
Description and Status of Initialized

Signs in Quebec Sign Language

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The first idea for this work was triggered by the observation that there exists a relationship between the handshake of some signs in Quebec Sign Language (henceforth LSQ) and the first letter of the equivalent written French word. This phenomenon, also observable in other sign languages, is called initialization. It quickly became evident that little has been published on this subject. It is also clear that initialization is given a particular status (oralization and fingerspelling are commonly discussed outcomes of language contact, whereas initialization is generally neglected). The main goal of this work is to describe these signs and verify the extent to which initialized signs are used by Deaf people. Another issue to be addressed has to do with the notion of borrowing and can be summarized by the following questions: can initialization represent a form of lexical borrowing from French, and can the existent definitions used when talking of borrowing between oral languages apply to this particular contact phenomenon? Finally, I will propose an explanation for the status of initialized signs.

A brief survey of different notions of borrowing will be followed by a review of the literature on fingerspelling and initialization. Then, data from LSQ will be analysed from two points of view: one related to form, the other to meaning. The question of integration of initialized signs in LSQ will be then addressed. Finally, two proposals on the status of initialized signs will be proposed.

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The term Deaf with a capital *D* will be used in this chapter to indicate those who consider themselves culturally Deaf and members of the Deaf community.

The Status of the Term "Borrowing"

Since we know that Deaf communities are usually considered to be bilingual (Davis 1989, Hansen 1990, Lacerte 1991, and Lucas and Valli 1989), we can expect to find lexical borrowing from the majority oral language in the signed language. In this work, I will attempt to clarify the status of initialized signs. First of all, it is important to note from the start that this work does not presume to take part in theoretical debates on the different manifestations of language contact; it will limit itself to a distinction between two notions, namely code-switching and borrowing. Because the object of study is limited to single lexical items, I will thus speak of one-item code-switching or borrowing. The main distinctions between these notions are of frequency and linguistic integration. This work will present two different analyses of the possible status of initialized signs, each treating initialized signs differently. One analysis is based on the theoretical position that code-switching and borrowing are two distinct phenomena (Sankoff, Poplack, and Vanniarajan, 1990), whereas the other supposes that code-switching and borrowing are on a continuum (Myers-Scotton 1992).

A distinction between different types of borrowing will be useful. According to Haugen (1950), lexical borrowing, which is the imitation of a model from a donor language (L2) by a borrowing language (L1), can take the form of loanwords, loanblends, and loanshifts. Loanwords present morphemic importation from L2 without replacement of L2 morphemes by L1 morphemes. Haugen presents several examples. First is the American English *shivaree*, from the French word *châriuari*. Here, the morphemes are imported from L2, French, and there was phonemic substitution but no morphemic substitution. Loanblends present both morphemic substitution and importation, as illustrated by the Pennsylvania German word [blaUməpa], from the English *plum pie*, where the morpheme [pa] is imported, but the native morpheme [blaUmə] has been substituted for *plum*. Finally, loanshifts present only morphemic substitution, represented by such words as *gratte-ciel* (French) and *rascacielos* (Spanish), from the English *skyscraper*, in which there is no importation of morphemes, only substitution.

The possibility of adopting the notion of nonce borrowing, proposed by Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller (1988), will also be taken into consid-

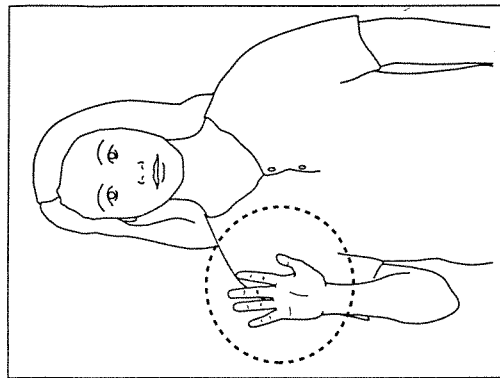


FIGURE 1. *Fingerspelling space*

eration. This category explains the presence of linguistically integrated items that do not respond to the criterion of frequency for loans.

Fingerspelling

This section will briefly review the literature on fingerspelling since this phenomenon appears to be closely related to initialization. However, the fingerspelling system of LSQ will first be introduced.

The manual alphabet of LSQ is identical to that of ASL. It is one-handed and is composed of the same handshapes (see appendix A); the fingerspelling space is the same (see figure 1).¹

Fingerspelling was extensively studied by Battison (1978). He suggested that it is a result of the influence of English on ASL. It can be used to mark meaning distinctions that do not exist in ASL and that are not conveyed by the context. According to Battison, fingerspelled words can become loan signs when they are restructured. In LSQ, Desouvey et al. (1992) show that fingerspelled words can be lexicalized (mainly by representing the first letter and a medial letter). It seems, however, that this phenomenon is much less frequent in LSQ than it is in ASL.

Battison (1978) believes restructured fingerspellings are borrowings from English. Davis (1989) takes the position that fingerspelling is not

1. Drawings found in this work are from Carole Pilon.

lexical borrowing in the strictest sense since a lexical item is not borrowed into another language as in a relationship between two phonological systems. Rather, the relationship takes place between the orthography of English and ASL phonology. Davis qualifies fingerspelling as an ASL phonological event. For the same reason, Lucas and Valli (1992, 43) do not consider fingerspelling to be borrowing. According to these authors, fingerspelling is a unique outcome of language contact. They consider it not to be an outcome of contact between a sign language and a spoken language "but rather between a sign language and the orthographic system used to represent that spoken language."

Initialized Signs in the Literature

Many authors mention the existence of these signs in different sign languages (ASL, British Sign Language (henceforth, BSL), French Sign Language (henceforth, LSF), and others), but few of them elaborate. First, an overview of the different definitions of initialized signs will follow. It will be shown that those could point out only two different possibilities: namely, initialization can be the result either of a fingerspelling reduction or of differentiation of an existing sign.

Battison (1978, 58) defines initialized signs as follows: "Initialized signs (or initial dez signs, or initial handshake signs) are those whose handshapes correspond (via fingerspelling) to the first letter of the English word which commonly translates the sign." For Battison, initialization ("incorporating a handshape into the sign to stand for the (usually first) letter of the English word equivalent") is clearly an artificial influence of English on ASL, whereas fingerspelling is a natural influence. Woodward (1979) also considers initialized signs to be like authentic ASL signs, which are modified in order to have their handshape represent the first letter of the corresponding English word. Supalla (1990), in a paper on name signs, also gives a definition of initialized signs. Citing the signs DRINK and WATER, he says the second one is an initialized sign if the handshape of DRINK has been replaced by /W/. He doesn't consider his name sign (made with an /S/ handshape contacting both sides of the chin) to be an initialized sign because it is not based on an ASL sign. These conceptions of initialized signs are somewhat restrictive because, to be considered initialized, a sign must be derived from an existing sign.

Stokoe et al. (1976, xxv) define initialized signs (or loansigns) as "coinages to translate a particular English word and have as dez the

manual alphabet configuration for the first letter of that word. Although this is an open class and still used in coinage of new signs, it is by no means an innovation." In fact, it is well known now that some ASL initialized signs can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Elsewhere, Stokoe et al. (p. iv₆) write that "these signs [initial-dez signs] are virtually abbreviations of a finger-spelled word. The dez forming the first letter of the word makes a slight movement unlike a genuine sign, in neutral space or perhaps in a more marked tab region." This definition of initialized signs is different from those given by Battison (1978), Woodward (1979), and Supalla (1990), for whom these signs are a modification of an existing sign.

