

Abstract for TISLR 11

Language Use in Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL)

Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) is one of the under-researched languages of Ethiopia although it has over a million users of the Deaf community. Not much is known about the language, the use and current status. However, there is a growing question of equality, participation and use of rights which have been emerging among the users of the Deaf community. Until quite recently many people in Ethiopia presume EthSL resembles the country's dominant spoken language, Amharic. It is also poorly understood that the use of EthSL in all domains of public life helps to gain success in every aspects especially in the life especially in Deaf education. On the other hand a large number of Deaf students are attending their education no matter how the type of sign language that is used is in question i.e. due to mixing EthSL with Amharic. It has also been difficult to minimize the challenges of Deaf students in education in Ethiopia for lacking the basic knowledge and information about EthSL. As part of the ongoing PhD research, this paper tries to outline all those Whs- that should be answered in the area of language use in EthSL. How EthSL is used? Where it is used? Who is using EthSL? When it is used? Which variety is used in what circumstances? In the mean time, various lexical items will be collected to complement the research so as to provide a justifiable answer for the type of variety that is used in certain domain. In order to achieve these objectives, the researcher would need to assess some selected schools for the Deaf in Ethiopia. Interviews will be held with Deaf students, teachers of the Deaf and their parents. Questionnaires will be distributed and observations in the selected Deaf schools will be carried out. Finally, the study will try to come up with the required information in the language use in EthSL for the prevailing academic and social questions raised above.

This paper will be presented in English language

Eyasu H. Tamene

PhD Student at Addis Ababa University, affiliate student at UCL/DCAL