# Article information:

“Tip of the Fingers” Experiences by Deaf Signers: Insights Into the Organization of a Sign-Based Lexicon - Robin Thompson, Karen Emmorey, Tamar H. Gollan, 2005
[https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01626.x?url\_ver=Z39.88-2003=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org=cr\_pub++0pubmed](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01626.x?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub++0pubmed)

# Article summary:

1. Deaf signers experience a tip of the fingers phenomenon (TOF) where they are sure they know a sign but cannot retrieve it, similar to the tip of the tongue phenomenon in spoken language.

2. TOFs often resolve spontaneously, involve proper names, and include partial access to phonology, with handshape being more likely to be retrieved than movement.

3. The existence of TOFs supports a division between semantics and phonology in American Sign Language and suggests that phonological features are accessed more simultaneously during lexical access for signed language than during lexical access for spoken language.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The article “Tip of the Fingers” Experiences by Deaf Signers: Insights Into the Organization of a Sign-Based Lexicon” by Robin Thompson, Karen Emmorey, and Tamar H. Gollan explores the phenomenon of retrieval failure in sign language, known as “tip of the fingers” (TOF), which is similar to the “tip of the tongue” (TOT) state in spoken language. The authors investigate whether TOFs occur in American Sign Language (ASL) and what dimensions of target signs or finger-spelled words are retrieved during TOFs.

The article provides a comprehensive overview of the study’s methodology and findings. The authors report that deaf signers do experience TOFs for both finger-spelled words and lexical signs, which supports models of the sign lexicon with a clear division between semantic and phonological representations. The study also found that handshape is more accessible than other parameters during TOFs, suggesting that it may be recalled more often than other parameters.

However, there are some potential biases and limitations in this study. Firstly, the sample size is relatively small, consisting of only 12 deaf ASL signers. This limits the generalizability of the findings to a larger population. Secondly, while the authors acknowledge that some theories collapse semantics and phonology in sign language and thus predict that TOFs should not occur, they do not provide a detailed discussion or analysis of these theories. This could be seen as one-sided reporting.

Additionally, while the study provides insights into how phonological forms are accessed during sign retrieval, it does not explore counterarguments or alternative explanations for why handshape may be more accessible than other parameters during TOFs. For example, it could be argued that handshape is simply more salient or memorable due to its visual distinctiveness.

Overall, while this study offers valuable insights into retrieval failure in sign language and how phonological forms are accessed during sign retrieval, it is important to consider its potential biases and limitations. Further research with larger sample sizes and more detailed analyses of alternative theories would be beneficial in advancing our understanding of the organization of a sign-based lexicon.

# Topics for further research:

* Alternative theories of sign language organization
* Semantic and phonological representations in sign language
* Salience and memorability of sign parameters
* Retrieval failure in spoken language
* Comparison of TOT and TOF states
* Sign language lexicon and its organization

# Report location:

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