

Concrete poetry for the sign language classroom

Poesia concreta para a sala de aula de língua de sinais

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Abstract: Concrete poetry creates meaning by relying primarily on visual iconicity likewise sign languages (SLs). As they are visual-gestural languages, their modality allows a more transparent relation between the form of the sign and its meaning. Due to this common characteristic, the paper introduces the construction of SL literary material on the basis of the visual stimuli (mainly written) of concrete poetry. In this process, both languages (written and signed) are equal, since the reconstruction of the original text requires the close reading of their grammar and literary traditions.

Keywords: concrete poetry; sign language; philology.

Resumo: Poesia concreta cria significados confiando principalmente na iconicidade visual da mesma forma que as línguas de sinais (SLs). Como elas são línguas visuais-gestuais, a modalidade delas permite uma relação mais transparente entre a forma do sinal e o seu significado. Devido a esta característica comum, o estudo introduz a construção de material literário de SL com base nos estímulos visuais (principalmente escritos) da poesia concreta. Neste processo, ambas as línguas (escrita e de sinais) são iguais, uma vez que a reconstrução do texto original requer a leitura atenta da gramática e tradições literárias.

Palavras-chave: poesia concreta; línguas de sinais; filologia.

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Introduction

The recognition of sign languages (SLs) as the first, mother tongue languages of deaf children, and their use in sign bilingual school settings, emerge the need for SL instruction where SL is the medium and the subject of study. However, common educational practice reveals that SL is not treated as such and deaf children learn only the spoken language (in its written form mainly) throughout their grades. Thus, the lack of structured SL classes means that deaf children are not exposed to a variety of learning materials, in which they will have to use, think and discuss about SL, and hence, develop metalinguistic skills. As a result, “deaf students do not grow up with an expectation that one’s language is something to be discussed and thought about and expanded” (Lee, 2005, p. 153). In reality, children access language materials by their teachers and/or educational interpreters (where schools provide), who selectively translate and/or transliterate into SL source texts (STs) that are meant for hearing students.

The recognition of this situation is the basis of the on-going Project *INST 15 - Currículo de LIBRAS como primeira língua* (Curriculum of Libras as the First Language) in the Post Graduate Program *PPGEDU* of the Institute of Education, Federal University of Rio Grande (FURG), in collaboration with (i) the municipal school of the deaf *Escola Municipal de Educação Bilingue Carmen Regina Teixeira Baldino*, and (ii) the Municipal Secretary of Education *Secretaria de Município da Educação-SMed*, Rio Grande, RS-Brasil. The project develops the first public Curriculum of the Brazilian Sign Language - Libras as the first language (L1) of the deaf children in elementary education, inclusive of the required learning materials and professional training of Libras educators.

In this context, the present work addresses the production of SL learning material, mainly through the philology of literary material under translation. By *philology* is meant the “making sense” of literary texts through a close and slow reading method that aims at informing about the linguistic (syntax, grammar), semantic, and pragmatic dimension of the ST (Lönnroth, 2017; Lönnroth and Siponkoski, 2017). To date, in addition to the limited number of SL learning material, the educational practice (in schools and Higher Education) focuses on translating the written text (any) into the target SL through a simultaneous signed interpretation and/or transliteration (cf. Locker, 2015) that occurs fast and without a profound study. In contrast, the philology of SL materials concerns the translation process of literary written materials and how they can be shaped by the target SL. In addition, it scrutinizes the recreated text that is meant for literary activity in the SL classroom.

In doing so, this paper presents a case study choosing the genre *concrete poetry*, and discusses its translation, for it is a visual art, using writing in a pictorial way. Contrary to the sequentiality (and hence, linearity) of writing in conventional poetry, words arrange in a non-sequential way on the page so as to form visually various shapes (e.g., sphere, spirals, birds, flowers), with which the meaning of the poem is associated (Bohn, 2011; Bollobás, 1986; Gross, 1997). Thus, concrete poetry is primarily meant to be seen (Bohn, 2011), through performance, enactment, and presentation, since the poems happen not on the page only, but orally and physically, in various environments (Bollobás, 1986; Erber, 2012; Mcallister, 2014; Schmidt, 1982). Due to these characteristics, there is some correspondence to the orality and the visual-kinesthetic iconicity of SLs. In fact, the iconicity of concrete poetry is met

in the mimetic character of the poem's visual form (Ellestrom, 2016) and in the sound symbolism (cf. Hinton *et al.*, 1994) of its words. Thus meaning is created by relying primarily on visual iconicity likewise SLs (cf. Taub, 2001).

Due to this common characteristic, the paper introduces the construction of SL literary material on the basis of the visual stimuli of concrete poetry. In this process, both languages (written and signed) are equal, since the reconstruction of the original ST requires the close reading of their grammar and literary traditions.

From concrete poetry to SL

Method

Three concrete poems were chosen, handwritten and typewritten, representing a spectrum of narrativity (in terms of the extent to which the verbal and nonverbal provides a narrative potential) (McAllister, 2014). Thus, the poem *Pássaro em Vertical* embodies all characteristics of narrativity; the poem *Silencio* represents partial narrativity; and the poem *Water* lacks all narrativity. These are published poems that are scholarly discussed (to mention a few: Bohn, 2011; Borkent, 2010; Gross, 1997; Lang, 1979; McAllister, 2014; Mchughes, 1977), therefore they are known representatives of this visual art. In fact, the poem *Pássaro em Vertical* is taught in Brazilian schools (for hearing children) in Brazilian literature.

