



RESEARCH AT GALLAUDET

A Publication of the Gallaudet Research Institute at Gallaudet University

Fall 2005-Winter 2006

SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

Reaching Out: Gallaudet Plays a Variety of Roles in International Research

By Elizabeth Shun-Ching Parks

Goedele De Clerck, who grew up as an oral deaf person in mainstream education programs in Belgium, first met a signing deaf person in her early twenties. Captivated by an experience of deafness so unlike her own, she plunged into this new Deaf world. De Clerck quickly found that many Flemish deaf people, like herself, experience a new sense of identity as deaf people when they begin to meet and interact with people from other countries who are proud of their deafness, embrace a deaf identity that celebrates their linguistic and cultural achievements, reject the idea that deafness needs to be cured, and advocate for deaf people's human rights. Like many individuals who have become active in the Flemish deaf community as a result of such an empowering experience—described by members as a WAKE-UP moment—De Clerck, now a student in Gallaudet's Department of ASL and Deaf Studies, is conducting research at Gallaudet on how transnational contact can empower deaf individuals to see themselves as part of a global deaf community.



Goedele De Clerck signs WAKE-UP

Continued on Page 5

International Sign: Negotiating Understanding

By Rachel Rosenstock



Rachel Rosenstock

During the summer of 2002, thousands of people traveled to Washington, D.C., to take part in Deaf Way II—one of the largest gatherings of the international deaf community in the past decade. Participants from 90 countries came together to exchange ideas and learn about deaf culture. In planning for such a conference, an important question emerges: How do you make presentations accessible to as many people as possible when they use different sign languages? Since American Sign Language (ASL) is being learned as a foreign language in the deaf communities of many countries and in this case was the indigenous sign language of the host country, the Deaf Way conference naturally provided interpretation into ASL, but fluency in ASL is by no means universal among deaf people. A lecture on the newest computer technology or any other topic would be largely inaccessible to this linguistically diverse audience through ASL alone. Unfortunately, the cost for interpretation into the native sign languages of all participants would be enormous.

This dilemma is not new to the international deaf community. In the late 1950s, the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) established a committee whose mission was to create a dictionary of international signs. The resulting collection, GESTUNO, was used for the first time at the 1976 WFD congress in Bulgaria. Unfortunately, the

Continued on Next Page

deaf participants found the translation into GESTUNO incomprehensible. One cause for this was GESTUNO's lack of adequate grammatical structure. The vocabulary in isolation seemed accessible enough, but the blank faces and lack of body movement failed to convey meaning to the audience. In subsequent years, children of deaf adults (CODAs) and deaf interpreters took up the cause and started combining the original collection of signs, GESTUNO, with features of natural sign languages that were considered by linguists to be universal, such as role playing and classifier use. While there are a few individuals who offer training sessions before large conferences, this new means of communication, International Sign (IS), is not a system that is learned in a classroom. A thorough knowledge of IS—generally including awareness of vocabulary origins and sentence structure—is still lacking. The research presented in this article is derived from my 2004 dissertation,* which was a first step toward a comprehensive description of IS.

The data used in this study was collected from three IS interpreter teams (six interpreters) at Deaf Way II. Each team was filmed interpreting two 45-minute lectures. For

* Rosenstock, Rachel. (2004). *An Investigation of International Sign: Analyzing Structure and Comprehension*. Gallaudet University.

Rachel Rosenstock was the first graduate of Gallaudet's newly developed **Ph.D. Program in the Department of Linguistics**. The linguistics department, known for its unique interest in the use and study of American Sign Language (ASL), first opened its doors to students interested in earning a Ph.D. degree in 2002. This expanded the department's already established M.A. program.

Students pursuing a Ph.D. degree will receive the M.A. degree after successfully completing the first two years of the program, providing them with a solid grounding in linguistic theory, method, and research with a special emphasis on sign language linguistics. They will then continue with additional course work and research leading to a doctoral dissertation and the doctoral degree in linguistics.

Students may specialize in a range of theoretical and applied areas related to sign language, including but not limited to phonology, syntax, morphology, cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, language assessment, first language acquisition, and second language acquisition.

the analysis, 12 five-minute clips were chosen randomly, transcribed and analyzed. In order to investigate the source of the IS lexicon, a list of all signs occurring over five times in the data set was compiled and compared to 15 natural sign languages (SLs), from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Middle East.

