

## Attitude ascriptions in sign languages and role shift

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### 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Sign languages have been shown to share a strategy to mark reports and quotes known as *role shift* or *role taking*. The label refers to the fact that the report looks on the surface as if the signer takes on the role of the reported person, as a kind of enactment of the speech event. Role shift is often presented as some sort of direct quotation that is systematically accompanied by imitation of the actions by the reported agent, in a mimic-like way. In this paper I discuss several properties of role shift that undermine such a simple view. Research on this phenomenon in specific sign languages such as Catalan Sign Language (LSC) shows that more fine-grained distinctions must be identified in the domain of role shift, as it is used in a broader domain of structures than direct quotation. It will be argued, on the one hand, that different kinds of role shift complements must be distinguished in LSC, and on the other, that role shift is not restricted to speech reports but it serves a more general function of marking attitude ascriptions overtly.

### 2 Characterisation of role shift structures

The grammatical phenomenon identified in sign languages as *role shift* (alternatively called *role taking*, *role switching*, *reference shift* or in some cases *constructed dialogue*, as in Metzger 1995) is usually taken to be the equivalent of a direct discourse report or quotation in the visual-gestural modality. It is the typical means these languages have in order to convey the utterances or thoughts ascribed to a discourse agent, and sometimes to reproduce or rather recreate the dialogue between two or more subjects in a displaced context. It mostly appears in narrative discourse, but not exclusively. General characterizations and analyses of the phenomenon in different sign languages have been put forth by Padden (1986), Engberg-Pedersen (1995), Lee et al. (1997), Poulin (1994), Poulin & Miller (1995), Lillo-Martin (1995, 2012), Zucchi (2004), Quer (2005, 2011), Quer & Frigola (2006), Herrmann & Steinbach (2007, 2009, 2010), Schlenker (2010) Hübl & Steinbach (2012) and Hübl (this volume), among others.

Descriptively, role shift is characterized by two sets of properties: on the formal side, by a whole set of non-manual markers that flag the utterance(s) as reported; on the

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter builds on the research reported in Quer (2005, 2011), Quer & Frigola (2006) and takes it one step further. I would like to thank the audiences at SALT 15 (Los Angeles, April 2005), the Sign Language Workshop *Signa Volant* (Milan, June 2005), the conference *Text structure: form, meaning and processing* (Göttingen, July 2010), the 13<sup>th</sup> Texas Linguistics Society conference (2012) and the Göttingen Fall School *Non-canonical Forms of Reported Discourse in Spoken and Sign Languages* (2012) for their valuable comments and criticism. Special thanks go to Annika Herrmann, Annika Hübl and Markus Steinbach. This work would have been impossible without the collaboration of my Deaf colleagues Santiago Frigola and Delfina Aliaga. The research was partly made possible by a grant awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation to Josep Quer (FFI2009-10492), by the Govern de la Generalitat de Catalunya (2009SGR00763) and by SignGram Cost Action IS1006.

interpretive side, by the referential displacement that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person markings and other indexicals undergo. In the following, both types of properties are described.

## 2.1 Formal properties

The overt marking of role shift structures can engage different articulations. The most prominent of those articulations are as follows:

- (a) Temporary interruption of eye contact with the actual interlocutor and direction change of eye gaze towards the reported interlocutor (Fig. 1).
- (b) Slight shift of the upper body in the direction of the locus associated with the author of the reported utterance (Fig 2).
- (c) Change in head position (Fig. 3).
- (d) Facial expression associated to the reported agent (Fig. 4).



**Figure 1:** Eye gaze break.



**Figure 2:** Body shift.



**Figure 3:** Head position.



**Figure 4:** Facial expression.

Although all these non-manual markers can co-occur in a role shift segment, they are not all obligatory. In a small corpus study, Herrmann & Steinbach (2009, 2010) established for German Sign Language (DGS) that the only required articulation to mark role shift is eye gaze break, which seems sufficient to identify a discourse segment as role shift from a formal point of view. This is confirmed by signers' intuitions for LSC. Fact is that, even though marking by the whole array of non-manuals can be very obvious, sometimes it is extremely subtle, especially when only one marker is found.

## 2.2 Interpretive properties

Next to formal marking, role shift is characterized by referential displacement of indexical elements. The reference of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns and all the grammatical elements agreeing with them (verb agreement, possessives, etc.) are not interpreted with respect to the actual context of utterance, but in the reported context; that is, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person features do not refer in principle to the signer and the addressee of the main context but to those of the derived one. At the same time, temporal and locative indexicals appearing in the role shift segment must shift in their reference. An almost minimal pair of a report with and without role shift can be found in (1) and (2), respectively.<sup>2</sup> Note that the embedded first person subject in (1) refers to Anna and not

<sup>2</sup> The usual glossing conventions in the SL literature are followed here, according to which manual signs are represented by the capitalized word corresponding to the translation of the sign. The scope of non-manual markings is represented with a line that spreads over the manual

the actual utterer of the sentence. The equivalent in (2) without role shift requires a 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun coreferent with the main clause subject. Example (1) is a rather standard case of reported speech where pronouns and indexical reference are shifted to the derived context, and consequently IX-1 is interpreted as the referent of ANNA. The contrast in formal marking of those two pronouns can be observed in Figs. 5 and 6.

