Dactylological Sign in Libras (Brazilian Sign Language)

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Introduction: The current study addresses dactylological sign (fingerspelled sign) in Libras defined as a lexicon formed by dactylology (fingerspelling) that has several ways of articulation, being a peculiar characteristic of this language. The relevance of dactylological sign to understand the productive phonological relationship between Portuguese language and Libras leading to linguistic borrowings from the spoken language becoming items in the lexicon of Libras. As theoretical foundation, the main theories addressed are:

- lexical borrowing, lexicalized fingerspelling and loan sign of ASL (BATTISON, 1978) and of BSL (SUTTON-SPENCE, 1994);
- types of coarticulation in ASL fingerspelling: anticipatory and perseverative (WILCOX, 1992; CHANNER, 2012);
- tipology of linguistic borrowing of Libras, directing to lexicalized transmigration loans (emprestimos por transiliteração lexicalizada ‘semi-dactilológico’) (FARIA-NASCIMENTO, 2009);

General Objective: to catalog the dactylological signs and describe the possible phonological adaptations they undergo in Libras.

Specific Objectives:
1. Analyze the dactylological signs comparing with their respective equivalent fingerspelled words in segments in the canonical form of the Libras manual alphabet in an online dictionary;
2. Define and classify categories and their relationship to phonological processes in Libras.

Methodology:
- Qualitative approach: the description of dactylological signs, classifying them in categories with relation of phonological processes.


- Procedure: cataloging, description and analysis of the dactylological signs with the canonical form of the Libras manual alphabet to identify the phonological changes following Battison’s criteria about restructuring profiles which there are nine categories: deletion (A); location (L); handshape (CM); movement (M); orientation (O); reduplication (R); second hand (2); morphological involvement (Morf); Semantics (Sem).

There was the realization of the phonological adaptation of the collected data to define its types of coarticulation that may be anticipatory or perseveratory (WILCOX, 1992).

Data Analysis: Dactylological Sign: #BAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement (M)</th>
<th>Canonical movement of manual alphabet</th>
<th>Phonological adaptation of #BAR</th>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Orientation (O)</th>
<th>Canonical orientation of manual alphabet</th>
<th>Phonological adaptation of #BAR</th>
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Coarticulation: Anticipatory (CA) and Perseveratory (CP)

In the first segment there is the effect of anticipatory coarticulation, due to the implication of the posterior segment, in which its palm orientation is also oriented inward from the hypothesis of the old manual alphabet of letter A, whose palm orientation was contralateral with the arm positioned horizontally. Therefore, in diachronic analysis, in #BAR the palm orientation of segment [A] changes inward and the arm position becomes vertical.

Results: The percentage occurrences of the categories of restructuring profile of the dactylological signs are presented in the following graph, and is related to the table beside.

Conclusions: This research revealed that although the dactylology is a loan of the Portuguese language, in the process of lexical adoption, the dactylological signs undergo phonological adaptations that occur naturally. This work is relevant to the phonological studies of the Libras, as it contributes to the linguistic area, being a dactylological sign a feature of constant use in the lexical productivity of the Brazilian deaf community. It also reinforces the form of linguistic registration and language description used for the enhancement and perpetuation of sign language in Brazil.

References: