

Indirect discourse as mixed quotation: Evidence from self pointing gestures

Summary. The results of an experimental rating study are reported suggesting that self pointing gestures aligned with a third-person pronoun are available in German *indirect discourse* (ID) utterances. Following a proposal by Ebert and Hinterwimmer (2022) for self pointing in *free indirect discourse* (FID), self pointing in ID is interpreted as a *character viewpoint gesture* (CVG) from the matrix subject's perspective. Crucially, it is argued that in ID a perspective shift to the matrix subject can take place. It is proposed that ID is an instance of mixed quotation involving a demonstration (cf. Clark and Gerrig, 1990; Davidson, 2015) where self pointing is quoted from the matrix subject's original utterance.

Background. Davidson (2015) proposes a formal account of quotation under which it is demonstrational (cf. Clark and Gerrig, 1990). Ebert and Hinterwimmer (2022) report that self pointing aligned with a third-person pronoun is acceptable in German FID utterances, providing evidence in favor of an analysis of FID as mixed quotation (Maier, 2015), since self pointing aligned with a third-person pronoun can be treated as a demonstration with the pointing gesture being a quoted CVG (McNeill, 1992) from the protagonist's perspective. As a control condition, they also tested for self pointing in ID utterances and hypothesized them to be unacceptable because they have not been claimed to involve (mixed) quotation. However, self pointing was surprisingly acceptable in ID. The study reported here further explores this by means of a rating study that pairs self pointing with German ID utterances where either the speaker's or the matrix subject's perspective was made prominent. Since a perspective shift is more readily available when the matrix subject's perspective is prominent in ID (cf. Anderson, 2019), it is hypothesized that self pointing is more acceptable in those cases.

Experimental study. A rating study with 16 experimental items was conducted to test this hypothesis. German ID utterances were paired either with a self pointing or a beat gesture (factor *Gesture*). The gestures were always aligned with a third-person pronoun marked with a focal accent in order to increase the overall naturalness of the gesture. Assuming that ID can involve demonstrations if a perspective-shift toward the matrix subject takes place and that self pointing on a third-person pronoun is a demonstration, it is predicted that self pointing is more acceptable in the matrix subject condition than in the speaker condition. The beat gesture condition was included as a control condition as they should always be acceptable. Moreover, the ID utterances were manipulated in such a way that in one version the matrix subject's perspective was more prominent and in the other the speaker's perspective was more prominent (factor *Perspective*). The study was thus of a 2x2 design. The verbal stimuli (i.e., without a gesture) were tested in a pre-study in which participants had to select whose perspective was more prominent in the ID utterance: the speaker's or the matrix subject's. The items were then videotaped for the pilot study. An example of an experimental item is given in (1) (square brackets indicate gesture-speech alignment).

- (1) a. **Matrix subject perspective:** Pia ging es erbärmlich. Sie fragte sich, warum ihre beste Freundin Anna, diese gottverdammte Saufziege, gestern Abend mal wieder [IHR] zu viel Wein nachgeschüttet hat, obwohl sie doch so wenig verträgt.
'Pia was feeling miserable. She wondered why her best friend Anna, that damned lush, had poured [HER] too much wine again last night, even though she couldn't handle it.'
+ self pointing or beat gesture

- b. **Speaker perspective:** Pia ging es erbärmlich. Sie fragte sich, warum ihre beste Freundin Anna, die aber eigentlich nur die letzte Pfütze aus der Weinflasche loswerden wollte, gestern Abend mal wieder [IHR] zu viel Wein nachgeschüttet hat, obwohl sie doch so wenig verträgt.

'Pia was feeling miserable. She wondered why her best friend Anna, who was just trying to get rid of the last drops in the wine bottle, had poured [HER] too much wine again last night, even though she couldn't handle it.'

+ self pointing or beat gesture

The items were divided onto four lists according to a Latin square design and interspersed with 30 filler items. 60 native speakers of German participated in the study. Their task was to rate the utterances for acceptability on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = completely unacceptable; 7 = completely acceptable). An interaction of the two factors was predicted since self pointing was hypothesized to be more acceptable when the matrix subject's perspective is more prominent than when the speaker's perspective is more prominent in the ID utterance. The results show that self pointing was equally acceptable in both conditions of the factor Perspective (matrix subject: $M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.95$; speaker: $M = 4.54$, $SD = 1.96$). Beat gestures were also acceptable in both conditions of Perspective (matrix subject: $M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.68$; speaker: $M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.67$). An ordinal mixed-effects model with Gesture and Perspective as fixed effects and participants and items as random intercepts was fitted onto the data. It yielded a main effect for the factor Gesture ($p < .001$, $z = -6.212$). The rating differences for the two gesture types were significant in the matrix subject as well as the speaker condition (matrix subject: $p < .001$, $z = -3.928$; speaker: $p < .001$, $z = -4.948$).

Discussion and conclusion. The model output suggests that, contrary to the prediction, self pointing aligned with a third-person pronoun is acceptable irrespective of the prominent perspective in the ID utterance. However, it confirms the hypothesis that self pointing is acceptable in ID when the matrix subject's perspective is made prominent. The results thus go beyond the initial hypothesis. Following Ebert and Hinterwimmer (2022), this suggests that in ID a perspective shift toward the matrix subject takes place thus allowing for the interpretation of self pointing gestures as demonstrations of CVGs from the matrix subject's perspective. From a theoretical perspective, the results of the present study indicate that demonstrations in Davidson's (2015) sense and thus (mixed) quotation can also be present in instances of ID. This is in line with previous findings that some indexicals (e.g., temporal expressions in German and *tomorrow* in English) can shift in ID utterances (Plank, 1986; Anderson, 2019). Davidson's (2015) demonstration needs to be extended, however, so that it is able to also capture gestures (Ebert and Hinterwimmer, 2022). This proposal can be formally implemented by modifying Davidson's (2015) account, which can then also straightforwardly model the aforementioned shifting behavior of some indexicals in ID.

References

- Anderson, C. J. (2019). Tomorrow isn't always a day away. *Proceedings of SuB 23*.
- Clark, H. H. and R. J. Gerrig (1990). Quotations as demonstrations. *Language*, 66(4).
- Davidson, K. (2015). Quotation, demonstration, and iconicity. *L & P*, 38(6).
- Ebert, C. and S. Hinterwimmer (2022). Free indirect discourse meets character viewpoint gestures. *Proceedings of LE 2020*.
- Maier, E. (2015). Quotation and unquotation in free indirect discourse. *M & L*, 30(3).
- McNeill, D. (1992). *Hand and Mind: What Gestures reveal about Thought*. UChicago Press.
- Plank, F. (1986). Über den Personenwechsel und den anderer deiktischer Kategorien in indirekter Rede. *Zeitschrift für germanistische Linguistik*, 14(3).