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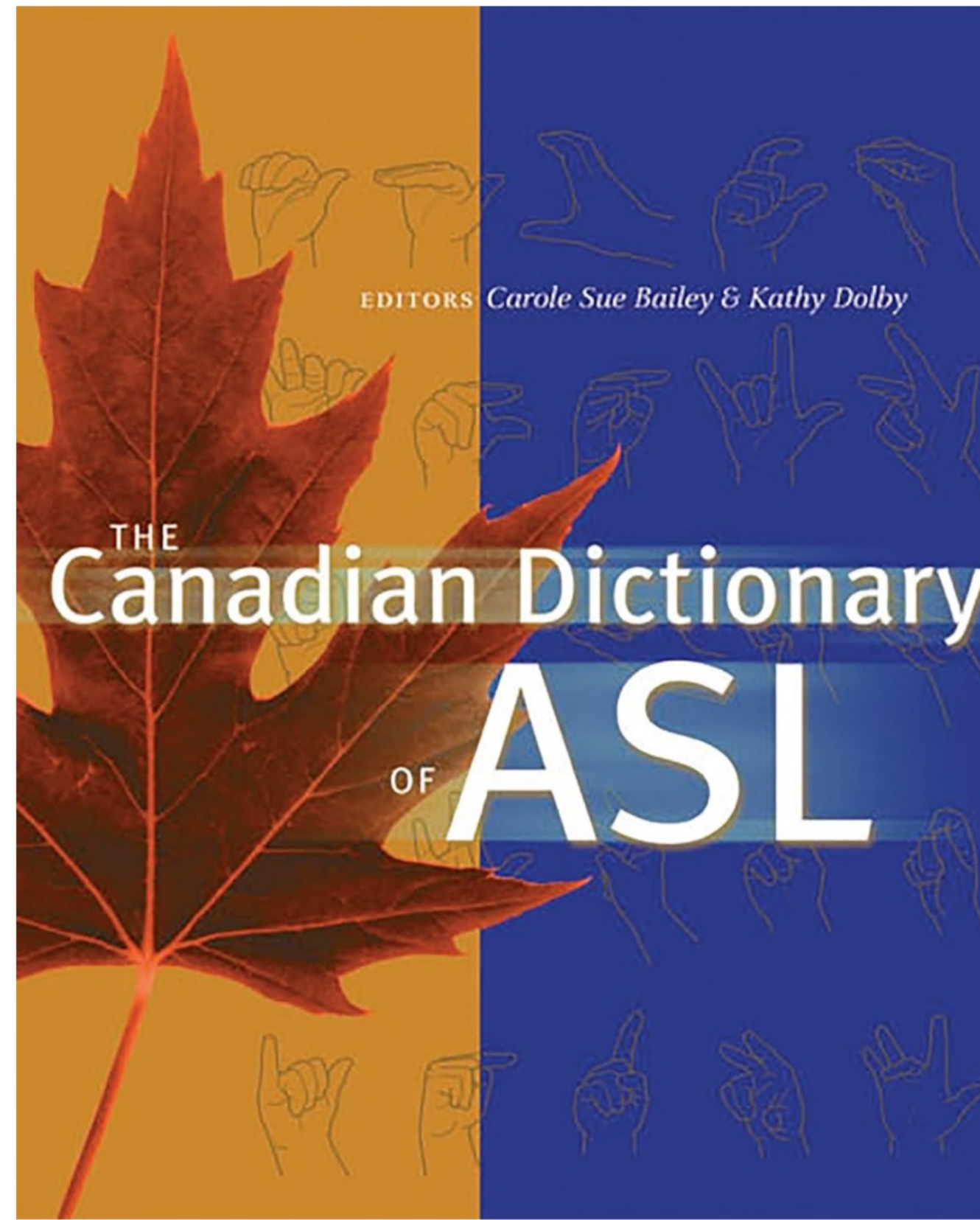
Phonological Transcription of the Canadian Dictionary of ASL as a Language Resource

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The Canadian Dictionary of ASL (CD-ASL)

- Bailey & Dolby 2002; work began 1982
- Developed in conjunction with the *Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf*
- Over 8,700 signs; many unique to Canada
- Focus on regional variation of signs across Canada: the Pacific (British Columbia), Prairie (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), Central (Ontario and Québec), and Atlantic (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador)
- See sample entry for RED below.