Based on the school's experience to present (2019), concrete poetry is still an unknown literary genre to be used and adopted in the SL classroom of elementary education, and hence, *deaf norms* are missing (considering these in known deaf literary work nationally and internationally). Therefore, the project bases this philological study on the deaf native perspective in SL poetry overall (Sutton-Spence, 2005); referenced published work (where applicable); the knowledge of Libras at school (e.g., by the teachers, interpreters, staff); the collaboration with two SL interpreters of Libras in the Institute of Language and Art at Rio Grande University; and on the researcher's knowledge of SL overall. Moreover, where sign universality² is reported, this is informed by Spreadthesign (2018), the international online dictionary that provides sign comparisons among twenty eight national SLs. Furthermore, non-Libras signs were selected considering the phenomenon of neologism in SL poetry (cf. Sutton-Spence, 2005), which allows the borrowing of signs from other SLs so as to facilitate the deployment of signing (see below the poem *Water*).

Where the visual iconicity is discussed, the *analogue-building model* by Taub (2001) is adopted, according to which the creation of an icon item is based on three cognitive stages; (i) on the selection of a sensory image to stand for the entire denoted concept; (ii) on the schematization of this prototype image (so that it is representable by SLs); and (iii) on the encoding of the schematic image into specific

² The figures of this paper illustrate examples of sign universality by displaying randomly signs of the respective SLs. They also address the similarity of signing to the corresponding signs of Libras.

linguistic forms. Thus, “when modifying the image or “translating” it into linguistic form, one makes sure that the new image preserves the relevant physical structure of the previous stage.” (Taub, 2001, p. 44).

The poem Water

The analysis starts with the *Water* poem (cf. Borkent, 2010), which represents a handwritten visual poem (Figure 1). The poem itself builds an image of a wavy sea with perhaps a boat on it. In fact, this image is the handwritten word “water,” in which the letter <t> represents the boat in the sea, and the letter <e>, a round figure (e.g., a buoy or other floating object). The title of the poem helps the reader to associate the wavy sea with the English word “water”. Thus, the conceptualisation of this poem is made by referencing to a naturalistic scene of a boat on a rough wavy sea (perhaps of a shipwreck) that represents the element “water.”

Figure 1. The Water Poem.

WATER POEM 5



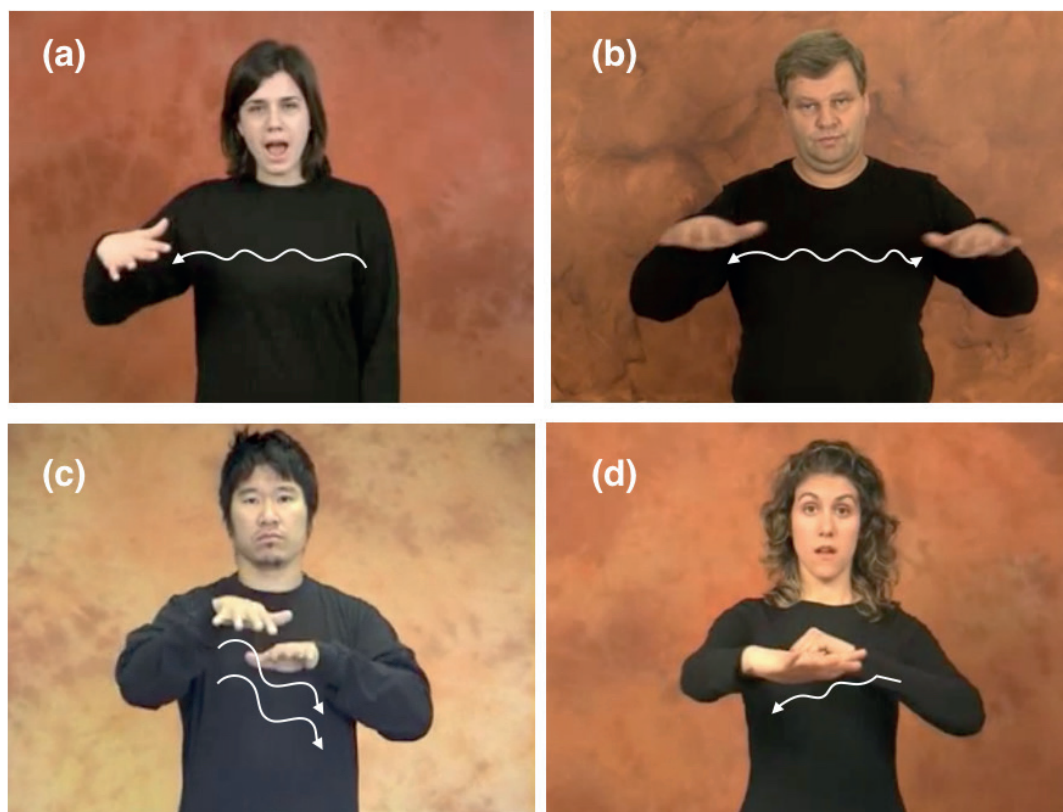
Source: Borkent (2010, p. 156).

Hence, the rough sea, the boat, and the English word “water,” are the building blocks that need to be transferred in SL for the construction of the poem. The rough sea is easily represented, as SLs, almost universally (including Libras), use the 5-Handshape for its articulation (Figure 2).

The difficulty in translation appears when considering the blending of the word “water” with its <t> letter as the boat, and its <e> as a person in the sea. In SLs, the boat is usually depicted by the B-handshape (Figure 3), and <t> and <e> are fingerspelled according to the corresponding manual alphabets. What this image of the poem suggests is the recreation of an analogical fusion including signs that will represent the boat and the person while at the same time will refer to the concept of “water.” In

most SLs, the “water” is signed close to the mouth, representing the physical act of “drinking water,” which imitates the holding of a glass/bottle (Figure 4). Elsewhere, the sign is lexicalised and hence, the holding of a glass is replaced by a fingerspelled letter, usually by <w>, the initial letter of the word “water” or other corresponding European w-word for water (e.g., in German, wasser). This latter, in some European SLs is represented by the 5-Handshape (Figure 4e-f).

