

**From sign-in-interaction to grammar:  
Mixed viewpoints in factual and fictive discourse  
in Catalan Sign Language narratives**

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Signed languages are especially interesting for the study of mixed viewpoints, since their grammar is characterized by viewpoint shift (Herrmann and Steinback, 2012). They also lend themselves particularly well for the study of conversational constructions, such as direct discourse, as they are typically used in situated intersubjective interaction.

In this paper we focus on how role shift is used to set up non-genuine quotes in Catalan Sign Language narratives. We examine multifunctional or polysemic direct discourse, which is characterized by (mixed) viewpoints. As it is, in signed languages, direct discourse may serve to represent a referent's actions, state of affairs, utterances, thoughts, emotions, attitudes and source of information.

Keywords: constructed action, demonstration, fictive interaction, direct speech, sign languages

## 1. Introduction

This paper stems from the assumption that thought and language are not only embodied, as generally assumed in Cognitive Linguistic (Wilcox and Xavier 2013, inter alia). We assume that thought, grammar and discourse are also inherently intersubjective (Voloshinov [1929] 1986; Bakhtin [1975] 1981; Vygotsky[1934] 1962; Verhagen 2005; Zlatev et al. 2008), and hence *viewpointed* in nature (Dancygier and Sweetser 2012). More specifically, the assumption is that the structure of narratives as well as language's pragmatic functions and grammatical meaning are intimately related to and partly modeled by face-to-face interaction (Voloshinov 1929; Verhagen 2005; Zlatev et al. 2008; Pascual in press). The central question addressed is: how is the basic interactional pattern of turn-taking reflected in discursive and grammatical structure? And, since turn-taking involves the alternation of viewpoints, how is viewpoint shift and the resulting mixing of viewpoints reflected in grammatical structures used in narratives?

The focus is on the form and function of conversational structures such as the use of direct discourse, which involves viewpoint shift and thus a mixture of viewpoints. Consider for instance this extract in Dutch from an interview from 1997 with the then crown prince of the Netherlands. There, the future king illustrates his empathic capacities with a story on his visit to the victims of a crashed building (<http://nos.nl/koningshuis/video/189536-prins-willemalexander-over-de-troonswisseling-1997.html>, min. 4:22, 4:37-4:57):<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>All italics, bold and underlinings in the examples are ours.

(1) Met name na het bezoeken aan, aan het flat zelf, het samenkomen in de sporthal, waar de meest vre-se-lijke ellende door je heen gaan. Maar gewoon, het kunnen geven van een **gevoel** van *er wordt aan ons gedacht, Nederland leeft met ons mee.*

‘Specially after visiting the- the apartment building itself, getting together in the sports hall, where the most ter-ri-ble things go through your<sub>i</sub> head. But just being able to give this **feeling** of *we<sub>j</sub>’re being thought of, The Netherlands is with us<sub>j</sub>.*’

In (1), the narrator characterizes the kind of feeling he gave to the victims he visited by an embedded enunciation ascribed to the receivers of such a feeling. This involves the presentation of two mixed viewpoints in one and the same grammatical phrase. The embedded utterance “*we’re being thought of, the Netherlands is with us*” is produced from the victim’s perspective and thus the first person plural refers to them rather than to the utterer in the here-and-now. At the same time, this characterizing ‘utterance’ is produced from the narrator’s perspective, as this is his interpretation and presentation of an emotional state of his interlocutors’. Note that the string in italics is not a genuine utterance factually produced by the victims in unison, but rather a non-genuine ‘demonstration’ (Clark and Gerrig 1990). It is not only an instance of constructed choral speech (Tannen 1986), but also of *fictive interaction* (Pascual 2002, 2006, in press). As it is, its ontological state is between reality and fiction and it uses of the frame of the ordinary conversation in order to characterize a non-conversational referent.

We suggest that all instances of direct discourse involve the fusion of different viewpoints, regardless of whether they present factual or fictive speech or writing. Such intersubjective structures occur in a great number of unrelated languages (Pascual 2002, 2006, in press). In fact, a vast cross-linguistic study of direct speech for non-quotations across a large number of spoken languages from different families, found no single

language without this construction (Pascual in press: ch 4). There are, however, important differences in their degree of grammaticalization.

