



Dear ALS Members,

We'd like to add to David Nash's words on David Wilkins, as many other people will want to – and many who knew him better than we did.

David Wilkins was unusual. It is difficult to do justice to the impact he has had on the field of linguistics and gesture studies. This is due, among many things, to his unwillingness to engage in any part of academia that involves ego, elbows, competition and the claiming of authorship.

We knew him as an outstandingly brilliant thinker and the brightest and also the kindest person in the room, as a lecturer, mentor, colleague and friend in Buffalo, Nijmegen and Australia. He would take one's garbled contribution to a discussion, take it apart, clarify it, find what made sense, put it back together, hand it back to you, and compliment you on it. And refuse to take any credit.

In every discussion, he challenged us not to look for the right answers but to ask the right questions. Three of his publications stand out for us as examples of this approach: Wilkins (1992) is ahead of most of us and of academia as a whole by a good 35 years. Evans & Wilkins (2000) gently but firmly take apart Eurocentric assumptions about language, cognition, and semantic change. Wilkins (2003) sheds new light on the intricacies of pointing, setting a new agenda for gesture studies. These three papers exemplify the tremendous importance and impact Indigenous languages of Australia have had on the field of linguistics and gesture studies, just like David himself.



Wilkins, David. (1992). *Linguistic research under aboriginal control: A personal account of fieldwork in central Australia*. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 12(1), 171–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07268609208599475>

Evans, Nicholas, & David Wilkins. (2000). *In the Mind's Ear: The Semantic Extensions of Perception Verbs in Australian Languages*. *Language*, 76(3), 546–592. <https://doi.org/10.2307/417135>

Wilkins, David. 2003. *Why Pointing with the Index Finger is not a Universal (in Sociocultural and Semiotic Terms)*. In Sotaro Kita (ed.), *Pointing: Where Language, Culture, and Cognition Meet* (1st ed.). 1st ed. New York: Psychology Press.

Kind regards,
Anna Margetts & Marianne Gullberg