- (1) ANNA<sub>i</sub> 3-SAY-2 IX-1 FED-UP LOSE+++ RS-i  
 ‘Anna told you that she was fed up with losing so often.’
- (2) ANNA<sub>i</sub> 3-SAY-1 IX-3<sub>i</sub> FED-UP LOSE+++ t  
 ‘Anna told me that she was fed up with losing so often.’

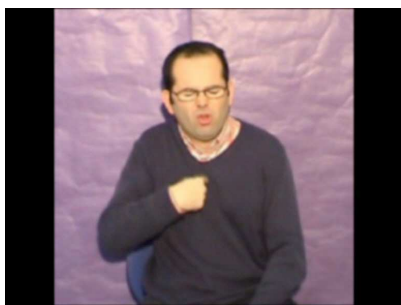


Figure 5: IX-1<sub>i</sub> in (1).

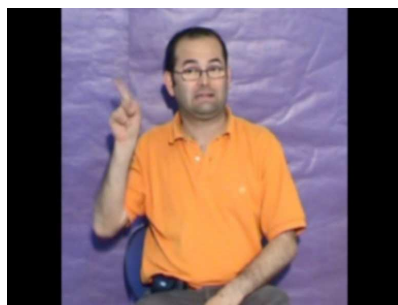


Figure 6: IX-3<sub>i</sub> in (2).

With this first characterization of the phenomenon, one could easily conclude that it is equivalent to direct quotation in the visual-gestural modality. However, LSC has been shown to have specific markers of direct quotation like the ones glossed as AUTHOR, DECLARE, VOICE and SAY1-SENTENCE (see Figs. (7)-(10)).

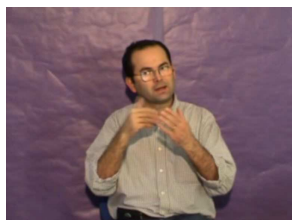


Figure 7: AUTHOR.

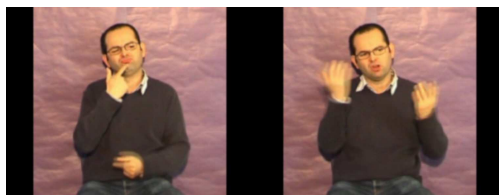


Figure 8: DECLARE.

material with which it is coarticulated. The relevant abbreviations for the purposes of this paper are the following ones: #-VERB-# (verb agreeing with subject and object; the number before the verb refers to the grammatical person of the former and the one after the verb refers to the latter); AGR (unbound agreement marker); eg (eyegaze); IX-a (locative index pointing to locus *a*); IX-# (pronominal index; the number corresponds to person); hs (negative headshake); RS (role shift); t (topic marking); wh (wh marking); +++ (reduplication of the sign). The referential indices *i, j*, etc. link the first person role in RS fragments to the intended author of the reported utterance.

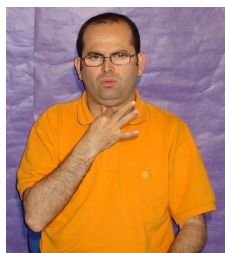


Figure 9: VOICE.



Figure 10: SAY1-SENTENCE.

When one such marker introduces the role shift, it is interpreted unambiguously as a direct quote, as in (3):

- (3) ANNA<sub>i</sub> EXPLAIN SAY1-SENTENCE MAN!  $\overline{\text{IX-1}}$  BROTHER MAN 3-IGNORE-1  $\overline{\text{RS-i}}$   
 ‘Anna told me: “Man, my brother ignores me!”’

This type of examples thus displays a distinctive feature of direct quote, distinguishing them from other introducing predicates such as SAY, THINK, REPLY (cf. Figs. (11)-(13)), which are ambiguous in terms of the direct or indirect status of the report they signal.



Figure 11: SAY.



Figure 12: THINK.



Figure 13: REPLY.

In spontaneous data and especially in connected discourse, it is very common to find instances of reported speech that are not explicitly introduced, or that are introduced simply by indicating the agent of the reported utterance, as in example (4):

- (4)  $\overline{\text{RS-i}}$   
 $\overline{\text{y/n}}$   
 LION<sub>i</sub>  $\overline{\text{IX-2}}$  WANT 2-HELP-1  
 ‘The lion said: “Do you want to help me?”’