Consider for instance these examples from English (2a) and Kwaza (2b) from Clark and Gerrig(1990: 794) and van der Voort(2002: 321), respectively:

- (2) a. The problem is this guy [the speaker's ring finger] will say, 'I'm gonna curl,' and then this guy [the pinky] will say, 'Yeah, I'm gonna curl too!' But then it goes "Aaaaaaigh!"
- b. bwa-da'mỹ-Ø-tse  
finish-want-3-DECL  
Lit. 'It [the gas of the cigarette lighter] (says): *I want to run out*'  
'It [the gas of the cigarette lighter] is about to run out'

These two examples both present a state of affairs involving two inanimate entities (a finger and a cigarette lighter) through giving volition and voice to such entities. The difference is that whereas the English example is clearly playful and a pragmatic option, the Kwaza example illustrates a fully grammaticalized unmarked and in fact obligatory construction. This difference is suggested to be related to orality (Pascual in press: Ch 4). Non-quotational direct speech constructions, which involve mixed viewpoints, all seem to be the more thoroughly engrained in the grammar of a language, the more its speakers rely exclusively or mostly on oral communication among them. In fact, the only languages lacking an indirect speech construction tend to be languages without or with a limited writing system. When a language has both direct and indirect speech, direct speech is also use more frequently in spontaneous situated interaction as opposed to monologic writing (Tannen 1982, 1986, inter alia).The role of speech, voice, turn-taking, naturally becomes less prominent in a chirographic society, the role of

conversation also becoming less exclusive as a locus of language change (See Pascual in press: ch 4 for references).

Mixed viewpoints in non-quotational direct speech appear fully grammaticalized in many unrelated spoken languages of the world with no or a poorly used writing system. These may serve to express: mental states – thoughts or the result of thoughts, emotions, desires, intentions, attempts, states of affairs, causation, reason, purpose, and even the future tense. The most common meanings or functions seem to be the expression of thoughts, emotions, and intentions; the least common ones are those expressing attempts, causation, and the future tense (Pascual in press: ch 4).

It should be noted that descriptive alternative constructions for these same functions do exist and are frequently used. However, native signers consider those involving constructed action and discourse as more unmarked and genuine signed languages ones.

The present paper builds up on this study to examine non-quotational direct discourse in signed languages. Languages in the visual-gestural modality are particularly interesting for our purposes since they have viewpoint or role shift as a critical feature of their grammar and discourse structure. To quote Herrmann and Steinback (2012: 222): “Only in sign languages has role shift become a genuine part of the grammatical system, because of visual-manual modality, unlike the oral-auditory modality, offers the unique property of grammaticalizing manual and nonmanual gestures”. Sign languages are further interesting to our purposes since they show characteristics of both oral and chirographic languages. They are used mainly in face-to-face interaction by (mainly) literate individuals.

Our hypothesis is that the in-between position of signed languages on the orality continuum also places them in an in-between position in the grammaticalization of

interactional structures continuum. In other words, our hypothesis is that signed languages will show a use of non-quotational direct discourse that is more grammaticalized than their counterpart constructions in spoken languages with established writing but less grammaticalized than in spoken languages with limited or no writing. Since many signed languages are still in a conventionalization and entrenchment process, and most signed language users are not native signers, and the transmission process is horizontal and discontinuous, we will not speak of *grammaticalized* but *unmarked* viewpoint shift.

The non-quotational use of construed action or dialogue in signed languages is further particularly interesting for the study of mixed viewpoints, since it is characterized by a combination of direct and indirect speech features).<sup>2</sup>As Herrman and Pfau (2012: 213) state: “role shift seems to be part of a continuum between indirect and direct speech, most probably closer to direct speech”. Temporal indexicals as YESTERDAY and local indexicals may be ambiguous, i.e. they may be interpreted in the shifted context or in the actual context (Herrmann and Steinback 2007; Quer 2005). In signed languages, the construction under discussion thus per definition involves mixed viewpoints of the ‘reporting’ and the ‘reported’ speaker.

### **3. Methodology**

This paper is based on a qualitative corpus analysis of narratives in Catalan Sign Language (henceforth LSC).

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<sup>2</sup>Such constructions displaying characteristics of both direct and indirect speech are also found in languages with a writing code in a predominantly oral community, such as ancient Greek and some African languages (See Pascual in press for references).

A poorly studied language, LSC is the signed language used by the signing deaf and deaf-blind community in Catalonia. There is evidence of its existence in the schools for the deaf opened in Barcelona and other cities in Catalonia at the beginning of the XIX century (Ferrerons2001).

Data for this paper were collected from 20 deaf adult signers in Catalonia. All were Catalan-born, between ages 40 and 68 with LSC as their most frequently used language. They are all native signers, that is, they either come from a family in which LSC has been the native language used by two or three generations, or they come from a hearing family, but acquired LSC before their sixth birthday. Almost all subjects have training as LSC instructors and half of them actually work as LSC instructors. All of them are in regular contact with written language (in Catalan or – mostly – in Spanish). Their written and especially reading competence is rather high.