Figure 2. The 5-Handshape for the sign SEA.

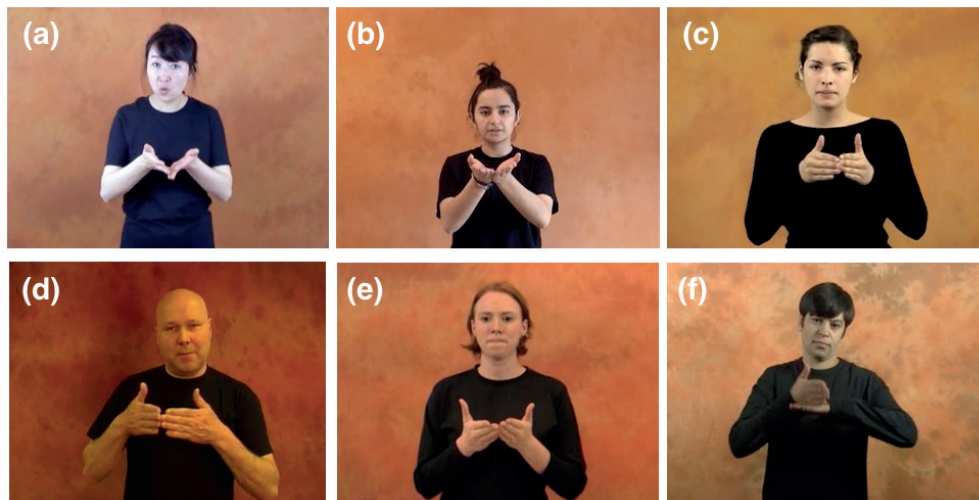


Note: Examples of the SEA in: (a) German Sign Language; (b) Icelandic Sign Language; (c) American Sign Language; and (d) Spanish Sign Language. They all consist of the 5-Handshape, and a wavy movement in front of the signer’s chest. The intensity of the movement denotes the “calmness” and/or the “roughness” of the sea.

Source: Spreadthesign (2018, lemma “sea”).

Since, though, in SLs the lexicalisation occurs only for the initial letters of the words, this cannot refer to <t> and <e>, as they are the middle letters of the word. However, its signed version can adopt the 5-Handshape, which represents both concepts; the water and the sea. In fact, considering the phenomenon of neologism in SL poetry (as aforementioned), this handshape as such (neologism) facilitates the deployment of signing by blending the target signs. Thus, from representing the waves of the sea (the water), the 5-Handshape is easily transformed into the B-Handshape BOAT that battles with the waves, which, in turn, becomes a person diving and swimming in the sea. In this scene, the signer’s head (as a round referent) is analogical to the roundness of <e> in the poem. While swimming, the waves hit the signer (as the castaway) (Figure 5).

Figure 3. The B-Handshape for the sign BOAT.



Note: Examples of the BOAT in: (a) Chinese Sign Language; (b) Turkish Sign Language; (c) French Sign Language; (d) British Sign Language; (e) American Sign Language; and (f) Spanish Sign Language. The handshape represents the bow of the hull of a ship/boat, and its forward movement when the vessel is underway.

Source: Spreadthesign (2018, lemma “boat”).

Phonologically then, the poem focuses on the open flat handshapes - the 5-Handshape and B-Handshape; and on the wavy (cf. SEA) and forward movement (cf. BOAT, SWIM), which, overall, address the linearity/angularity of the poem’s original image and its referents (the flatness and vastness of the sea’s surface, the point of the boat’s bow, the shape of the hands swimming, etc.). Moreover, the sequence of the signs is visually motivated so as to match the image of the poem. Thus, the 5-Handshape of the sea, becomes the B-Handshape of the boat, which easily becomes one’s diving and swimming in the sea. In almost all cases, movement segments (cf. movement epenthesis, Valli and Lucas, 2000) are added among the signs (see Figure 5), facilitating hence the phonological and semantic transitions.

Linguistically, the scene of the poem introduces simple subject noun phrases, and agreement verb sentences. For example, the phrase: SEA(waves)++ BOAT-TO-SAIL(the sailing follows the movement of the waves)++ (‘a boat sailing in the wavy sea’) is a simple subject noun phrase (containing an inflected verb), in which the subject of the sentence is the same with the verb (the boat). These are phenomena with which deaf children and educators can work in the SL classroom.

The poem Pássaro em Vertical

It is a Brazilian poem by Libério Neves that represents the fall of a bird struck by a shot. The image of the poem (Figure 6), following the grammatical structure of the Portuguese text, forms the shape of a bird, which the reader sees in an upright (vertical) position. Thus, the first four lines present the head of the bird (“Cantava o pássaro e voava ... voava o pássaro e cantava”), the diagonal text its long neck (“de repente um tiro seco”), the five-line text its plumage - upper and lower part - (“penas fofas... e um risco surdo”), and its long legs (“norte-sul”).

