# Article information:

The Link Between Form and Meaning in American Sign Language: Lexical Processing Effects  
<https://oce-ovid-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/article/00004786-200903000-00018/HTML>

# Article summary:

1. American Sign Language (ASL) makes use of iconicity to a greater extent than spoken languages, allowing for a closer mapping between meaning and form.

2. Native ASL signers are faster at recognizing signs for objects when iconic properties are made salient in corresponding pictures, providing evidence that a closer mapping between meaning and form aids in lexical retrieval.

3. Late second-language learners of ASL use iconicity as an aid to learning sign, but do not show the same facilitation effect as native ASL signers, suggesting that the task tapped into more automatic language processes.

# Article rating:

May be slightly imbalanced: The article presents the information in a generally reliable way, but there are minor points of consideration that could be explored further or claims that are not fully backed by appropriate evidence. Some perspectives may also be omitted, and you are encouraged to use the research topics section to explore the topic further.

# Article analysis:

The article "The Link Between Form and Meaning in American Sign Language: Lexical Processing Effects" explores the potential advantage of iconicity in sign language for both first- and second-language learners. The authors argue that signed languages make use of iconicity to a greater extent than spoken languages, which may be due to the modality of language. They suggest that a closer mapping between meaning and form can aid in lexical retrieval and that completely arbitrary mappings between meaning and form may not be more advantageous in language.

The study involved a picture-sign matching experiment measuring reaction times, with native ASL signers, hearing proficient ASL signers, and hearing nonsigners participating. The results showed that native ASL signers were faster to respond when a specific property iconically represented in a sign was made salient in the corresponding picture, providing evidence that a closer mapping between meaning and form can aid in lexical retrieval. However, late 2nd-language learners did not show the same facilitation effect as native ASL signers.

While the article provides interesting insights into the role of iconicity in language processing, there are some potential biases and limitations to consider. Firstly, the study only focused on American Sign Language, so it is unclear whether these findings would generalize to other signed languages or even spoken languages. Additionally, while the authors suggest that arbitrariness may simply be an accident of modality, they do not provide sufficient evidence to support this claim.

Furthermore, while the study found evidence for the advantage of iconicity for native ASL signers, it is unclear why late 2nd-language learners did not show the same facilitation effect. The authors suggest that this may be because the task tapped into more automatic language processes but do not provide further explanation or evidence for this claim.

Overall, while the article provides interesting insights into the role of iconicity in language processing, there are some potential biases and limitations to consider. Further research is needed to explore the generalizability of these findings and to better understand the role of iconicity in language processing for both native and non-native signers.

# Topics for further research:

* Iconicity in signed languages other than American Sign Language
* Comparison of iconicity in signed and spoken languages
* Evidence for the claim that arbitrariness in language is a result of modality
* Factors that may affect lexical retrieval in late 2nd-language learners of ASL
* Automatic language processes involved in picture-sign matching tasks
* Further research on the role of iconicity in language processing for native and non-native signers

# Report location:

<https://www.fullpicture.app/item/25733be9e74766bc34f0738d65d389c6>