I am a hero.  
       b. John says that he is a hero.

In English, the (a) examples cannot be interpreted as the (b) examples – that is, the reference of ‘I’ must be taken to be the speaker; it does not change to represent the speaker or thinker of the reported event (John). It is of course this shifting of reference which takes place in direct discourse in English, as in (16). This case is specifically excluded from Kaplan’s concern.

- (16) John says, “I am a hero.”

Kaplan’s claim is that no language can interpret indexicals in non-direct discourse contexts as shifted, in the way that they are interpreted in direct discourse. He says that if an operator existed which would allow such a shift, it would be a ‘monster’.

Schlenker (2003) objects to Kaplan’s claim on the basis of evidence from a number of languages that do, he claims, allow such ‘monsters’. One type of example comes from logophoric pronouns, which were discussed earlier. Clearly logophoric pronouns seem to do exactly what Kaplan’s monsters would do, providing counter-evidence for his claim that they do not exist. On the other hand, it is important not to allow indexicals to shift willy-nilly, for surely this would lead to results incompatible with any natural language.

Schlenker’s solution is to establish context variables introduced by matrix verbs such as ‘say’ or ‘think’, according to which shifting indexicals will be interpreted. In different languages, different indexicals will be identified as to the domain within which they must be interpreted.

Zucchi (2004) considers whether role shift in sign language is another example showing that monsters do in fact exist. His data focus on Italian Sign Language (LIS), but it appears that the basic phenomenon is the same as we have seen for other sign languages as well. Zucchi assumes that the quotational and non-quotational uses of role shift are distinct in terms of at least some of the structures they use. As for the quotational use of role shift, this would not be problematic for Kaplan’s claim should this use be equivalent to direct discourse, since direct discourse has already been excluded. However, Zucchi argues that non-quotational role shift still shows that the interpretation of indexicals must be allowed to shift in non-direct discourse contexts.

In this context, a claim made by Engberg-Pedersen (1993), cited in (7) above, becomes very relevant. Recall that Engberg-Pedersen claimed that (DSL) first-person pronouns are only used in the shifted way within direct discourse. If shifted pronouns can only be used in direct discourse, is there any ‘monster’ to be concerned about?

The answer is ‘yes’. Numerous examples of role shift, including those provided by Engberg-Pedersen, show that the verb may be produced with first-person agreement which is interpreted as shifted, just as first-person pronouns are shifted. This is what Engberg-Pedersen calls ‘shifted locus’ (as opposed to ‘shifted reference’). The issue of why direct discourse allows shifted pronouns, while other cases of role shift only allow shifted locus, will be discussed in section 5. For now, the important point is that verb agreement with first person is just as ‘indexical’ as a first-person pronoun for the issue under discussion.

With this in mind, Zucchi pursues a common analysis of shifting indexicals in quotational and non-quotational contexts. It has three parts. The first part is the introduction of another variable, this one for the speaker/signer ( $\sigma$ ). Ordinarily, this variable will refer to the speaker/signer of the actual utterance. However, Zucchi proposes that the grammar of LIS also includes a covert operator which assigns a different value to the variable  $\sigma$ . Furthermore, he proposes that the non-manual markings of a role shift “induce a presupposition on the occurrence of the signer’s variable, namely the presupposition that this variable denotes the individual corresponding to the position toward which the body (or the eye gaze, etc.) shifts” (Zucchi 2004, 14). In order to satisfy this presupposition in shifted contexts, the operator that assigns a different value to the speaker/signer variable must be invoked.

Why does Zucchi use presuppositional failure to motivate the use of the operator? It is because he seeks a unified analysis of quotational and non-quotational shifts. He argues that the non-manual marking is “not in itself a grammatical marker of quotes or of non quotational signer shift (two functions that could hardly be accomplished by a single grammatical element)” (Zucchi 2004, 15–16). The non-manual marking simply indicates that the presupposition regarding the  $\sigma$  variable is at stake.