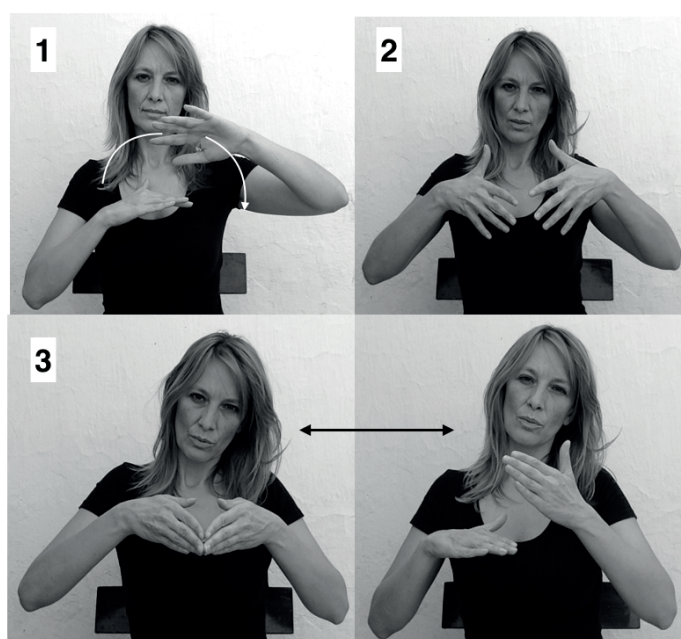
Figure 4. Examples of the sign WATER.

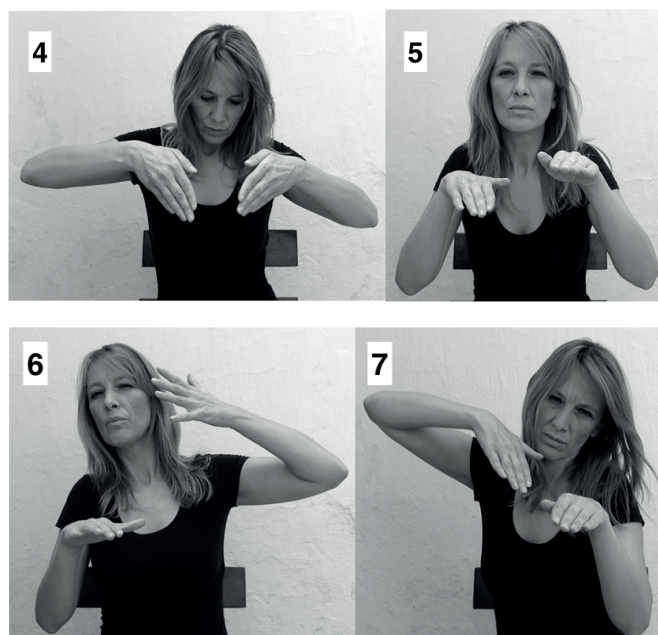


Note: Examples of the sign WATER in: (a) British Sign Language; (b) American Sign Language; (c) Portuguese Sign Language; (d) Indian Sign Language; (e) Spanish Sign Language; (f) German Sign Language. The (e) and (f) indicate the sign in its 5-Handshape form.

Source: Spreadthesign (2018, lemma “water”).

Figure 5. The 5-Handshape and B-Handshape signs in the Water poem.





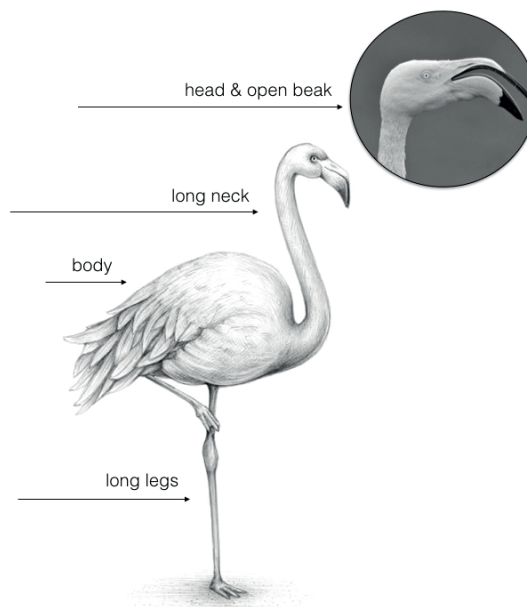
Note: 1: (left) SEA (right)WAVE (“rough sea”); 2: A movement epenthesis: the hands from the SEA become the BOAT; two ways of signing BOAT-TO-SAIL; on the right, (left) SEA (right) CL:B BOAT-TO-SAIL (“a boat sailing”); 4: TO-DIVE; 5: HEAD-OVER-THE-SEA (“one’s head on the sea surface”); 6: (left) SEA (right)WAVE-TO-HIT (“hit by a wave”); 7: TO-SWIM.

Figure 6. Visual correspondence in *Pássaro em Vertical*.

Pássaro em Vertical

Cantava o pássaro e voava
cantava para lá
voava para cá
voava o pássaro e cantava
de
repente

um
tiro
seco
penas fofas
leves plumas
mole espuma
e um risco
surdo
N
O
R
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Interestingly, its reading follows a vertical deployment. The first four lines, which are read horizontally, describe the happiness of the living bird, flying to a left-right direction, as the reading of the text guides. In fact, these lines form the bird’s open beak, an image that allows the reader to visualise

the bird singing (while flying). In addition, this state of happiness is depicted by the sound symbolism of the words “voava” (was flying), “cantava” (was singing), “para cá” (to here), and “para lá” (to there), in which the phoneme /a/ is repetitive. This projection is purposeful as the /a/ easily reminds of the physiology of laughing (the open mouth cavity), and by extension, of the bird’s crying and/or singing (the open beak).

Figure 7. Examples of the sign flamingo.

