

(Gestural) Demonstrations and (Shifting) Perspectives

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We will focus on one specific phenomenon that is particularly prevalent in the visual domain: perspective taking. In spoken and signed languages, manual and non-manual gestural demonstrations are a powerful means used, among other things, to reproduce linguistic and non-linguistic actions of other people and to integrate them into one's own utterance. In doing so, gestural demonstrations can trigger a context or perspective shift that allows the speaker or signer to take the perspective of the person whose actions are being reproduced or demonstrated. In this talk, we will look at recent formal semantic analyses of gestural demonstrations in both linguistic modalities. Crucially, by way of combining demonstration with speech or sign language and also with demonstration alone, it is possible to express multiple perspectives simultaneously in the same utterance.