The data collected combine both naturalistic Catalan Sign Language discourse from various genres and elicited data. The naturalistic data come from personal video blogs and conversations between friends, and specially a LSC news website. The latter includes short news, documentaries, and tales. The text types are narratives, expository and argumentative, that include narrative fragments. The elicited data are narratives using the *Frog story*, by Mercer Mayer (1968), as stimulus.

Our bibliographic study includes information from 24 signed languages from different families (see section 6 and tables in the appendix).

#### **4. Direct discourse in signed languages: constructed action**

In the sign language literature the visual-gestural direct discourse construction used to (re)present mixed viewpoints has been identified as *role shift*, *reference shift*, or *role switching*(Lillo-Martin 2012). In work from the cognitive/functional perspective, the

term *constructed action* is preferred since: (i) it constitutes a *demonstration* in the sense of Clark and Gerrig (1990), and (ii) what is being related to does not have to equate what actually happened, it is considered an elaboration of it-- as described for spoken languages by Tannen (1989), inter alia.

Constructed action has been defined as “the reporting (usually via a demonstration) of another’s actions” (Quinto-Pozos 2007b). Constructed action is a discourse strategy, used widely in signed languages, in which the signer uses his/her face, head, body, hands, and/or other non-manual cues to represent a referent’s actions, utterances, thoughts, feelings and/or attitudes (Metzger 1995; Liddell and Metzger 1998; Cormier, Smith and Zewts 2013; Ferrara and Johnston 2014). Liddell and Metzger (1998:672) describe the various types of constructed action found in Table 1.

**Table 1 Type of constructed actions**

Type of constructed actions	Significance
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

Metzger (1995) distinguishes between *constructed action* (a signer’s representation of a referent’s actual or perceived actions) and *constructed dialogue* in the sense of Tannen (1986, 1988), that is, a language user’s (re)presentation of a referent’s words. We will consider *constructed action* as the overarching phenomenon and *constructed discourse* as a subtype or a specific function of it. This view is also shared by Herrmann and Steinbach (2012), Quinto-Pozos (2007a,b), Cormier, Smith and Zwets (2013), Wilcox and Xavier (2013), and Ferrara and Johnston (2014). As we will see in the next pages, in



LSC narratives constructed action involving mixed viewpoints is used to present: (i) previously produced actions (4.1.) and previously produced discourse (4.2) as well as constructed discourse for non-discourse referents such as mental, emotional and attitudinal states and source of information (5).<sup>3</sup>

#### *4.1. Constructed action for reporting actions in LSC*

In signed languages, the expression of constructed action, which occurs through manual and non-manual (i.e. the upper part of the body, the head and the face), is particularly interesting. As it is, signed constructed action may refer to the different characters in the narrative, showing, thus, mixed viewpoints simultaneously (Cf. Liddell 2003; Aarons and Morgan 2003; Dudis 2004). Note, for instance, the example of construction action from Catalan Sign Language (LSC) in(3). It is the episode of the frog story narrative where the narrator describes how the boy character reacts when he realizes that the supposed tree is a deer's running and approaching to the cliff (Jarque 2011: 88).







(3) The Frog story (JMS)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> We also found instances of the use of constructed discourse to express epistemic attitude in the LSC data. However, since our data on this is limited and this has not been studied in any other signed language, we will not discuss it here.

<sup>4</sup> The glosses are shown in two different rows in order to focus on the simultaneous or consecutive combination of mixed viewpoints. We will specify first the narrator or character(s) perspective (in grey shadow), followed by the action reported or shown. In all LSC examples, lexical and grammatical signs are glossed in uppercase. Subscripts indicate points in the signing space. The signs <> mark the scope of the report or demonstration. PV stands for *polycomponential verb* in the sense of Slobin et al. (2003).

‘The boy was on the deer looked back with his head and torso, as they were moving (seeing tree branches passed through) and became scared when he saw they were approaching the cliff.’

							
	Fig.1a	Fig.1b	Fig.1c	Fig.1d	Fig.1e	Fig.1f	
non-manual	<i>boy</i>		<i>boy &gt; narrator</i>		<i>boy character &gt; narrator</i>		
	boy's head and torso looking back	neutral	neutral	neutral	The boy is scared seeing how they are approaching to the cliff.	The scared boy calms down when the deer stops just before the cliff.	
Manual	<i>tree branches</i>		<i>narrator</i>			<i>Deer</i>	
	PV: <tree branches passing through>	TILL	PV: plain landscape	PV: CLIFF	PV deer's body approaching to the cliff.	PV deer's body stopping before the cliff.	

