

Aesthetics of Subjectivity in Literary Productions in Colombian Sign Language*

[English Version]

Estética de la subjetividad en producciones literarias en lengua de señas colombiana

Estética da subjetividade em produções literárias em língua de sinais colombiana

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Colombia

Abstract

Objective: To understand the relationship between aesthetics and subjectivity in literary productions in Colombian Sign Language (LSC). **Methodology:** The study was conducted at the Francisco Luis Hernández Betancur Educational Institution in Medellín, Colombia, using the videographic method. The process included three main steps: collecting video recordings, constructing a videographic analysis matrix, and conducting literary-creation sessions in LSC with a group of Deaf signing students. **Results:** In Colombia, there is a wide and diverse body of literature produced in LSC. Expressive resources, visual rhetorical figures, and methods of constructing intensity and form, articulated through the language's own parameters, enable the configuration of the aesthetic sign. This sign is intertwined with the narrator's subjectivity—their identity, experiences, and life events—which strengthens the literary work, enhances the appeal of the narrative,

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and evokes emotions in the audience. Aesthetics thus manifests itself as an expression of subjectivity. **Conclusions:** Those who produce literature in LSC seek to communicate sensations, feelings, and messages that address others, while representing the world they inhabit and the ways they experience and interpret it through signs.

Keywords: aesthetics; sign language; literature; Deaf (obtained from the UNESCO Thesaurus).

Resumen

Objetivo: comprender el tejido entre estética y subjetividad en las producciones literarias en lengua de señas colombiana (LSC). **Metodología:** la investigación se desarrolló en la Institución Educativa Francisco Luis Hernández Betancur, en Medellín, Colombia, mediante el método videográfico. El proceso incluyó tres acciones principales: recolección de registros en video, construcción de una matriz de análisis videográfico y realización de encuentros de creación literaria en LSC con un grupo de estudiantes sordos señantes. **Resultados:** en Colombia se evidencia una amplia y diversa producción de literatura en LSC. Los recursos expresivos, las figuras retóricas visuales y los modos de construcción de intensidad y forma, articulados con los parámetros propios de la lengua de señas, posibilitan la configuración del signo estético. Este signo se entrelaza con la subjetividad del narrador —su identidad, experiencias y vivencias—, lo que fortalece la creación literaria, genera atractivo en la narración y despierta emociones en el público. La estética se manifiesta, así, como expresión de la subjetividad. **Conclusiones:** quienes producen literatura en LSC buscan comunicar sensaciones, sentimientos y mensajes que interpelen al otro, al tiempo que representan el mundo que habitan y la manera en que lo experimentan y resignifican mediante las señas.

Palabras clave: estética; lenguaje de signos; literatura; sordo (obtenidos del tesoro UNESCO).

Resumo

Objetivo: compreender a interação entre estética e subjetividade em produções literárias em Língua de Sinais Colombiana (LSC). **Metodologia:** a pesquisa foi realizada na Instituição Educacional Francisco Luis Hernández Betancur, em Medellín, Colômbia, utilizando o método videográfico. O processo incluiu três ações principais: coleta de gravações em vídeo, construção de uma matriz de análise de vídeo e realização de oficinas de escrita criativa em LSC com um grupo de alunos surdos que utilizam a

língua de sinais. **Resultados:** na Colômbia, existe um amplo e diversificado corpo de literatura produzida em LSC. Recursos expressivos, figuras de retórica visual e métodos de construção de intensidade e forma, articulados com os parâmetros próprios da língua de sinais, possibilitam a configuração do signo estético. Esse signo se entrelaça com a subjetividade do narrador — sua identidade, experiências e vivências —, o que fortalece a criação literária, gera apelo na narrativa e evoca emoções no público. A estética, portanto, manifesta-se como uma expressão de subjetividade. **Conclusões:** os autores de literatura em LSC buscam comunicar sensações, sentimentos e mensagens dirigidas ao outro, ao mesmo tempo que representam o mundo que habitam e a forma como o vivenciam e ressignificam por meio de sinais.

Palavras chaves: estética; língua gestual; literatura; surdos. (obtidos do tesauro da UNESCO).

Introduction

Deaf signing students' education reveals weaknesses in the field of literature. Most of them are unfamiliar with stories, narratives, and in general, literary texts, along with their poetics, aesthetics, and constitutive and structuring elements, both in their own language and in Spanish (translated, adapted, or interpreted). This is because such texts had never been told to them at school or at home; consequently, these literary productions were unknown to them. Following the recognition of Colombian Sign Language (LSC) in Colombia, and thanks to access to communication through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), accessing literary productions through videos, both synchronously and asynchronously has become possible. In recent years, an increasing amount of information has been disseminated on literary production in LSC, driven by the personal interest of individuals in exploring their language, whether or not influenced by experiences in other countries or by organizations that initiated processes of interpreting, translating, and adapting literary texts. For this reason, the decision was made to investigate the aesthetics of subjectivity in literary productions in LSC, with the aim of contributing to existing research and to the process of teaching and learning literature in this language.