Bellugi and Newkirk (1981), working on ASL, clearly distinguish between two different origins of initialized signs. Some originate from a handshape, to which a movement and place of articulation are added (for example, signs representing colours). Others are made by differentiation of an existing sign. They cite as an example the initialized sign MODULATION, which was created in their laboratory by modifying the handshape of the sign CHANGE.

For Swisher and McKee (1989), the ease of initialization is affected by the nature of the manual alphabet in use. For example, in BSL, which has a two-handed alphabet, initialization, even if present, is less frequent. There is, in this case, less overlapping between the alphabet and the natural handshapes. Kyle and Woll (1985), while working on BSL, mention common initialized signs from ASL in which the handshape of an existing sign is changed to correspond to the first letter of its English counterpart. According to them, in BSL, some signs develop differently: "signs like GOLD in BSL have developed from the opposite direction. The older form of GOLD, for example, is a simple *g*. The movement found in the modern sign GOLD (which is the same as in signs such as BRIGHT and SUN² is a later addition and serves to distinguish GOLD from signs such as GOVERNMENT (*g**g**) or AUGUST (*g**g**)".³ According to Kyle and Woll, these

2. According to Kyle and Woll, the older form of the sign GOLD was made using the handshape *g* in neutral space (note that this alphabet is two-handed, and that *g* is made with two closed fists, one resting on the other). The modern sign starts the same way but is completed by a separation of the hands while the fists open.

3. In Kyle and Woll's notation system, *g**g** means that the initial handshape is repeated, that is, the contact between the two hands forming the letter *g* is repeated.

signs seem to be a result of a fingerspelling reduction to which a movement is added.

These different definitions can be summarized in the following way: initialized signs are the result of either a fingerspelling reduction or a change of handshape in an existing noninitialized sign. Furthermore, Kyle and Woll propose that in BSL some signs might result from an addition of movement to a sign that was simply a fingerspelling reduction. In the following sections, the data found in LSQ will be described. It will be demonstrated that these three definitions are applicable to LSQ initialized signs. However, some LSQ signs do not fit any of these definitions.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Data Base

Data were extracted from three different sources described in the following sections.

VIDEOTAPED CONVERSATIONS

The source of data most important is a thirty-hour corpus of videotaped conversations recorded in 1988, in which participants expressed themselves on a variety of topics of their choice. This recording was made in four sessions and involved ten participants. Participants were selected on the basis of their knowledge of LSQ by a Deaf person who later monitored free group interactions. Groups were later formed, taking into consideration their acquaintance with one another. Each participant knew the monitor; we expected this to reduce the degree of discomfort this kind of session might generate. Three sessions lasted about two hours, and one lasted three hours. Each participant was filmed by an individual camera while another camera filmed overall views.

Participants

The video corpus is composed of ten participants. The monitor took part in all sessions. The participants ranged in age from 22 to 31, and the average age was 26.2 years old. Half the participants have a high school education (or almost), three of them have a college diploma, and two are at university level. None of the signers has Deaf parents, but

two of them have Deaf brothers or sisters.⁴ Eight of them were born in the Montreal region, and all have a certain knowledge of French as a second language.

OTHER SOURCES

Signs were also found in a dictionary of LSQ (Bourcier and Roy, 1985) and in day-to-day exchanges with Deaf informants. For all signs taken from the dictionary, I consulted the Deaf informants in order to ensure that these signs were quite familiar to them and could theoretically be used by other Deaf people.

Informants

The work was undertaken with five different informants, four of whom have Deaf parents. All of them considered LSQ as their first language. Three were consulted only during a preliminary stage of the research, whereas two were active throughout our work. These latter informants, a thirty-one-year-old woman and a twenty-two-year-old man, grew up in Montreal and have Deaf parents.

Historical Considerations

Very little information is available on LSQ. Certain information in Abbé Lambert's (1865) dictionary of LSF proved useful in identifying a number of initialized signs. For example, the sign *NOM⁵ (*name*) was considered to be initialized on the grounds of historical information. In LSF, this sign is described by Abbé Lambert: "Frapper de l'index de la m. d. sur celui de la m. g., avec l'expression de chercher ou demander le nom."⁶

4. The fact that none of the signers was born of Deaf parents is not surprising due to the fact that about ninety percent of Deaf children are born of hearing parents.

5. Initialized signs are noted using dots to identify the hand configuration that links it to the letter of the equivalent word in French. Here, the glosses are not translated in English in order to preserve the link between the handshape of the sign and the French word. When necessary, the English translation is parenthesized.

6. "With the index finger of the right hand, contact the index finger of the left hand, with the expression of searching for or asking for a name."

Sternberg (1981) writes that the organization of the hands represents "the x used by illiterates in writing their names." It appeared to us, on the basis of this information, that the only possible explanation of the change is initialization. I therefore treated the sign $\bullet\text{NOM}$ as an initialized sign.

Data Collection

From our various sources, we first collected all the signs that could possibly be of initialized origin, that is, all the signs for which the handshape corresponds to the first letter of an equivalent written French word. In the case of videorecordings, an informant with a good knowledge of French examined the whole corpus and noted these signs. We obtained 398 possible initialized signs in this way.

All these potentially initialized signs were presented to Deaf informants, who were asked to give their native intuitions on the possibility of an initialized origin. The answers were often unanimous, allowing us to have a good idea of the signs that were commonly felt to be initialized or noninitialized. The intuition of the informants demonstrated, for example, that most of the signs with an /R/ handshape were considered to be initialized, whereas the signs with an /A/ handshape were rarely felt to be initialized. On the basis of the informants' intuition, I developed different criteria in order to differentiate between signs related to initialization and those in which the handshape/letter equivalence could be due only to chance.

Signs articulated in the fingerspelling area were clearly initialized (110 different signs). Criteria were necessary to determine the status of the other signs (288 different signs). The following letters (or handshapes) were represented: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U, V, and W. I proceeded in a different manner depending on the letter. The signs with an /A/, /B/, /C/ (or /I/), or /S/ handshape, which are common in LSQ, frequently correspond to the first letter of a French word only by chance. All the signs having one of these handshapes were eliminated unless they corresponded to one of the following criteria:

1. The sign is part of a group of initialized signs. For example, the sign $\bullet\text{SOCIÉTÉ}$ (*society*) was considered initialized because of the other initialized signs formatonally identical except for their handshape.
2. The sign is based on another sign that is not initialized. For

example, the sign $\bullet\text{SOUTIEN}$ ⁷ (*support*) is based on the sign AIDE (*help*).

3. We have historical information on the origin of the sign. For example, the sign $\bullet\text{MILLE}$ (*thousand*), in LSF (Lambert 1865), was identical to the modern LSQ sign, except for the handshape, which was /M/.

Signs with /D/ and /M/ handshapes were also treated the same way. These handshapes are more easily associated with the handshapes of the manual alphabet, but they can frequently be transformed by a variable rule into /G/ (or /I/) and /B[^] /⁸. Knowing this, signs with a /G/ or /B[^] / handshape that corresponded to French words starting with the letters D or M were retained as possibly initialized.