In Fig. (1a) the narrator first assumes the boy's viewpoint, acting as a so-called 'surrogate' of the boy's (Liddell 1995, 2003) by turning his torso, head and face, as the boy does in the story. At the same time, his hands produce a polycomponential predicate (or *depicting verb* in Liddell's 2003 terminology) representing the static branches of the trees around, which seem to move when the boy on the deer moves forward. Subsequently, the signer makes eye contact with the addressee, as he produces the lexical sign 'STILL', as shown in Figures(1b) to (1d), indicating he is taking the narrator's viewpoint as he describes the landscape (i.e. the cliff). In (1e) there is a break of eye gaze, which shows that the narrator enacts the referent again. The signer again uses his own facial expression to represent the referent's face, who is scared because of the cliff's proximity. The signer's head and torso represent the referent's head and torso

movements, as well as his posture. In (1e), his dominant hand produces the polycomponential predicate that corresponds to a four-leg animal (i.e. the deer) whereas the non-dominant hand represents a plain entity (i.e. the ground). That is, the narrator simultaneously conveys two mixed viewpoints: the running action of the deer (with the manual articulators) and the boy (with the face, the head and the torso). Whereas both hands produce a given type of linguistic material/, the non-manual articulators produce the gestural part, representing the constructing action as such, creating thereby a composite utterance (Enfield 2009; Ferrara and Johnson 2014).

#### *4.2. Constructed discourse in LSC*

As described for other signed languages (Lillo-Martin 2012; Herrman and Steinback 2012), the formal marking of constructed discourse in LSC may include a constellation of nonmanual markers coarticulated with the (re)presented utterance (Cf. Quer 2005; Quer and Frigola 2006):








- i. Eye gaze change towards the locus of the addressee of the quoted utterance, and thus temporal interruption of eye contact with the actual interlocutor.
- ii. Body lean including a sideward movement of the upper part of the body towards the locus of the quoted signer and a midsagittal body shift towards the locus of the addressee of the reported utterance.
- iii. Change of head position towards the locus of the addressee of the reported utterance.
- iv. Facial and bodily expression associated with the quoted signer conveying affective and attitudinal components

These nonmanual markers are produced more prominently in non-native signers (See Costello et al. 2008 for LSE). Moreover, in conjunction with prosodic pauses, they constitute the genuine and unmarked devices for expressing embedding constructing reports in LSC, rather than subjunctions or a marker as BE+LIKE, as described for ASL (Ferrara and Bell 1995). It should be noted, however, that not all of them are mandatory. Eye gaze change and temporal interruption of eye contact with the actual interlocutor constitutes the most frequent marking. Consider the example in (4). This piece of dialogue describes an anecdote in which a man goes to visit a friend in a working-class neighborhood, notorious for its many robberies. The signer narrates how the visitor’s motorcycle is stolen in front of his friend’s apartment and how his friend told him he should have warned him about his motorcycle so they could leave it somewhere safe.

(4)The stolen motorbike story






4.a. [DEAF [OF LIVE INDEX:<sub>neighborhood</sub>]-relative]-topic KNOW-ASP.PERF SEE-ASP.HAB INDEX:<sub>neighborhood</sub>

‘The deaf man who was living there was aware (about the possibility of the motorcycle being stolen) (because) he knew the people around.’

							
	narrator				narrator		
non-manual	[	[		]-top ]-rel			
	narrator				narrator		
Manual	DEAF	OF	LIVE	IX-THERE	KNOW-ASP.PERFECTIVE	SEE-ASP.HABITUAL	IX-THERE

4.b. <CA: hosting deaf man PITY 2-TELL-1, MOTORBIKE SAVE WELL >

‘...he [the hosting deaf man] said: “*That’s a pity. You (should) have told me and (I would) have kept the motorbike in a safe place*”.’

					
non-manual	character: hosting deaf man				
	facial expression of	facial expression of "obligation"	[ facial expression of "counterfactual" ]-top		
Manual	character: hosting deaf man				
	< PITY	2-TELL-1	MOTORBIKE	SAVE	WELL >

4.c. [DEAF]<sub>-topic</sub><CA:guest deaf INNOCENT ><sub>pause</sub> [DEAF OF LIVE IX-THERE]<sub>-top</sub><CA:hosting deaf WAIT >

‘The (other) deaf (man) answered: “*I didn’t know that!*”. (Then) the deaf who was living there said: “*Wait*” ...

							
non-manual	narrator	guest deaf man	narrator			hosting deaf man	
	[ ]-top		[	[		]-top ]-rel	
Manual	narrator	guest deaf man	narrator			hosting deaf man	
	DEAF	INNOCENT	DEAF	OF	LIVE	IX-THERE	<WAIT >

