

# BETTER LETTER

"My alphabet  
is better  
than yours"



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## Introduction

**Iconicity** is defined as a "perceived resemblance between aspects of form and meaning" (Dingemanse 2019)



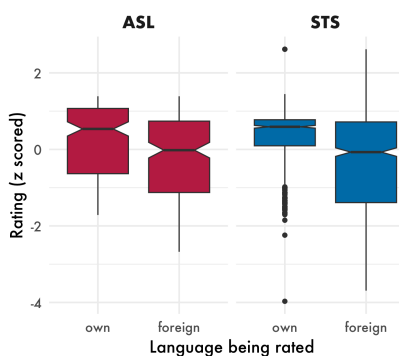
**BUT**

Signers judge their own sign language as **more iconic** than foreign ones (Occhino & al 2017)

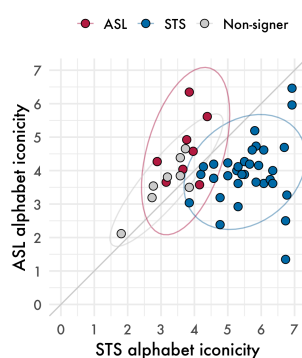
Do signers see their own **alphabet** as more iconic than foreign ones?

## Results: General

Ratings across languages  
participant and target language



Average ratings per alphabet  
by participant



## Conclusions

- **Hearing non-signers** rate alphabets ASL  $\approx$  STS
- **Signers** rate their **own alphabet** as **more iconic**, even in cases with identical handshapes
- **All signers agree**: some handshapes are more iconic



## Method

**Online survey:**  
Select how similar  
the handshapes  
are to the shape  
of the letter



34 deaf **STS**

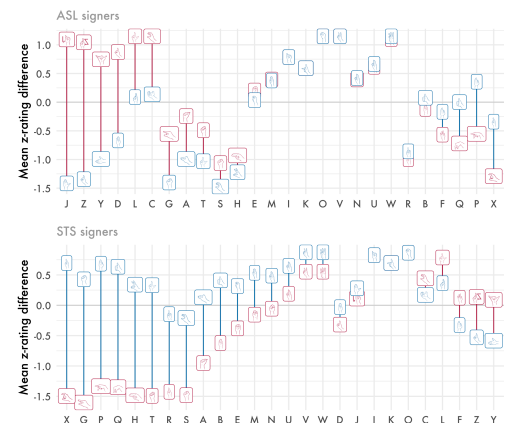
8 deaf/HH **ASL**

8 hearing **control**

A	a	A	a	N	n	N	n
B	b	B	b	O	o	O	o
C	c	C	c	P	p	P	p
D	d	D	d	Q	q	Q	q
E	e	E	e	R	r	R	r
F	f	F	f	S	s	S	s
G	g	G	g	T	t	T	t
H	h	H	h	U	u	U	u
I	i	I	i	V	v	V	v
J	j	J	j	W	w	W	w
K	k	K	k	X	x	X	x
L	l	L	l	Y	y	Y	y
M	m	M	m	Z	z	Z	z

## Results: Detailed

Both **ASL** and **STS** signers  
rate most own  
handshapes  
as **more iconic**,  
but they  
accept that a  
**few foreign**  
**handshapes**  
are "better"



## References

### Literature

- Dingemanse, Mark. 2019. 'Ideophone' as a comparative concept. DOI: 10.1075/ill.16.02din
- Occhino, Corrine, Benjamin Anible, Erin Wilkinson & Jill P. Morford. 2017. Iconicity is in the eye of the beholder. DOI: 10.1075/gest.16.1.04occ

### Data analysis and visualization

R 4.2.2, RStudio, {tidyverse,ggrepel,ggtext,scales}

Handshape font created by CSLDS, CUHK