Does this analysis show that there are, indeed, monsters of the type Kaplan decried? In fact, Zucchi argues that neither the operator he proposes for role shift nor the examples used by Schlenker actually constitute monsters. On Zucchi’s analysis of LIS role shift, it is important that only the signer be interpreted as shifted. Then, the role shift operators do not change all of the features of the context, and therefore it is not a monster.

However, Quer (2005, 2011) suggests that Zucchi’s analysis may be oversimplified. He proposes a different solution to the problem, although like Zucchi his goal is to unify analysis of shifting indexicals in quotational and non-quotational uses of role shift, bringing in new data from Catalan Sign Language (LSC).

Quer’s proposal moves the discussion further by bringing in data on the shifting (or not) of indexicals in addition to pronouns, such as temporal and locative adverbials. Relatively little research on role shift has mentioned the shiftability of these indexicals, so clearly more research is needed on their behavior. According to Quer, such indexicals show variable behavior in LSC. Importantly, some may shift within the context of a role shift, while others may not. Herrmann and Steinbach (2011) report a similar variability in context shift for locative and temporal indexicals in German Sign Language (DGS). Consider the examples in (17) (Quer 2005, 153–154):



What is to be made of these various approaches to role shift in sign languages? Is this a case of irreconcilable differences in theoretical foundations? Perhaps the questions one side asks are simply not sensible to the other. However, there are important aspects to both approaches, and a direction is suggested here for gaining from both views, which may result eventually in a more comprehensive analysis than either of the approaches alone.

To begin with, the comparison between role shift and constructed action is quite apt. As happens not infrequently when comparing aspects of sign and spoken language, the sign phenomena can lead to a broadening of our consideration of what languages do, not because sign languages are so different from spoken languages, but because there is more going on in spoken languages than previously considered. Let us take into consideration what speakers do with gestures, facial expressions, and changes in voice quality alongside their words.

As Liddell (1998) points out, what speakers do and what signers do is actually rather similar. Constructed dialogue portrays much more than a verbatim replication of another's spoken words. Just as in role play, thoughts can be 'quoted', and the narrator's point of view can shift with those of a character represented (shifted attribution of expressive elements). Furthermore, co-speech gestures may participate in constructed action more generally, giving more information about how a character performed an action, or other aspects of the character's viewpoint.

If role shift is constructed action, and constructed action is an expanded conception of direct discourse, what kinds of formal structures are involved? De Vries (2008) shows that direct quotation in spoken languages can take a number of syntactic forms. Importantly, he shows that quotational clauses have the structure of main clauses, not embedded clauses. This is in line with the proposal of Lee et al. that role shift involves a syntactically independent clause, not an embedded clause. How can the shifting of indexicals be integrated into this proposal?

First, consider the quotative use of role shift. For many researchers, direct quotation sets up a domain which is opaque to semantic analysis. For example, de Vries (2008) follows Clark and Gerrig (1990) in considering quotation to be pragmatically demonstration. He argues that, syntactically, direct quotation can take a variety of forms, but the quoted form is inserted as atomic. His proposal takes the following form (de Vries 2008, 68):

I conclude that quotation can be viewed as a function – call it *quote*  $\alpha$  – that turns anything that can pragmatically serve as a (quasi-)linguistic demonstration into a syntactic nominal category:

$$(62) \quad \textit{quote} \alpha: \\ f. \dots (\alpha) \rightarrow [_{\text{N}} \textit{"}\alpha\textit{"}]$$

The quotation marks in the output are a provisional notational convention indicating that  $\alpha$  is pragmatically a demonstration, and also that  $\alpha$  is syntactically opaque. If  $\alpha$  itself is syntactically complex, it can be viewed as the result of a previous derivation.

On such an analysis, the quoted material is inserted into a sentence but its semantic content is not analyzed as part of the larger sentence. Rather, the content would presumably be calculated in the 'previous derivation' where the syntactically complex quoted material is compiled. In this case, interpretation of shifters would take

place according to the context of the quotation (when quoting Joan, ‘I’ refers to the quoted speaker, Joan). So, if quotation is simply a demonstration, there might be no issue with the shifting of indexicals. Thus, quotative role shift might not pose any particular challenges to the formal theorist. What about its non-quotative uses?