The studies collected and reviewed for this research revealed two trends: sign language literature and Deaf literature (Montoya & Castellano, 2023). The former refers to research conducted from an external perspective on the Deaf population and its language, carried out mostly by hearing scholars, and consisting of studies on a wide range of topics. In Brazil, these are referred to as "Deaf Studies" (Quadros, 2006; Quadros & Stumpf, 2008), a term that points to a series of books addressing issues related to education, sign language, and deaf identities, written by Deaf and hearing authors committed to a socio-anthropological approach to deafness (Andreis-Witkoski, 2015). This perspective is linked to the socio-anthropological model, which recognizes LSC as a legitimate language and a cultural value, distinguishing it from the clinical-therapeutic approaches that historically sought the "normalization" of Deaf people (INSOR, 2006). Within this category, three components stand out: the first is related to visibility, or visual experience, in the acquisition of sign language; the second refers to the literary, linguistic, and narrative characteristics of sign language; and the third addresses inclusion and bilingualism in relation to education, accessibility, interpretation, and written language as a second language for Deaf people. The fields in which these studies are primarily situated are education and linguistics.

The second trend, called "deaf literature", establishes an internal view of sign language. The studies within this line maintain a close link with the Deaf community, since some of them are carried out by hearing people with deep

immersion in that community, and others by Deaf people who conduct research based on their experiences, practices, and lived realities in relation to their language. It is a way of sharing in different spaces, both formal and informal, with a diverse audience (Mourão, 2016, p. 8). Four axes stand out in this category: identity, representations of Deaf people, genres, and the proposal for writing sign language.

These trends support the discussion regarding how literary production in sign language, or the literary-artistic expressions of members of the Deaf community, are named, as well as regarding what is investigated when spoken language is used as a reference model. The first trend approaches the literary from the perspective of hearing people, that is, from an external viewpoint. From this perspective, literary production is assessed in relation to the dominant spoken language within a given territory (Spanish or Portuguese), which serves as the basis for communication. The second trend departs from the evaluative and classificatory criteria established by spoken language and instead proposes an internal viewpoint: research produced by members of the Deaf community or by hearing scholars who recognize the perspective that sign language establishes in communicative terms, as well as in the representation of the world and in literary and aesthetic expression.

The background studies make identifying the two viewpoints that have shaped the education of Deaf people over the years possible, grounded in epistemological perspectives that imply the transition from an external or “normalizing” view to an internal or interpretive one. The external view, linked to the clinical-therapeutic paradigm, tends toward the “normalization” of the Deaf person and seeks to bring sign language closer to oral language, or even to deny its existence and its status as a language. The internal perspective, linked to the socio-anthropological model, constitutes a transitional approach between evaluative and interpretive frameworks, ultimately leading to an understanding of sign language on its own terms, without the need to compare it with other languages. In this sense, recognizing the linguistic difference of Deaf people is fundamental to their social and educational participation, without seeking their normalization or subordination to the dominant spoken language.

“Deaf literature” emerged in the Brazilian context from this internal viewpoint, which grants value and recognition to productions in sign language. According to Karnopp (2010), “it is the production of literary texts in signs, which translates visual experience [...] and considers Deaf people as a different linguistic and cultural group” (p. 161). From this perspective, Deaf people assert themselves as subjects of and through their language and make use of the various functions of language, including the poetic function, which is most closely associated with creativity. This function enables them to participate autonomously

in the literary field and to engage with issues intrinsic to the language itself. Although this term was initially proposed in studies in fields such as linguistics, education, and translation (Karnopp, 2006; Mourão, 2016; Pokorski, 2014; Porto, 2007; Rosa, 2006; Sutton-Spence, 2021), it has also been adopted within literary studies. In this field, Alves (2022) proposes the concept of “*señalitura*” (a blend of the Spanish words *seña* (sign) and *literatura* (literature)), understood as literary work by Deaf people and for Deaf people, made accessible through visual means.

In Colombia, the studies by Montoya (2019) and Trillos (2016) show an interest in literature in LSC from areas such as education, literature, theater, and the performing arts. The first author focuses on literary production in LSC, while the second analyzes Deaf people’s perceptions of the world in relation to hearing people in seven *signliterary* narratives. More recently, Montoya and Porto (2024) identify common aesthetic elements in sign language literature in Brazil and Colombia, highlighting the shared visual creativity in these productions.

In Colombia, the need for the full recognition of LSC as a language has become particularly evident, not simply as a means of interpreting texts written in Spanish, but as a language with its own literary productions, aesthetic manifestations, and subjective modes of expression. Within this effort to understand LSC from an internal perspective, grounded in what signers themselves create and produce, literary production emerges as a means of advancing such recognition. Through literary production one may observe how users engage with language, construct meaning, and express their understanding of the world as subjects. Approaching sign language from an internal perspective strengthens emancipatory processes that make inhabiting the world outside the logics of domination possible.

Within this framework, the research problem addressed in the present study may be formulated as follows: what relationships are established between aesthetics and subjectivity in literary productions in Colombian Sign Language?

The general purpose of this work was to understand this interweaving, and the specific objectives were:

- a) To identify aesthetic elements in literary productions in LSC.
- b) To explain aspects of the subjectivity of members of the Deaf community who participate in literary production processes.
- c) To describe the tensions that arise in the manifestation of aesthetic elements in such productions.