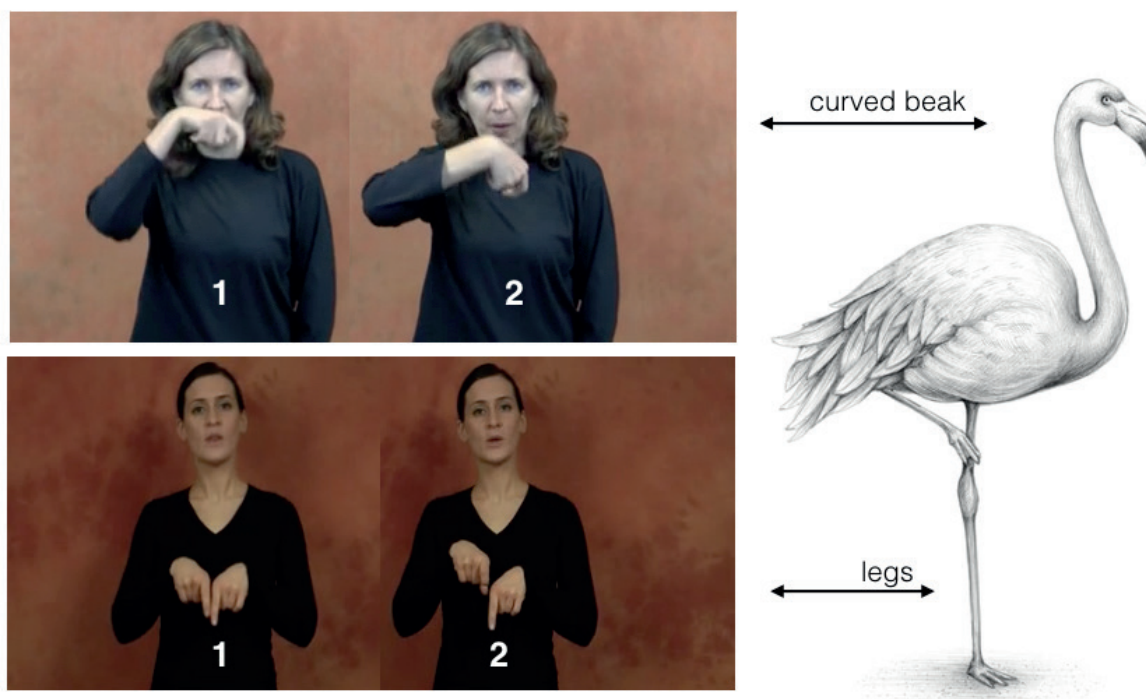


Note: The (a) represents the sign in the Turkish Sign Language; whereas the (b), (c) and (d) are the compounds of the sign. The (b) is the second compound in the Spanish Sign Language; the (c) in the American Sign Language; and the (d) in the French Sign Language. These parts demonstrate common and descriptive use of the sign.

Source: Spreadthesign (2018, lemma “flamingo”).

The horizontal reading of the poem breaks suddenly by the descending form of the phrase “de repente um tiro seco” (suddenly a dry shot). This textual structure creates a ‘sliding’ effect due to the downward direction of the words, which, in a climax, reproduce a shooting-like sound using repetitively the Portuguese /ts/ in the words “repente” and “tiro.” Thus, visually, acoustically, and semantically, they present the chronological order of the unhappy event (repente [the time] - tiro [the instrument] - seco [the condition]): the struck by a bullet and the bird’s stillness. The location of the word “seco” (dry) at the end of the phrase is also symbolic, corresponding to the bird’s body anatomy. In fact, it points the place where the shot hits the bird’s body, and with its /s/ and /c/ sounds it denotes the bird’s ‘quietness.’

Figure 8. Visual analogies for flamingo's parts.



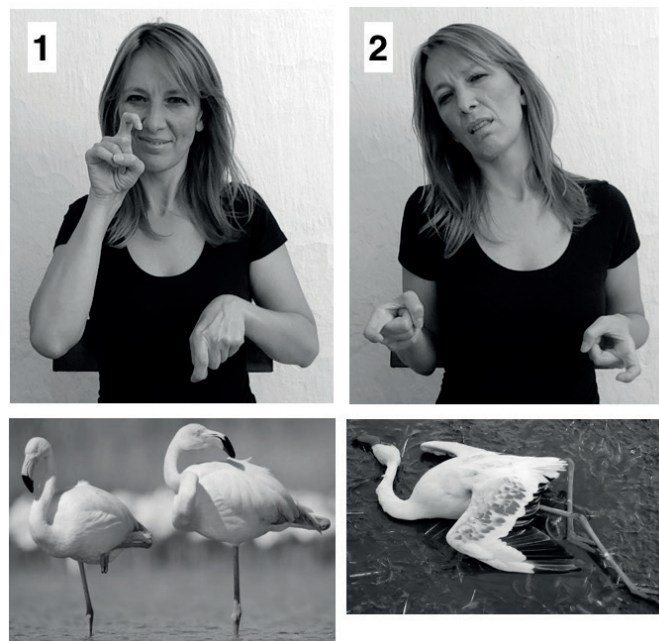
Note: The beak representation comes from the Latvian Sign Language, and the leg bending from the German Sign Language.

Source: Spreadthesign (2018, lemma “flamingo”).

The reader returns to a horizontal reading in the round form of the text, which represents the bird's main body with its wings and fluffs (see Figure 6). These are then explicitly denoted, when the words describe the scattering of the feathers in the sky after the shot (“penas fofas, leves plumas, mole espuma”), and the bird's “deafeness” (“e um risco surdo”). Interestingly, this latter (“surdo”) is positioned as the hock joint of the bird's body, meaning, metaphorically, the point from which the bird starts falling vertically, and from which the poem ends vertically (literally). The last two words (“norte” and “sul”) are written vertically, symbolising the cardinal points of the earth, or else its axis, and by extension, the bird's fall following their direction; from the north to the south. Moreover, among these two compass words, a dash is inserted, representing their unequivocal opposite meaning; that is, the north as life, and the south as death.