Now we must confront the issue of which indexicals shift in non-quotative role shift. Recall Engberg-Pedersen’s claims that first person pronouns shift only in direct discourse. As was pointed out in the previous section, the fact that first person agreement is used on verbs in non-quotative role shift indicates that some account of shifting is still needed. But why should the shifting of first-person pronouns be excluded from non-quotative role shift?

The answer might be that it’s not that the pronoun used to pick out the character whose point of view is being portrayed fails to shift, but rather that no pronouns – or noun phrases – are used to name this character within non-quotative role shift. This type of constructed action focuses on the action, without naming the participants within the scope of the shift. This is true for all the examples of non-quotative role shift presented thus far. Consider also Zucchi’s (2004, 6) example of non-quotative role shift, given below in (18) (Zucchi uses the notation ‘→Gianni’ to indicate role shift to Gianni).

- (18)  $\begin{array}{c} \text{→Gianni} \\ \text{—————} \\ \text{GIANNI ARRIVE BOOK I—DONATE—you} \end{array}$  [LIS]  
 ‘When Gianni will come, he’ll give you a book as a present.’

In this example, the agent (GIANNI) and the theme (BOOK) are named, but before the role shift occurs. The role shift co-occurs with the verb and its agreement markers.

This mystery is not solved, but made somewhat less mysterious, by considering again the comparison between sign language and spoken language. In a spoken English narration of the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, a speaker might gesture along with the verb in examples such as (19). In these examples, the verb and gesture constitute a type of constructed action.

- (19) a. And she ate it all up.  
           g(eating)  
 b. And she was, like, eating it all up.  
           g(eating)

However, if the speaker adds a first-person pronoun, as in (20), the interpretation changes to quotation. As usual with *be+like*, the report need not be an actual verbatim quote of what the character said (in the story), but may be a report of her thoughts. But the interpretation changes sharply in comparison to the example with no pronoun.

- (20) And she was, like, I’m eating it all up.  
           g(eating)

So it seems to be a more general property of non-quotational constructed action that rules out the use of any pronoun (or noun phrase), referring to the character

whose point of view is being portrayed, not a restriction against first-person shifting pronouns. What about other indexical elements, such as temporal or locative adverbs? No examples of non-quotational role shifting with shifted indexicals other than first-person agreement have been reported. This is clearly a matter for additional research.

With this in mind, a system is needed to accommodate the shifting nature of first-person verb agreement (and possibly other indexicals) under non-quotational role shift. The proposal by Quer (2005, 2011) has the necessary components: an operator over contexts which can (if needed) separately account for the shifting of different indexicals. This type of approach can then account for the full range of phenomena under consideration here.

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, there have been two approaches to role shift in sign languages. One approach makes the comparison between role shift and constructed action (including constructed dialogue). This approach highlights similarities between constructed action in sign languages and the use of voice quality and gestures for similar purposes in spoken languages. The second approach brings formalisms from syntax and semantics to understanding the nature of the shifted indexicals in role shift. This approach also makes comparisons between sign languages and spoken languages, finding some possible similarities between the shifting of indexicals in role shift and in logophoricity and other spoken language phenomena. More research is needed, particularly in determining the extent to which different indexicals may or may not shift together in both quotative and non-quotative contexts across different sign languages.

Do these comparisons imply that there is no difference between signers and speakers in their use of constructed action and shifting indexicals? There is at least one way in which they seem to be different. Quinto-Pozos (2007) asks to what degree constructed action is obligatory for signers. He finds that at least some signers find it very difficult to describe certain scenes without the use of different markers of constructed action (body motions which replicate or indicate the motions of depicted characters). He suggests that there may be differences in the relative obligatoriness of constructed action in sign vs. speech. Exploring this possibility and accounting for it will be additional areas of future research.

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## Notation specific to this chapter

rs            role shift

→ Gianni    role shift

|character|    in the notation of works by Liddell and colleagues, words in vertical line

                  brackets label ‘grounded blend elements’

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