

How many perspectives to explain how to change a tire?

A cinematic approach to analyzing depicting constructions in signed language discourse



Assumptions for a cinematic approach

- Signer and immediate surrounding as screen
- Signed motion images can be described assuming a virtual camera
- Addressee equals film spectator → adopting the viewpoint of the virtual camera
- Apparent size relates to shot size
- The terminology of film analysis (e.g. Thompson/Bowen 2009) can be used



CA

Beginning of the story:
man driving on express way
tire exploding, car swerving
man driving carefully to the side



CA+CC_car

- one blend (Dudis 2004)
- two blends (Dudis 2004)

CA and CC are depicting constructions that can be analyzed as signed motion images (Müller 2018).
CA equals a Medium Close-Up; CC vary in (shot) size.

Research questions

- What kind and how many different spatial perspectives are used?
- How are these perspectives organized to give an oriented view on events and scene?

Analysis of perspective

- Viewing point (location of camera)
- Orientation of object (camera angle on object)
- Size (distance of camera to object)

Data from the DGS corpus: The signer explains how to change a tire and narrates a breakdown event. Story line (selection) with signer's depiction of:

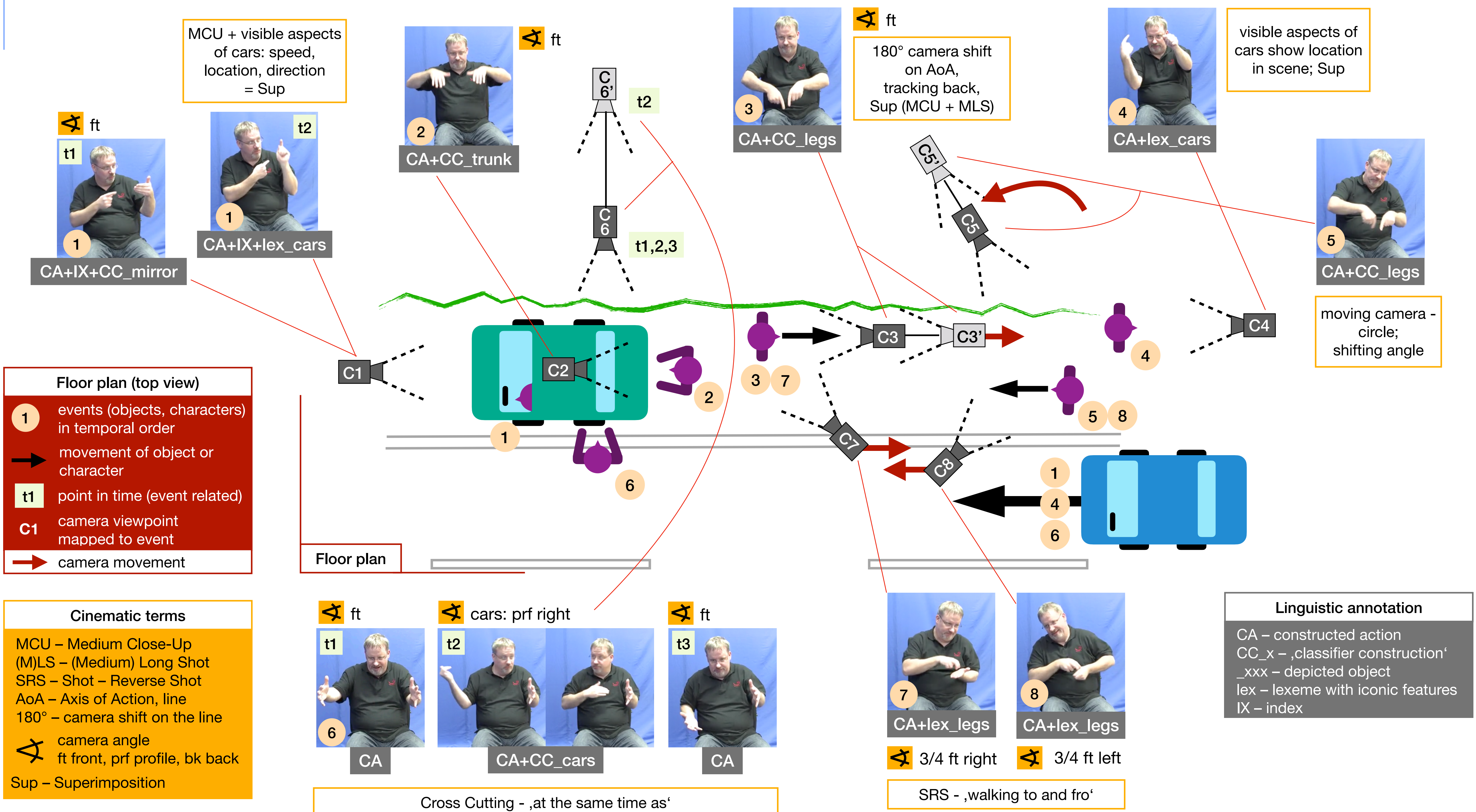
- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 t1 man observing traffic in rear-view mirror | 3 man walking along the side lane | 6 t1 man starting to take off the tire | 7 man walking to fetch the sign |
| t2 with cars speeding by | 4 man holding the sign while cars race past | t2 cars racing past | 8 man hurrying back to car |
| 2 man opening trunk to get breakdown triangle | 5 man hurrying back to car | t3 man taking off the tire | |



[Process Description | Leipzig | dgs-korpus_lei_10.1.31-45m](#)

Selected film stills of depicting constructions (CA and CC)

cinematic description - camera angle, viewpoint, editing



Results

- 11 different perspectives (8 + 3) since the halt of the car on the side lane; some repeatedly used
- Variation of perspectives serves lively narration
- Indication of perspective change through angle, movement, combination of images and lexemes
- Constructional patterns: moving camera, shift on AoA, SRS, superimpositions and cross cutting

Hypothesis

The apparent similarity to cinematic devices reveals common cognitive strategies of meaning construction in sign languages and films based on motion images and compositional structure.

Further research questions

- Can these constructional patterns be identified in other signed texts and contexts? How are they indicated and used?

References

- Dudis, P. 2004. Body partitioning and real-space blends. *Cognitive Linguistics* 15(2), 223–238.
Public DGS Corpus: MY DGS – annotated; <https://doi.org/10.25592/dgs.corpus-3.0>
- Müller, A. 2018. *Gebärdensprachen als bewegte Bilder? Eine Untersuchung zur Anwendbarkeit von Filmbeschreibungsbegriffen auf bildliche Diskursphänomene in Deutscher Gebärdensprache (DGS)*. Hamburg: SUB Hamburg. Doctoral dissertation. Online: <http://ediss.sub.uni-hamburg.de/volltexte/2018/9166/>
- Thompson, R. and Bowen, C. J. 2009. *Grammar of the Edit*. 2nd edition. Amsterdam, Boston, Heidelberg: Elsevier.