

snippets

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We argue that ASL 'high' loci can simultaneously display a behavior which is:

- (i) iconic [= loci may stand in geometric relations that reflect the geometric arrangement of their denotations];
- (ii) quasi-gradient [= when two loci are interpreted iconically, a third one can be 'sandwiched' between them, with the expected interpretation];
- (iii) *phi*-feature-like [= height specifications can be disregarded – possibly under agreement – by ellipsis and focus-sensitive constructions];
- (iv) irreducible to the behavior of co-occurring and possibly non-featural elements, such as classifiers.

Schlenker et al. 2013 and Schlenker 2014 established points (i) and (iii), but not points (ii) and (iv). (The crucial examples involved 3 levels only [high, normal, low], as well as classifiers in various positions, which could be taken to be responsible for the iconic effects that we observed.)

In (1), the pronouns index 4 different heights that reflect the height of [the heads of] their denotations, which begins to establish Points (i) and (ii). (1c) shows that these height specifications are disregarded in the course of ellipsis resolution, for otherwise the elided occurrences of *SELF* taking *IX-b* and *IX-d* as antecedents would have the 'wrong' feature specifications – which in turn should yield deviance, as in the control sentence in (1b), which contrasts with (1a); this establishes Point (iii), and the absence of classifiers establishes Point (iv). Acceptability ratings were obtained by the 'playback method' from repeated judgments by a native ASL signer [Deaf child of Deaf, signing parents] on a 7-point scale, with 7 = best.

(1) SHOW HAVE 4 GYMNAST STAND-CL BAR ORDER HEIGHT.

a. *SELF* signed at various, appropriate heights

[6.5] IX-a PRESENT SELF-a WELL, IX-b MAYBE NOT PRESENT SELF-b WELL, IX-c NOT CLEAR, IX-d DEFINITELY NOT PRESENT SELF-d WELL.

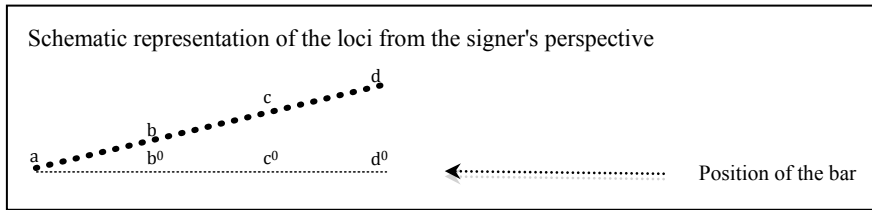
b. *SELF* signed at a constant, low height

[3.2] IX-a PRESENT SELF-a WELL, IX-b MAYBE NOT PRESENT SELF-b⁰ WELL, IX-c NOT CLEAR, IX-d DEFINITELY NOT PRESENT SELF-d⁰ WELL.

c. *SELF* signed low, only once (with ellipsis of the the second and fourth VPs)

[7] IX-a PRESENT SELF-a WELL, IX-b MAYBE NOT, IX-c NOT CLEAR, IX-d DEFINITELY NOT. => bound variable reading

'During a show, four gymnasts were standing on a bar, ranked by height. One [a short one] presented himself well; the second [taller] one possibly didn't present himself well; for the third [still taller] one, it was unclear; and the fourth [still taller] one definitely didn't present himself well.'



The first sentence of (2) is analogous to (1a). The third sentence establishes that the gymnasts operated a vertical rotation, hence *additional* heights, but now below the position of the bar – which reinforces Points (i) and (ii); Points (iii) and (iv) are preserved as in (1).

(2) SHOW HAVE 4 GYMNAST STAND-CL BAR ORDER HEIGHT.

IX-a PRESENT SELF-a BAD, IX-b MAYBE NOT, IX-c NOT CLEAR, IX-d DEFINITELY NOT.

SUDDENLY STAND-CL HANG-CL. WEIRD – NOW

a. *SELF* signed at various, appropriate heights

[6.3] IX-a' PRESENT SELF-a' WELL, IX-b' MAYBE NOT PRESENT SELF-b' WELL, IX-c' NOT CLEAR, IX-d' DEFINITELY NOT PRESENT SELF-d' WELL.

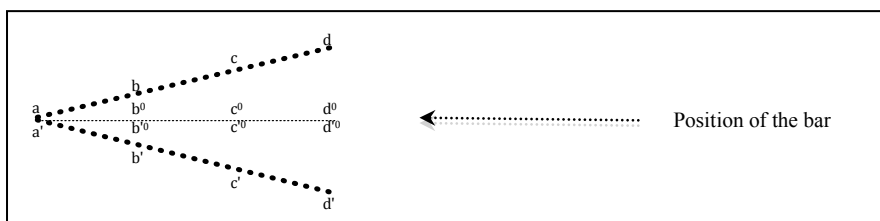
b. *SELF* signed at a constant, intermediate height

[3.7] IX-a' PRESENT SELF-a' WELL, IX-b' MAYBE NOT PRESENT SELF-b'⁰ WELL, IX-c' NOT CLEAR, IX-d' DEFINITELY NOT PRESENT SELF-d'⁰WELL.

c. *SELF* signed low, only once (with ellipsis of the the second and fourth VPs)

[6.3] IX-a' PRESENT SELF-a' WELL, IX-b' MAYBE NOT, IX-c' NOT CLEAR, IX-d' DEFINITELY NOT. => bound variable reading

'During a show, four gymnasts were standing on a bar, ranked by height. One [a short one] presented himself badly; the second [taller] one didn't present himself badly; for the third [still taller] one, it was unclear; and the fourth [still taller] one definitely didn't present badly. Suddenly, they effected a vertical rotation. Oddly, now the short one presented himself well; the second one possibly didn't present himself well; for the third one, it was unclear; and the fourth one definitely didn't present himself well.'



Arguably, then, height specifications of loci display grammatical properties of *phi*-features *and* a highly iconic/gradient behavior.

References

- Schlenker, P., Lamberton, J. and M. Santoro. (2013) "Iconic variables." *Linguistics & Philosophy* 36, 91-149.
- Schlenker, P. (2014) "Iconic features." *Natural Language Semantics* 22, 299-356.

References of the videos in which sentences were signed and assessed.

(1) = 19, 253; 19, 254; 19, 265; 19, 282; 19, 293 (4 ratings). (2) = 19, 272; 19, 273; 19, 284; 19, 294 (3 ratings)

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