The markers of viewpoint shift in this example are very little prominent, since the narrating signer is a native. Moreover, several mechanisms frame the constructed action,

marking its beginning and end (Cornier et al. 2013). In the above piece of discourse in (4) we identify different strategies for framing constructed action: contiguous reference, non-contiguous reference and subject omission. Contiguous reference (a noun phrase referred to the character portrayed by the constructed action followed by the constructed action) was preferred with an introduction function, but also for reintroduction (switch reference). Note the examples in (4a) and (4c) where a NP is followed by a relative clause for a switch in viewpoint. Non-contiguous reference, as in (4b)

Generally a pattern of overt subject expression is preferred in switch reference context, especially when there is minimal marking (eye gaze break). Moreover, subject omission was favored when the subject was co-referent with the subject of the preceding clause, or shift reference context with maximal marking.

Apart from serving to set up actions and utterances reports, in signed languages constructed action may also be used in LSC narratives as an unmarked means to present fictive speech ascribed to a discourse character.

## **5. Fictive discourse in LSC**

In signed languages, a non-genuine action or fictive discourse constitutes an unmarked linguistic construction to convey discourse and grammatical functions such as the expressions of thoughts and intentions (5.1.), emotional states and attitudes (5.3.), and source of information (5.4.).

### *5.1. Fictive discourse for mental states and processes*

Just as is the case for the pragmatics of a large number of spoken languages with established writing (so-called/referred to as ‘chirographic languages’), and the grammar

of various spoken languages with no or restricted writing (so-called/referred to as 'oral languages'), direct discourse in signed languages may also serve to present thoughts and intentions. Consider first the example below, from a tale about an old lady having troubles with a fly:

(5) The spider tale (Webvisual)<sup>5</sup>

[OLD PERSON FEMALE<sub>i</sub>]-topic <CA:old lady SOLUTION think THINK [INDEX:<sub>spider</sub> SPIDER]-topic SPIDER-GO EAT...>

Lit. 'The old lady goes: "What can I do?" (She goes like) thinking for a while (and then says): "I got it. If the spider eats (the fly then)...".

'The old lady wonders what to do. She thinks for a while and then has an idea: If the spider ate the fly then...'

In (5), the signer first establishes the referent with a topicalized nominal phrase, and then produces the constructed action that includes both "mental verbatim" (i.e. 'SOLUTION') and gestural enactment (the external attitude that accompanies the thinking process). This is followed by a cognitive predicate working as a framing device (i.e. 'THINK') and the "mental verbatim", result of the thinking process (i.e. '[INDEX:<sub>spider</sub> SPIDER]-topic SPIDER-GO EAT...').








Other cognitive predicates that frame constructed action for thoughts and intentions are 'THINK', 'BELIEVE', 'WORRY', etc. This is also the case of zero manual marking, as in (6) below. This piece of direct discourse, from the beginning of the deer episode of the Frog Story, illustrates the expression of intentions.





(6) The frog story (ES)

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<sup>5</sup>For reasons of anonymity, we will not include in this example the pictures.

‘There was a huge rock, taller than the boy, surrounded by branches. The boy said to himself: “Let’s see if the frog is there”.’

							
non-manual	narrator						
	neutral	facial expression of massive quantity			facial expression of massive quantity		
Manual	narrator	narrator			narrator		
	ROCK	PV huge rock			PV branches all around the rock		

				
non-manual	boy character			
	facial expression of intention		facial expression of possibility	
Manual	boy character			
	SEE	IX-there	THERE.BE	FROG

After the token of the manual polycomponential verb describing the branches and the rocks, the string in direct discourse (i.e. “<SEE IX-there THERE.BE FROG>”) represents neither reported action or dialogue nor actual dialogue. Instead, it presents the thoughts of the boy in the story, as constructed by the signer. The boy is not really talking to himself in the story. Rather the signer expresses his intention out loud for the sake of the signer’s interlocutor, the recipient of the story and in effect fictive bystander



of the boy’s fictive enunciation. The interplay of mixed viewpoints hence includes the character (the boy) and the narrator.







5.2. Fictive discourse for emotional and attitudinal states

The use of a non-genuine piece of discourse for presenting emotions and attitudes is very common in a wide range of spoken as well as signed languages. Consider this example from the same signer in LSC.

(7) The frog story (ES)

Lit. ‘The boy and the dog were looking [at the frog family]. *How exciting, happiness!*’, the boy thought. The boy and the dog were looking [at the frog family].