Methodology

In line with the internal perspective and the recognition of sign language, the methodological procedure adopted in this study is grounded in an approach aimed at understanding and investigating issues related to visual experience. In addition, the study proposes and supports a videographic method that emerged from inquiry into and reflection on the characteristics of sign language, particularly in relation to autonomy and independence, that it may be approached by researchers who know, accept, and affirm sign language as the natural language of Deaf people.

The videographic method proposed in this study emerged from reflection on communication in sign language, visual experience, and literary productions in LSC. The specific characteristics of the language were taken into account, as they reveal experiences and practices that make visible relevant aspects of sign language and that are currently recorded in video format, since this format allows tetra-dimensional communication (Herrero & Nogueira, 2012) to be captured through moving images. In this sense, emphasizing the role and predominant modality of language within this videographic approach to understand the significance of communication in the research process is necessary, particularly in relation to subjective configurations and aesthetics grounded in linguistic difference, in accordance with the socio-anthropological perspective (INSOR, 2006). The importance attributed to language lies in its role as a mediator in the construction and representation of the world, based on symbolic structures and interactions that enable the establishment of intersubjective relations. These relations shape the internal structures of the participants and delineate the construction of the research object.

A research proposal grounded in the videographic method seeks to recognize sign language in communicative practice as part of human diversity. In this sense, technology enables new forms of engagement with diverse videographic materialities and opens up new textual, methodological, formal, and expressive possibilities, which in turn allow the exploration of other modes of knowledge through experimental forms (Poppe, 2018). In this study, the videographic method is employed to record information, and also to analyze and put into practice the production of meaning from visual experience. This makes a sensory engagement with literary creations in LSC recorded in video format possible. This also functions as a productive resource for approaching literary production in sign language, such as written texts capable of eliciting processes of thought, imagination, and sensibility (Migliorin & Barroso, 2016).

Videography constitutes a commitment to understanding sign language from its internal dynamics and to establishing a self-reflexive perspective. It has

been used as a technological tool to record information on practices in certain communities, such as Indigenous communities, to document those practices, preserve oral traditions, and address other concerns through audiovisual production (Coutiño, 2018). Videography is also a medium through which Deaf people express their literary productions in their natural language. Video makes recording literary and artistic creations in sign language possible, and disseminating them, especially among those whose experience of the world is fundamentally visual, through platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and other digital media.

The study was conducted at the Francisco Luis Hernández Betancur Educational Institution, located in Medellín, Colombia, during 2021. The research involved a group of eighth-grade students; videos of literary production by alumni of the institution were also collected. Some of the participants had prior experience in literary production, whereas others were only beginning to engage in such processes. The selected students had participated in literary activities with the researcher from the first year of primary school and expressed interest in taking part in the study. The group was selected on the basis of their involvement in literary creation experiences, given that no previous work had been undertaken in this field in Medellín or, more broadly, in Colombia.

A total of 15 students from Grade 8A at the Francisco Luis Hernández Betancur Educational Institution participated in 2021, together with alumni whose literary productions had been published on social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. All participants signed informed consent forms. In the case of minors, authorization was obtained from their parents or legal guardians, who permitted the use of the participants' names and literary productions in the study.

Constitutive Actions of the Method

The first step consisted of videographic collection, which involved compiling existing videos of literary production in LSC to identify, review, document, and analyze aesthetic and subjective elements.

The second step involved the development of videographic content analysis forms designed to record the information contained in the footage. For the videographic review, a form was created to compile literary productions in LSC and to organize an information repository for their analysis.

Table 1. Videographic Review Form (inventory-characterization).

Location	Genre – Format	Nº
(Where the material is located)		(Consecutive numbering assigned to the identified material)
Bibliographic Information		
(Full name of the author, title of the material/topic, city, and year of publication)		
		Aesthetic Elements
Interpretative Description of the Content		(Relationships between the aesthetic and the elements that structure the language and enable production, including grammatical, expressive, semantic, and experiential dimensions)
		Subjective Elements
Observations: issues concerning the video or the production of a descriptive nature.		
Elements Identified: grammatical, experiential, semantic, expressive.		
Determine whether the collected productions can be classified as literary. What defines this production as literary?		Researcher’s Name:

From this action, a “videographic matrix” was developed, which facilitated the analysis of the objectives proposed in the research. The poetic function proposed by Jakobson (1975), the dramatic and rhetorical functions of Mandoki (2005), and the nine aesthetic components indicated by Sutton-Spence (2021) were taken into account: speed, space and symmetry, same hand configurations, morphism, incorporation of humans, incorporation of non-humans, classifiers, non-manual elements, and multiple perspectives.

Table 2. Atrix for Recording Aesthetic Elements for the Analysis.

Sign – GLOSS	QR Code	Poetic Function (Jakobson)	Dramatic- Rhetorical (Mandoki)	Elementos estéticos (Sutton-Spence)
	Narrative	Literary Figures		

The third step, as the central process of the research, was the implementation of literary creation workshops in LSC. Their objective was to develop a creation exercise in accordance with the interests, abilities, and experiences of each participant. The information recorded in the proposed matrix made fulfilling the purpose set out in the research possible.