The key question in analyzing IS vocabulary is the place of origin. In previous research, it was found that most IS signs stem from the sign language (SL) of the country where IS is used. IS interpreters intentionally adapt vocabulary from the local SL on the assumption that the audience will be most familiar with that particular set of signs. Other IS signs were assumed to be either highly iconic or specific to IS alone. Iconicity is defined as the resemblance between the form of a sign and the concept to which it refers.

Interestingly, a comparison between a list of IS vocabulary and natural SLs in the present study revealed that over 60% of the signs occurred in the same form in more than eight SLs as well as in IS. This suggests that the majority of IS signs are not signs borrowed from a specific SL, as other studies found, but rather are common to many natural SLs. Only 2% of IS signs were found to be unique to IS. The remaining 38% were borrowed (or "loan") signs that could be traced back to one SL or a group of related SLs.

A comparison with the original GESTUNO signs shows that most of the GESTUNO signs were replaced in IS by signs with higher iconicity and loan vocabulary. This is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Comparison of GESTUNO and IS Signs
(GESTUNO signs are above the gloss; the row beneath shows the forms in IS.)



Groups of languages were formed by geographical location and the degree of similarity among languages, and most loans could be traced back to several SLs within one or two language groups. In Figure 2 below, the IS signs for HAVE and GOVERNMENT are paralleled with a natural

SL variant of the same concept. HAVE is unique to the ASL language group. It occurs in ASL, Jamaican SL and Swiss German SL. GOVERNMENT is found in the BSL group, occurring in both Auslan and South African SL.

Figure 2: IS Loan Vocabulary



Nearly a quarter of all IS signs occurred in the same form in over 10 different SLs, four or five of the language groups. Of the signs most common among all SLs, the degree of iconicity is striking. Figure 3, below, shows the signs for HOUSE, OLYMPICS, BOOK, and WRITE. The IS sign is shown on the left, followed by the examples from three different SLs.

Figure 3: Common Signs in IS



In some cases, the image conveyed in a sign may be universally understood. For example, signs for knowledge and emotion seem to occur in the same location for all SLs included in this study. The location of the head represents knowledge, while the chest represents feeling. In Figure 4a, signs for ‘increasing knowledge’ are given, while Figure 4b shows the feeling ‘depressed’.

Figure 4a: Universal Sign Location: ‘know much’



Figure 4b: Universal Sign Location: ‘feel’



Iconic representation is clearly indicated when even a non-signer was able to guess meanings related to these signs. Some signs, however, do not share universal iconicity. Cultural motivation becomes obvious in the usage of the sign THUMBS-UP (Figure 5a), as an expression of approval and positive reinforcement in IS. In Japanese SL, the same form means ‘no’.

Figure 5a: Signs that are Iconic: THUMBS-UP



The same is true for the sign HAT-OFF (Figure 5b). As a rough translation of ‘recognizing their work’, representing the concept of ‘recognition’ or ‘respect’, the IS meaning was easily understood by most European and American signers, while to the South Korean, it meant ‘support’.

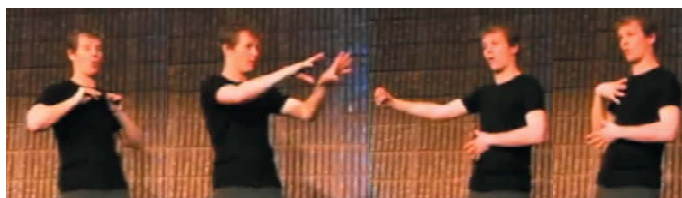
Figure 5b: Signs that are Iconic: HAT-OFF



Overall, the IS lexicon exhibits a number of highly iconic signs that are common among natural SLs, as well as loans specific to single SLs or SL groups. Only a very small number of signs are unique to IS. It seems, however, that the size of the IS lexicon is very small in comparison to natural SLs. Interpreters rely, instead, on grammatical means to convey meaning.

Many researchers summarize the possible origin of the grammar of IS as a combination of natural SL and IS. IS makes use of several features that are also frequently found in natural SLs. Taub* describes various structures that seem to exist in all natural SLs researched to date. She names, among others, the classifier system, pronoun system, and the inflections of the verb system. These structures also seem to be prominent in IS. Directional verbs are used frequently to indicate the relationship between two entities. An example is shown in Figure 6 where the IS interpreter begins the sign COPY at location B, indicating the entity that is being copied, and moves toward location A to indicate the entity that is doing the copying. The interpreter then shifts roles and repeats the directional verb from another perspective.

Figure 6: Different perspectives of COPY



COPY B to A

COPY A to B

* Taub, Sarah. 2001. *Language from the Body, Iconicity, and Metaphor in ASL*. Washington DC: Gallaudet University Press.

