

## What's in a Signed Pun?

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### ABSTRACT

Since the seminal work by Klima & Bellugi (1979), there has been little about how sign languages produce wordplays, or in other words: plays on signs. In this presentation we show the linguistic mechanisms in producing puns in the signed modality, comparing them to the spoken modality. For doing so, we will use some examples from American Sign Language-ASL and British Sign Language-BSL. We also discuss the attempts some authors have done to translate Lewis Carroll's puns in the work "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (Araújo & Bentes, 2016) from one spoken language (Portuguese) into a signed language (Brazilian Sign Language-Libras). We demonstrate that besides the linguistic dimension of punning in a signed language, questions of Deaf culture and Deaf humor are also necessary for a better understanding of the punning process (Sutton-Spence & Napoli, 2009). Another characteristic of punning in signed languages is the interplay between the signed language and a spoken language which can produce kinds of signed loanblends or blend signplays, puns in a sign language with morphophonological elements borrowed from a spoken language. One interesting fact is that those signplays follow the phonological restrictions on borrowed signs, according to Battison (1978).

**Keywords:** Pun, Signed Languages, Borrowing, Libras.

### REFERENCE

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