The structures that role shift flags are not only used to report utterances, but also the thoughts of an individual, as in (5):

- (5)  $\overline{\text{IX-a MADRID}_i \text{ JOAN THINK 1-MOVE-b IX-b BARCELONA}}^{\text{RS-i}}$   
 ‘When Joan was in Madrid, he thought about moving to Barcelona.’

In this sense, role shift not only serves the function of reproducing actual discourse, but also that of representing (re)constructed discourse or thoughts. This is not an atypical feature of reported discourse, as we can see in (6) for English:

- (6) And then Barack thought: “What am I going to say next?”

In section 5 below, though, I will show that role shift actually covers a broader domain than pure utterance or thought, and I will argue that it appears more generally in (some types of) attitude ascriptions.

### 3 Role shift and linguistic reports

As part of role shift another phenomenon is usually discussed, namely *constructed action*. From a descriptive point of view, it consists in the imitative reproduction of actions or gestures attributed to the agent being reported about. It is not simply co-speech gesture in most cases, as it mostly complements or illustrates the utterances or thoughts of that agent that are being reported. In this respect, it appears to be more integrated into signed discourse than co-speech gesture, as in the following ASL example (Emmorey 2002: 162):

- (7) DECIDE DANCE [DANCE+++] THEN GIRL THINK. “PRO<sub>1st</sub> MUST GO HOME, PRO<sub>1st</sub> MUST GO HOME.”  
 ‘They decide to dance. They dance all around, and then the girl realizes, “I must go home, I must go home.”’

In (7), gestural action is marked between square brackets: in this case gesture is clearly integrated into the narrative line. It constitutes a simple example of constructed action, which is really pervasive in certain types of signed discourse like narratives. Some authors like Liddell and Metzger (1998), subsume role shift under the term constructed action. Here I would like to distinguish between the reportive use of role shift and the non-reportive one, and briefly dwell on the latter. Although the term “role shift” as overt marker of both types of production can function as a useful cover term, I would like to maintain the distinction between its use as represented speech/thought (Smith 2009) and its other use as constructed action as described above, even if they are closely intertwined in production. In the former case, the represented signing is meant to reproduce linguistic content and it resorts to signed sentences that are attributed to an illocutionary agent. In the latter, though, no linguistic strings are used.

The split between represented speech and represented action has been somewhat collapsed by some authors with the distinction between quotational and non-quotational uses of role shift. For instance, Lillo-Martin (2012: 370) states this perspective as follows:

“Some [instances of role shift] report the words or thoughts of another (although not necessarily verbatim). Such cases will sometimes be referred to as quotational role shift. Other examples report a character’s emotional state or actions, including, as

Mandel pointed out, actions of which the character is recipient as well as agent. These cases will be referred to as non-quotational. What unifies these different types of reports is that they portray the event from the point of view of the character, as interpreted by the speaker.”

This partition of role shift into these two different kinds of uses has also been defended by Zucchi (2004) on the basis of examples like (8) in Italian Sign Language (LIS): he claims it to be an instance of non-quotational role shift, as it is allegedly not intended to reproduce Gianni’s imagined utterance upon his arrival. The role shift fragment is anchored to the previously introduced referent of GIANNI.

- (8) GIANNI<sub>i</sub> ARRIVE \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 BOOK 1-DONATE-2  
 ‘When Gianni comes, he will give you the book as a present.’<sup>3</sup>

[LIS] (Zucchi 2004: 6)

In a similar vein, Lillo-Martin (2012) takes Padden’s (1986) examples in (9) and (10) to instantiate cases of quotational vs. non-quotational role shift, respectively. Both examples feature role shift anchored to the referent of HUSBAND, which is the only introducing element. For Lillo-Martin, the crucial factor to distinguish between the two is the fact that a 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun appears in (9), but not in (10), and this would correlate with the quotative vs. quotative nature of the role fragment.

- (9) HUSBAND \_\_\_\_\_RS-husband  
 REALLY I NOT MEAN  
 ‘The husband goes, “Really, I didn’t mean it.”’  
 \_\_\_\_\_RS:husband  
 (10) HUSBAND WORK  
 ‘The husband was like – “here I am, working.”’

[ASL] (Padden 1986: 49-50)

Lillo-Martin establishes a parallel between such examples and the distinctions that can arguably be detected in the corresponding English cases with co-occurring co-speech gesture, as in (11). While (11a) would be a simple instance of indirect report accompanied by an eating gesture, (11b) and (11c), both flagged by the quotative marker *be like*, would correspond to an action report and an utterance report, respectively. Her proposal is that the appearance of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun in (11c) is what turns it into a case of reported discourse, and it would be comparable to example (9) above in ASL.