EDITORS Carole Sue Bailey & Kathy Dolby

The Canadian Dictionary of ASL
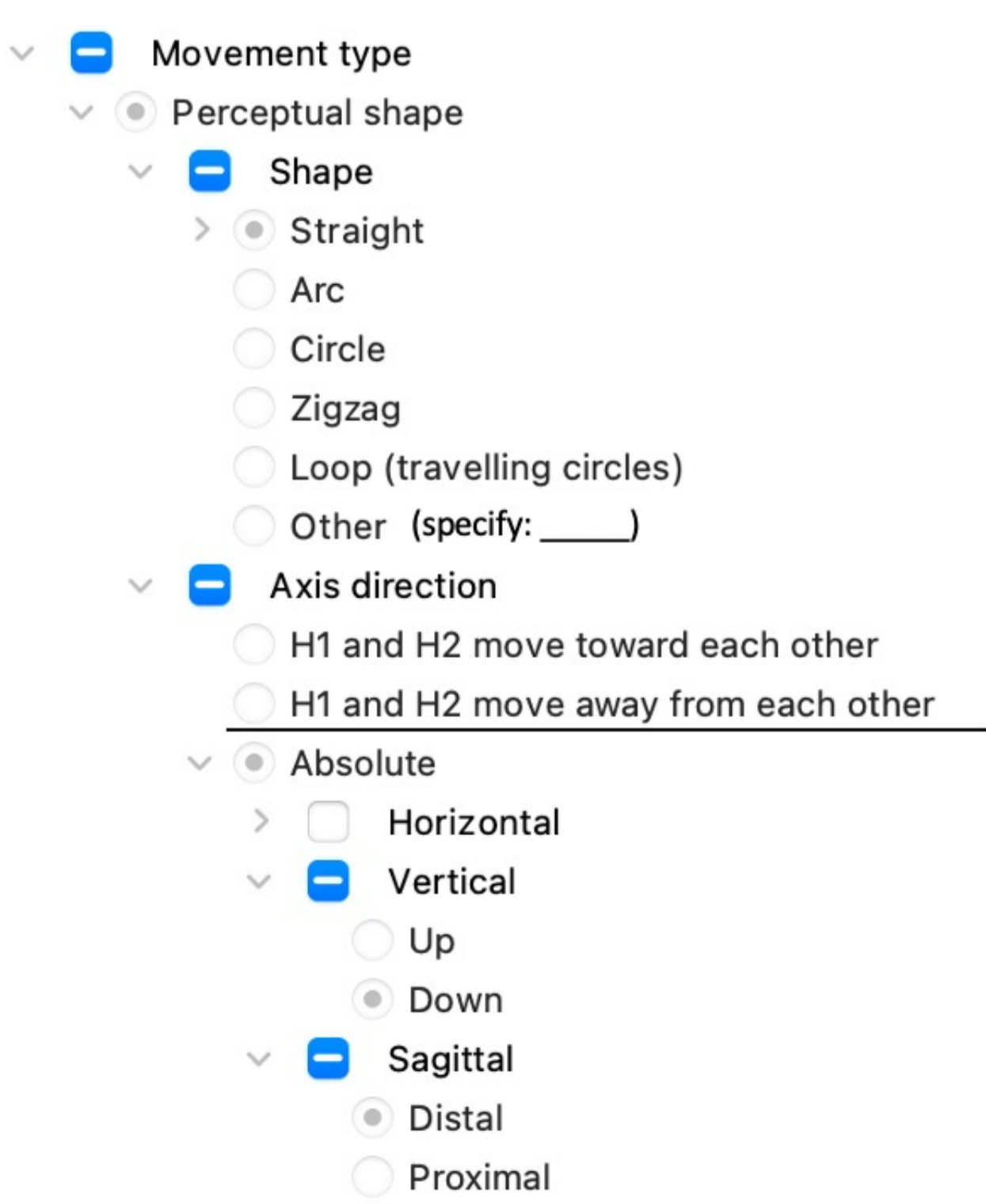