‘The boy, looking at the frog family, was filled with excitement and happiness’

						
	Fig. 7a.					
non-manual	boy	narrator	narrator > boy	boy	boy	boy
	The boy and the dog are looking at the frog family with a happy expression.	facial expression of happiness	facial expression of happiness	The boy and the dog are looking at the frog family.	facial expression of intentions	
Manual	boy and dog	narrator	narrator	boy and dog	boy	
	PV: two entities with eyes (the boy and the dog) are looking at the frog family	EMOTION	EMOTION	PV: the boy and the dog are looking at the frog family	FROG	

In (7) the signer narrates how the boy and the frog in *The Frog Story* find the family of the lost frog. She does so by a demonstration rather than description. She uses all of the nonmanual markers available in LSC for coding the mixed viewpoints of both herself as outside and the boy as discourse character in this fragment in the narrative.

### *5.3. Fictive discourse for source of information*

The last function of constructed action we will address in this paper involves the use of direct discourse from different viewpoints as a discourse strategy to present information from different sources.

The semantic domain regarding the coding of the source of information is referred as *evidentiality* and it is a fully grammaticalized as an inflectional category in some spoken languages used mainly in face-to-face interaction (Aikhenvald 2004), and it is grammaticalized in lexical, periphrastic and syntactic constructions in other languages (Bermúdez 2005). The evidential function is relevant in narratives since it constitutes a deictic phenomenon of non-discrete nature. It expresses the speaker's point of view and being based on both the context of utterance and the speaker's relationship with the interlocutor and the conceptualized scene (Bermúdez 2005), including the participants and/or the characters in the narratives. Evidentiality is particularly relevant for the characterization of mixed viewpoints since it allows the utterer to guide the interlocutor to the pragmatic interpretation of the state of affairs presented based on the qualification of its source.

Consider example(8), from a news webpage addressed to the signing community in Catalonia reporting the demonstration against social exclusion organized around the celebration of World Deaf Federation. The narrator presents the contradictory report on

the number of attendees given by the organizers and the police. This is done through a fictive dialogue between two groups, a mixed viewpoint discourse structure, each speaking ‘as one voice’.

(8) The success of unity (*Webvisual*, 01:49-02:00)<sup>6</sup>

- a. [ORGANIZATION OF DEAF.FEDERATIONENTITY]<sub>i</sub>-topic<CA:Deaf Federation<sub>1</sub>contral-LOOK-INDEX<sub>demonstration</sub>SAY<sub>i</sub> COUNT SAY<sub>i</sub> ROUGHLY 2-THOUSAND PERSON-PLU PARTICIPATE-AT.1 DEMONSTRATION INDEX>

Lit. ‘The Catalan Federation for the Deaf looked at the demonstration and said: “*we count (and) two thousand people participated at our demonstration*”.

- b. [BUT]<sub>advers.</sub> [OF POLICE^TRAFFIC INDEX<sub>demonstration\_z</sub> POLICE INDEX <sub>j</sub>]<sub>j</sub>-topic <sub>1</sub><sub>ipsil</sub>-LOOK-INDEX<sub>(demonstration)</sub>SAY<sub>j</sub><CA: POLICE [NO]<sub>neg</sub> ROUGHLY THOUSAND 5-HUNDRED A.LITTLE MORE ROUGHLY>

Lit. But, the traffic police looked at it and said: “*Not really, roughly one thousand five hundred, (or maybe) a little bit more approximately*”.’

‘The Catalan Federation for the Deaf estimated that two thousand people participated in the demonstration. However, the traffic police claimed one thousand five hundred, or a little bit more, approximately.’

This piece of news is construed as a narrative where the perspective of the narrator and the two quoted characters are thoroughly interwoven. The dynamic interplay of several perspectives requires that the narrator signs from multiple points of view. The signer, after establishing the agent entity, adopts the perspective of the Federation for the Deaf, by shifting the body slightly and producing the verb ‘SEE’ from a contralateral side. The sign begins from the signer’s body and ends at the point in space that corresponds to the deaf demonstration. The body orientation shift encodes both subject and

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<sup>6</sup>For reasons of anonymity, we will not include in this example the pictures.

object (Morales et al. 2005). This spatial orientation of the verb provides information about the signer taking one of the character's voice. In indirect discourse the verb would have to include an intermediate locus to mark the third person reference (the Federation for the Deaf).

This example illustrates possible variations in the use of the nonmanual markers in LSC in order to encode role shift. The signer changes his position and body shift into the perspective of the two "reported" entities (i.e. the Deaf Federation and the traffic police) by adjusting his body and head position as well as his eye gaze and facial expression. However, his eye gaze changes the locus of the demonstration rather than towards the locus of the addressee of the quoted utterance, as one may expect. After assuming the perspective of the Deaf Federation (8a), the signer assumes the perspective of the traffic police (8b). He does so not only giving them voice, but also presenting them as directly confronting the Deaf Federation in a discussion that never took place. In (8), an approximate number of attendees is presented through a fictive discussion between two groups, each giving their estimation 'as one voice' that contradicts the other. By so doing the signer manages to present both a piece of information and the source where this information comes from. In sum, the fictive dialogue set up thus serves to express evidentiality.

It should be noted at this point that this is not a rhetorical device, like the presentation of a contemporary philosopher as debating with the long-deceased Kant in order to teach philosophy students (cf. Fauconnier and Turner 2002). Quite differently, it is an entirely unmarked means of presenting information in LSC. The narrator indicates the source of information upon which his statement is based (See also Chafe and Nichols 1986; Aikhenvald 2004). By so doing, through conversational implicature the news reader

manages to present the degree of commitment in the information reported to the interlocutor (i.e. the viewer of the news), thereby giving it epistemic value.

## **6. Fictive discourse across signed languages**

Despite its complexity, constructed action is a central component of signed language narratives and grammatical structure. Constructed action constitutes a grammatical and discursive mechanism present in the majority of languages in the visual-gestural modality studied so far (see Table 1 in the appendix for a list of the main research focused on it). Although perspective marking and perspective shift mechanisms have not been described for the majority of signed languages, some functions of constructed action and discourse are identified. These are: discourse reports, expression of emotional and attitude states, the expression of thoughts and intentions, and evidentiality (see Table 2 in the appendix for a list of these functions per language). In all 24 signed languages considered, constructed action is used to present previous actions and discourse. In at least most of the languages studied, constructed discourse serves to express mental states and processes (in fact in all but those in which it has not been studied, namely ABSL, ISN, NGT, TSL and TID), as well as emotional and attitudinal states (all but the one in which it has not been studied, namely NGT). The occurrence of fictive discourse to as an evidential strategy can only be reported for the two languages in which this was been studied (i.e. ASL and LSC).

The effective use of constructed action in sign languages requires a mastery of non-manual features on the face (i.e. eyebrow movement, eye gaze patterns, eye blinks, mouth gestures, and facial expressions), verb morphology, pronoun reference, use of space, as well as the understanding that these mixed viewpoints can serve to express a wide range of meanings or functions. Instances of constructed action in signed

languages are *composites utterances*, in Enfield's (2009) sense, combining different manual and nonmanual components simultaneously. They seem to be in-between between purely pragmatic and obligatory grammatical structures. As pointed out by Ferrara and Johnston (2014) for AULAN, "while conventionalized and entrenched to a degree, some aspects of their form and meaning are dependent on a specific instance of use."

It should be pointed out that differences across signed languages on features and the use of this mechanism have been pointed out (Engberg-Pedersen 1993; Poulin and Miller 1995; Pyers and Senghas 2007; Hendricks 2008; Janzen 2008). This notwithstanding, we argue for the existence of a schematic construction with possible similarities and differences across languages, due to the source (i.e. differences in the gestural features in multimodal interaction across spoken languages) as well as the grammaticalization or discursivization path (i.e. differences in the conventionalization and entrenchment across and within the specific sign language community). As for the former, McClave (2001) proposes that gestural body shift has become conventionalized to express referential shift in ASL out of the characteristic shift of the body to one side or the other during quoted speech by English speakers.

## **7. Summary and conclusions**

In this chapter, we showed that signers use a schematic linguistic unit called *construed action*, thereby setting up multiple perspectives within a narrative. Signers enact a character's actions and discourse – both a factual previous one and an entirely constructed one – by using non-manual articulators as well as body shifts in space, indicating viewpoint shift.

The non-genuine instances of direct discourse in signed languages discussed, together with the fact that they displaying characteristics of both direct and indirect discourse, further seem to contradict the idea of a clear dichotomy between direct and indirect speech (See Pascual in press for discussion and references).

Our data and bibliographic study further shows a clear preference for demonstration, rather than description in the sense of Clark and Gerrig (1990) in signed languages (Cornier et al. 2013; Ferrara and Johnson 2014). The most widespread functions or meanings of fictive discourse in signed languages correspond to the most frequently used and most widely grammaticalized one in spoken languages with and without (established) writing (Pascual in press: ch 4). These are the expression of mental and emotion and attitudinal states. The meanings or functions we could not find in signed languages are also the least common ones in spoken languages, namely those expressing attempts, causation, and the future tense.

Although descriptive alternative constructions for these same functions do exist and are frequently used, native signers consider those involving constructed action and discourse as more unmarked and genuine signed languages ones.

This seems to confirm our hypothesis that related the frequency or use and grammaticalization of conversational structures, such as direct discourse to orality. The fact that languages without or with limited use of writing share a massive use of *unmarked* interactional structures, which are also vastly –if maybe less so – present in signed languages further raises issues of grammaticalization.

