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**Suppose a person decides
to study the phonology,
morphology, syntax,
semantics, pragmatics,
and other aspects of a
language. We could say
that what he/she is doing
is...**

**... engaging in a scientific
study of language.**

**What should we call
the scientific study
of language?**

Linguistics

**Thus if we
scientifically
study ASL we
have...**

ASL

linguistics

structure

usage

sign

signing

signing-
[skilled]

language

-[1]

**language-[2]
= sentence**

rule

**control =
governed**

communication

system-

[1]

system-

[2]

**All languages are
communication
systems,
but not all
communication
systems are
languages.**

**Languages are
types of rule
governed
communication
systems.**

**How can we tell if a
communication
system is a language
or not?**

**Don't answer that.
I'm going to tell you...**

**If it walks like a duck
and quacks like a duck.**

It's a duck.

If an animal has the features of a duck we know it is a duck. Thus to know if a communication system is a language or not we need to know the features of a language.

features

Features shared by communication systems and languages:

- * Composed of **Symbols**
- * Organized and used **systematically**
- * May be **arbitrary** or **iconic**
- * **Shared** by members of a community

Will discuss each of these more but

Features that **both communication systems and languages have:**

- * System**
- * Arbitrary or Iconic**
- * Symbols**
- * Shared by community**

I don't expect you to know what these things mean yet. I'm just pointing out that communication systems and languages share

Communication systems have arbitrary and/or iconic symbols that are organized and used systematically by members of a community.

Languages are types of communication systems.

Therefore languages **also have arbitrary or iconic symbols that are shared by a community.**

Languages have some EXTRA features that make languages special (unique/different) from other communication systems.

In addition to being a system of arbitrary or iconic symbols shared by a community, languages are also able to...

Produce infinite new messages.

Show relationships between symbols

Add new symbols

Talk about anything (unrestricted domains)

Break down to smaller parts

The same symbol can mean different things

Can discuss the past or future

Evolves (changes)

ALSO...

Language users:

Can monitor their own usage of their language.

Must be learned from other users of the language.

Can learn more than one variation.

Can use the language to discuss the language.

symbol

**Show me a
symbol for a
small 4 legged
furry animal
house pet.**

Cat

**(...or dog, or hamster.
But not a fish.)**

**Some signs
have two
moving hands.
Give me an
example.**

DRAMA

MAYBE

Rule: If both hands move during a sign there is a tendency for both hands to have the same handshape.

**What should we
call the rule that if
both hands move
during a sign there
is a tendency for
both hands to have
the same
handshape?**



**"Symmetry
Condition"**

**Give me an
example of a
2-handed sign
that has
different
handshapes.**

WORD

MONEY

**In those
examples, do
both hands
move?**

**What should
we call the
moving hand?**

Dominant hand

**What should
we call the
non-moving
hand?**

Any of these will work:

Non-Dominant hand

Passive hand

Base hand

**In a two-handed sign,
if each hand has a
different handshape
do both hands move?**

**What should we call
the rule that in a two-
handed sign, if each
hand has a different
handshape then only
the active hand
moves?**

no

**What should we call
the rule that in a two-
handed sign, if each
hand has a different
handshape then only
the active hand
moves?**



**"Dominance
Condition"**

**What handshapes
does the base
hand use in a two
handed sign has
different
handshapes?**

BUSY

HELP

WORK

SODA

(pop)

COMMUNIST

CAN'T

PAPER

When a two handed sign has different handshapes, the passive hand tends to be one of what 7 basic handshapes?

When a two handed sign has different handshapes, the passive hand tends to be one of what 7 basic handshapes?



BASOC15

**alternating
movement**

MAYBE



**non-
alternating
movement**

CAN

PLAY



symbol

either

arbitrary

iconic

GIRL

[bonnet]

MAN

[hat]



WRONG

LOUSY

arbitrary



**Show me
some iconic
signs.
(They look like
what they
represent.)**

**Does
English
have
“iconicity”?**

**cock-a-
doodle-
do**

choo-

choo

**In spoken
languages a
word sounding
like what it
represents is
called:**

Onomatopoeia

**The point here
is that ASL is a
language
because it has
the features of a
language. (Just
in a **visual** way)**



**Spoken
languages
have word
forms that
seem related
in meaning.**

**-ump, rump,
dump, hump,
mump, lump,
bump...**

Phonesthesia

**Show me
some signs
that seem
“related” via
handshape.**

**Example: What
signs use the
“EMPTY”
dominant
handshape?**



**schematized,
encoded ex:
TREE**



**Just as words are
different in
spoken
languages. They
are also different
in signed
languages.**

DIFFERENT

STUDENT
[ASL]

STUDENT
[Thai SL]



**Don't focus
/ dwell
upon
iconicity**

**For more
insight
look
beyond
iconicity:**

ex: SIT (legs)

“CHAIR”

**“SIT-for-a-
long-time”**

SIT-abruptly



**Small
animal
sitting**

CAT-SIT /

BIRD-SIT



**Members of a
community
share the
same
communication
system.**

**Language is
productive**

(any topic)

**Language
has ways of
showing the
relationship
between
symbols**

**One of the many
ways ASL shows
relationships
between signs is by
nonmanual signals:**

**Example:
DRIVE ("mm")**

Ex:

LOOK-at

("mmm")

“mm” =

regularly /

unexceptionally



"th" =

carelessly



**Another way language
shows relationships
between symbols
(words) is thru the use
of prepositions:**

"The book is **on the
table."**

Instead of using a separate preposition such as “on” ASL would include the concept through **depiction**:

TABLE, INDEX, BOOK

[**depict** is just a fancy word for “show”]

Depiction is the new terminology for “**classifier predicate**”



**Where did the sign
for BROTHER come
from?**

**How about the sign
for HOME?**

How about JAPAN?

BROTHER is a **compound** of
BOY SAME (later mutated).
HOME is a **compound** of **EAT**
SLEEP (later mutated).
JAPAN is a form of borrowing
as a result of **language contact**.

Language has mechanisms for introducing new symbols such as **compounding and **language contact**.**

MICROWAVE

COMPUTER

EAT.

SLEEP ...

HOME

BOY-SAME

...

BROTHER