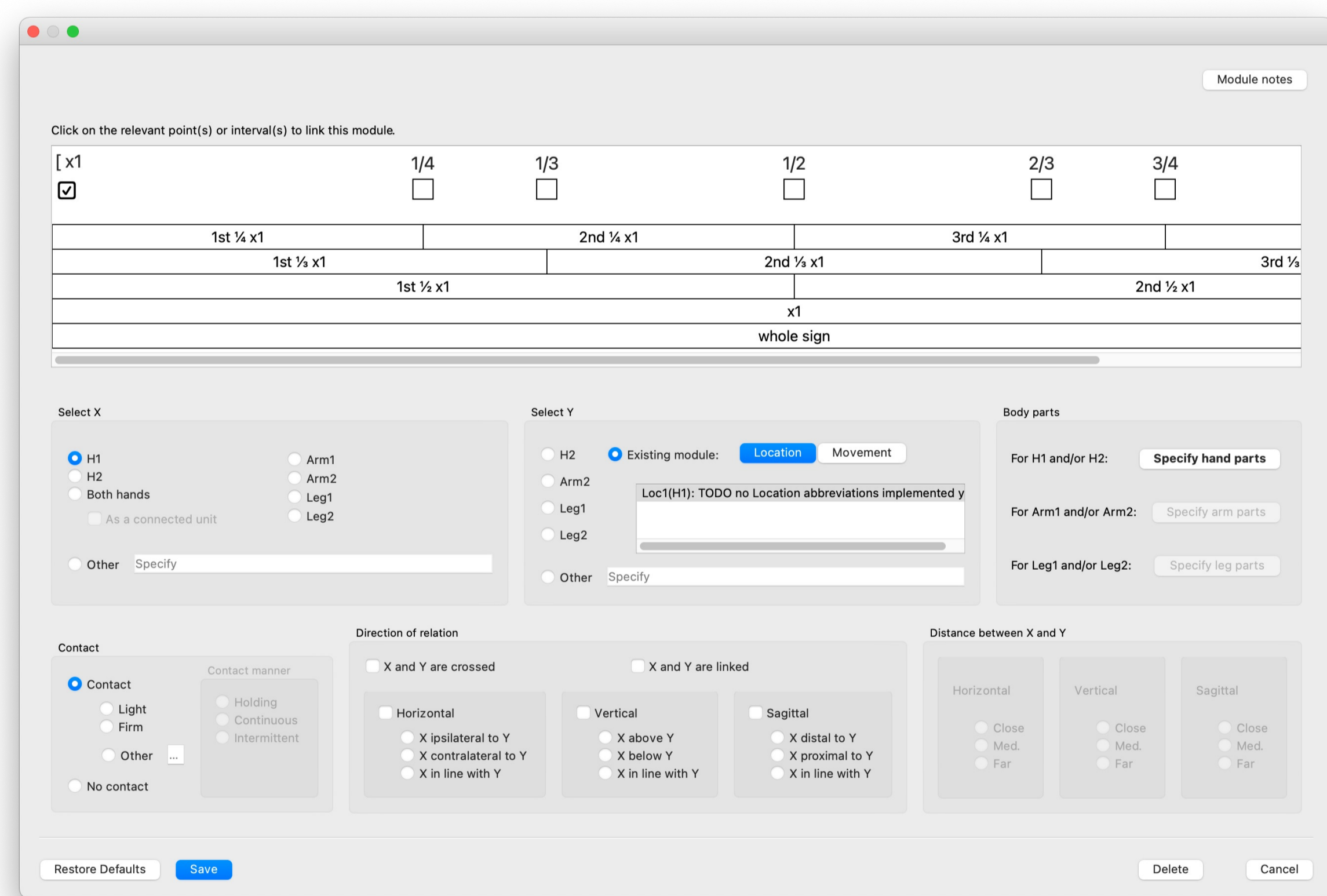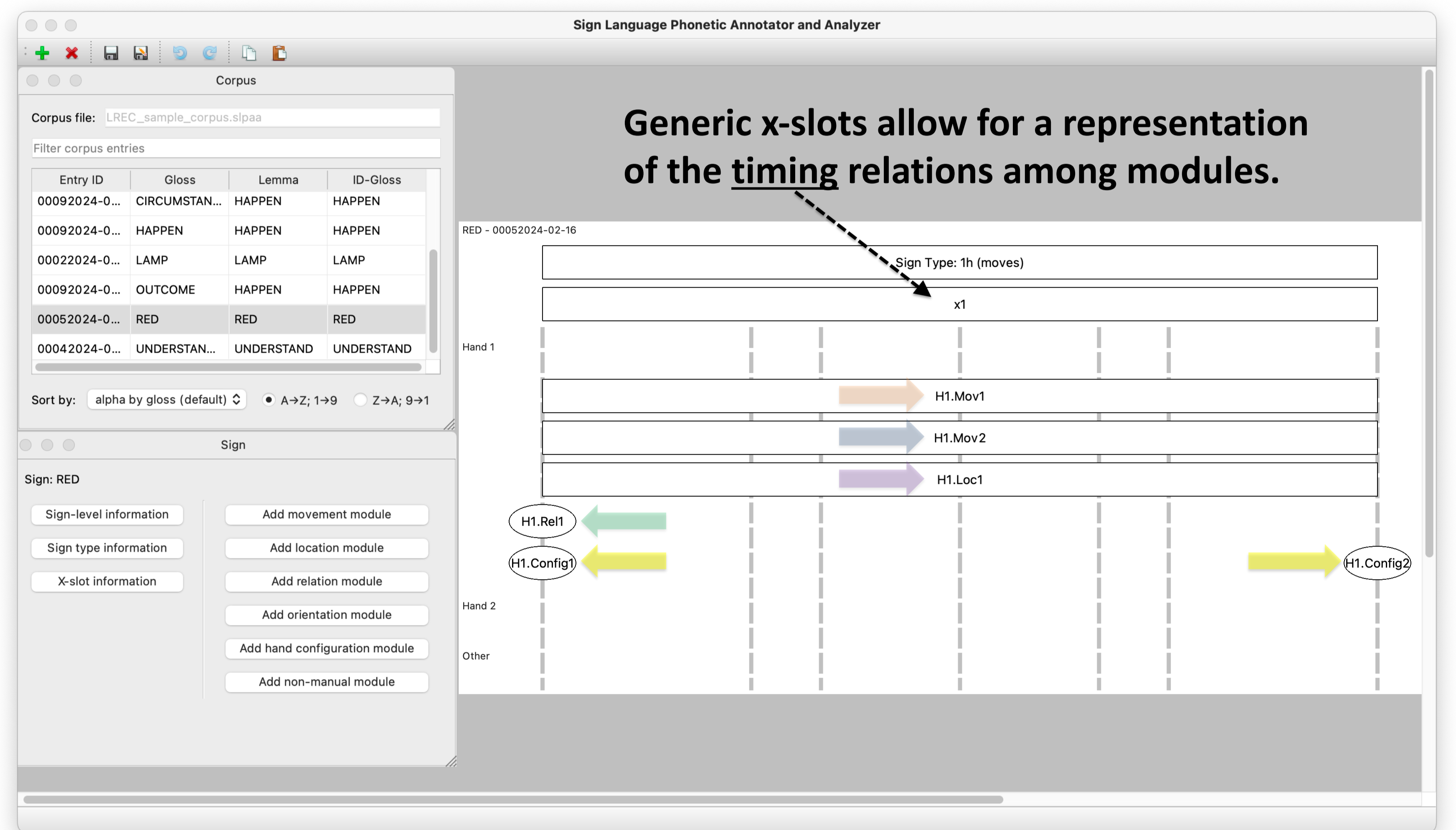
Transcription Process