On a discourse-pragmatic level, many structures in IS were found that correspond to natural SL structures but that are used more frequently in IS. Many observers note the extensive use of role play. Often, when specific vocabulary is not available, actions are performed by assuming a role. At other times, role-play is used to reenact dialogues or events or to show the relationship between two or more people. The techniques used for role play in IS are identical to those documented in natural SLs.

Tokens are created when signers associate specific locations in space with different concepts. Tokens provide a way to refer back to concepts without having to reiterate explanations and are used frequently in IS. Comparisons, contrasts, dichotomies of power, and other relations can be expressed by specific placement of tokens based on iconic principles. In one case in the present data, ten different tokens are introduced and re-accessed within a 5-minute period. The complexity and multilayered nature of the tokens observed in this data suggest that IS interpreters assume that tokens are universally known and used.

The limitation of the IS lexicon forces interpreters to expand upon simple concepts in lengthy explanations. These explanations are 'costly' because they require time – a valuable commodity in simultaneous interpretation. As a consequence, many interpreters limit explanation of a concept to whatever is immediately necessary. This is illustrated with the introduction of the concept 'loan' in one context as a request for money and, in another context, as the process of receiving, working toward repayment, and paying the debt. The ability to restrict or expand information depending on the context shows an enormous amount of cognitive planning on the part of the IS interpreters.

While knowledge of ASL is spreading around the globe, it is not likely that an international communication system like IS will disappear in the near future. Although limited, IS is a practical tool for participants from countries who cannot afford to engage national SL interpreters. With an international deaf community that is more diverse every year, the role of IS will become increasingly important.

A communication system like IS that lacks both an extensive lexicon and a firmly established grammar presents a tremendous challenge to interpreters. A more detailed description of both the lexicon and the structure of IS needs to be the basis for any future development of IS educational materials. Discovery of linguistic structures that make IS more accessible to audiences should be passed on to new IS interpreters. This research may help to improve IS interpreter education by becoming a catalyst toward a complete understanding of IS. This will ultimately lead to improved service for deaf people who depend on IS to fully benefit from international gatherings.

International Research, Continued from Page 1

Through interviews conducted with the deaf community in Belgium and with international students at Gallaudet University, De Clerck's research is finding that Gallaudet is a key player in promoting deaf cultural identity in deaf communities worldwide. In the words of one Flemish deaf interviewee after visiting Gallaudet:

...there was the trip to Gallaudet. Then I really woke up. My mouth fell open with amazement. I couldn't believe it. Then I started feeling frustrated. I thought: something has to happen, things must change!!!...Back in Flanders, I rolled up my sleeves: I was aware! Gallaudet, that was fire! After that, we were more active: more and more Deaf started to think about how Deaf people live. We have to fight...



Research at Gallaudet is available free of charge. Address inquiries to Research at Gallaudet, Gallaudet Research Institute, Gallaudet University, 800 Florida Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002-3660. Phone: (202) 651-5995 (V/TTY). Contributing to this issue were Rachel Rosenstock, Elizabeth Parks, and Robert C. Johnson. Special thanks are due to Goedele DeClerck, Amy Wilson, Deborah Chen Pichler, Russell Olson, Madan Vasishta, Charles Reilly, Owen Wrigley, Rachel Pigott, and Liz Anazagasti for the materials and advice they provided for the articles and photos in this issue. Comments related to articles in this issue are welcomed by the editor and may be sent by e-mail to Robert.C.Johnson@gallaudet.edu.

Michael A. Karchmer, Director
Gallaudet Research Institute

Robert Clover Johnson
Senior Research Editor

Elizabeth Shun-Ching Parks
Walter Ross Fellow

Copyright © December 2005
Gallaudet Research Institute
Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C.

De Clerck describes Gallaudet as a “transnational deaf site” where “deaf international students from all over the world come, share their translocal experiences, pick up Gallaudet rhetoric and go back home to share ideas with their deaf communities and empower their people.” In her effort to describe deaf cultural rhetoric, and through her interviews with deaf people, she is encountering many international deaf students at Gallaudet who stress the importance of the university as an institution that encourages international deaf empowerment.

International Research a New Gallaudet Priority

De Clerck is a recipient of a small research grant from the Gallaudet Research Institute (GRI). The GRI's small research grants program is designed to facilitate short-term research projects by supporting studies with relatively small funding needs.

International research, such as DeClerck's, is one of many types of investigation that the small research grant program wishes to encourage.