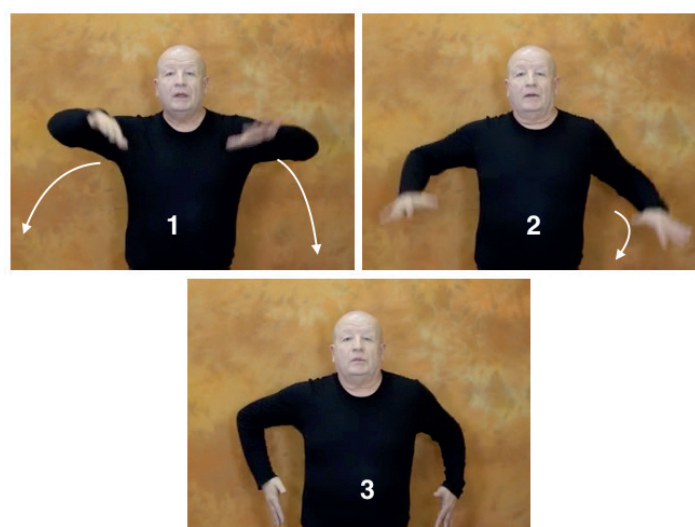
Transferring this poem into a SL, requires, firstly, the construction of a standing bird as an analogy to the poem's visual form. This can be created by signing the body parts of a flamingo such as its beak, using a closed and crooked-like handshape, and its legs, by the index handshape (Figures 7-8). The choice of these handshapes (the crooked one in particular) is purposeful, for they create a visual opposition at the beginning and end of the poem. They are used twofold so as to indicate the living and dead condition of the bird. Thus, the crooked handshape corresponds to the bird's habit to bend its legs when alive, and to their stillness and stiffness when it dies. This opposition is enhanced by the appropriate facial expression in both ends (Figure 9).

Figure 9. The crooked handshape for beak and legs.



The bird's winged body is displayed in Figure 10. This representation allows the 'still' image of the standing bird to become an 'animated' one, as the the 5-handshape (representing the bird's plumage) changes to the B-handshape for the representation of its wings, thus initiating the translation of the poem's first four lines. The bird flying is then depicted by the opening of the hands, imitating the flapping of the wings, and/or by the crossing of the hands in front of the signer's body (Figure 11). Thus, the words "voava" and "cantava" are performed simultaneously, with a body shift (to the right/left) following the direction of the text, and the accompaniment of an /a/ mouthing that replaces the universal BEAK sign.

Figure 10. Flamingo's plumage.



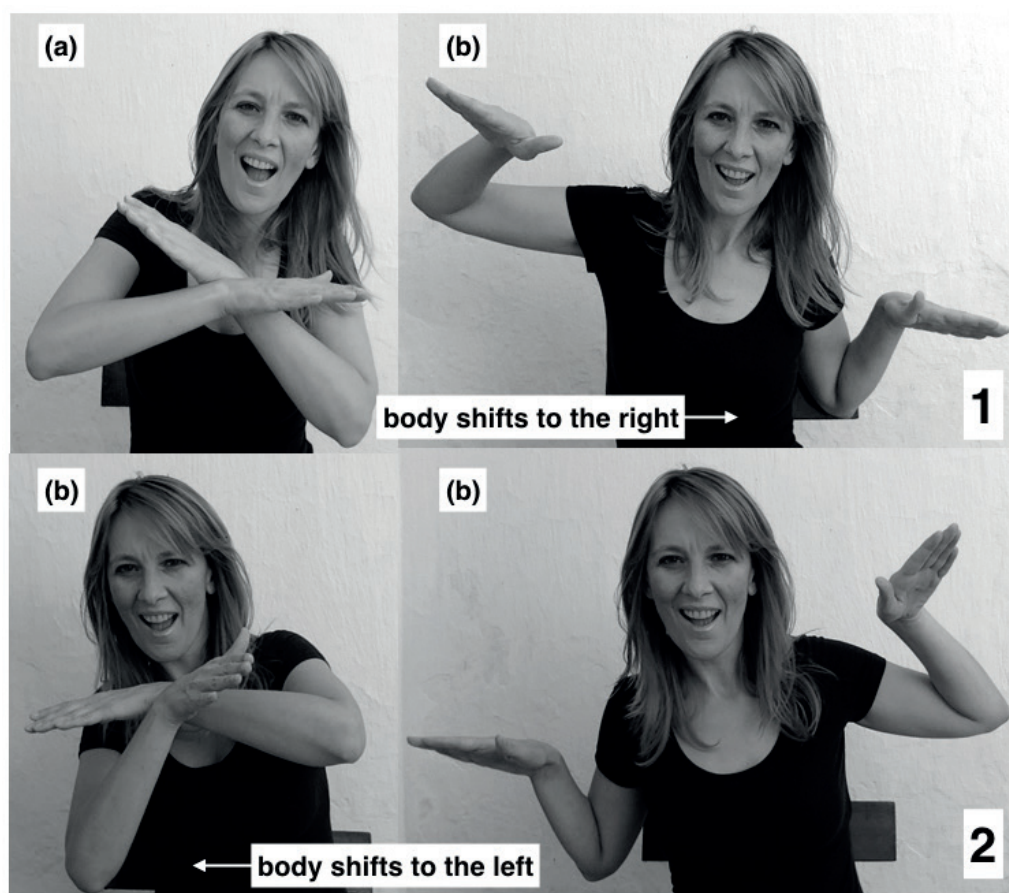
Note: The 5-Handshape traces the front and sides, and ends at the feather tail.