- Sample of all entries from the *CD-ASL*
- Select signs that share a gloss with entries in the *ASL-LEX* database (Casselli et al. 2021; N = 2723)
- Transcribe all of the various entries from the CD-ASL for that gloss, using the *Sign Language Phonetic Annotator-Analyzer* (SLP-AA) software (Hall et al. 2022)
- Transcribe hand configuration, movement, location, contact, and relative orientation
- Consult with native signers to resolve ambiguities in text
- >2,000 signs have been transcribed so far

red: *adj.* the colour of blood. *He wore a red shirt and white shorts for Canada Day.*

SIGN: Vertical right 'ONE' hand is held with palm facing the body and tip of forefinger touching the lower lip. As the hand is then drawn very firmly forward at a downward angle, the forefinger crooks to form an 'X' shape.

Sign to be coded: RED **in ASL** *(from the CD-ASL)*

Generic x-slots allow for a representation of the *timing* relations among modules.

Details of the relation module (above) and movement selection options (left) in the SLP-AA software, showing the coding for RED**.**

Benefits:

- Detailed form-based transcription provides insight into:
  - **phonetic description** issues
  - **phonological structure**
    - find **minimal pairs**
    - calculate **lexical frequency** of phonological parameters
    - analyse **phonotactic restrictions**
- Digitized resource for Canadian ASL users:
  - **searches for signs using form** rather than English glosses
- Digitizing older sign language resources:
  - **acknowledge past signers** and research
  - **preserve sign language data** for research and education efforts
- SLP-AA is a user-friendly, GUI-based software
  - **consistent transcription** of any signed variety
  - **analysis component** for easy search and comparison of signs

References:

Bailey, Carole Sue, and Kathy Dolby (eds.). (2002). *The Canadian Dictionary of ASL*. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press.

Casselli, Naomi, Karen Emmorey, Zed Sevcikova Sehyr, Ariel Cohen-Goldberg, and Cindy O'Grady Farnady. (2021). ASL-LEX 2.0: Visualizing the ASL lexicon. PID https://asl-lex.org/.

Hall, Kathleen Currie, Yurika Aonuki, Kaili Vesik, April Poy, and Nico Tolmie. (2022). Sign language phonetic annotator-analyzer: Open-source software for form-based analysis of sign languages. LREC2022.

Acknowledgments:

https://github.com/PhonologicalCorpusTools/SLPAA
Click link / scan for access to the software and a recorded demonstration!
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