

Attitudes towards Black American Sign Language

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IAM3 2023

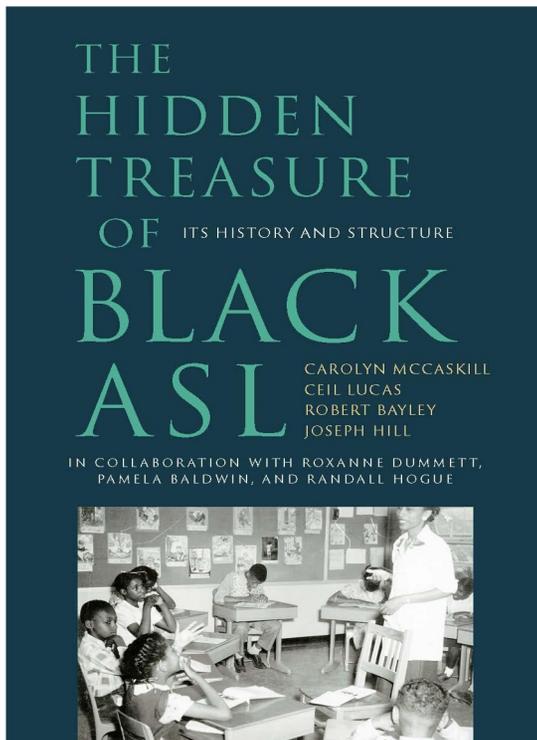
Friday June 16, 2023

Based on:

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<https://repository.upenn.edu/pwpl/vol23/iss2/4/>

The History and Structure of Black ASL: Research Team, 2007 - 2011



black asl



The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL: Companion Video to the Book

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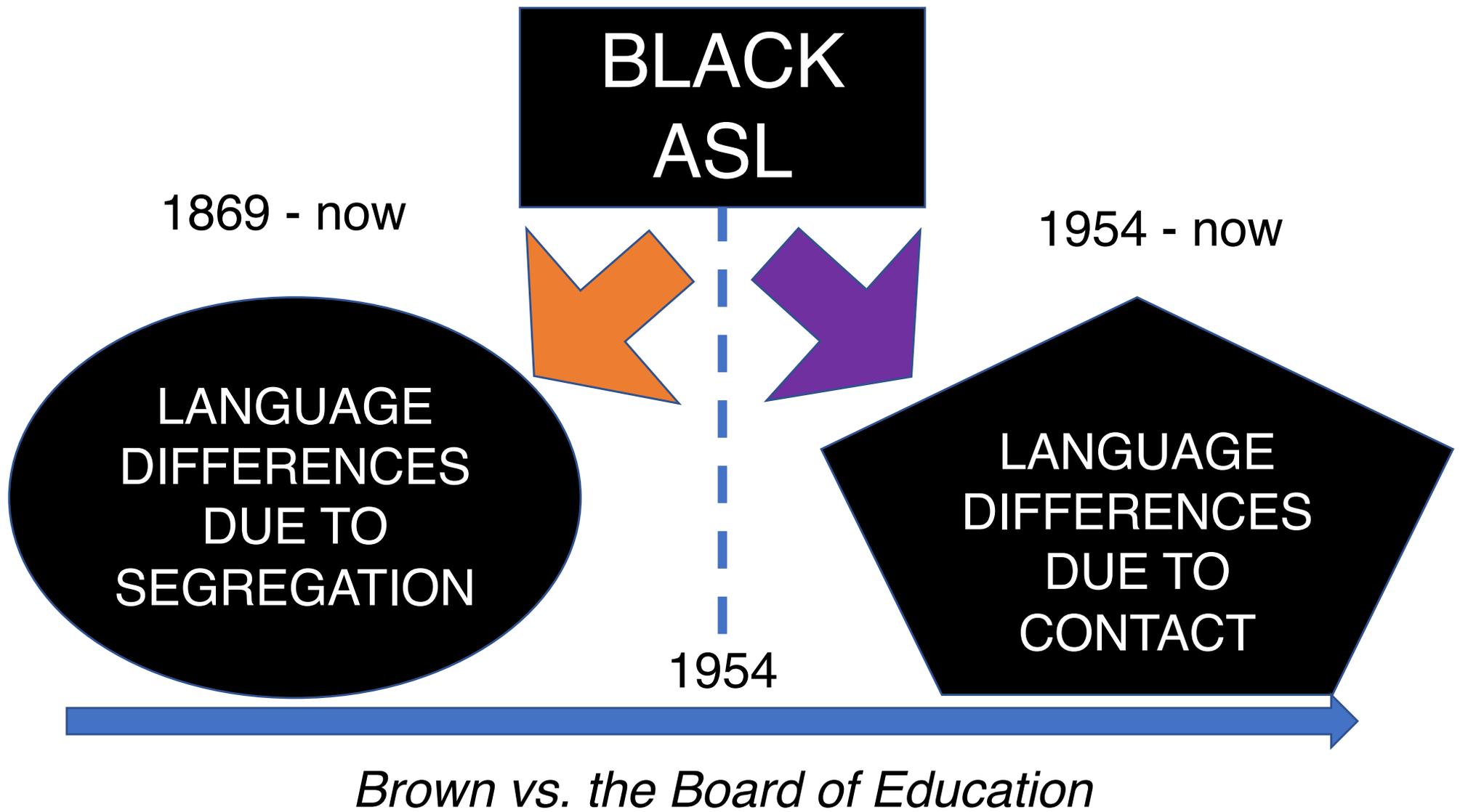