Videographic Analysis

To gain a clearer understanding of videographic analysis—here understood as the study of the aesthetic elements of subjectivity in literary productions in LSC—a search was conducted in databases such as Scielo, Redalyc, Dialnet, Google Scholar, and Base Search to identify videographic studies that could serve as references for the fieldwork. The literature reviewed included references to documents, materials, devices, and records of a videographic and audiovisual nature.

A definition is therefore provided below to clarify the methodological procedure. In this study, videographic analysis refers to the process of reflection, discussion, and argumentation based on literary material in sign language recorded in video format, understood as a means of documenting and interpreting research practices.

Through videographic analysis, the central aim of the study was pursued: to understand the relationship between aesthetics and subjectivity in literary productions in LSC. In the search for literary productions in LSC—specifically those created by students and alumni of the Francisco Luis Hernández Betancur Educational Institution—several videos were identified that made examining aesthetic elements of subjectivity possible, drawing on the approaches of Kant (1876), Jakobson (1975), Mandoki (2001), and Sutton-Spence (2021).

Table 3. *Collection: Videographic Literary Production in LSC.*

Title	Author	Genre	Location
Especial del Caballo (Horse special)	Sebastián Arenas	Narrative	YouTube https://youtu.be/pa4clfsKazk .
Vaquero es sordo (The cowboy is deaf)	Sebastián Arenas	Narrative	YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYQq-g_4byoQ

Title	Author	Genre	Location
Yo vs. Moscas (Me vs flies)	Sebastián Arenas	Narrative	YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Z7a0_Jkz-4c .
Oruga-mariposa (Caterpillar-butterfly)	Sebastián Arenas	Visual Vernacular	YouTube https://youtu.be/sHRgm34Zs4M
Las palpitaciones del corazón (The heart's palpitations)	Sebastián Arenas	Visual Vernacular	YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_w9s93yySU
Vaquero con caballo (Cowboy with horse)	Geraldine Vélez	Visual Vernacular	YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meBedB-DEmGI
El balón de fútbol y el fútbol (The soccer ball and soccer)	Eduar David Peña Berrío	Visual Vernacular	Facebook https://www.facebook.com/SebazoaArenasS.LSC/videos/10220050703715590

The literary production videos collected were created on the initiative of alumni and students of the Francisco Luis Hernández Betancur Educational Institution in Medellín. These videos were personally shared with the researcher and are hosted on YouTube or Facebook.

Other literary productions analyzed were those obtained in the literary creation workshops in LSC:

Table 4. *Literary Production Carried out in the Fieldwork.*

Author	Topic	Nature	Link
Chelmy	Dog	Narrative	https://youtu.be/E_GgQVTV2iU
Claudia	Fish	Narrative	https://youtu.be/eE7dcAy3EQw
Erica	Rabbits	Narrative	https://youtu.be/hNdvYSzKOVQ
Valeria	Valeria Narrative	Narrative	https://youtu.be/Fw_letO2yCg

Eduar 1	Athlete	Visual Vernacular	https://youtu.be/LAZwxmTmTkA
Eduar 2	War	Visual Vernacular	https://youtu.be/c7-3x7TyjrY
Eduar 3	Dinosaur	Visual Vernacular	https://youtu.be/RQIm-M4JJoY

Videographic analysis was conducted on both the collected videos and those recorded during the fieldwork and were uploaded to the YouTube channel “Clarita En-Seña.” These videos were examined in detail, and the relevant scenes illustrating the aspects and elements selected for analysis were identified. Specifically, the analysis focused on: the modes of presentation of intensity and form in the parameters of LSC to identify the precise moment at which the aesthetic sign is configured; the literary resources and figures highlighted for analysis; scenes of anthropomorphism examined in relation to the aesthetic sign; and the elements of subjectivity present in literary productions in LSC.

Results

Aesthetics in literary productions in LSC highlights bodily experience and appeals to the senses, which awakens sensitivity and captivates the audience. According to Sutton-Spence (2021), “[...] aesthetic language appeals to the senses and, through the Deaf artist, seeks to create an experience for the audience, rather than simply asserting something or providing information” (p. 56). For this author, aesthetics refers to the ways in which signers can produce, in sign language, forms that generate emotions in the audience.

These imagined and created productions are literary in nature, as they are imbued with ingenuity through visual expressions. This is possible thanks to grammatical resources that enable poetic expression as a special use of language, together with other expressive elements (such as the pictorial, the erotic, religious traditions, or testimonial events) based on visual and sensory codes. Such codes are expressed through the signer’s gestures and body, which convey sensations, ideas, and emotions.

Sutton-Spence (2021) proposes certain aesthetic elements present in literary productions in signs. These elements are:

Speed. The rhythms and movements with which signs are produced are resources used to generate emotions in the audience. In aesthetic language, speed can be manipulated to produce “cinematic” effects, such as slow motion or fast motion. Artists can recreate scenes with prolonged and slow movements to increase emotions in viewers; such movements are often applied in the

incorporations performed by the narrator and through the use of classifiers (Hodge & Ferrara, 2022). In the video *Me vs. Flies* (Sebastián Arenas, Figure 1), the acceleration of movements reinforces the comic tone of the narrative; while in *Athlete* (Eduar, Figure 2), slowness at certain moments emphasizes the competition and denotes the effort to reach the finish line.