- (11) a. And she ate it all up.  
               g(eating)  
       b. And she was, like, eating it all up.  
                                   g(eating)

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<sup>3</sup> I adapt Zucchi’s original notation in order to unify it with the one used here, but nothing crucial hinges on this. The translation of the example is also his, with a minor modification.

- c. And she was, like, I'm eating it all up.  
g(eating)

However, I would like to argue that cases like (10) are simple indirect reports that happen to be accompanied by role shift markers, thus rendering them parallel to cases like (11a) in English. Padden (1986: 50) remarks that “[10] involves changes in facial configuration, eye gaze, but not in body position.” The predicate WORK is part of the report uttered by the actual signer. The non-manual markers associated to it add (some unspecified) information about the emotional state of the subject of WORK, but they do not force the interpretation of that predicate as part of the utterances or thoughts of the agent. I think this is just a misinterpretation derived from the English rendition, which introduces reported speech to make the coarticulation component prominent. The fact that no 1<sup>st</sup> person appears is not surprising, as it is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person report by the actual signer. Other temporal or locative indexicals anchored to the reported context are not expected, either, because they would turn it immediately into a direct report.<sup>4</sup> Admittedly, though, we do not have a good way available to transcribe such coarticulations, as (11a) makes clear, but I propose that, strictly speaking, the role shift in cases like (10) does not fall under quotative role shift, but rather under the non-manual facet of my more restrictive interpretation of constructed action.<sup>5</sup>

From this perspective, the LIS example in (8) is different from the ASL one in (10): it constitutes a case of quotational role shift (*pace* Zucchi), not because of the appearance of a 1<sup>st</sup> person feature in the subject agreement of the verb, but simply because it is intended to reproduce Gianni's expected utterance upon his arrival. A constructed action correlate would not involve the lexical verb DONATE inflected for subject and object, but rather a gestural form in an imitative way. The fact that the role shift segment is not introduced by a verb of saying does not tell us anything about the quotative or non-quotative status of the role shift. In fact, indicating only the individual anchor of the role shift segment might be the default strategy in signed discourse. A clear illustration of non-introduced role shift segment in LSC is presented in (12): it (re)presents the content of an e-mail message, which has been mentioned in the same sentence and is linked to its author, namely Joan. Notice that the report sentence does not contain a 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun and there is clearly no constructed action involved.

- (12)  $\overline{\text{JOAN}_i \text{ MAIL ELECTRONIC 3-SEND-1 IX-2 ALL GUILT IX-2}}$   $\overline{\text{RS-i}}$   
'In an e-mail Joan sent to me, he was like, "It's all your fault!".'

<sup>4</sup> Lillo-Martin (2012: 383) actually notices in passing that there are no mentions in the literature of non-quotational role shift involving other indexical elements. I think this follows naturally from the characterization offered in the text.

<sup>5</sup> The findings in child acquisition of role shift reported in Lillo-Martin & Quadros (2011) point in the same direction: role shift is used at a very young age (1;07 and 1;11 for the first occurrences of their two subjects) for portraying the actions of others; children use non-manual marking including eye-gaze, facial expression and manner of movement correctly to indicate another's point of view. However, reported speech with role shift only occurs at a later stage.

So, from this point of view, such types of alleged non-quotational role shift simply reduce to non-introduced quotational role shift. The proposed role of the presence vs. absence of a 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun in order to discriminate between the two types becomes irrelevant: as soon as signs are uttered, we are in front of a linguistic report. Nevertheless, here I will have nothing more to say about constructed action in the restrictive sense, namely, as non-quotational role shift. In the following we will concentrate exclusively on utterance/thought reports.

A further central question that needs to be raised next is to what the status is of role shift in examples like (1): is it direct quotation or rather an indirect report, despite the surface appearance? In the next section we will offer some compelling empirical arguments that show quite clearly that role shift occurs in both direct and non-direct reports.

#### 4 Distinctions within role shift structures

The impression that role shift reports reduce to a single type of structure, namely, direct quotes, dissolves after closer examination of two apparently independent properties in LSC: interpretation of indexicals and syntactic preposing of the reported clause. We will examine them in turn.

##### 4.1 Interpretation of indexicals in role shift

According to Kaplan's (1989) analysis of indexical expressions like 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, their semantic value can only be fixed by the actual context of utterance and cannot be affected by any operator. This is what Schlenker (2003) called "the fixity thesis", reproduced in (13):

(13) *Fixity Thesis*

The semantic value of an indexical is fixed solely by the context of the actual speech act, and cannot be affected by any logical operators.

