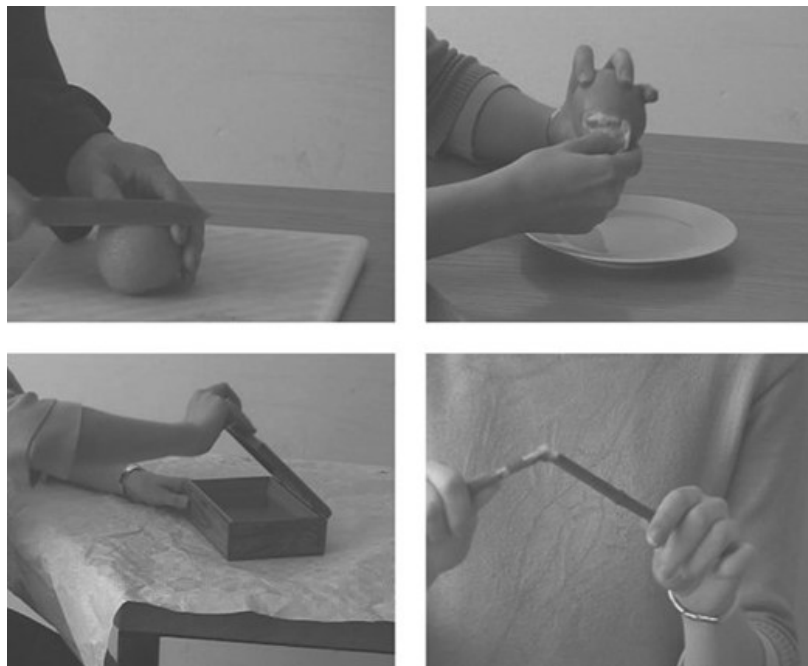


**Figure 2.2.**



Stills taken from the ‘cut and break’ video clips designed by Bohnermeyer, Bowerman, and Brown (2001), see also Majid, Bowerman, et al. (2007), and Majid et al. (2008).

Is the purpose to investigate a domain within a single language? Here the typological perspective can also be useful, but in addition, consulting your language corpora for potential hypotheses about the domain is invaluable (Hellwig 2006). In addition, you can ask speakers to ‘free-list’ exemplars from a domain (‘Can you tell me all the types of X?’). This can provide possibilities for further investigation. Additional exploratory interviewing and observation beforehand can be productive for identifying relevant contrasts for constructing a stimulus set.

### **2.3.3 How many stimulus materials should I use?**

There is a practical limitation to how many materials you should use. If you are doing a naming task, where consultants describe the materials, then a session with a 60-stimulus set can take anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour to conduct (depending on how many ancillary questions you ask, and how free you invite your participants to be in their talk—a straight run through without additional questions should take around 15 minutes per participant on average). It is possible to use far larger stimulus sets (cf. the World Colour Survey: Kay et al. 2009), but participants can get bored and distracted, so the quality of data that you elicit may suffer. Also the more time it takes to run a single participant, and the less they enjoy it, the harder it will be to find additional volunteers for that task.

### **2.3.4 But there will be lots of things you miss!**

No single stimulus set will address all of the possible factors of potential relevance to a semantic domain. Human fatigue is only one limiting factor. The larger the stimulus set, the more worrisome the possibility of participants becoming stuck in a response set (e.g. only producing a limited number of responses as a result of priming). So the selection of a stimulus set has to be clearly motivated. And, of course, the results will prompt you to pursue further hypotheses and avenues.