In 2002, the Gallaudet University Board of Trustees addressed the institution's global responsibility in its Diversity Statement and Guidelines, stating that:

In the twenty-first century, deafness as a condition will change. Our plans for the university cannot be limited to within our national borders; we must broaden our outlook to include deafness on a global scale, to welcome individuals from societies outside the U.S. and around the world.

In the fall of 2003, Gallaudet University's Provost Dr. Jane K. Fernandes charged a newly established Academic Affairs Planning Committee (AAPC) with discussing and formulating university academic priorities for the next five to seven years. The AAPC's final report was accepted by the Provost in the spring of 2004. Under these new directives, Gallaudet University recognizes a need for an international focus, implementing University Priority #4:

Gallaudet University nurtures and strengthens its position as a global educational and cultural center for people who are deaf and hard of hearing and demonstrates its commitment to diversity by reaching out to deaf and hard of hearing people everywhere...

Here is a taste of what is already happening on a continent by continent basis.



The Americas

Like many deaf people around the globe, the deaf Brazilians that Amy Wilson encountered while working in Recife, Brazil, had a thriving language of their own (Brazilian Sign Language—LIBRAS) but were marginalized and patronized by many outsiders ignorant of their culture. Wilson's entrance into their community was of a different sort as she supported their empowerment and worked toward the sustainability of their deaf community. After years of learning and contributing to community development, Wilson's time ended, after she had learned important lessons that would influence the future course of her life.

Wilson is now a faculty member in the Department of Educational Foundations and Research, and director of the International Development Certificate program at Gallaudet. Earning her Doctorate from Gallaudet's Department of Education after returning from Brazil, she now puts her knowledge into action as a consultant to development organizations, mentor and teacher to Gallaudet students who are interested in international development, and researcher in a variety of international projects.



Amy Wilson

Wilson's dissertation*, completed in 2001, focused on the effectiveness of various American organizations (NGOs, federal agencies, and churches) in international development within yet another country—in this case, Jamaica. Using a qualitative interpretive case study approach, Wilson went to live with the Jamaican deaf community. Learning their ways and language guided Wilson in the development of field research by allowing her to see, through the perspective of deaf Jamaicans, what was important for their community development. From the concerns of Jamaican deaf individuals, interview questions were formed that led to a study of how well four American development organizations were helping these people.

The effectiveness of these organizations was determined by a number of factors: understanding by the organization of Jamaican deaf culture and language in the context of the broader Jamaican culture, deaf people's involvement in the

organizational leadership and planning, the deaf community's satisfaction with the organization, and organizational accountability both to the people who support it and to the wider field of deafness and development. From her research, Wilson concluded that the only factor of effectiveness that was partially fulfilled was the organization's accountability to their home sponsors.

Deaf Jamaicans expressed frustration that they were not being adequately included in program planning in such a way that projects led to the empowerment of the Jamaican deaf community. They pointed to the ongoing needs of deaf Jamaicans for training in leadership, teaching, and job skills, legal aid, establishment of local and national deaf associations, interpreter training programs, continued education for deaf adults, increased technological services, promotion of deaf awareness, and the creation of a Jamaican Sign Language dictionary. Wilson concluded that if deaf communities are given opportunities to communicate their needs for support from outside development entities, the ongoing international dialogue can create a positive environment for truly beneficial development within countries and in the larger global deaf community.

Cristina Berdichevsky, of the Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Department, is the founder of the International Deaf Partnership Project (IDPP). The IDPP was established in order for deaf students from Gallaudet University to have the opportunity to study abroad and develop mentoring relationships with other deaf individuals. In a shared goal of self-empowerment and "leadership in action" through deaf peer mentoring, Gallaudet students are learning to see the world through a new lens. Through these internships, students have the unique opportunity to learn the culture, written language, and signed language of another part of the world, while respectfully sharing their own experiences and empowerment.



Gallaudet student Rachel Pigott (second from right) interns with English teacher Giselle (second from left) in Costa Rica

* Wilson, Amy. (2001). *Development Assistance from American Organizations to Deaf Communities in the Developing World: A Qualitative Study in Jamaica*. Gallaudet University.

Berdichevsky remembers how in the first year of the partnership program, established in Costa Rica, a deaf child who interacted with a Gallaudet student was inspired by the realization that “I can be like her—I can be educated and go places! I can teach and be understood! I can play soccer with the boys!” Since that first year, Berdichevsky has been energized to add other Latin American countries to the list of peer-mentoring locations, including Mexico and Argentina. Within the next three years, Columbia and Puerto Rico may also be partners with the IDPP.