For the signs with one of the other handshapes (/C/, /E/, /F/, /H/, /I/, /J/, /L/, /N/, /O/, /P/, /R/, /T/, /U/, /V/, or /W/), I adopted different criteria. These handshapes are, to a different degree, less common in LSQ. The chances of having a correspondence between handshape and first letter only by chance are smaller. I therefore retained these signs for analysis unless one of the following criteria indicated that they were not initialized:

1. The sign is in fact an extension of another sign, whether initialized or not. For example, the sign $\bullet\text{PERSONNE}$ (*person*), to which a movement is added, gives LE MONDE (*people*), POPULATION, or PUBLIC (*public*). They are distinguished by oralization. I did not include POPULATION and PUBLIC in my list since they are derived from $\bullet\text{PERSONNE}$ and have no direct link with initialization. Another example is the sign INGÉNIEUR (*engineer*), which is made with two /I/ handshapes; it is not an initialized sign since it is derived from the sign MESURER (*to measure*), from which it is distinguished only by movement.
2. If an iconic explanation was available, I rejected the sign even if it could also be explained by initialization. For example, the /F/ handshape in the sign $\bullet\text{FRÈRE}$ (*monk*) can be analysed as a classifier representing the buttons on a monk's robe (figure 2).
3. If we had no indication of initialization for a sign and if the in-
7. See the transcription symbols section for the significance of the boldface type.
8. The latter handshape is a /B/ handshape that is bent.

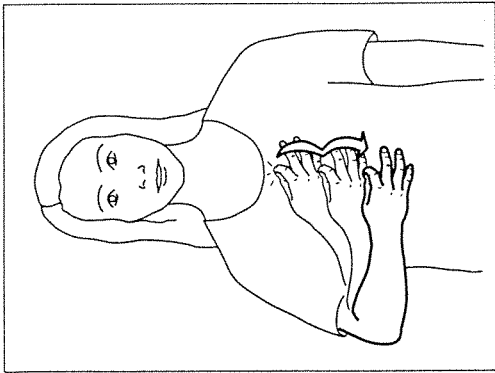


FIGURE 2. •F•RENE

formants did not feel that the sign was of initialized origin, I rejected the sign.

This first stage of classification by handshape was made on a generally intuitive basis, relying to a large extent on the informants' responses. The first group of handshapes I identified (/A/, /B/, /D/, /G/, (or /I/), /M/, and /S/) corresponds quite well to the unmarked handshapes identified by Battison (1978) (/A/, /S/, /B/, /5/, /G/, /C/, and /O/). The handshape /5/ is obviously without interest for our purposes. I added /D/ and /M/ handshapes, which, in context, can frequently change to /G/ and /B^/ handshapes. Battison also considers /C/ and /O/ handshapes to be unmarked, whereas I analyzed them in the second list. In a conversation, Christopher Miller (1992) stated that these handshapes are different from the /A/, /B/, /S/, and /G/ handshapes in two ways. First, they are neither totally closed nor totally open. Second, in LSQ, these handshapes have a different behaviour with respect to the dominance condition which states that only the unmarked configurations can appear on the non-dominant hand if both hands within a sign do not have the same dominant hand. In LSQ, /C/ and /O/ can appear on the nondominant hand only if they have morphemic status (for example, when they are classifiers), whereas the other unmarked handshapes are less constrained.

To summarize, the signs with the handshapes /C/, /E/, /F/, /H/, /I/, /J/, /L/, /N/, /O/, /P/, /R/, /T/, /U/, and /V/ were all retained as initialized unless one of the preceding analytical criteria was applicable. The signs hav-

ing an /A/, /B/, /D/, /G/, /M/, or /S/ handshape were all rejected unless one of the selection criteria was applicable.

The criteria applied to our possible initialized signs probably eliminated some signs that are in fact initialized, but I felt these criteria were necessary to minimize the possibility of including noninitialized signs in our corpus. After the application of these criteria, 93 signs were rejected. The initial corpus of 288 signs (excluding the 110 that are signed in the fingerspelling space) is thus reduced to 195 initialized signs. The total corpus is composed of 305 different signs.

It is important to notice that not all the initialized signs retained here are widespread. Some clearly are, but others are not and can even be viewed as idiosyncratic. The type of work undertaken in this paper does not allow us to clearly distinguish initialized signs according to their frequency. Nevertheless, the informants' native intuition might enable us to partially understand this phenomenon. The important point in this work is to determine whether initialization is really used by Deaf people. The fact that some initialized signs appear to be idiosyncratic is also important.

Transcription Symbols Used in Glosses

In order to distinguish between the different signs or tokens of sign, I use numbers and letters in subscript. For example, if for a given concept there exist different signs, I attribute a distinct subscript number to each (SIGN₁, SIGN₂, etc.). If, for the same sign, we have tokens that are slightly different in their formation (for example, if the orientation is different), I distinguish between these tokens with a letter (SIGN_{1a}, SIGN_{1b}, etc.). If we have only one sign and one token (or many identical tokens) for a concept, the sign has no subscript. Most of the signs were observed on video. Signs observed in daily exchanges or found in the LSQ dictionary are always written in bold face characters.

DATA ANALYSIS

An Analysis Based on Form

If we consider structural factors such as place of articulation, orientation, and movement, we notice that initialized signs can be separated into three groups, the first two of which seem to have greater significance.

CLASS I SIGNS

Class I signs (ninety-one signs) share a characteristic restricted manner of formation since they seem to be related to fingerspelling. They are formed with a handshape representing the first letter of a French written word. To this handshape is added a restricted set of places of articulation and movements.

Place of Articulation

Signs of class I can be made in two places of articulation: fingerspelling space and neutral space. Fingerspelling space is characteristic of these signs, which are articulated in that space most of the time. A few signs are made in neutral space. For example, signs that can be made with one or two hands are always made in neutral space when made with two hands. Others, which would be made in fingerspelling space in a citation form, can be made in neutral space, depending on context. For example, in *•V•VENDREDI SOIR* (*Friday evening*) the signer did not articulate *•V•VENDREDI* in fingerspelling space and *SOIR* in neutral space. He preferred to articulate the first sign in neutral space, shifting his dominant hand to the same spatial position as the sign *SOIR*.

Two signs observed on the video were articulated outside their normal location. One is a token of the sign *•G•GRIS* (*gray*), which, in context, is two-handed and signed on both sides of the head. The context is the following: *BARBE •G•GRIS CHEVEUX* (*beard, gray, hair*). The former is two-handed and is made near the chin, whereas the latter is also two-handed but made near the hair. For reasons of efficiency or economy, the sign *•G•GRIS*, which was made in between, is made with two hands and in the same place of articulation as *CHEVEUX*. In the second example, instead of signing *RIDEAUX* (*curtains*, figure 3) and afterward the sign *•B•LEU* (which is usually made in fingerspelling space), the signer makes the sign *RIDEAUX* with /B/ handshapes and oralizes *bleu*. Moreover, the first part of the path movement is accompanied by the movement normally found in *•B•LEU* (a twisting movement of the forearm). However, let us remember that a large majority of class I signs are made either in fingerspelling or neutral space.

