

## **Locational pointing in Murrinhpatha, Gija and English conversations**

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### **Abstract:**

It has been suggested that the gestural accuracy used by speakers of Australian Aboriginal languages like Guugu Yimidhirr and Arrernte to indicate directions and distant places is a consequence of absolute frame of reference being dominant in these languages; and that the lackadaisical points produced by North American English speakers is an outcome of relative frame being dominant in English. In this talk I will present a forthcoming paper from the 'Conversational Interaction in Aboriginal and Remote Australia' (CIARA) project that is scheduled to appear in the journal *Gesture* later this year. In this paper we compare locational pointing in contexts of place reference in conversations conducted in two Australian Aboriginal languages, Murrinhpatha and Gija, and in Australian English spoken by non-Aboriginal residents of a small town in north Western Australia. Pointing behaviour is remarkably similar across the three groups and all participants display a capacity to point accurately regardless of linguistic frame of reference options. We suggest that these speakers' intimate knowledge of the surrounding countryside better explains their capacity to accurately point to distant locations.

### **Bio:**

Caroline de Dear is a PhD candidate at Macquarie University, where she researches conversations conducted in Gija; an Australian Aboriginal language from the east Kimberley. She completed her MRes at Macquarie University in 2020. Caroline is currently working on the ARC funded CIARA project. Her research interests include Australian languages, language and social interaction, gesture, and multimodality.