Gallaudet student Liz Anazagasti lived with this deaf Tica family during her internship in Costa Rica

Gallaudet students not only have an opportunity to share the DEAF CAN attitude, they also learn important lessons from touching shoulders with people from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles. In the process of empowering others, they are themselves empowered.

Berdichevsky believes that the only way to promote significant changes in deaf people’s lives is “by empowering deaf people to speak up about their personal experiences and to take charge of their lives.” Based on this belief, she is planning a research project that will gather personal narratives from deaf people in Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico. From their stories, she hopes to create a multimedia anthology that will provide a foundation for more reliable international research, become a resource that reshapes negative attitudes toward deafness, and results in positive change in the lives of deaf Latin Americans.



Africa

Nikson O. Kakiri, Gallaudet student researcher, served for six years as Secretary General of the South Nyanza Association of the Deaf, a branch of the Kenya National Deaf Association. Encouraged to attend Gallaudet University by deaf leaders at the 1999 World Federation of the deaf conference, he decided to follow

their advice and enrolled in 2001 as an undergraduate student. Kakiri is the recipient of a scholarship from Gallaudet’s World Deaf Leadership (WDL) Scholars Fund, a program designed to support international scholars who are committed to working toward the betterment of their deaf communities. Through WDL’s support, Kakiri’s studies and research while attending Gallaudet have focused on his own Kenyan roots, contributing to his goals of returning home to serve the Kenyan deaf community.



Nikson Kakiri

This year, Kakiri, in partnership with mentor Dr. Amy Wilson, conducted a research project, financed by the WDL fund, that focused on providing an opportunity for deaf Kenyans to express their preferred methods of development assistance. Through Kakiri’s knowledge of Kenyan Sign Language (KSL) and Kenyan deaf culture, the researchers interviewed twenty-three deaf women and fifty-five deaf men about their perspectives toward international organizations at work in their country. Naming over thirty foreign entities working specifically with the Kenyan deaf community, this collected data, according to Wilson and Kakiri, could be the “starting point for dialogue between Kenyan and foreign deaf organizations as well as inform development organizations of what deaf Kenyans perceive as significant in empowering their community.”



Nikson and Amy interviewing in Kisumu, Kenya

The well-intentioned work of foreign development organizations in the deaf community, through benefits such as the establishment of schools, adult vocational training, and education about HIV/AIDS, is unfortunately tarnished by broken promises, lack of Kenyan deaf community involvement in decision-making, and deficiency of understanding about the community’s culture and language. Kakiri and Wilson’s research concludes that recipients of foreign assistance will view international aid programs as more successful if financial aspects of the foreign

organizations are clearly understood, deaf individuals and organizations in Kenya are involved in decisions and management, training is done by deaf partners with an eventual transfer of responsibility to the Kenyan deaf community, and Kenyan deaf culture is understood and respected.

A crucial part of understanding a culture is knowing its language. In Kenya, support of Kenyan Sign Language is an integral part of effective community development.* Similarly, many deaf people, internationally, treasure their own signs, their own language, as a unique expression of their cultural values and identity—the key to effective communication and connection within the community.



Europe

Dr. Deborah Chen Pichler, a faculty member in the Department of Linguistics, is currently involved in a five-year research analysis of Croatian Sign Language (HZJ). Partnering with principal investigator Dr. Ronnie Wilbur from Purdue

University and researcher from two Croatian universities, Pichler is analyzing the grammatical structures of HZJ.

According to Dr. Ljubica Pribanic, a Croatian member of the research team, there are approximately 12,000 deaf people in Croatia who identify themselves as culturally deaf and may use HZJ as their primary language. Members of the Croatian deaf community are involved in this research by becoming transcribers and research assistants. Based on previously collected data and linguistic project designs, these research assistants adapt materials to HZJ and perform interviews with HZJ users in order to better understand the grammatical aspects of HZJ.



Deborah Chen Pichler

Because of post-war economic challenges, many Croatian people have had little opportunity for traveling outside of their country. Hearing HZJ researchers who have recently attended linguistic conferences are building partnerships with researchers from other countries in an effort to understand HZJ and provide better resources for deaf people in their country. With the eventual development of

a published grammar text, Pichler hopes that their efforts will result in further linguistic investigation of HZJ and become a resource for training HZJ interpreters in Croatia.

International collaboration, valuable for linguistic researchers, is also of vital importance to European Union disability groups advocating for their human rights. Professors in the Department of Government and History, Russell Olson, David Penna, and Mairin Veith received a GRI Priority Grant for two consecutive recent summers to study the impact of Europeanization on disability organizations' advocacy methods in countries within the European Union (EU).