Movement

Signs of class I also have specific movements that generally have a common feature: the absence of path movement (here called internal movements). Most of the handshapes (whether articulated in fingerspelling or

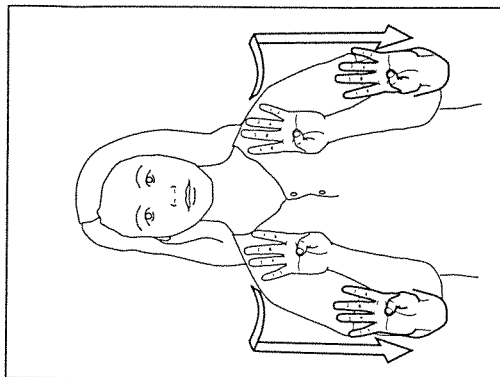


FIGURE 3. RIDEAUX

neutral space) are accompanied by a side-to-side movement ($\leftrightarrow$). The up-and-down movement ($\updownarrow$) is a variant of the first and is found with the horizontal handshapes /G/ and /H/. A circular movement is found in the signs *•B•EIGE* and *•R•OSE₂* (*pink*), which are commonly made with this movement (for the latter, see figure 4). Six other signs were made with a circular movement (*•É•DUCATEUR_{1,b}*, *•I•NFRAROUGE*, *•R•ÉFÉRENCE_{1,b}*, *•R•ÉPUTATION_{1a}*, *ULTRA-•V•IOLET*, AND *•V•ITAMINE_{1,c}*), but the movement can be of another type. Other tokens (*•É•DUCATEUR_{1a}*, *•R•ÉFÉRENCE_{1a}*, *•R•ÉPUTATION_{1b}*, and *•V•ITAMINE_{1b}*) had a side-to-side movement. The sign *•V•ITAMINE_{1a}* simply had no movement. A twisting movement of the forearm (ω) is commonly found in *•B•LEU*, *•B•LEUET*, (*blueberry*), *•J•AUNE* (*yellow*), *•J•EU/J•OUER* (*toy/to play*), and *•J•EUDI* (*Thursday*). Three other movements can be found, each in only one sign. The twisting movement away from the signer (α) is found in the sign *•R•OSE₁* (*pink*), and flexion of the finger's first interphalangeal joints (δ) accompanies the sign *•V•EUF* (*widower*). The last movement is found in the sign *•M•ERCREDI₂* (*Wednesday*); it is a swinging movement rather than a side-to-side movement. This movement distinguishes *•M•ERCREDI* from the sign *•M•ARDI₁* (*Tuesday*), which has a straight side-to-side movement.⁹ Movements other than side-

9. Synonyms of these two signs allow a distinction using the second letter as handshape: *M•A•RDI* et *M•E•RCREDI* (they then have a straight side-to-side movement).

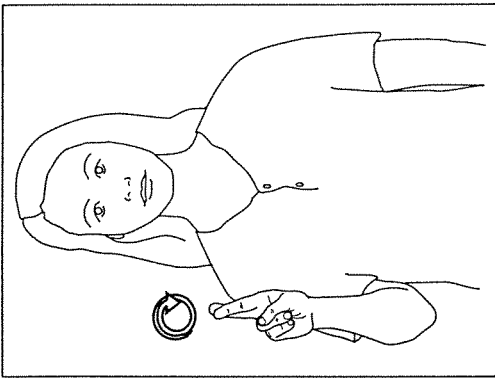


FIGURE 4. •R•OSE₂

to-side and up-and-down are usually found in widespread signs, such as colour signs and signs for days of the week. Path movements can occasionally be found but only when there is morphological modification (see p. 53 for further explanation).

A few class I signs that have two handshapes can bear a transition movement. In •S•ERVICE •S•OCIAL (*social service*), •S•OUS-•S•OL (*basement*), and •T•RONC •C•OMMUN (*core curriculum*), the second handshape is separated from the first by a small rightward movement. Frequently, movement was also absent from the signs of class I. Even though the citation form always has a movement, in context it was observed that twenty-nine percent of the class I signs had no movement at all.¹⁰

CLASS II SIGNS

Class II signs have the same characteristics as noninitialized LSQ signs. They can be executed in different places of articulation and have many different possible movement types. They may simply have an internal movement and can also be articulated in neutral space, but they never have both of these characteristics, which are exclusive to class I signs.

10. Of the 91 signs of class I, we observed a total of 160 tokens, 47 of them having no movement in context.

Place of Articulation

Class II signs have many possible places of articulation: neutral space, body (torso and chest), head (forehead, temple, cheek, chin, nose, and mouth), arm, and nondominant hand. These places of articulation can be combined with each other. For example, the sign •P•ARENTS¹¹ first contacts the right temple and, after a downward movement, there is another contact on the right side of the chin.

Movement

Some signs can have only a contacting movement, whether on the nondominant hand or on another place on the body. The movement can also be a path movement away from or toward the signer, upward or downward, to the left or right. When the sign is made with two hands, the movement can be alternating, either upward and downward or downward and upward, away from or towards the signer. Movement can also take the form of an arc movement away from or toward the signer or downward. I also found circular movements and twisting movements of the wrist.

These movements are combined with the different places of articulation. For example, the circular movement can be made away from the signer, in neutral space, near the temple, near the nondominant hand, near the cheek, or around the nondominant hand. The alternating movement of the hands can be made in neutral space, in contact with the chest or near the mouth. There are multiple combinations of places of articulation and movements in class II. This class thus cannot be defined by a closed set of possibilities as class I was.

CLASS III SIGNS

This class contains nineteen signs that are made with an initialized handshape in fingerspelling space (like class I signs) but are followed by a sign. This type of sign is probably uncommon but not totally unusual inasmuch as a few of these signs were observed in the LSQ dictionary (Bourcier and Roy 1985). Of the nineteen signs of this class, only one is composed of an initialization in fingerspelling space, followed by a sign that is also initialized (•P•INTERNATIONAL₂). The signer produces an //

11. This sign, even if known to most LSQ signers, does not appear to be widespread. Nevertheless, it was observed in our video data.

handshape in the fingerspelling space, which moves to produce the initialized sign of class II, **•I•INTERNATIONAL**. The first handshape, articulated in the fingerspelling space, therefore appears to be redundant.

The eighteen remaining signs all have a noninitialized sign as a second part, but redundancy is also present in these signs. For example, the sign **•I•NFORMATEUR (informant)** presents a handshape in fingerspelling space that does not add any information, since the signer articulates **/I/** in fingerspelling space and afterwards articulates the sign **INFORMATION**, followed by the person suffix. Other signs show interesting creations. For example, the sign **•E•XPLOITATION**, which seems clearly to have been created on the spur of the moment, is made with an **/E/** handshape in fingerspelling space, followed by the sign **PROFITER (to take advantage of)**. Furthermore, the sign **•P•OLLUTION₂** is made with a **/P/** handshape followed by the sign **SALE (dirty)**. Another sign, **•E•COLOGIE (ecology)**, also likely created on the spur of the moment, is first made with an **/E/** handshape in the fingerspelling space, followed by the sign **ÉCOLE (school)**. This sign is accompanied by the oralization of the French word, *écologie*. The signer then repeats the sign **ÉCOLE** and completes by fingerspelling **L-O-G-I-E**.

This class of signs, of little quantitative importance, will not be described in further detail.

An Analysis Based on Meaning

An analysis based on meaning shows that form is often related to meaning. In other cases the signs seems arbitrary. Whether or not we find a link between form and meaning, we will see that many signs can be grouped in families.

MOTIVATED SIGNS

I will call the signs showing a link between form and meaning *motivated signs*.¹³ Some are constructed with classifiers, such as **•L•OI (law)**, where the nondominant hand has a **/B/** handshape (classifier for a flat surface—in this case, representing paper), and the dominant hand has

12. The characters bearing an accent are always initialized as if there were no accent. There are no "manual codes" to represent the accents.

