

LOOK-AT THAT!

AN ATTITUDE PREDICATE IN GERMAN SIGN LANGUAGE (DGS)

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In German Sign Language, a sign I gloss as LOOK-AT consistently appears in constructions involving role shift. Based on its articulatory and morphosyntactic properties, I argue that LOOK-AT functions as an attitude predicate of the doxastic type.

THE DATA

30 constructions with LOOK-AT, plus 20 constructions containing a lexical verb that looks similar, glossed as LOOK-AT:mv. Examples are from dialogues in the DGS Corpus (<http://ling.meine-dgs.de>)

ARTICULATORY PROPERTIES



LOOK-AT



LOOK-AT:mv

| | |
|--|--|
| Handshape: represents eyes | Handshape: represents eyes |
| Orientation of fingers adaptable; not toward signer | Fingers oriented toward object of perception |
| Back of hand toward signer | Back of hand oriented toward perceiver (subject) |
| Often articulated lower in signing space | Articulation usually in front of eyes |
| No / sideward transitional movement | Path movement from perceiver (subject) to perceived (object) |

MORPHOSYNTACTIC PROPERTIES

- LOOK-AT is consistently within the scope of, and followed by a clause under, **role shift**;
- An **object never occurs** in the same clause; LOOK-AT sometimes appears to 'agree' with an abstract situation;
- LOOK-AT introduces a referent's (internal) **affective response** toward a situation

LOOK-AT IN ASL

Winston (2013) and Healy (2015) describe a similar sign, albeit fully directional (subj>obj), typically used with psych-verbs in ASL

- Winston (2013): LOOK-AT is a **light verb** connecting clauses indicating cause and emotion ('The dog barked. I was afraid.')
- Healy (2015): LOOK-AT is a **Prospective Attending Sign** → anticipates an experiencer's response

ATTITUDE PREDICATE

Proposal: LOOK-AT is an **attitude predicate** which introduces a role shift (see e.g. Lillo-Martin 1995; Schlenker 2003)

But: LOOK-AT itself is also accompanied by role shift markers

Koulidobrova & Davidson (f.c.): **proffering** vs. **doxastic** predicates

- Proffering predicates = verbs of assertion (e.g. SAY)
 - Truth of proposition is evaluated w.r.t. common ground
 - 'Mom says she's busy' – 'Is mom busy?'
- Doxastic predicates = verbs of belief (e.g. THINK)
 - Entire proposition is up for discussion:
 - 'Mom thinks she's busy' – 'Does mom think she's busy?'

Conclusion: DGS LOOK-AT is an attitude predicate of the doxastic type

SOME EXAMPLES

- (1) WOMAN LET-KNOW₁ / SWIM / INDEX₁ LOOK-AT₃ / HEAD-NOD
'My wife tells me I should swim and I'm like, yeah...'
- (2) CL:board₃ MISS THIS-AND-THAT / MOTHER LOOK-AT₃ / VERY GOOSEBUMPS VERY
'There were boards with missing people. It gave my mother goosebumps.'
- (3) NOW MODIFY ALSO MORE-AND-MORE / INDEX₁ LOOK-AT₃ / ALSO NOT BAD
'There's a trend toward more unusual clothes, which I rather like.'

Situation

Subj. LOOK-AT Reaction

References: Healy, C. (2015). *Construing affective events in ASL*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University PhD dissertation. Koulidobrova, E. & Davidson, K. (f.c.). Attitude embedding predicates and indexicals under role shift in ASL. In *Papers for Angelika (Festschrift for Angelika Kratzer)*. Lillo-Martin, D. (1995). The point of view predicate in American Sign Language. In K. Emmorey & J.S. Reilly (Eds.), *Language, Gesture & Space* (pp. 155-170). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Schlenker, P. (2003). A plea for monsters. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 26, 29-120. Winston, C. (2013). *Psychological verb constructions in American Sign Language*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University MA thesis.

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