Source: Spreadthesign (2018, lemma "flamingo").

In the last text direction (in the line: “voava o pássaro e cantava”), the signer’s body shifts to the left, while the main hand (the index handshape) articulates the bullet striking the bird’s body. Subsequently, both hands imitate the feathers falling out of the bird’s body (Figure 12), outlining the initial plumage shape (see Figure 10). The wiggling of the fingers stops, and the main hand returns to its crooked form (in analogy to the stillness of “deafness”) that moves downward (as a whole entity classifier) to represent the vertical fall. The poem ends with both hands crooked (see Figure 9).

Phonologically, through this repeated pattern, the poem focuses on the closed, crooked handshape, and on the open ones, the 5-handshape and B-Handshape. Linguistically, it demonstrates sentences with verb agreement, using classifier constructions too. For example, for the bird’s flying, the SL sentence involves single verb agreement, as the bird moves to a left-right direction. Additionally, the verb agreement happens with the use of classifiers, as in the case of the crooked handshape. For instance, the crooked beak, representing, by extension the bird itself, is articulated by a slow movement vertically to show its fall, and only when the bird touches ground, the handshape symbolises its dead body (see Figure 9).

Figure 11. Bird’s flying.



Note: Two representations (a) and (b) of the bird’s flying, involving body shift and mouthing.

Figure 12. Plumage falling out.



Note: The signing changes from an O-Handshape to the 5-Handshape.

The poem Silencio

Eugen Gomringer's poem is a paradigmatic example of the minimalist movement in concrete poetry, according to which the repetition of words/letters in rows/columns discern referential elements, and create certain optical illusion (Lang, 1979, p. 106). By containing one word only, the "silencio," and lacking narrativity, the poem passes to the reader its meaning successfully.

Figure 13. The poem Silencio.

silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio

As text-object, Silencio signifies both verbally and visually. Verbally, it paradoxically engages the word's semantic "silence" and its phonetic sound. Visually, it spatially arranges sites for semantic and phonetic effects (i.e., the individual words) in order to produce the hollowed, block shape ... The hollow center, the only truly "silent" space in the text, becomes the gravitational force around which the poem revolves... Page blankness serves as a silent signifier in which the empty center becomes the gravitational black hole (or, more accurately, white hole) that motivates the text's visual-poetic meaning. (McAllister, 2014, p. 239)

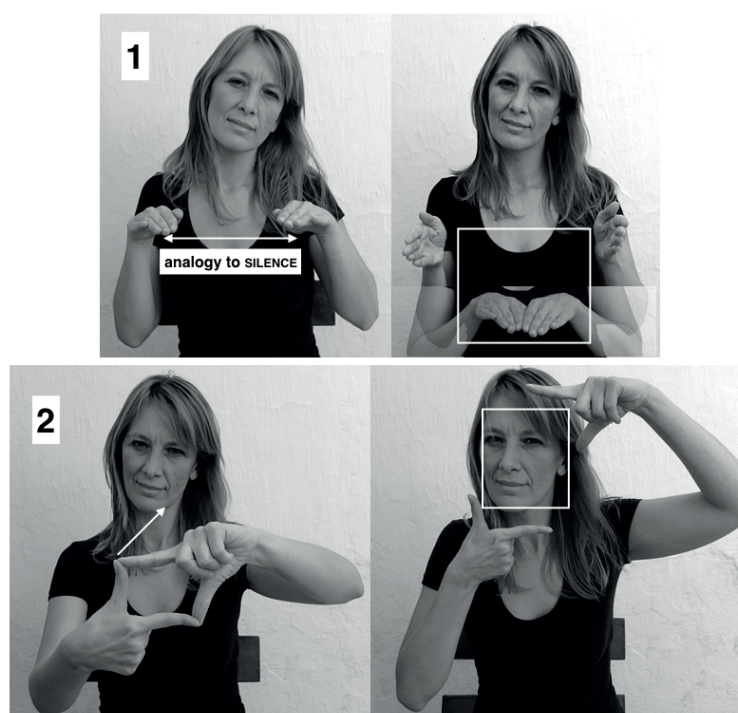
Figure 14. Examples of the sign SILENCE.



Note: The (a) is in Russian Sign Language; (b) in Portuguese Sign Language; and (c) in Spanish Sign Language.

Source: Spreadthesign (2018, lemma "silence").

Figure 15. Forming the square.



Before transferring it in a SL, the poem calls for understanding its square form and the meaning of its missing word “silêncio” (Figure 13). In SLs, the square is usually formed in two basic ways. Firstly, the index finger of both hands outlines in the air a square shape; and secondly, both hands in the B-Handshape perform the same outline, producing though the solid cube rather the two-dimensional square. This second shape (the cube) is preferred for the poem’s translation, for its B-handshape corresponds to the second compound of the sign SILENCE (Figure 14). This element helps in creating visually the shape of the poem, since the individual repetition of the word “silêncio” cannot be realised as such in its signed version.

Thus, the first part of the sign SILENCE is signed with the index finger pointing up in front of the mouth, followed by the B-handshape of both hands (its second part). Palms are facing down and trace the upper side of the cube, while denoting the quietness of/in the space. Likewise, the hands continue downward, tracing the left and right sides of the cube, and end, when both palms meet in front of the chest (Figure 15).