13. I prefer this term rather than *iconic signs* because it is more general; it clearly includes signs that have, for example, a metaphorical relation with the meaning.

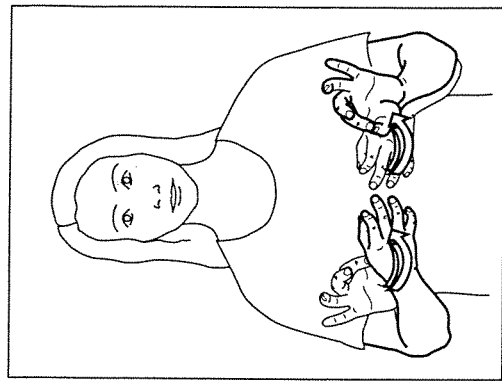


FIGURE 5. **•F•ESTIVAL**

an **/L/** handshape. Other signs have a symbolic place of articulation (the sign **•E•MOTION**, made on the chest; **•C•ONCEPT**, on the temple, and **•R•ESTAURANT**, near the mouth). Other signs refer to physical features of the referent, such as **•R•OMAIN (Roman)** where the handshape traces the form of a Roman military helmet above the head, and **•R•AT**, where the handshape, placed before the nose and accompanied by a bending movement of the fingers, represents the muzzle of a rat.

Other signs have a form/meaning link that is less evident. For example, the movement of the sign **•P•RE (worst)** seems to refer to the metaphor that places positive upward and negative downward. The rhythm of the signs **•F•ESTIVAL** and **•P•ARTY** suggests the idea of celebration (figure 5).

Signs from class I obviously never have a form/meaning link since they are formed only by a handshape made in the fingerspelling space, to which is added an internal movement. About one third of the signs of class II appear to be arbitrary synchronically, but this appearance of arbitrariness should not exclude the possibility of historical motivation.

SIGNS BASED ON AN EXISTING SIGN

Signs can also be created on the basis of a semantic link with an existing sign. When a sign is said to be based on an existing sign, it is identical to a noninitialized sign (except for the handshape) and is semantically related to this sign. Ten signs of class II are based on an existing sign

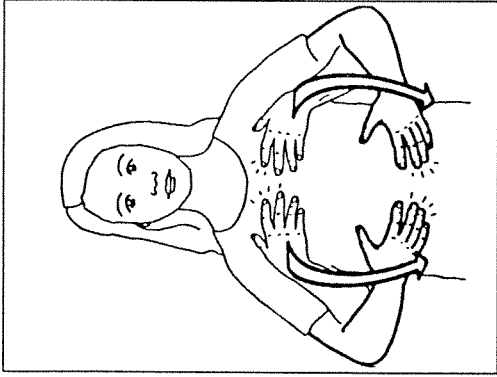


FIGURE 6. CORPS

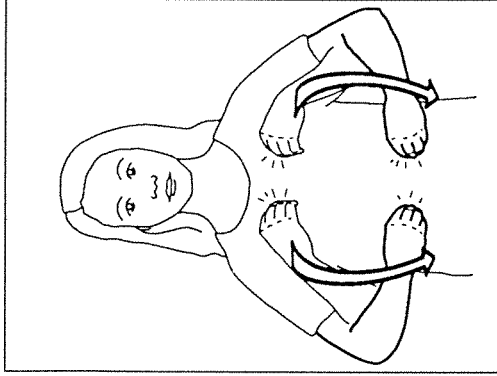


FIGURE 7. O*RGANISME

that have exactly the same meaning. In this case, there is no lexical creation but only a change of handshake. These signs represent only five percent of class II data. Most of the signs based on an existing sign show a distinctive meaning (fifty-seven signs were identified, twenty-nine percent of the class II data). For example, the sign CORPS (*body*) served as a base to create the initialized signs O*RGANISME (*organism*), H*UMAIN, (*human*), and P*HYSIQUE, (*physical*); see figures 6 and 7. The base sign CORPS is clearly motivated, but in other cases, the base sign appears arbitrary. These signs, created on the basis of an existing sign, form sign families, which are described below.

SIGN FAMILIES

Sign families consist of two or more signs.¹⁴ Some are formed on the basis of a noninitialized sign, but other families group only initialized signs. These signs can be either motivated or unmotivated. Signs from class I are evidently nonmotivated and, despite their limited structural possibilities, can be grouped in families. Signs from class II have many structural possibilities and can be based on an existing sign or not and can also be motivated or not.

14. Initialized signs based on an existing sign with an identical meaning were not counted as members of a family. These are more likely variants of the same sign.

Class I Sign Families

All class I signs are formed in an identical way: they present a handshake generally oriented as in fingerspelling, an internal movement (usually a side-to-side movement), and are made in fingerspelling or neutral space.¹⁵ Nevertheless, some of them can be grouped into families classified according to meaning: kinship signs (C*OUSIN, N*EVEU [*nephew*]/N*ÈCE, O*NCLE [*uncle*], P*ARENTÉ [*relatives*], and T*ANTE [*aunt*]), color signs (B*LEU [*blue*], G*RIS [*grey*], J*AUNE [*yellow*], R*OSE, R*OSE, V*ERT [*green*], and V*OLET, [*purple*]), and signs indicating days of the week. Apart from meaning, these signs can be grouped into families on the basis of a consistent type of behaviour. Signs denoting kinship terms can be made with one or two hands; color signs have structural characteristics (particular movements) that distinguish them from other signs of class I; and signs indicating days of the week can be morphologically modified (see p. 53).

Class II Sign Families

Many sign families are observed in class II. Signs from each family are made in an identical way except for the handshake. A family can include as many as twelve signs, but most of them contain only two or three signs. However, all these families are capable of expansion.

A large family, also found in both ASL and Australian Sign Language, is based on the sign GROUP (this base sign is nonexistent in LSQ). The signs extracted from our data are: A*SSOCIATION, A*TELIER (*workshop*) C*OMMUNAUTÉ (*community*), C*OMITÉ (*committee*), D*ÉPARTEMENT (*department*), É*QUIPE (*team*), É*TAT (*state*), F*AMILLE (*family*), G*ROUPE (*group*), O*R*GANISATION (*organization*), R*ÉUNION (*meeting*), S*OCIÉTÉ (*society*).¹⁶ Another sign family consists of the following signs: PHRASE (*sentence*), D*ÉCODEUR (*decoder*), G*RAMMAIRE (*grammar*), L*ANGAGE (*language*), L*ANGUE (*language*), L*INGUISTIQUE (*linguistics*). The sign PHRASE is not initialized but is probably the sign on which the initialized signs are based. The signs CORPS, P*HYSIQUE, and O*RGANISME, already mentioned, are other examples.

15. More than 94 percent of the class I tokens are accompanied by oralization, which distinguishes them from each other.

16. Not all these signs are equally well established. That is, the signs A*TELIER, C*OMITÉ, and É*TAT are not frequently used. They were observed either in video or the LSQ dictionary.

Forty-four families containing 110 of the 195 total signs were identified in class II. These families represent a productive means of lexical creation in LSQ. In effect, although most of the families consist of only a few signs, none is a closed class.

LINKS BETWEEN LSQ AND ASL

The initialized signs identified in our data are always related to French, but they may also have a link with some ASL signs. In effect, many LSQ initialized signs are also found in ASL (whether in an identical or similar form). Some of them may have had a common origin, such as color signs. For others, we can assume that a model may have been borrowed from ASL, the handshake later being adapted to the equivalent written French word.