Asking research questions such as "How has the European disability movement become institutionalized?" and "How has this process impacted the tactics these organizations use to influence government?", Olson, Penna, and Veith have spent the last four years interviewing leaders of more than 66 disability organizations from a number of older EU countries, including Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and Ireland. A total of 160 organizations were included in this research through responses to written surveys and analyses of published literature.

Disability organizations in the EU, these researchers say, tend now to be "of" groups instead of "for" groups, meaning that they are self-run by their own members. For example, the European Union of the Deaf is managed by deaf people, making it an "of" group, instead of hearing people running it "for" deaf people. Most EU countries are united under a multi-disability European organization that represents all disability groups to the EU. Likewise, local and regional organizations may unite under one national umbrella organization to advocate their causes on the national level.

They also found that many EU disability organizations have decided that, because of improved communication with the government, politically sophisticated ways of advocating for their rights are more effective than attempting to stage fights through courts or protests. By supporting each other's efforts, many EU disability organizations are pursuing insider tactics such as lobbying, instead of outsider tactics such as protests.

Some disability groups, such as in Sicily, believe that changing attitudes and advocating for human rights should begin, not in the workplace or in the government, but with training of the next generation. By shaping young attitudes, encouraging children from a diversity of backgrounds and abilities to interact with each other, they believe that negative beliefs and ignorance about disability rights should decrease in the next 25 years as these children become adults.

* Julie Guberman, GRI graduate research assistant, recently served with the Peace Corps in Kenya. While there, she worked with the Kenyan deaf community to develop and publish a CD-ROM dictionary of KSL. Currently a student in the Department of Linguistics, she hopes to do further linguistic research of KSL. If interested in more information, please contact Julie by email at Julie.Guberman@gallaudet.edu.



Asia

Children not only learn from adults, they also learn from interaction with each other. In a presentation on November 4, 2005, Dr. Charles and Nipapon Reilly shared their findings from research in Thailand.

Now a research scientist in the GRI, Reilly first went to Thailand in 1978 as a volunteer teacher at a deaf school. While there, he met his eventual wife Nipapon, a deaf woman, born and raised in Thailand, who worked at the same school. Their insights, as they have worked together over the last twenty-five years, have culminated in a book recently published by Gallaudet University Press: *The Rising of Lotus Flowers: Self Education by Deaf Children in Thai Boarding Schools*.



Charles and Nipapon Reilly sign their new book

The book draws most of its data from Charles Reilly's dissertation research conducted in 1991-1992, amplified by follow-up return visits by Charles and Nipapon to the main research site, the Bua School (name invented for study purposes). At the time of the initial study, 400 residential deaf students, ranging from age six to nineteen, were enrolled in the school. The teachers, with one exception, were hearing people with little or no signing ability. Instruction consisted largely of teachers writing Thai words on blackboards and asking the students to copy the words on paper.

Despite teachers' inability to sign, a core of Thai Sign Language (TSL), mixed with the children's own signs and syntax, clearly thrived among the children when they were free to interact outside the classroom. Through participant observation, videotaping, and photography, Reilly focused his research on the social organization of the school, the children's activities, and their language use. Visits were made to classrooms and assemblies, where teacher-student and student-student interactions were observed, and student-student interactions after class hours were further studied in the dormitories and public areas.

Reilly found that though the children at Bua School appeared to learn relatively little from their non-signing

instructors, they were able to self-educate outside the classroom. This was happening largely because the student body as a whole constituted a critical mass of visually oriented people using a sign language.



Reilly asks dorm leaders to explain their approach to taking care of younger pupils

A social hierarchy had been established among the children in which sign masters were granted the role of opening the world of accessible language and information to children who generally arrived at the school with little or no language input. Deaf children who had been at the Bua School for some time and who had demonstrated mastery of story telling and sign communication were effectively teaching TSL and knowledge about the world to the less advanced children.



Signmasters of the student body at the Bua School, as indicated by fellow students

In addition to his research at the Bua School, Reilly was involved in the development of the first TSL dictionary. This dictionary, created with a team that included members of the Thai deaf community, eventually led to the recognition and use of TSL by non-deaf people, opening up educational and occupational opportunities for Thai deaf individuals. Such developments, resulting from the creation of

a sign language dictionary, have also taken place in other countries. At times the path to change seems quick, and at other times, such as in India, the path may seem painstakingly slow.



Madan Vasishtha

sign language dictionaries can have for the benefit of deaf communities.