The fact that the same constructions are used more or less prominently and more or less often by different users depending on their language competence, as in the examples discussed, necessarily affects the structure of a language. Thus, we suggests that

(signed) languages are not stable homogeneous and integrated wholes, but rather dynamic heterogeneous systems constantly adapting to the needs of users.

We hope to have shown that there is no clear-cut distinction between discourse and grammar, since discourse structures, such as viewpoint shift, may become stable and unmarked parts of the grammar of languages (Dubois2011, inter alia). We suggest the following grammaticalization path for signed languages (which probably would be the same for spoken ones): factual sign-in-interaction > factual report of factual action or sign-in-interaction > factual report of fictive sign-in-interaction.

In the light of this and previous cross-linguistic studies (Pascual in press), we propose that viewpoint constructions might be a universal phenomenon of thought and language, reflecting the primacy of face-to-face conversation. We further propose that the structure of a narrative as well as of a language's grammar mimics the mode in which language is mostly used, namely intersubjective conversation which involves the constraint shifting of perspective. More generally, language being intimately related to interaction, the most basic organizing aspect of language may be the conversational turn (cf. Pascual in press).

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## Appendix

Table 1. Cross-linguistic bibliographic study<sup>7</sup>

Family	Language	Studies
Arabic family	Jordanian (LIU)	Hendriks '08
BANZSL	Australian SL (Auslan)	Ferrara & Johnson 2014
	British SL (BSL)	Morgan 1998; Cornier et al. 2013
	South African SL (SASL)	Aarons & Morgan 2003
French SL Family	American SL (ASL)	Mandel 1977; Liddell 1980; Padden 1986; Poulin 1994; Lillo-Martin 1995; Metzger 1995; Emmorey & Reilly 1998; Liddell & Metzger 1998; Janzen 2004, 2008, 2012; Quinto-Pozos 2007a,b; Quinto-Pozos & Mehta 2010; Braga & Talbot 2009; Lillo-Martin & Müller de Quadros 2011
	Brazilian SL (LIBRAS)	McCleary&Viotti 2010; Lillo-Martin & Müller de Quadros 2011
	Catalan SL (LSC)	Quer 2005, 2011; Quer&Frigola 2006, Jarque 2011
	Danish SL (DSL)	Engberg-Pedersen 1993, 1995
	SL of the Netherlands (NGT)	Bos 1991; Baker & van den Bogaerde 2008; van Loon 2012
	French SL (LSF)	Cuxac 2000; Sallandre&Cuxac 2002
	French Belgian SL (LSFB)	Meurant 2008
	Italian (LIS)	Zucchi 2004
	Mexican SL (LSM)	Quinto-Pozos et al. 2009
	Quebecois (LSQ)	Poulin& Miller 1995
	Spanish (LSE)	Costello et al. 2008
	Hong Kong (HKSL)	Sze& Cheung 2013
	German SL family	German (DGS)
German Swiss SL (DSGS)		Boyes-Braem 1992, 1995
Israeli (ISL)		Meir et al. 2010
Swedish SL (SSL)		Ahlgren 1990; Ahlgren& Bergman 1994; Nilsson 2010
	Turkish (TID)	Perniss&Ozyürek 2008;
Isolated	Al-Sayyid Bedouin SL (ABSL)	Sandler 2012
	Nicaraguan SL	Pyers& Senghas 2007

<sup>7</sup> There is not a formal or accepted typological classification of signed languages. We assume Witman (1991)'s classification even being aware of its problems /the fact that it is not without problems.

**Table 2:** Functions of constructed action across signed languages

Sign language	Action reports	Utterance reports	Mental States	Emotions/attitudes	Evid.
American SL (ASL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Al-Sayyid Bedouin (ABSL)	✓	✓	?	✓	?
Australian SL (AUSLAN)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Brazilian SL (LIBRAS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
British SL (BSL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Catalan SL (LSC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Danish SL (DSL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
French SL (LSF)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
French Belgian SL (LSFB)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
German SL (DGS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
German-Swiss SL (DSGS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Hong Kong SL (HKSL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Israeli SL (ISL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Italian SL (LIS)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Jordanian SL (LIU)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Mexican SL (LSM)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Nicaraguan SL (ISN)	✓	✓	?	✓	?
Quebecois SL (LSQ)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
SL of Netherlands (NGT)	✓	✓	?	?	?
South African SL (SASL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Spanish SL (LSE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Swedish SL (SSL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Taiwanese SL (TSL)	✓	✓	?	✓	?
Turkish SL (TID)	✓	✓	?	✓	?

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