

Abstract

This thesis aims to (1) compare the language structure of Chinese Signed Language (CSL) with Taiwan Sign Language (TSL), and investigate the efficiency, vagueness, and ambiguity of these two language systems; (2) to provide a preliminary evaluation of the implementation of Sign Language Policy in Taiwan through an investigation of the deaf's proficiency in CSL and TSL, their use of them, and their attitudes toward both these two linguistic systems and the related policy.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are adopted. Quantitative analysis includes two tests. On "structure evaluation test," the efficiency, vagueness, and ambiguity of CSL and TSL are investigated. Evaluated items are taped into 194 segments of films, distributed on 7 linguistic levels, including lexical items, phrases, tense, adverbs, simple sentences, complex sentences, and discourse. Subjects are required to answer the questionnaire immediately after each test item is shown. "Sign language use and attitude questionnaire" is to elicit the deaf's language proficiency, language use, and language attitudes. 75 questionnaires are collected through nonprobability sampling and nonparametric statistical test with all the subjects being deaf adults who live in Taipei area and use sign language for communication. For qualitative analysis, 6 informants were interviewed through judgemental samplings to interpret the results of the questionnaires.

The results of statistic tests indicate that TSL is more efficient, less vague and less ambiguous than CSL. Moreover, the subjects' proficiency in the two sign language systems are equally good and their frequency of language use are decided by their interlocutors. As to their attitudes toward the two sign languages and the related language policy, all the subjects show support to TSL.

Based on the findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis, suggestions are given as follows. Legislate the law. Establish a government institution, institute lexicology, set the instructional language of the deaf school and evaluate the proficiency of deaf school teachers. Train the interpreters and provide communication unimpediment environment. Investigate sign language research, and plant institution.

Key words: Taiwan Sign Language, Chinese Signed Language, language attitude, language policy