When Vasishtha came to the United States in the 1970s, he was astonished by the extent to which signing was used in deaf education programs and information about ASL was available through books and video recordings. Form-

Madan Vasishtha, a deaf faculty member in Gallaudet's Department of Administration and Supervision, worked with colleagues to create four dictionaries for four dialects of Indian Sign Language (ISL). Indian himself, and deeply involved in deaf advocacy within India, Vasishtha has played a significant role in a gradually unfolding story of the impact

ing a team with Gallaudet researchers James Woodward and Susan DeSantis in the late 1970s, he began a project in India to find and describe existing sign languages. While Indian school administrators reported that there were no sign languages, Vasishtha and the team doubted the report and obtained funding from the Indo-American Fellowship Exchange Program, the National Science Foundation, and Sign Language Research, Inc. to study the sign languages of four cities: Delhi, Bangor, Bombay, and Calcutta.

Interviews were conducted with deaf Indians who had deaf parents and had attended deaf schools. The research team elicited language data through gestures and pictures, and recorded the signs through videotapes and photographs. Their analysis found four unique regional sign languages, only 80% similar to each other, that were not the same as any French or British signing system. From this information, they created four books, three printed through the GRI and one in Delhi, India.

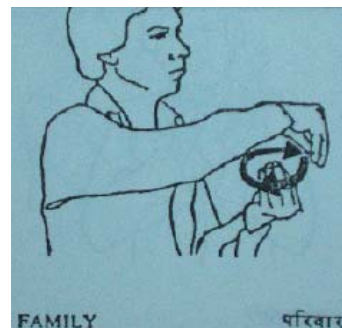
Elizabeth Shun-Ching Parks, the 2005-2006 Walter G. Ross Graduate Fellow, is a second year graduate student pursuing her degree in Deaf studies: Cultural studies. The **Department of American Sign Language and Deaf Studies' M.A. Program** first began in 2002.



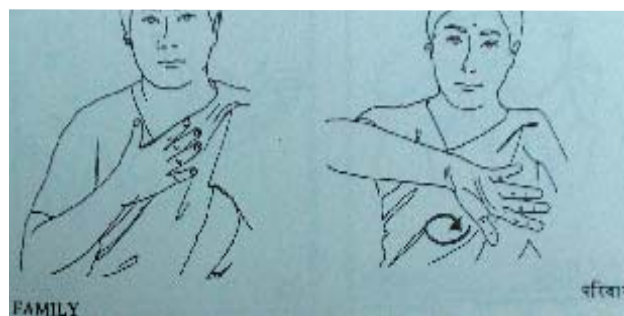
Elizabeth Parks

Through an interdisciplinary approach, students engage Deaf Studies by a critical exchange with related fields, including cultural studies, anthropology, history, literature, critical theory, linguistics, philosophy, critical pedagogy, and visual media production.

Students complete the core curriculum in their first year of coursework, then select a specific area from one of three concentrations. The cultural studies concentration provides students with a critical understanding of the position of the deaf world within the context of human cultures by using a variety of theoretical approaches to the concepts of identity, ideology, resistance, and culture. The sign language teaching concentration introduces key theoretical and methodological issues, including curriculum development, assessment, and the incorporation of deaf culture into the curriculum. The deaf history concentration provides courses in history research methods and content, emphasizing how techniques of social and cultural history can be applied to the histories of deaf people and communities in the United States and Europe.



Sign for FAMILY in
Indian Sign Language: Bangalore Variety



Sign for FAMILY in
Indian Sign Language: Calcutta Variety

At that time (and for decades afterward) education of deaf Indians was done primarily through the oral method. In fact, being caught signing was considered worthy of punishment. Because of this language attitude, "when a white man [Woodward] and an Indian man [Vasishtha] came signing, they were really shocked!" When the dictionaries were printed, Vasishtha wanted them available to everyone. However, because of the economic situation of

many individuals, the dictionaries ended up hidden on administrators' desks and bookshelves, gathering dust, never arriving at deaf schools. Yet the unimaginable happened, as told by Vasishtha:

It was a lot of work but it was really a big thing that happened—it changed people's attitudes. Before, people thought that they did not need signs or the sign dictionary, but that slowly changed. It happened in a funny way. One of the top administrators of the schools, a woman, went to Japan and saw their Japanese Sign Language (JSL). Because she really admired Japan, and they had their own language, she decided to order that all the Indian deaf schools that were oral should start using JSL. In the year 2000, when people I knew learned of this, they contacted me and I wrote a quick response, asking them to wait. Then I wrote a letter that explained to the administrator about ISL...It convinced her that India had a rich sign language and that there was no need to go to Japan and bring back their sign language.