In this performance, there are two analogies to the original poem. Firstly, the use of the sign SILENCE corresponds to the poem’s word “silêncio,” although its repetition does not occur in the same way, since this is implicitly denoted by the continuous movement of the B-Handshape in all sides (of the cube) and by its non-manual markings. Secondly, the square outline (of the cube) also corresponds to the hollow centre of the poem, for this is intrinsically generated. As the hands outline the square, the gap exists within the boundaries of this same outline, representing “the only truly silent space” out of its signing, which, in reality, is its ‘verbal’ expression. This empty space is surrounded by the horizontal and vertical signing that produces a “circular” reading of the square. However, this effect agrees partially with the horizontal reading of the poem, since the attention is on reading the “silêncio” lines (the written ones) (Mchughes, 1977, p. 171). In contrast, the signing of “silêncio” introduces a vertical ‘reading’ as well by observing the signing of the square’s sides.

Moreover, a hushing sound is spread through the repetition of the word “silêncio,” mainly through its /s/ value of the <s> and <c> letters. Interestingly, the common signing of SILENCE expresses its meaning by contrasting the sonority of the word “silêncio.” Thus, it refers to quietness and calmness in terms of the absence of movement (not of the sound) by performing the B-Handshape slowly. Nonetheless, the end result is the same across modality, since silence pervades when words and/or signing are missing. Emphasis on this meaning can be given through an additional square construction as shown in Figure 15. This focuses on the square gap, in particular, on its small shape (analogical to the one in the centre of the original poem), on which the signer’s vision zooms in.

Due to the absence of narrativity, the poem is poor in phonological and linguistic phenomena, although the zoom-in construction introduces the double verb agreement (as a zoom-out too).

Discussion and conclusion

The three SL translations are meant to be used as source material in the educational context of deaf children. Thus, the philological study intended to educate about the analytic process of

translating visual literature such as the concrete poetry. This again entailed spotting the visual iconicity in the written text, and analogically provide it using the corresponding morpho-phonological forms in SL. The poems representing different spoken languages (English, Italian, Portuguese) and degrees/types of iconicity (e.g., sound symbolism) were manipulated comparatively, revealing common mappings independent of language modality. For example, the linearity of the written zig-zag (for the representation of the sea) corresponded to the 5-Handshape under the semantic domain “sea water.” In another instance, the open vowel /a/ (as in “cantava” and “voava”), mapped to the openness of the 5-Handshape in the signs WING and /or BIRD-TO-FLY. In fact, the visual images that associated with the meanings of the poems prove a strong mapping to their referents, which due to the transparency of iconicity in SLs appears to promoting common signing and hence a universal-like translation.

This is an interesting outcome, since the concrete poetry was considered international by its creators due to its ability to connect elements of different languages in the same text (Malmkjaer, 1987, p. 33). Thus, its materiality is not tied on the mother tongue but on iconicity mappings that cognate and non-cognate languages share (for a review cf. Dingemanse *et al.*, 2015). Of course, in cognate languages such mappings facilitate the translation due to their common verbal material. For instance, by containing one word only, the poem “Silencio” “depend[s] on spatial features for effect” (Malmkjaer, 1987, p. 38), in particular on the graphic space (of a blank page), which is the same for any spoken language. Correspondingly, its SL translation depends on the physical 3-D space. The translation then of the word “silencio” in Romanised languages is unaffected as the word is a cognate one (e.g., English, silence; Italian, silenzio). Interestingly, its SL translation is not affected either since its signing is universal for the ‘hushing’ and ‘calming-down’ gestures are used internationally by both deaf and hearing people.

The visual material also suggests a careful selection of concrete poems that can be transferred in SLs since there are types bound strictly to the typeface art (e.g., the “Il Pleut” by Apollinaire; the “Futurist typogram” by Ardegnò Soffici). Such careful selection is needed for the SL classroom for the additional reason; current research shows iconicity influencing sign processing (cf. Carreiras, 2010). Thus, educators of deaf children can make use of concrete poetry since it is already introduced as a linguistic technique in teaching hearing children verbal skills next to other forms of visual expression such as painting (Carpenter, 1986); and in adult’s second language learning (Brod, 1983).

The translated text becomes the object for study at school, as the philological translation demonstrates in detail the linguistic analyses of the poems, which, in turn, can be used for building SL tasks. This process does not require the teacher to be a poet, but to provide through an in-depth study the translated material that can be used in the SL classroom for children’s practice. It raises, thus, questions with regards the choice of the signs, and their blending for representing the visual aspects of this poetry in the visual-kinesthetic modality of SLs. The case study also wants teachers to gain a broader understanding of the complexities of translating such work.

The project also suggests universality to be used in SL literary translations and the design of learning materials. For example, in the “water” poem, the short ST focuses on two unmarked Handshapes (e.g., the 5-Handshape, B-Handshape), which the comparative analysis reveals to be used in a

similar way across various SLs, denoting the same referents with apparent strong correspondences in sign articulation and iconicity.

It does raise though the lack of training and awareness for both deaf and hearing teachers in the implementation of philology translation and creation of SL learning materials. Few teachers with fluency in SLs recognise the importance of such processes and analyses in the development of SL instructional material. Moreover, few teachers are familiar with these processes that demand the preparation of STs and their segmentation into their constituents (lexical, grammatical, semantic, etc.) for the teaching and learning of the target SL as a L1. In contrast to teachers of spoken languages, who have at their disposal a variety of ready learning materials, and to which they interfere a little, the SL teacher is called to apply her/his knowledge (if any) of SL linguistics, and to design and develop from scratch the material. It is the aim of the project to fulfill this gap, after the official publication (in due) of the completed Libras Curriculum in November 2019.

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