(Schlenker 2003: 29)

Although one can conceive of operators that could shift the context of evaluation of an indexical, Kaplan excludes them as 'monsters'. At first sight, this position seems to capture quite accurately the properties of indexical interpretation in a language like English. Nevertheless, Schlenker (2003) argues that such monsters do exist and are realized in certain languages by attitude predicates. An instance of such a shifted indexical is represented by the 1<sup>st</sup> person in the Amharic example in (14), where the indexical feature in the scope of 'say' does not refer to the actual utterer but to John, the reported utterer:

(14) Situation: John says: 'I am a hero'

jon jəgna nə-ññ yil-all  
 John hero be.PF-1sO 3M.say-AUX.3M  
 'John<sub>i</sub> says that he<sub>i</sub> is a hero.'  
 (Lit.: 'John<sub>i</sub> says that I<sub>i</sub> am a hero.')

[Amharic] (Schlenker 2003: 68)



From a crosslinguistic point of view, this situation is not rare, as work on languages such as Navajo, Slave or Zazaki, among others, testifies (see Anand & Nevins 2004, Schlenker 2003, Speas 1999 for a representative sample). Have a look at another such case from Havyaka Kannada (Dravidian), which uses the same set of pronouns for actual and reported speech act participants. In (15), the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun in the embedded report is ambiguous between the reported and the actual speaker of the sentence, as reflected in the two possible translations of the example.

- (15) en-na ello:ru-de hogaḷuttavu he: ḷi ra:ju enna-tre he:liddā  
 me.ACC all.EMPH praise that Raju me-with tell.PERF
- (i) Raju<sub>1</sub> has told me<sub>2</sub>: “Everybody praises me<sub>1</sub>.”  
 (ii) Raju<sub>1</sub> has told me<sub>2</sub> that everybody praises me<sub>2</sub>.

[Havyaka Kannada] (Bhat 2004: 58)

Sign languages typically align with this type of indexical behaviour, in the sense that 1<sup>st</sup> and second person indexical pronouns in the scope of role shift are interpreted in the reported context and not in the main context. We have already seen LSC examples of this in (1), (3) and (12). Almost routinely, other grammatical elements like verb agreement or possessives endowed with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person features shift accordingly, as illustrated in (16):

- (16) YESTERDAY ANNA<sub>i</sub> IX-3a 3a-TELL-1 IX-1<sub>i</sub> 1-HELP-2  
 ‘Yesterday Anna told me that she would help me.’

From this perspective, sign languages turn out to systematically realize the kind of monster Kaplan claimed not to be possible and its incarnation is actually role shift. As suggested in Quer (2005, 2011), role shift can be conceived of as an abstract operator that quantifies over contexts and determines all its contextual parameters in principle, including indexical reference. It not only accounts for the interpretation of indexical features of pronouns and related categories, but also of locative and temporal indexicals. In those works the abstract operator is dubbed as Point of View Operator, building on Lillo-Martin’s (1995) idea, and it is deemed to be responsible for both the referential shift and the non-manual marking that characterizes role shift. Like other operators in sign languages such as negation or Q (cf. Neidle et al. 2002), it marks its scope overtly with the array of markers presented in 2.1 above through spreading over the relevant c-command domain.

In the work on languages with shiftable indexicals by Anand & Nevins (2004), it was established that all the indexicals appearing in the scope of a propositional attitude must shift, that is, we cannot find a situation where some indexicals in the scope of such an operator are interpreted in the derived context, while other indexicals are interpreted in the main context of utterance, as stated in (17):

- (17) *Shift-Together Constraint*  
Shiftable indexicals must shift together.

(Anand & Nevins 2004)

However, empirical evidence in LSC has been shown to contradict this generalization. Quer (2005, 2011) discusses cases like (18):

- (18) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>t</sup> \_\_\_\_\_<sup>RS-i</sup>  
IXa MADRID<sub>m</sub> MOMENT JOAN<sub>i</sub> THINK IX-1<sub>i</sub> STUDY FINISH HERE<sub>b</sub>  
'When he was in Madrid, Joan thought he would finish his study here (in Barcelona).'

This sentence, uttered in Barcelona, reports on Joan's thoughts while he was in Madrid. In the report marked with role shift we find two indexicals: the personal pronoun IX-1 and the locative indexical HERE. The 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun is interpreted, as expected, as referring to the utterer of the derived context that is being reported. Unexpectedly, though, the locative HERE does not receive the shifted interpretation ('in Madrid'), but the main context one ('in Barcelona'). This does not mean that such an indexical can never be interpreted in the shifted context: as (19) shows, there is no problem to get that reading if the location parameter of the embedded context is specified overtly. In that case, we only obtain the shifted interpretation.

- (19) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>t</sup> \_\_\_\_\_<sup>RS-i</sup>  
IXa MADRID JOAN<sub>i</sub> THINK IX-1<sub>i</sub> STUDY FINISH HERE MADRID  
'When he was in Madrid, John thought he would finish his studies there in Madrid.'