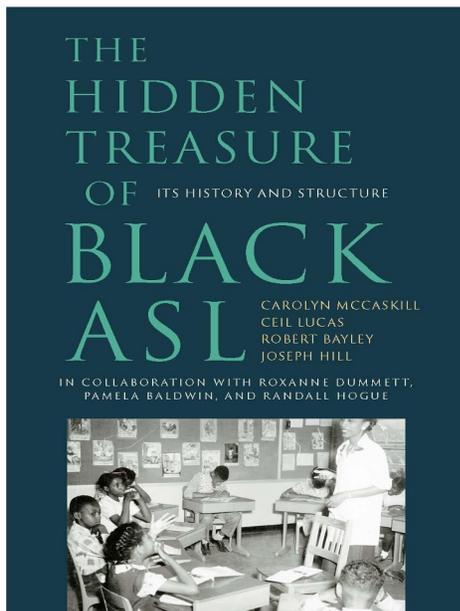
The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL: Its History and Structure

Companion video to the book:

<http://gupress.gallaudet.edu/bookpage...>

Carolyn McCaskill, Ceil Lucas, Robert Bayley, and Joseph Hill





Marked features of Black ASL

PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES

LOWERING
(forehead location)
KNOW, FOR,
TEACHER

*Woodward, Erting,
and Oliver (1976)*

*Lucas, Bayley, and
Valli (2001)*

HANDEDNESS
(number of hands)
TIRED, DON'T-
KNOW

*Woodward and
DeSantis (1977)*

Lucas et al. (2007)

PHYSICAL SPACE
(signing space)

Aramburo (1989)

Lewis (1998)

*Lucas, Bayley, and
Valli (2001)*

LEXICAL FEATURES

SEGREGATION-BASED

BATHROOM: NC, TX, VA
CHICKEN: NC, TX

Woodward et al. (1976)
Lucas, Bayley, and Valli (2001)

CONTACT-BASED

ex. TRIPPIN', MY-BAD, BOY-BYE

Lucas, Bayley, and Valli (2001)

DISCOURSE AND CONTACT FEATURES

REPETITION

Ex. WHAT'S-UP+++, LEAVE+++

Lucas, Bayley, and Valli (2001)

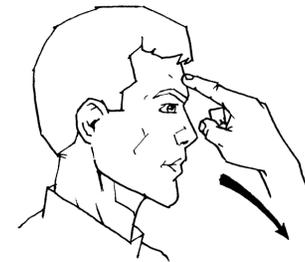
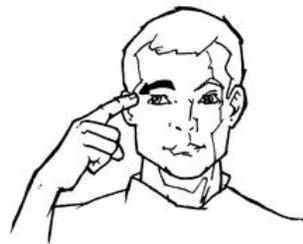
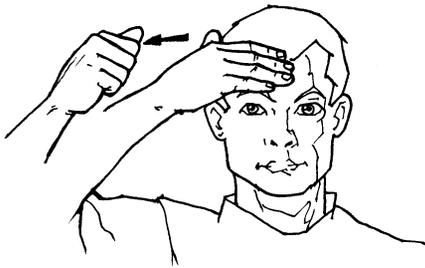
MOUTHING

Lesser instances of English mouthing
among older Black Deaf signers

Lucas, Bayley, and Valli (2001)
Lucas and Valli (1992)

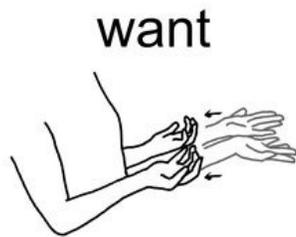
Location: Comparison of Results from Four Studies, Age by Lowering (% –cf)

Study	Tokens	Younger	Older	Total
Southern Black ASL	877	36%	23%	29%
Louisiana Black ASL	157	44%	26%	38%
Northern Black ASL (3 sites)	355	50%	32%	47%
White ASL (7 sites)	1882	60%	49%	53%



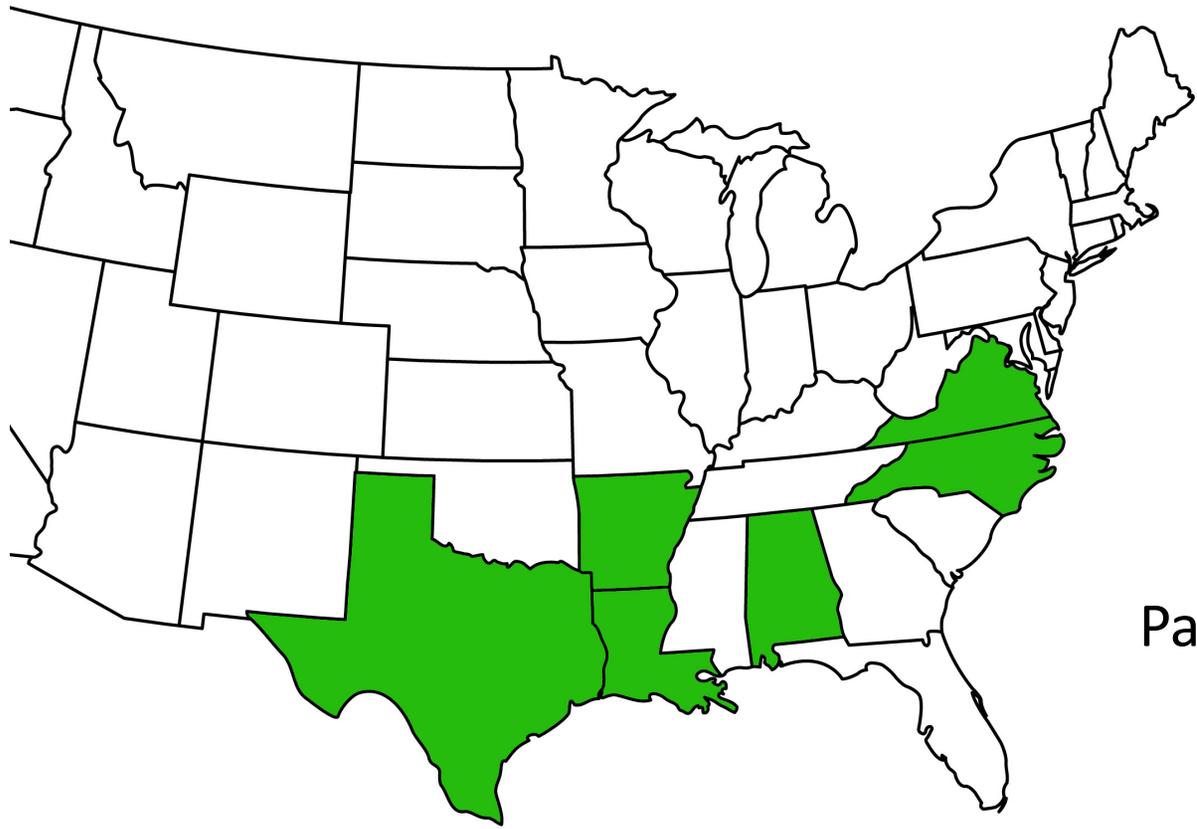
1 Handed vs. 2 Handed Signs: Comparison of Results from Four Studies (% 1 Handed)

Study	Tokens	Younger	Older	Total
Southern Black ASL	818	40%	31%	35%
Louisiana Black ASL	258	43%	24%	39%
Northern Black ASL (3 sites)	855	46%	44%	45%
White ASL (7 sites)	1145	57%	37%	50%





Demographic Profile



States Visited

- North Carolina (1868/9)
- Texas (1887)
- Arkansas (1887)
- Alabama (1892)
- Virginia (1909)
- Louisiana (1938)

Participants (N=90)

- “Over 55” (n = 58)
 - attended school during segregation
- “Under 35” (n = 32)
 - attended integrated schools

The History and Structure of Black ASL: Data Collection

Participants' Former Schools: Race of Students

	55 and older		35 and younger	
<i>Black Only</i>	38	86%	0	0%
<i>Mostly Black</i>	2	5%	0	0%
<i>Black Only, then Mixed</i>	0	0%	4	13%
<i>Mixed</i>	0	0%	26	81%
<i>Mostly White</i>	1	2%	2	6%
<i>(left blank)</i>	3	7%	0	0%

Participants' Sign Language Acquisition

Where they learned signs	55 and older		35 and younger	
<i>At school</i>	36	81%	21	66%
<i>At home</i>	1	2%	6	19%
<i>Both</i>	1	2%	2	6%
<i>(left blank)</i>	6	14%	3	9%

Participants' Sign Language Acquisition

Who signers learned signs from	55+		35-	
<i>Teachers only</i>	11	25%	0	0%
<i>Teachers and classmates</i>	10	23%	5	16%
<i>Socializing with classmates</i>	3	7%	9	28%
<i>School resources (flashcards, interpreters, books)</i>	4	9%	1	3%
<i>Deaf family</i>	2	5%	5	16%
<i>Non-Deaf family</i>	0	0%	1	3%
<i>Other Deaf adult (non-family)</i>	2	5%	1	3%
<i>(left blank)</i>	12	27%	10	31%



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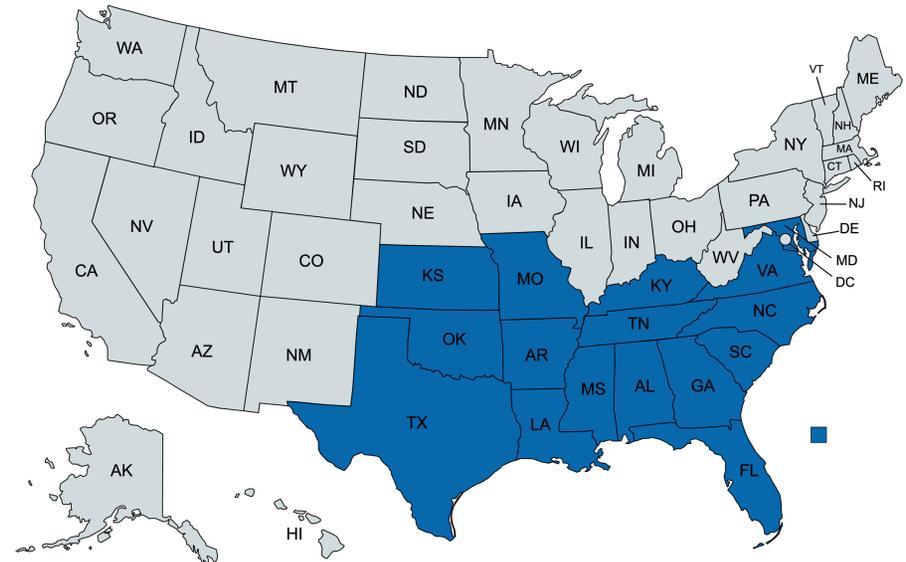
Language Policies