More copies are now being printed in India of the four original dictionaries of ISL, as well as a single comprehensive dictionary. Smaller abridged dictionaries, subsidized by foreign support, are also being provided freely or very inexpensively to the public.

Vasishtha continues to be passionate about playing a role in India, advocating for deaf rights. He believes that his sign language research not only benefits Indians, but also benefits sign language research as a whole.

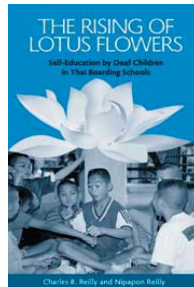
Face to Face with a Global Deaf Community

With increasing numbers of international students enriching the campus community, students from the United States studying abroad, and the swell of transnational contact through international conferences, the internet, and telecommunications, Gallaudet's research community is increasingly coming face to face with a larger deaf world as it embraces the University's global priority. Here, researchers and those benefiting from their work, will find new pathways of discovery by seeing the challenges facing deaf people through a new lens—an international perspective.

The Rising of Lotus Flowers: Self-Education by Deaf Children in Thai Boarding Schools

Charles B. Reilly and Nipapon Reilly

The Eleventh Volume in the Sociolinguistics of Deaf Communities Series



The Rising of Lotus Flowers: Self-Education by Deaf Children in Thai Boarding Schools is an ethnography about the daily lives of 400 deaf children who are intensively learning from each other in the dorms and playgrounds of their residential school. The authors uncover rich variety of language, creative activities, and social structure created by the children themselves, and how they elevate their minds above their conditions to knowledge of societal and Deaf ways. This seminal book reveals a hidden role of residential schooling in aiding human development, transmission of sign language, and the formation of a deaf community.

Charles B. Reilly, a teacher and community organizer in Thailand for eight years, and Nipapon Reilly, a Deaf Thai citizen, studied the students in the Bua School for 14 years, with periodic follow-ups thereafter. They found that the

students learned little from their formal instructors, but that they were able to educate each other in time spent away from the classroom. Older students who had learned TSL in the dorms and on the playground successfully passed it on to six-year-olds who had virtually no language at all. The Reillys' study uncovers an elaborate hierarchy of education among these students, with each group using games and other activities to teach and bring other classmates up to their level. Named for the much admired aquatic plant that blooms in Thailand's bogs, this book is a window on deaf children's never-ending pursuit of meaning and normalcy, and should intrigue anyone interested in the generative power of the isolated mind.

Cost: \$55

To order, please contact Gallaudet University Press
TEL: 1-800-621-2736, TTY: 1-888-630-9347

Gallaudet University is an equal opportunity employer/educational institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, hearing status, disability, covered veteran status, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, source of income, place of business or residence, pregnancy, childbirth, or any other unlawful basis.

Assessing Deaf Adults: Critical Issues in Testing and Evaluation

Editors: Judith L. Mounty and David S. Martin



Historically, deaf and hard of hearing people have demonstrated various levels of competence in a multitude of professions, but they also have experienced discrimination and oppression. In five sections, this volume responds to the tidal wave of high-stakes testing that has come to dominate educational policy and qualification for various occupations. It is a digest of relevant research to meet the testing challenge, including work done by educational researchers, legal experts, test developers, and others.

Section I frames the contexts facing deaf and hard of hearing individuals and those who test them. In Section II, chapters explore how deaf and hard of hearing candidates can meet the rigors of test-taking, how to level the

playing field with a new approach to assessment, what to consider to develop fully accessible licensing tests, and examines the psychometric properties of intellectual assessments. Administrative issues constitute Section III, with legal considerations related to equity testing for deaf adults and an exploration of the potential of sign language interpretation in the testing environment. Section IV provides case studies of deaf and hard of hearing adults from a variety of professions, including certification testing for therapeutic recreation, preparation strategies for university students, and ways to maximize access to licensure for social workers. A separate chapter addresses the impact of recent federal mandates on assessment of deaf and hard of hearing teachers and teaching candidates. The final section summarizes the current situation and presents recommendations to manage it, concluding with an epilogue on directions for the future.

Cost: \$55

To order, please contact Gallaudet University Press.
TEL: 1-800-621-2736, TTY: 1-888-630-9347

**Gallaudet Research Institute
Gallaudet University
800 Florida Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002-3660**

<p>Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Washington, D.C. Permit No. 9452</p>
--

Fall 2005-Winter 2006

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED