

Iconic gestural demonstrations in sign language narration

Annika Herrmann¹, Nina-Kristin Pendzich² & Markus Steinbach²
¹University of Hamburg, ²University of Göttingen

annika.herrmann@uni-hamburg.de, nina-kristin.penzich@phil.uni-goettingen.de, msteinb@gwdg.de

Sign languages share with manual and non-manual gestures the same modality (just as spoken languages do with vocal gestures). Therefore, signers cannot only use co-speech gestures accompanying utterances but also systematically integrate manual and non-manual gestures in various ways into signed utterances. Two particularly interesting and related cases of this integration are modality-specific constructions of reported speech (so-called quotation or attitude role shift) and reported action (so-called action role shift or constructed action). In this presentation, we will show how sign languages interact with gestures in role shift and how iconic gestural aspects of meaning can be systematically integrated into the discourse semantic representation of narratives. The analysis is based on an elicited data set of 5 different fables of German Sign Language (DGS), cf. Herrmann and Pendzich (2018). The results reveal that signers systematically use gestural elements to express actions or attitudes of protagonists. Interestingly, in sign language narration such demonstrations are not restricted to one protagonist. Since sign languages permit the simultaneous realization of different features by various articulators, a signer can represent different protagonists and the narrator at the same time. Moreover, in sign language narration gestural elements directly contribute to the complex proposition in a similar way as linguistic elements; certain aspects of the proposition such as the description of actions, attitudes and emotions can either be conveyed linguistically, by gestures only, or by a combination of gestures and linguistic expressions. In the latter case, gestures typically modify the linguistic expressions in an iconic way and add expressive meaning aspects. In order to account for the complex interaction of gestural and linguistic elements in signed narration, we argue for a modified version of Meir et al.'s (2007) analysis of body as subject, Davidson's (2015) analysis of role shift in terms of demonstration and Maier's theory of unquotation.

References: Davidson, K. 2015. Quotation, demonstration, and iconicity. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 38. 477–520. • Herrmann, A. & N.-K. Pendzich. 2018. Between narrator and protagonist in fables of German Sign Language. In A. Hübl & M. Steinbach (eds.), *Linguistic foundations of narration in spoken and sign languages*, 275–308. Amsterdam: Benjamins. • Maier, E. 2017. The pragmatics of attraction: Explaining unquotation in direct and free indirect discourse. In P. Saka & M. Johnson (eds.), *The semantics and pragmatics of quotation*, 259–280. Berlin: Springer. • Meir, I. et al. 2007. Body as subject. *Journal of Linguistics* 43. 531–563.