Schools	# of Students (range)	Oral	Non-oral	Combined	Taught speech
Black	41-175	10%	17%	80%	57%
White	131–491	70%	13%	17%	80%

A pattern of manualism in all eighteen of the Black schools and departments from their founding after 1869

White schools: a clear pattern of manualism from their founding until the advent of oralism and a maintenance of a combined method afterwards

Black schools: oralism was simply not extended to the Black students through the same time period



Created with mapchart.net

(Lucas et al., 2022)

Participants' Former Schools: Teachers' Race

	55 and older		35 and younger	
<i>Black</i>	20	45%	0	0%
<i>Most Black</i>	5	11%	0	0%
<i>Both</i>	0	0%	12	38%
<i>Most White</i>	1	2%	9	29%
<i>White</i>	6	14%	6	19%
<i>Black at one school, White at another</i>	0	0%	6	19%
<i>White to start, then mixed</i>	7	16%	0	0%
<i>(left blank)</i>	5	11%	0	0%

Participants' Former Schools: Teachers' Auditory Status

	55 and older		35 and younger	
<i>Deaf</i>	7	16%	0	0%
<i>Most Deaf</i>	7	16%	2	6%
<i>Both</i>	0	0%	5	11%
<i>Most hearing</i>	2	5%	12	27%
<i>Most hearing, but later moved to school with both</i>	0	0%	2	6%
<i>Hearing</i>	23	52%	8	25%
<i>(left blank)</i>	5	11%	3	9%

Participants' Comments: Teachers' Signing

	55 and older		35 and younger	
<i>Mostly fingerspelling</i>	2	5%	3	9%
<i>Unskilled signing</i>	8	18%	9	28%
<i>Basic signing, simultaneous communication, total communication</i>	3	7%	2	6%
<i>Signed Exact English</i>	11	25%	7	22%
<i>ASL signing</i>	8	18%	4	13%
<i>Some of everything</i>	0	0%	4	13%
<i>(left blank)</i>	12	27%	3	9%

Participants' Comments: Teachers' Signing

Black & White teachers' signing	55 and older		35 and younger	
<i>Signing is different</i>	14	32%	19	59%
<i>Signing is similar</i>	0	0%	1	3%
<i>Undecided</i>	0	0%	2	6%
<i>(no comments made)</i>	30	68%	10	31%

Themes

- **“White Deaf education is better.”**
 - Systemic racism in the distribution of educational resources and talents
- **“White signing is better and more advanced.”**
 - Influence of racial and linguistic hegemonies on the perception of language differences
- **“Black signing is different from White signing based on style, attitude, and culture. ”**
 - Categorize differences as cultural-based rather than deficit-based
- **“Younger Black Deaf signers sign differently depending on situation and people. ”**
 - Awareness of the need to code switch

Theme:
“White Deaf education is better.”

Arkansas, 55+



00:36

Virginia, 35-



00:19

Theme:

“White signing is better and more advanced.”

Texas, 55+



0:52

Louisiana, 55+



0:29

Theme:

“White signing is better and more advanced.”

Louisiana, 35-



Theme:

”Black signing is different from White signing based on style, attitude, and culture.”

North Carolina, 35-



00:52

Theme:

“Younger Black Deaf signers sign differently depending on situation and people.”

Texas, 35-



00:40



Acknowledgments

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SPENCER

Special thanks to the members of the African American Deaf community who generously shared with us the richness of their experience and language.



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