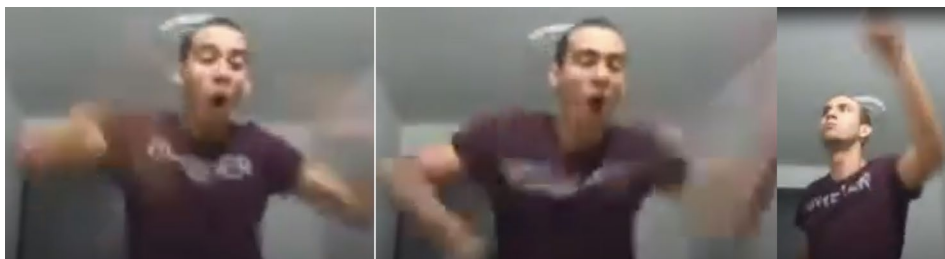


Figure 1. *Me vs Flies*.

Source: Arenas, 2019.



Figure 2. *Athlete*.

Source: Clarita En-Seña, 2021a.

Space and Symmetry. Symmetry is a way of creating aesthetic effects through a sense of balance. Both hands are used simultaneously with the same handshape. These signs can be placed in different locations, thereby creating additional meanings (Sutton-Spence & Pedroni, 2023). This visually pleasing symmetry produces aesthetic impact by expressing harmony, beauty, and perfection (Quadros & Sutton-Spence, 2006). This resource can be observed in

Cowboy with Horse (Geraldine Vélez, Figure 3), where the symmetrical use of both hands lends force to the scene of the rider.



Figure 3. *Cowboy with Horse*.

Source: Clarita En-Seña, 2022d.

Same Handshapes: Aesthetic and Metaphorical. The use of repeated handshapes in signs creates a kind of visual “rhyme.” From an aesthetic point of view, the repetition of the same handshape is much more pleasing to the eye (Beukeleers & Vermeerbergen, 2022). In *Fish* (Claudia, Figure 4), the reiteration of the handshape conveys visual rhythm and reinforces the sense of continuous movement in the water.



Figure 4. *Fish*.

Source: Clarita En-Seña, 2021d.

Morphing: Changing Handshape. The movement of some signs can merge with that of others. A sign with a certain handshape in one location can adopt a new movement or a new location and acquire a different meaning (Sutton-Spence, 2021; Capirci *et al.*, 2022). The final handshape, location, and

movement of the preceding sign are maintained as the initial parameters of the following sign. It is an aesthetic resource that creates a poetic, smooth, and elegant effect (Quadros & Sutton-Spence, 2006). This can be clearly seen in *Rabbits* (Erica, Figure 5), where the handshape of the initial sign, “walk,” gradually transforms to “sad” and then to “indignation,” visually representing the rabbit’s state.

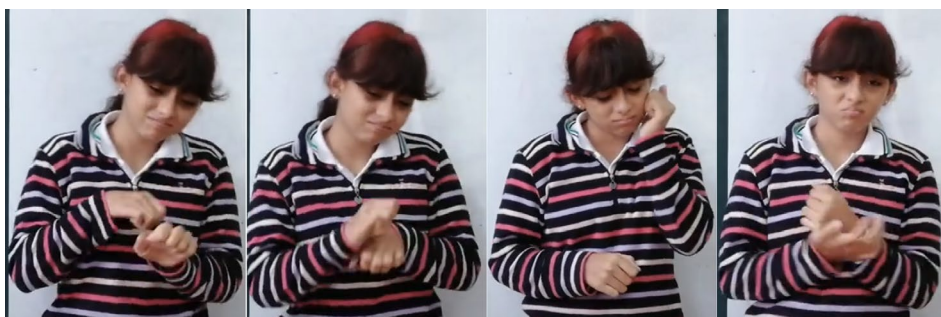


Figure 5. *Rabbits*.

Source: Clarita En-Seña 2022c.

Showing Humans (through incorporation). This consists of the imitation of human beings. This resource is aesthetically effective when the character is caricatured through the exaggeration of physical features or movements (Vandenitte, 2022). In *The Cowboy is deaf* (Sebastián Arenas, Figure 6), the narrator intensifies gestures and postures to highlight the main character and evoke humor and empathy.



Figure 6. *The Cowboy is Deaf.*

Source: Arenas, 2014b.

Showing Animals, Plants, and Inanimate Objects. The aesthetic imitation of human beings extends to the imitation of non-human beings, whether animals, plants, or inanimate objects. The important literary resource of anthropomorphism is used, in which the signer portrays the non-human character as if it were human. This occurs in *Dog* (Chelmy, Figure 7), where the animal is presented with humanized expressions and behaviors, and in *The Soccer Ball and Soccer* (Eduar David Peña, Figure 8), where the object comes to life by moving as the protagonist of the narrative.



Figure 7. *Dog.*

Source: Clarita En-Seña, 2021c.



Figure 8. *The Soccer Ball and Soccer.*

Source: Arenas, 2021.

Classifiers (and new classifiers). Hand configurations are selected from a conventional set within the sign language and are positioned and moved through space to show how characters and objects move and interact with one another. Effective storytelling in sign language typically makes use of classifiers to create

an engaging text. Classifiers render the meaning of what is narrated clearer and more accessible. Descriptive classifiers, in particular, serve a highly detailed function: they allow for the description of sounds, sizes, textures, flavors, tactile sensations, smells, and shapes, and, more generally, of inanimate objects and animate beings. An example appears in *Caterpillar-butterfly* (Sebastián Arenas, Figure 9), where the author uses a new classifier to depict the butterfly's body upon waking. He represents this new classifier through the forearm and fist, while also using movements of the body, head, and facial features to indicate the animal's actions, thereby generating a different form in the representation of metamorphosis.

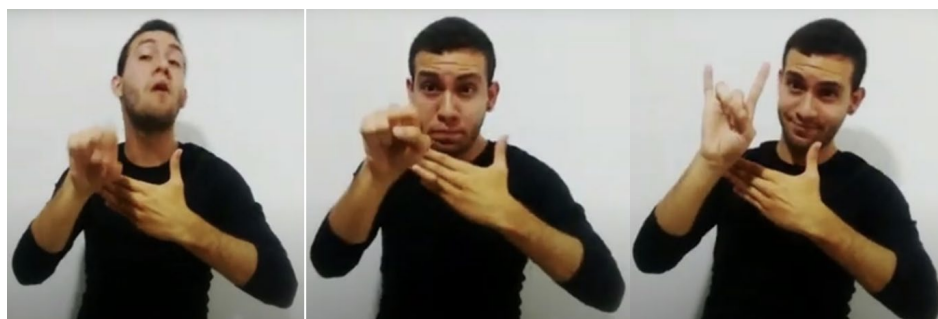


Figure 9. *Caterpillar-butterfly*.

Source: Francisco Luis En-Seña, 2021.

Non-manual Elements. Non-manual elements are very important, especially when the aim is to increase aesthetic impact. In aesthetic signing, fewer mouthing patterns derived from oralization often appear, partly due to a greater presence of highly iconic structures. The more visual the piece is and the fewer signs with formal vocabulary it contains, the fewer mouthing patterns derived from spoken language are observed. In *The Heart's Palpitations* (Sebastián Arenas, Figure 10), facial expressions intensify the emotion of the story, conveying visceral sensations to the viewer.



Figure 10. *The Heart's Palpitations.*

Source: Clarita En-Seña, 2022e.

Multiple Perspectives. Aesthetic signing often shares characteristics with cinematic techniques, including the presentation of different perspectives. There are two types: the signer may produce signs that represent two points of view of the same character (for example, alternating between a close-up shot and a long shot of the character), or may present the perspective of two different characters, such as that of the observer and the observed, through the use of divided space. This can be seen in *War* (Eduar 2, Figure 11), where the narrator alternates between the perspective of the combatant and that of the enemy to convey tension and drama.



Figure 11. *War.*

Source: Clarita En-Seña, 2022b.

Sutton-Spence (2021) states that these aesthetic elements generate emotion in viewers. However, this paper considers such elements to be part of the grammatical aspects of sign language, although they may acquire aesthetic value depending on how they are used. They are readily identifiable in narratives and, when taken into account, they facilitate the interpretation of a literary text, inviting the reader to perceive and to use the parameters, resources, and literary figures involved in storytelling consciously and effectively.

In light of the above, this study proposes exploring the aesthetic sign in the narratives that make up its corpus, which leads to aesthetics, understood here as a form of visual captivation that awakens sensitivity and emotion in recipients.

The aesthetic sign, then, transforms the way in which the linguistic sign is presented through modifications of intensification and form, components that allow the emergence of the aesthetic sign, together with elements that make the poetic function possible (Jakobson, 1975). This modification of the linguistic sign does not affect its content; rather, it adds an emotional charge through features of substitution and personification proper to the aesthetic sign. According to López (1982), “human representations and ideas are substituted through their personification, that is, through the embodiment of representations of human ideas in certain concrete objects and beings” (p. 60).

Within the parameters of sign language, modifications are produced in the intensity and form of signs, making discourse more striking and appealing. These variations in intensity may be exaggerated or excessive, and they are manifested through the use of literary and aesthetic figures, resources, and elements. Among them are classifiers, descriptions of places, prosopographies of animals and people, personification, and anthropomorphism, all of which produce sensitivity and emotion in recipients as a result of literary work.

In literary productions, resources can be identified that modify both the message and the way in which the narrator represents their world. These modifications mark the transition from the linguistic sign to the aesthetic sign. Through the force and intensity applied to parameters such as handshape, non-manual features, movement, location, and orientation (Quadros & Karnopp, 2007), the sign is modified and configured as an aesthetic sign. As indicated, this corresponds to a transformation of the sign through expansion and intensification, generating an intended effect in communicative interaction, whether humor, surprise, or horror, ranging from the tragic to the comic, and from the sublime to the horrible and monstrous.

In both the literary works collected and those created in the workshops, identifying aesthetic elements that emerge through the transition from the linguistic sign to the aesthetic sign that modifies it is possible. The intensification of the sign is what enables this transition, expressed through modifications that

alter the form of the structured sign. Intensification refers to changes in tension and in the movements of body parts, as well as to certain one-handed signs that are produced with both hands to achieve the intended intensity (Xavier, 2017). Characters may be enlarged, dramatized, or exaggerated to create powerful images in narratives; the narrator may amplify and dramatize character descriptions to heighten the audience's emotions (Sutton-Spence, 2021). In *Dinosaur* (Eduar 3), the exaggeration of gestures and size intensifies the visual effect and generates astonishment in recipients (Clarita En-Seña, 2022a).

The modifications that express intensity are presented in those parameters of sign language where attention is focused, showing the moment when the change from the linguistic sign to the aesthetic sign occurs. The modes of presentation of intensity in each parameter of sign language, as they appear in fragments of the corpus of literary productions in LSC, are specified below:

- **Handshape:** Intensity is achieved through greater amplitude, changes in handshape, and the use of both hands in signs that are initially one-handed, to express what is intended. In *Athlete* (Eduar 1), the transition from one hand to two highlights the character's physical strength (Clarita En-Seña, 2021a).
- **Movement:** Movements may be performed quickly or slowly, with more marked beginnings and endings, depending on what is intended to be expressed.
 - Repetition: The movement or the sign is repeated to emphasize something.
 - Addition or increase of trajectory: Movements broader than normal are performed.
 - Delayed release: The release at the beginning of the movement is delayed, thereby prolonging the duration of the sign. In *Me vs. Flies*, the accelerated repetition of movements underscores the humorous nature of the piece (Arenas, 2019).
- **Location:** Precision in the point of articulation of the sign is highly important for meaning, and intensity is marked through gaze. Effective use of location delimits the space of the characters' world; it "allows one to know where in signing space the articulating hand is located and, in cases where some part of the body is touched, which section of the

touching hand is closest to that place” (Oviedo, 2001, p. 109). In *Valeria Narrative*, differentiated spatial location helps identify each character and their relationships (Clarita En-Seña, 2021b).

- **Non-manual Features:** Facial gestures, gaze, mouth movements, tongue, eyebrows, and the position of the head and body stand out. The use of non-manual elements is key to achieving exaggeration. Facial expression, the opening and closing of the eyes and mouth, together with bodily movements, generate powerful visual images and intense emotions when emphasized (Sutton-Spence, 2021). “Basic features, related to possibilities of movement of the head and facial muscles, as well as some bodily postures articulated significantly, which together with the activity of the hands constitute the signs” (Oviedo, 2001, pp. 113-114). This is evidenced in *The Heart’s Palpitations*, where facial gestures intensify the dramatic quality of the story (Clarita En-Seña, 2022e).
- **Orientation:** This parameter acquires great intensity that attracts attention and causes emotion in viewers by increasing the impact of the visual image. “It accounts for the relative position of the articulating hand in space” (Oviedo, 2001, p. 109). In *War*, the marked orientation of the hands reinforces the confrontation between sides, increasing narrative tension (Clarita En-Seña, 2022b).

Discussion

The resources of sign language, literary figures, aesthetic elements, and discursive forms expand the possibilities of expression. This allows the linguistic sign to become an aesthetic sign, one that draws the gaze and evokes emotion and sensitivity in viewers by virtue of the parameters specific to sign language. This is precisely how the present study approaches the description and analysis of certain aspects of the narratives that make them aesthetically compelling.

Drawing on Deleuze (1995) and with regard to the ways in which art gives rise to thought about ways of life—in this case, the literary creation of narratives from an aesthetic perspective, through which life is reflected upon and participation in the world takes place—subjectivity is understood as the capacity to constitute oneself as an individual through language, within the scope of what the subject can do in interacting with and interpreting reality, as reflected in the

narratives they produce. Accordingly, the narrator's subjectivity is understood as being in a constant process of constitution.

LSC possesses a beauty that enables both subjective experience (that is, experiential and meaning-related experience) and aesthetic experience, understood as ways of perceiving the world and making meaning within it (Farina, 2005), as well as the sensitive captivation of things (Mandoki, 2001). In this sense, literary productions in LSC reveal elements of the narrators' subjectivity: their ways of presenting themselves, relating to others, and bringing together their attitudes, emotions, sensations, feelings, and thoughts. Literary creation is, for example, an artistic manifestation of subjectivity, insofar as it reveals how people represent reality, the mechanisms they use to represent the reality in which they live, and how they understand and express it. These findings reinforce the socio-anthropological approach (INSOR, 2006), which recognizes sign language as a legitimate language and as a fundamental means of cultural expression, in contrast to the clinical-therapeutic paradigm that sought to "normalize" the Deaf person through the imposition of oral language. From this perspective, "the Deaf community is distinguished by the absence of hearing, as well as primarily by its visual culture and identity, constructed around sign language and shared experiences" (Silva *et al.*, 2025, p. 6).