More than 60 percent of class II signs appear to be based on existing signs. I therefore verified that these initialized signs that lacked a noninitialized base sign were not simply borrowed from ASL initialized signs (which could be based on ASL noninitialized signs). It was observed that many signs appear to be native to LSQ to the extent that some of them are not based on a noninitialized sign. I maintain that not all class II signs are based on an existing noninitialized sign. Moreover, if initialized signs often present a feature common in ASL signs, initialization is without doubt a means of lexical creation that is productive in LSQ.

Conclusion

Initialization appears to be a phenomenon that is noteworthy in LSQ. Many different signs were observed, repeatedly in some cases. Signs are realized either in fingerspelling or neutral space, accompanied by an internal movement or no movement at all (class I signs), or the same way as natural LSQ signs (class II signs). In this latter case, signs are often created on the basis of an already existing noninitialized sign, but they sometimes appear to be constructed simply using the lexical creation means of LSQ. Many of these might be inspired by ASL's initialized signs, but this explanation applies to only some of them. Therefore, we can conclude that initialized signs in LSQ appear to be made using the lexical creation means of LSQ, not just as an imitation of an existing sign.

STATUS OF INITIALIZED SIGNS

At the beginning of this paper, we considered whether initialization is a result of contact with the oral language and whether it is really used by Deaf people in practice, and if such was the case, whether it could be construed as borrowing. Borrowing is commonly defined as a copy by L1 of a model from L2. It is usually distinguished from code-switching by different factors, both linguistic and sociolinguistic. At a linguistic level, a borrowed element is usually integrated into L1 phonologically, morphologically, or syntactically. Borrowing is also expected to be widespread, unlike code-switching. The following sections will briefly examine the integration of initialized signs in LSQ, from both a sociolinguistic and a linguistic viewpoint.

Sociolinguistic Integration of Initialized Signs

The total number of initialized signs in our data was 305 (91 class I signs, 195 class II signs, and 19 class III signs). However, the total number of tokens observed was 733 (160 class I signs, 551 class II signs, and 22 class III signs). This means that some signs are used more than once. It was hypothesized that looking at these repetitions, using our informants' intuition, could help identify some widespread initialized signs that will be later examined on the basis of their linguistic integration.

WIDESPREAD USE OF INITIALIZED SIGNS

It is certainly imprudent, in a work using limited data, to talk of the frequency of initialized signs. Nevertheless, our data can probably give us an indication of the frequency of a few signs. In other words, if a sign is observed to occur again and again in different conversations and is used by different signers, then it may be an established sign. The opposite is not necessarily true: a sign that is not recurrent in our corpus might nevertheless be very common in LSQ. In order to obtain some idea of the number of signs in our corpus that are recurrent in LSQ, I decided on an arbitrary and conservative criterion. This criterion states that if a sign in our data is used by three or more different signers in different conversations, then it can be considered widespread.

Not all class I signs were observed in the LSQ88 corpus. Eighty were observed, while eleven were extracted from the dictionary or observed in day-to-day exchanges. Table 1 shows the frequency of these eighty

TABLE 1. *Number of Tokens of Class I*

Number of Signs	Number of Tokens
50	1
13	2
6	3
3	4
2	5
1	6
3	7
1	9
1	10

signs. Once the criterion was applied, only ten signs could be considered widespread. These signs are •G•RIS (*grey*), •O•NCLE (*uncle*), •C•OUSIN, •D•IMANCHE (*Sunday*), •V•ERT (*green*), •S•ERVICE •S•OCIAL (*social services*), •B•LEU (*blue*), •V•ENDREDI (*Friday*), •J•EU/•J•OUER (*toy/to play*), and •S•ECONDAIRE (*secondary education*). These signs were all identified by our informants as widespread signs.

Out of the 195 signs of class II, 152 were observed on videotapes, and 43 were observed in daily exchanges or in the dictionary. The number of tokens observed for the 152 signs ranges from one to twenty-three. Table 2 gives the details.

After the application of our criterion, thirty-four signs of class II could be said to be widespread. These signs¹⁷ are: •P•ROFESSIONNEL, •R•ÉFÉCHIR, •A•SSOCIATION, •M•ILLE, •P•AYS, •R•ELIGION, •U•NIVERSITÉ, •I•TALIEN, •C•ROUPE, •N•ORD, •N•ORMAL, •P•ERMETTRE, •R•ESPECT, •S•UD, •O•PINION, •I•MPOSSIBLE, •L•OI, •N•ATUREL, •R•AISON, •C•LUB DE NUIT, •J•AMAIS, •R•ÉPONDRE, •P•OLITIQUE, •L•ANGUE, •P•ERSONNE, •C•ARACTÈRE, •F•AMILLE, •V•IN, •C•OMMUNIQUER, •V•RAI, •C•ULTURE, •DÉE, •F•RANÇAIS, and •N•OM. Many signs identified as widespread by our informants do not appear in the preceding lists. For example, among class I signs, signs for days of the week are clearly wide-

17. Respectively, *professional, reflect upon, association, thousand, country, religion, university, Italian, group, north, normal, to allow, respect, south, opinion, impossible, law, natural, reason, nightclub, never, to answer, politics, language, person, temperament, family, wine, to communicate, true, culture, idea, French, and name*.

TABLE 2. *Number of Tokens of Class II Signs*

Number of Signs	Number of Tokens
68	1
25	2
13	3
12	4
2	5
8	6
4	7
4	8
3	9
1	10
2	11
1	12
2	13
1	14
2	15
2	17
1	18
1	23

spread. Only chance can explain the fact that we find •P•IMANCHE (*Sunday*) but not •S•AMEDI (*Saturday*). In fact, although this kind of procedure can help us identify some widespread signs, our informants' intuition was necessary to formulate a more precise idea of which signs are clearly widespread and which are clearly idiosyncratic. A large gray area still remains, but it is beyond the scope of this work.

NONESTABLISHED INITIALIZED SIGNS

This aspect of initialized signs is not clarified by our data. Nevertheless, consulting our informants on this question gives us an idea of the number of signs that are nonestablished or at least idiosyncratic. Approximately 25 percent of class I signs and 10 percent of class II signs appear to be nonestablished initialized signs.

DEGREES OF INTEGRATION

It appears that initialized signs exhibit different degrees of integration into LSQ. Some are well integrated, are no doubt part of the lexicon,

and have no noninitialized synonyms (at least, none that are widespread). These include signs such as •L•UNDI (*Monday*), •C•ULTURE, •R•ÉPONDRE (*to answer*). On another level we find signs that are common but have a noninitialized synonym (the latter possibly more commonly used), such as •D•ICTIONNAIRE / DICTIONNAIRE (*dictionary*). On a third level, we find a gray area: signs are usually known by signers but are generally not accepted as "true LSQ," such as the sign •P•ARENTS.¹⁸ On a fourth level, we find initialized signs that are idiosyncratic, such as •É•LECTRON, •Î•LE (*island*), •M•ONDIAL (*worldwide*) from class II; and •C•HÂTEAU (*castle*) and •F•ARINE (*flour*) from class I. These signs, when from class II, are generally created by modifying a base sign that has the same or related meaning. For example, •É•VOLUTION is signed the same way as its noninitialized synonym except for the handshapes, which are changed to /E/. Also, •M•ONDIAL is made just as the other signs related in meaning (MONDE, (*world*), GÉOGRAPHIE (*geography*), and •I•NTERNATIONAL₁), but with an /M/ handshape.

What clearly emerges from this is that initialization is one of a number of lexical resources available to signers. In many cases, the concept can also be rendered by another noninitialized sign. Some initialized signs are widespread and sometimes have no synonym (at least none that is widespread). Others are clearly idiosyncratic and generally have a widespread noninitialized synonym. Between these two extremes, some signs are known to our consultants but are not widely used by signers. In such cases, we usually note the existence of another sign or another way to express the concept. For example, the signs •F•RAISE (*strawberry*) and •F•RAMBOISE (*raspberry*) from class I, are less frequently used than another sign that can be glossed SMALL OBJECT. This sign is used to refer to many different concepts, such as *wheat, blueberry, beans, strawberry, raspberry, seed, and pill*, and is accompanied by oralization that serves to specify the meaning.

Linguistic Integration of Initialized Signs

For established initialized signs, a certain degree of linguistic integration

18. Here, in accordance with Battison (1978), we would talk about "artificial signs." In effect, signers seem to consider these signs as part of Signed French. They are usually rejected by Deaf people; nevertheless, these signs were observed in discourse, a fundamental criterion for them to be included in our corpus.

tion is observed. This section will be restricted to morphological and syntactic integration: phonological integration will be discussed later in the chapter (see p. 56–57).

Established initialized signs were looked at with an informant in order to determine if they could be integrated into LSQ morphological structure.¹⁹

NOUNS

Most of the initialized signs are nouns. It appears that they can frequently be modified for plurality in a number of ways: repetition of the sign, repetition superimposed on an arc movement, two-handed signing for a usually one-handed sign, etc.²⁰ Many signs can also have qualitative modifications to express qualities such as *big, small, tall, short, nice, ugly, good, and no good*. These changes can be obtained by movement modifications and facial expression: shorter movement to express *small*, and larger movement to express *big*, etc.

Signs for days of the week (class I) can undergo well-known modifications based on time lines to express different meanings such as *last Monday, Monday two weeks ago, next Monday, Monday in two weeks, every Monday, each Monday* (see figures 8 and 9).

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives can be modified to mark degree. For example, modifying the movement of the sign •I•MPOSSIBLE (larger, more tense, and faster) and the facial expression will amplify the degree of impossibility. Color signs can be modified to mark the intensity of the color. For example, modifying the movement, rhythm, and facial expression of •J•AUNE (*yellow*) derives meanings such as *dark yellow* or *acid yellow*. Adjectives often have a predicative role; for example, •V•ERT (*green*) can be signed with a large side-to-side movement, meaning *it's green all over*. Adjectives can also be repeated on an arc to qualify referents. Finally, some adjectives seem to allow a change to mark temporal aspect. For example, •J•ALOUX (*jealous*) can be repeated and the rhythm of movement can be broken to signify *again and again*.

19. Because this work was done with one informant only, it does not claim to be comprehensive. Nevertheless, it will give an idea of the possibilities of morphological integration.

20. Facial expression plays a very important role in all modifications.

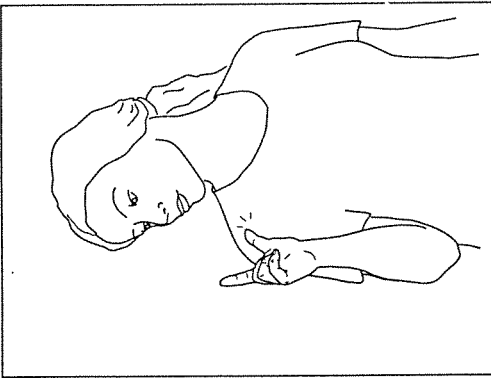


FIGURE 8. "last Monday"

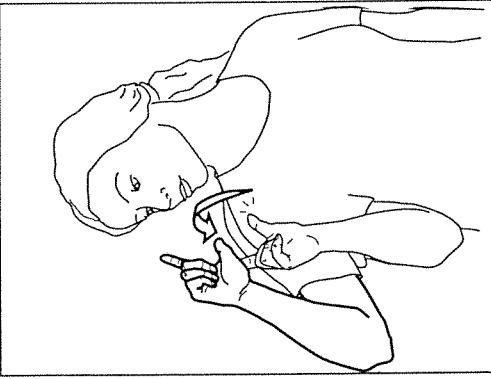


FIGURE 9. "Monday two weeks ago"

VERBS

Like many verbs of LSQ, initialized verbs can be modified to mark their arguments, number, and aspect. If the verb is signed on the body, it cannot be inflected for its arguments. I will discuss here two examples of initialized signs that undergo this type of inflection.

The sign *•R•FLÉCHIR* (*to reflect upon*) is anchored on the body and can be modified to mark temporal aspect (for example, *again and again, for a long time*), temporal focus (*to start to*), and manner (*easily, with difficulty*). These modifications are made by a change in movement (size and rhythm) accompanied by facial expression. A sign such as *•CRITIQUER* (*to criticize*), nonanchored on the body, undergoes the same modifications, but it also marks its arguments (by hand orientation and movement direction; see figures 10 and 11), its number (by repetition of the sign), and its distributional aspect (repetition of the sign at different points on an arc movement).

Fingerspelling and Initialization

According to Battison (1978), fingerspelling is an outcome of the influence of English on ASL. When fingerspellings are restructured, Battison calls them loanwords. For Davis (1989), fingerspelling is part of ASL and while clearly an outcome of language contact, does not represent lexical

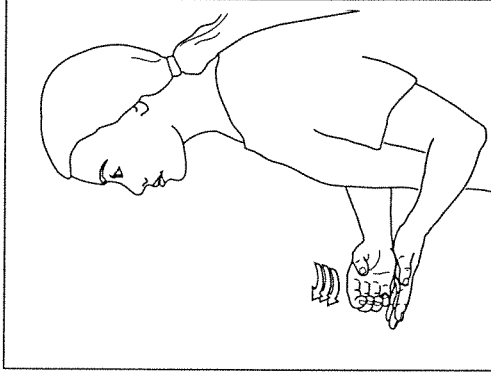


FIGURE 10. *I •CRITIQUER-2* "I criticize you"

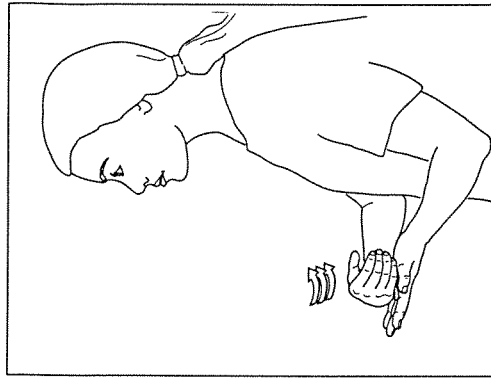


FIGURE 11. *2 •CRITIQUER-1* "You criticize me"

borrowing because the systems involved are the phonological system of the signed language on one hand and the orthographic system of the spoken language on the other, instead of two phonological systems. Similarly, Lucas and Valli (1992) write that fingerspelling can't be strictly associated with borrowing. It is a particular outcome of language contact, where a language represents but does not borrow the orthography of another.