Such behaviour of indexicals in role shift is not limited to locatives: a comparable pattern is found in temporal deixis with elements such as YEAR-THIS 'this year' or NOW in the same environment, as illustrated in (20) and (21), respectively:

- (20) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>t</sup> \_\_\_\_\_<sup>t</sup> \_\_\_\_\_<sup>RS-i</sup>  
PERIOD LAST-YEAR JOAN<sub>i</sub> IX-3 THINK STUDY FINISH YEAR-THIS  
'Last year, Joan thought he would finish his studies {this year > then-that year}.'

- (21) \_\_\_\_\_<sup>t</sup> \_\_\_\_\_<sup>RS-i</sup>  
LAST-YEAR JOAN<sub>i</sub> THINK IX-1<sub>i</sub> STUDY FINISH NOW  
'Last year, Joan thought he would finish his studies {now > then}.'

For these temporal indexicals the interpretation with the parameter of the main context is clearly the one that is strongly preferred over the shifted interpretation. The possibility for indexicals not to shift in embedded contexts has also been documented in German Sign Language (DGS; cf. Herrmann & Steinbach 2012).<sup>6</sup> Hübl & Steinbach (2012), in their

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<sup>6</sup> Schlenker (2010) and Lillo-Martin (personal communication) report that independent shift of indexicals has not been documented for ASL. Nevertheless, Schlenker notes that it is possible to unshift an indexical if role shift markers are not coarticulated with it. Such cases are different from

discussion of a comparable set of data in DGS, argue that the non-shifted interpretations of indexical elements might be due to their form, which in the DGS signs for *HERE*, *TODAY* or *NOW* is realized as an index pointing to the ground. Their conjecture is that through this indexical points the actual context re-enters the role shift segment, so to say. Although the sign *NOW* in LSC does not have such a clear indexical form, their idea is certainly worth exploring. In fact, further examination of demonstratives in LSC has shown that they can be ambiguous between the displaced and the main context interpretation, as in (22): *IX-a* can refer either to a book present in the actual context of utterance or to a book present in the reported context.

- (22)  $\text{_____ t _____ t t _____ RS-i}$   
 JOAN<sub>i</sub> PERIOD HOLIDAYS IX-3 THINK FEEL LIKE BOOK READ IX-a  
 ‘During his holidays, Joan felt like reading that book.’

However, LSC data indicate that such a simple explanation cannot account for the whole set of phenomena that are found in the language. Despite the non-shifted readings for indexicals identified for elements like *HERE* or *YEAR-THIS* in role shift structures such as (18) or (20) in LSC, other patterns have been attested where the very same elements in a non-final position receive the shifted interpretation by default. Thus, the same temporal and locative adverbials that we found in (20), when occurring in non-final position in the embedded clause, only receive the shifted interpretation.

- (23)  $\text{_____ t _____ RS-i}$   
 LAST-YEAR JOAN<sub>i</sub> IX-3 THINK HERE YEAR-THIS STUDY FINISH  
 ‘Last year, Joan thought he would finish his studies {there that year > here this year}.’

At this point, it is not clear why the position of the indexical should affect its interpretation, but a plausible explanation might lie in the information structure status of the relevant item, namely focal in sentence-final position vs. non-focal sentence-initial or sentence-medial position. It remains to be understood, then, why and how focus influences indexical interpretation in such structures.

Notice, though, that there is an important asymmetry between locative and temporal indexicals, on the one hand, and person indexicals, on the other, because the latter do not seem to be able to receive non-shifted interpretations, that is, they are always interpreted in the derived context. This might look quite surprising at face value, but on the basis of Navajo data displaying Direct Discourse Complements, Speas (2000) argues for a split between the system determining deixis for person marking (functional) and the system determining deixis more generally (semantic). In view of the data discussed so far, we must conclude that such a clear-cut divide as the one found in Navajo does not fully hold for the LSC (and maybe DGS), but a broad parallelism seems to underlie the empirical map. More detailed comparisons across the relevant languages are needed at this stage.

In any case, even if at first sight the explanation based on the pointing nature of some non-shifted indexicals by Hübl & Steinbach (2012) seems intuitively appealing, personal

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the LSC ones discussed in the main text, where the indexicals are in the overt domain of role shift marking. Overt unshifting by “switching off” the role shift non-manuals has also been observed in LSC, but it arguably constitutes a different case from the ones exemplified in (18) and (20)-(21).

indexicals pose a problem, as the first person pronoun does point to the chest of the actual signer in the role shift segment, and still it is unable to get interpreted with respect to the utterer-parameter of the main context.<sup>7</sup> This means that if deixis to the main context is at play with *HERE* and *TODAY* in LSC and DGS, it is of a different nature from the one present in IX-1, and this needs further motivation.

After having gone through the main properties of indexical interpretation in role shift, we are now in a position to establish an important distinction among role shift types. If in examples like (18) or (20) we have seen that a locative or temporal indexical can be interpreted with respect to the main context, this possibility remains excluded when role shift is introduced as direct quote by one of the markers mentioned in section 2.2 above. Take for instance (24), which forms a minimal pair with (20) with the only difference that role shift is introduced overtly by *DECLARE*, a marker of direct quotes.

- (24) PERIOD YEAR-LAST IX3 JOAN; <sup>RS-i</sup>THINK <sup>RS-i</sup>DECLARE  
<sup>RS-i</sup>IX-1 STUDY FINISH YEAR-THIS  
 ‘Last year Joan thought: “I’ll finish my study this year”.’

Given the picture drawn so far, the striking fact is that in this case the temporal indexical *YEAR-THIS* cannot possibly be interpreted in the main context of utterance and is obligatorily interpreted in the reported context, despite its occupying the same position in the clause and being marked by the same set of non-manual features as in (20).<sup>8</sup> This contrast must be taken as clear evidence that role shift structures cannot be identified exclusively with direct quotation, contrary to some superficial characterisations of the phenomenon. Rather, we are forced to conclude that reports marked with role shift instantiate both direct and indirect speech. In the next subsection a further syntactic contrast between the two types of reports will be described.

## 4.2 Syntactic position

A further property that distinguishes both cases is of syntactic nature. Direct quotes in LSC can be preposed (topicalized) vis-à-vis the introducing main sentence, as in (25), where *SENTENCE SAME* is the marker of direct discourse. On the contrary, ungrammaticality obtains if we try to do the same with a role shift segment which is interpreted as indirect discourse, as in (26):

<sup>7</sup> A 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun in role shift *can* be coreferential with the utterer of the main context, but because both referents are identified in the discourse model as one and the same, and not directly. Notice that the situation is different with 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns in role shift, as they are normally not directed to the actual interlocutor, but to a reported one located off the axis between signer-interlocutor.

<sup>8</sup> It should be mentioned that the obligatorily shifted interpretation of the indexical *YEAR-THIS* in (24) creates a problem for the account in Hübl & Steinbach (2012) that links the possibility for indexicals to receive non-shifted interpretations to their indexical pointing forms. In the totally parallel environments in (20) and (24) the form of the indexical is identical, but the reading is the opposite, and the only distinguishing factor is the interpretation of the role shift segment as direct discourse or not.

- (25) \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 IX-1 ANGRY AGR-2 IX-3c SENTENCE SAME IX-3a ANNAi 3a-SAY-3b IX-3b PEDRO  
 ‘‘I’m angry at you’ said Anna to Pedro.’
- (26) \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 \*IX-1 ANGRY AGR-2 YESTERDAY IX-3a ANNAi 3a-SAY-3b IX-3b PEDRO  
 ‘Anna said to Pedro that she was angry at him.’

In addition, a reportive complement clause that is not marked with role shift can also be preposed to the main verb, as (27) illustrates:

- (27) \_\_\_\_\_t \_\_\_\_\_t  
 ANNAi IX-3i FED-UP LOSE+++ 3-SAY-1ALREADY  
 ‘Anna already said to me that she was fed up with losing so often.’

On the basis of this evidence we can safely conclude that role shift structures do not form a uniform class and that they actually serve the expression of both direct and indirect reported discourse. The contrasting properties that we were able to identify so far were, on the one hand, the differing interpretation of locative and temporal indexicals in each type, and the possibility to prepose the reportive clause, on the other.

### 5 Role shift beyond reports

Role shift can be shown to display important properties that have been overlooked in most of the existing accounts of the phenomenon: it can appear in the scope of negation, of a quantified subject and a modal. I would like to claim that these facts are not prototypical for report or quotation and rather align role shift with attitude ascription marking.

In opposition to pure quotes under negation, a role shift fragment in the scope of a negative does not necessarily yield a corrective/contrastive reading of the embedded proposition that we find in a case in English like (28):

- (28) David didn’t say ‘‘Leave me!’’ (but ‘‘Love me!’’).

Contrasting with this type of interpretations, in LSC we find examples like (29)-(31) where role shift is in the scope of a negative and it simply yields the negative attribution of a proposition to a set of individuals. It is in this sense that the role shift structure turns out to be able to mark an attitude ascription more broadly, and not just reports of utterances or thoughts.

- (29) \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 JOANi SAY NEVER IX-1 ELECTIONS PARTICIPATE  
 ‘Joan never said that he wanted to run for the elections.’

(30) \_\_\_\_\_RS \_\_\_\_hs  
 IX-arc WARN-arc [CLASS CANCEL] NEG2  
 ‘Noone warned them that the class was cancelled.’

(31) \_\_\_\_\_hs \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 JOAN<sub>i</sub> NOT-KNOW TOWN-HALL WHERE  
 ‘Joan doesn’t know where is the town hall.’

(32) \_\_\_\_\_RS-i \_\_\_\_\_hs  
 JOAN<sub>i</sub>IX-1 EXAM FAIL NOT-BELIEVE  
 ‘Joan doesn’t believe he has failed the exam.’

In a similar fashion, role shift can also appear in the scope of a modal like CAN, as in (33), and in the scope of a quantified subject as well, as in (34) and (35):

(33) \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 SOME THINK CAN IX-1<sub>i</sub> EXAM FAIL  
 ‘Someone<sub>i</sub> may think he<sub>i</sub> has failed the exam.’

(34) \_\_\_\_\_t \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 PUPIL EACH-ONE<sub>i</sub> THINK^SEE-refl IX-1<sub>i</sub> BEST  
 ‘Every pupil<sub>i</sub> thinks that he<sub>i</sub> is the best.’

(35) \_\_\_\_\_RS-i  
 NOONE<sub>i</sub> SAY IX-1<sub>i</sub> AGR-1 SCARED DARKNESS  
 ‘Noone<sub>i</sub> says he<sub>i</sub> is scared of darkness.’

Note that these examples of role shift under negation, a modal or a quantified subject do not yield a corrective/contrastive reading comparable to the one in (28) for English, but rather the unmarked one where the signer attributes a propositional attitude to an individual or set of individuals (also negatively, as in (29)-(32) and (35)). Observe as well that the set of predicates that overtly introduce role shift is not restricted to verbs of saying and THINK, but it includes other typical propositional attitude verbs such as BELIEVE or KNOW, for instance.

The ability for role shift to naturally interact with negation, modals and quantified attitude holders is a characteristic that arguably takes the phenomenon of role shift to the broader domain of attitude ascription marking. This does not mean that role shift must always mark an attitude ascription, as we saw in (2) that attitude ascriptions can also be expressed without role shift marking. It remains to be explored if there is a proper subset of attitude ascriptions that role shift can mark, and if so, what the shared property of that set is.

In any event, on the basis of LSC data, it can be concluded that role shift is a cover term for a phenomenon that transcends the limits of pure reports and serves the general function of encoding propositional attitudes more generally, by signalling an individual’s perspective overtly.

## 6 Concluding remarks

In this paper a detailed characterization of role shift in Catalan Sign Language has been offered, both at the level of formal marking and at the level of interpretation. Role shift structures have been shown to be sometimes flagged overtly by specific lexical markers that identify them as direct discourse, which has led us to conclude that role shift is actually used for both direct and indirect reports. Correlating with that finding, it has been demonstrated that shifted indexical interpretation and the ability for the report to be syntactically preposed depend on the direct or indirect character of the reported utterance or thought. It has been further argued that some instances of alleged non-quotative uses or role shift reduce to non-introduced role shift structures, which are different from constructed action understood in the narrow sense of the term. Finally, it has been demonstrated that role shift transcends the domain of utterance and thought reporting, and that it covers the broader domain of propositional attitude ascriptions.

Some recent analyses such as Hübl & Steinbach (2012) propose a connection between role shift and Free Indirect Discourse (FID). Although there are certainly interesting lessons to be learnt from the comparison of the two phenomena, some of their core formal properties keep them apart. As we saw above, while locative and temporal indexicals can shift under certain circumstances in some sign languages like LSC or DGS, 1<sup>st</sup> person indexicals strictly flag the role shift fragment and they obligatorily shift. However, in FID 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns typically stand for the attitude holder, just like in standard indirect discourse. In Sharvit's (2008: 354) example of English FID, the underlined items indicate shifted parameters, while items in boldface mark unshifted parameters (as if they occurred in standard regular indirect reported speech).

(36) John looked at my picture. Yes (, he thought,) **he** wanted to marry me today.

Although FID also appears to involve mixing perspectives in the report, role shift treats the shift of contextual parameters in a different way and therefore cannot be reduced to it in a straightforward fashion. An alternative analysis of the partial shifting in terms of free direct quotation/unquotation as in Maier (2012) is promising, but potentially problematic too, because it would render the overt marking of the role shift fragment inconsistent with its interpretation. In fact, we do find instances of overt unquotation in LSC (and ASL, according to Schlenker 2010) where role shift markers are interrupted to mark non-shifted reference in the report, so it remains to be understood what the potential differences are between overt unquoting and non-shifted reference marked overtly by role shift. Understanding the mechanisms underlying the different types of phenomena (role shift, FID, unquotation) will certainly shed light on the broader issue of perspective taking and encoding in natural language discourse.

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