# Article information:

Frontiers | Iconicity in Signed and Spoken Vocabulary: A Comparison Between American Sign Language, British Sign Language, English, and Spanish  
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01433/full>

# Article summary:

1. Iconicity is a fundamental feature of human languages, and recent studies show that it plays a role in language production, processing, acquisition, and evolution.

2. Signed languages are often assumed to be categorically more iconic than spoken languages due to their visual-gestural modality, but comparative studies have shown that patterns of iconicity can vary systematically between signed languages and even within the lexicon of a single signed language.

3. The predominant linguistic theories over history have widely assumed that the vocabularies of spoken languages are essentially arbitrary, but recent research challenges this assumption and suggests that onomatopoeia is not the only exception to arbitrariness in 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 "Iconicity in Signed and Spoken Vocabulary: A Comparison Between American Sign Language, British Sign Language, English, and Spanish" provides an overview of the role of iconicity in language, with a focus on signed and spoken languages. The authors argue that while signed languages are often assumed to be more iconic than spoken languages due to their visual-gestural modality, there may be more nuanced differences between the two modalities.

Overall, the article provides a thorough review of the literature on iconicity in signed and spoken languages. However, there are some potential biases and limitations to consider. For example, the authors rely heavily on previous studies that have found high levels of iconicity in signed languages. While this is certainly a valid point, it would be useful to also consider studies that have found lower levels of iconicity or even arbitrariness in signed languages.

Additionally, the article does not fully explore counterarguments or alternative perspectives on the role of iconicity in language. For example, some linguists may argue that even seemingly arbitrary words in spoken languages can have underlying motivations or associations with their referents.

Another limitation is that the study only focuses on four specific languages (ASL, BSL, English, and Spanish), which may not be representative of all signed and spoken languages. It would be interesting to see how other sign languages or lesser-studied spoken languages compare in terms of their use of iconicity.

Finally, while the article does touch on some potential risks associated with assuming that signed languages are inherently more iconic than spoken languages (such as overlooking potential sources of arbitrariness), it could benefit from further discussion on how these assumptions may impact language policy or education for deaf individuals.

Overall, while the article provides valuable insights into the role of iconicity in language and its manifestation across different modalities and lexicons, it could benefit from a more balanced consideration of alternative perspectives and limitations.

# Topics for further research:

* Studies on lower levels of iconicity in signed languages
* Alternative perspectives on the role of iconicity in language
* Linguistic motivations for seemingly arbitrary words in spoken languages
* Iconicity in lesser-studied sign and spoken languages
* Impact of assumptions about iconicity on language policy and education for deaf individuals
* Critiques of the assumption that signed languages are inherently more iconic than spoken languages

# Report location:

<https://www.fullpicture.app/item/f5c40f4c2e2d199892ab58bccba69a75>