The fact that we are examining languages in different modalities should allow us to question whether we can strictly apply the definitions of borrowing elaborated for pairs of oral languages. The distinctions could result from the difference in modality. If borrowing is possible only between two phonological systems, then there are few possibilities for lexical borrowing between a signed and a spoken language (except perhaps some oralizations and semantic borrowing). [See editor's note on p. 59.] Knowing that the phonological system of oral language is not easily accessible to Deaf people, we can think of fingerspelling as a parallel system that is used to convey phonological material of the oral language, based on written forms of oral language and functioning as a bridge between the two phonological systems.

For Battison (1978), initialization is an artificial influence of English on ASL. Other authors give cursory mention of or ignore this process.

Yet, we have seen that initialization is not a negligible process inasmuch as it is used by Deaf people themselves. Initialization might have been inspired by hearing people in contact with Deaf people, such as teachers. However, it has clearly been adopted—at least partly—by Deaf people, who even use it as a productive means of lexical creation.

Stokoe et al. (1976) define initialized signs as a reduction of finger-spelled words. In effect, class I signs have characteristics that are structurally comparable to those of fingerspelling—place of articulation and orientation. Instead of using fingerspelling, a signer produces only the first letter (context and oralization completing the information). An internal movement is then added to complete the sign. Many signs of this class, just like fingerspellings, are not recurrent. Others have become established without modifications. A few others may undergo changes that incorporate them in LSQ. They are moved to neutral space, and a movement is added (for example, *H*ANDICAPÉ (*handicapped*) and *R*OCK'N'ROLL, which are similar to class I signs but are made in neutral space with a small path movement added and a change in orientation).

Most of the signs of class II are made a different way. A French lexical item can be fingerspelled or initialized in fingerspelling space, but if a signer wants to create a sign, one way is to create an initialized sign using an existing sign or simply to use the ordinary means of sign creation available in LSQ. Here, the link with fingerspelling is more tenuous, consisting only of the handshape. There does not appear to be a line of evolution between the signs of both classes, whereby class I signs are transformed into class II signs (except for a few signs described above). It appears that class II signs are formed using the usual morphological processes and rarely simply by modifying a class I sign.

Phonological Integration

Phonological integration is not an easy question to deal with since the languages we are examining are so different from each other. If we conceive of fingerspelling as an interface between the written form of the oral language and the signed language, we can see initialization as a way to transpose elements of the oral language via the orthographic representation into the signed language. Unless we talk of semantic borrowing, elements from the oral language must always undergo a certain degree of phonological integration in order to be articulated manually. This integration will vary in degrees according to the type of sign; class I signs

would be minimally integrated, whereas class II signs would be more integrated.

Conclusion

It is clear that to talk of initialized signs as a phenomenon of code-switching or borrowing is impossible if we strictly apply the definitions constructed to analyse contact between oral languages. The fact that we are studying languages so essentially different as a manual and an oral language has as a result that borrowing—in its strictest sense—is impossible in the manual mode (unless we talk of semantic loans). An enlarged definition of borrowing—which takes into account the fact that the handshapes representing the writing system are the nearest we can get to the phonology of the oral language in a manual mode—will permit us to view initialization as a possible borrowing process between signed languages and oral languages.

HYPOTHESES ON THE STATUS OF INITIALIZED SIGNS

This section presents two different analyses of the possible status of initialized signs, each treating class II signs differently. The first analysis is based on the theoretical position that code-switching and borrowing are two distinct phenomena (following Sankoff, Poplack, and Vanniarajan, 1990), whereas the other supposes that code-switching and borrowing are on a continuum (following Myers-Scotton, 1992).

First Analysis

In the first analysis, I propose that nonestablished class I signs that have many similarities with fingerspelled words (they usually have the same hand orientation and the same place of articulation, and only an internal movement is added) also have the status of code-switches. For example, the signer produced the sign *C*HÂTEAU (*castle*) in the following context:

C'EST-ÇA *C*HÂTEAU₁ CHIC I-REGARDER-3₁

"Mhm, I looked around, the castle was neat."

The signer could use the usual noninitialized sign for *castle*, but instead he started in LSQ, switched to produce *C•HÂTEAU in fingerspelling space, and finished in LSQ. Such a sign appears to us to be a code-switch. Established class I signs appear more likely to be borrowings.

Class II signs can be analyzed as loanblends. One part, the handshape, is "borrowed," while the rest is LSQ material. They are well integrated in LSQ and can be well-established LSQ signs. The existence of idiosyncratic class II signs suggests we adopt the category of nonce loans (as defined by Poplack, Sankoff, and Miller [1988]), since they do not correspond to the criterion of recurrence for true loans.

The fact that code-switches and borrowing are distinct phenomena for Sankoff, Poplack, and Vanniarajan (1990) may provide an explanation of the fact that class I and II signs are quite different. But it makes it difficult to explain how we can find established signs in class I if this is not a code-switching/borrowing continuum. We also cannot explain the fact that a few signs of class II appear to be from class I (such as •H•ANDICAPÉ).

Second Analysis

In this analysis, I adopt the point of view according to which nonce borrowings do not exist and for which code-switches and borrowings are on a continuum. Class I signs would then be code-switches if they are not recurrent but will become integrated borrowings if established. Some of them can have a movement added and be moved to neutral space, then becoming class II signs (•H•ANDICAPÉ₁). However, signs from class II would be analyzed differently. These signs use an element from the oral language to create a sign on an LSQ model. For class I signs, the principal element of the sign is the handshape, which is inspired from the orthographic system used to represent the oral language, while the internal movement added only serves to make a minimally acceptable sign. Moreover, class I signs are not created on the model of natural LSQ signs, unlike class II signs. Haugen (1950) identified a process he called *hybrid creation*, which is defined as loan morphemes substituted into native models. Haugen cites the Yaqui word *liosnooka* (God-to speak, which means *to pray*), which contains the Spanish word *dios*, a borrowed form. There was no imitation of a Spanish model but only a borrowed morpheme inserted in a Yaqui model (accompanied by phonological integration). Haugen does not think of this as borrowing but as a creation

drawing on two distinct languages. This type of lexical creation corresponds quite well to class II signs, which use an element of the oral language to create a sign using means of lexical creation native to the sign language. In effect, established and nonestablished signs of class II all respect models of the sign language, using a base sign as model or using the different means of lexical creation of the sign language.

This analysis explains, in a more efficient way, the structural difference we find between class I and II signs. We are examining two different processes, in one case code-switching and borrowing (class I signs) and in the other, lexical creation of the sign language, but using an element of the oral language (class II signs). This analysis can also explain the presence of class I established signs.

CONCLUSION

Our observations have made it clear that Deaf people use initialization as a means of lexical creation. It is one outcome of contact between French and LSQ. I hypothesized that the status of initialized signs would be either code-switches, borrowings, or hybrid creations. However, what appears to be most important to us is to consider the initialization process as an outcome of language contact, which could eventually contribute to the study of these phenomena.

Editor's note. Numerous examples of what can be termed *loan translations* exist in American Sign Language. These consist of spoken English compounds that have been translated into ASL compounds (e.g., HOMEWORK, BOYFRIEND, HOME-SICK). In addition, there are some cases where parts of ASL signs have been lexicalized as English words. For example, the mouth configuration meaning "large" is often glossed as CHA and is sometimes used by bilinguals as an English word, as in "I have cha homework." The ASL sign PAH, glossed as *at last!* or *finally!* has been seen in print as an English work—"PAHED", presumably meaning "finally done."

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APPENDIX A

The Manual Alphabet of LSQ

