We chose a clip of George Lakoff – “How Does Philosophy Illuminate the Physical World?” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jpq5RQfSYaA>). Professor Lakoff had an interview with the host Robert Kunh. We have identified various forms of points-to-fingers (PTF) patterns in their conversations (details were coded in the ELAN annotation file).

It shows that PTF are also prevalent in our spoken languages and their forms are similar to those in sign languages. However, PTF in gestures seem to be constrained as they only function as listing buoys. Although this example provides a small sample of PTF in gestures, it demonstrates that there is a close relationship between signs and gestures in terms of such similar forms. It is not impossible that PTF in sign language have been (1) borrowed from gestures and (2) further developed and conventionalized in sign languages. Evidence for the latter can be that PTF have become the temporal connectives as well as causal adverbials in CSL.

One additional note: The extending of the thumb in their conversation is used to accompany the speech “one major point”, whereas Chinese people are likely to use the index finger for such a purpose. This shows the cultural preference in finger gestures.