The relationship between aesthetics and subjectivity approaches aesthetics from contemplation, the poetic, the everyday, the sensitive, and the relational, thereby allowing LSC to engage in that artistic exercise through the act of literary creation. Subjectivity is linked to aesthetics through the sensitivity inherent in culture, which nourishes and permeates language through experience with others, with the world, and with oneself. In interaction with other people, language is inhabited, and vocabulary, forms, and styles of expression imbued with aesthetic elements are acquired, producing sensitive effects that are exposed to life (Mandoki, 2005).

Narrators express imagined and created stories in accordance with their knowledge and understandings of matters related to their lived experiences, as well as the values and dynamics specific to the communities to which they belong. In this case, reference is made to the transmission of ideas and messages in LSC laden with aesthetic elements, which are configured according to the viewer's interest in practice, allowing, according to Silva *et al.* (2025), "to tell their own stories, share their lived experiences, and see themselves represented in the cultural and artistic sphere" (p. 11). Viewers receive this information and perceive and interpret it according to their emotions. This is what the present study refers to as the "aesthetics of subjectivity": The way in which the narrator expresses and generates emotions in the audience through their manner of being, based on their experience and understandings in interaction with others. From a

pedagogical perspective, this recognition is fundamental, since it makes including literary productions in LSC as teaching material possible, thereby fostering the creativity and aesthetic development of Deaf students in school contexts.

Understanding the aesthetics of subjectivity in literary productions in LSC through these created and expressed forms makes acquiring new elements that enrich expression possible, rendering discourse aesthetically more elaborate. At the same time, this contributes to an ongoing constitution of subjectivity, nourished by experience as an openness to reality, which generates a transformation of the self and of one's presence in the world in relation to others. All this takes place within a specific field of action and through a capacity for interaction mediated by intentionality and negotiation in thinking, feeling, and willing.

As learning is acquired, the recognition of sign language becomes evident. Through this language, those who require it for communication are made visible, and, therefore, so too are their educational processes and their own creations. The presentation of created narratives is the result of the experience of people's becoming, of the fact of existing and being in relation with other beings in nature, both human and non-human. In this sense, work with literary productions in LSC in the educational sphere fosters the cultural appreciation of the Deaf community, as well as the consolidation of an inclusive pedagogical practice that integrates literature, identity, and aesthetics.

Participants naturally invent, imagine, and create narratives spontaneously. This makes observing characteristics inherent to their becoming in the world possible, a world permeated by culture and identity. The aesthetics surrounding LSC constitutes a fabric that produces sense and meaning and enables understanding through visual experience. According to Farina (2006), one speaks of aesthetics when experience refers to an order of ideas and to a specific sensible order that configures forms of subjectivity and is related to what inhabits each person through their experiences and beliefs.

Conclusions

Those who produce literature in sign language seek to express and reflect sensations, feelings, and emotions, as well as to craft messages that engage others. They also represent the world they inhabit: How they live in it, how they experience it, what it means to be in the place they live, and what they learn through signs. When a narrative in sign language is viewed, audiences are transported to those imaginary worlds and experience sensations, tears, laughter, expression, and feeling; a sense of motivation, displacement, and sensitivity emerges that forms

part of the aesthetics of the narrator's subjectivity. This is the result of their lived experiences, of what they think, feel, and desire, and of what enables them to captivate, move, and evoke sensations in viewers.

The resources, figures, and modes that express intensity and form in literary productions, together with the parameters of LSC, enable the configuration of the aesthetic sign. This sign is closely linked to the narrator's subjectivity, including the narrator's identity, experiences, and lived realities. Such elements make the literary creation that renders the narrative compelling and produces emotion in the audience possible. Literary productions in LSC are imbued with the participants' ways of being; aesthetics is the reflection of the narrator's subjectivity. In this sense, literature in LSC also constitutes a pedagogical resource that strengthens language teaching, fosters aesthetic sensitivity, and contributes to the construction of Deaf students' identities. Recognition of the value of LSC is essential to consolidating pedagogical practices that are more inclusive, equitable, and responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity. Literature in LSC is a pedagogical tool that offers a rich and diverse range of discursive genres, thereby playing an important role in linguistic and cultural development.

This study proposes the videographic method for research on literature in sign language. This method makes recording, collecting, identifying, and analyzing data and information on a topic of interest (in this case, the aesthetic construction of literary productions in Colombian Sign Language) possible, yielding results that reveal aspects of reality that must be considered and addressed. Likewise, the videographic method makes detecting weaknesses that may be addressed through improvement-oriented actions possible. It thus constitutes a contribution to research on sign language because of its visual nature and its consideration of handshape, non-manual features, location, orientation, and movement. In the educational sphere, this method is presented as a didactic tool that facilitates the analysis of narratives in LSC and opens possibilities for their incorporation into classroom practices.

Further study on aesthetics, subjectivity, and literature in LSC from a literary perspective is recommended to continue examining their components. This would allow for greater precision, clarity, and knowledge regarding literary productions in LSC, always from the internal perspective of the language. At the same time, these advances should be translated into pedagogical strategies that integrate literature in LSC into school education, so that the Deaf community may have access to materials and educational experiences that recognize their language and culture.

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