

## Status of Communication Modes in the Philippine School for the Deaf

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The purpose of this study is to identify the status of communication modes of teachers and students of the Philippine School for the Deaf. Questionnaires for two groups of respondents were constructed to determine their communication mode and sign language variety preference. A total of 51 teachers and 126 High School students participated in the research.

Results of the study reveal that among the modes of communication, the teachers ranked Simultaneous Communication, manual form and gestures, respectively, as their most preferred modes. Their most preferred sign language varieties include SEE1 (Seeing Essential English), followed by ASL (American Sign Language) and SEE2 (Signing Exact English). The students, on the other hand, employ a variety of approaches depending upon situations and whom they are conversing with.

Data collected in this study signify that teachers and students have common communication mode preference which implies that there is understanding between two groups. This understanding plays a vital role in the teaching-learning process. It is suggested that teachers and students make efforts to improve communication and sign language skills. The administration likewise can provide trainings and seminars to enhance knowledge and skills of teachers and to meet education and communication demands of students.

**Key Words :** deaf education, communication mode, sign language variety, communication ability

### Introduction

Due to a number of causes, the language abilities of deaf children have been described as deficient and inferior compared with hearing children. These have been attributed to their difficulty of learning the language through an impaired auditory system, un-

skilled or unsystematic teaching methodologies, or perplexity of identifying the forms of communication that best facilitate language acquisition and classroom instruction. Another alternative influence is the nature of the language models to which the children are exposed (Newton, 1985).

In an article written by Stewart (1993) that reports about a study he conducted, he made mention of Newton's statement that said

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significant adults like parents, workers for the deaf and teachers have a tendency to alter or simplify their input to the children. This can be attributed to efforts of the adults to incorporate sign language into their English communication, limited signing skills and by inherent difficulties in attempting to represent the English language through a visual manual modality. Stewart also mentioned of Krashen who stated that in addition to being exposed to linguistic input, the learner must be receptive to it and be able to comprehend it. Further mentioned were Vygotsky and Wertsch who went beyond the concept embedded in the input hypothesis and suggested that the key to language acquisition is the interaction between the individual learning the language and others proficient in using the language, that, for example, adults prescribe the terms by which children interpret their environment.

The teachers' ability to communicate with the children in ways which will elicit their responses will determine the extent to which the deaf understand and can accomplish what is expected of them. Obviously, if the deaf students do not understand the communication system being used, they will not be able to reach their full potential.

Taking into account the needs of the learners, its available resources, its philosophy and goals, the Philippine School for the Deaf has advocated the use of various modes and approaches from the time it was established up to the present, ranging from the oral, manual and a combination of these.

History of the school reveals that sign language, which was brought by the Thomasites in school, was predominantly used for sometime until about the 1960's. A shift from the manual to oral approach fol-

lowed which lasted for about a decade or two. Then, in the late 1970's the institute opened its doors to Simultaneous Communication in an attempt to meet the diversified communication needs and educational demands of the hearing impaired students of the biggest and the only national school for the deaf in the country.

As a consequence of this exposure to a variety of communication modes and sign language kinds, students may likewise employ a number of modes depending upon specific situations and whom they are talking to. Although small numbers of the deaf use speech and lipreading as their primary mode of communication, the vast majority rely on a variety or combination of varieties of sign language.

For these reasons, the authors want to investigate the status of communication modes and sign language varieties used by the teachers and students of the Philippine School for the Deaf. It is hoped that results of this study will help identify the strengths and weaknesses of both the teachers and students in the communication process, that is, in terms of expression and reception of ideas and thoughts. Further, it is aimed that results of this study will produce positive outcomes such as development of curriculum that will be more sensitive and suitable to the demands of the hearing impaired; formulation of training programs and an increasing awareness on the part of workers for the deaf and government authorities so that appropriate communication accessibility will be accorded to the deaf individuals.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the status of communication modes and sign lan-

guage preference of teachers and students of the Philippine School for the Deaf. Specifically, this research aims to:

- 1) analyze the communication modes and sign language variety used by teachers and students in particular situations.
- 2) ascertain the competency level of teachers and students in relation to communication modes and sign language variety.
- 3) evaluate (from the teachers point of view) the extent by which administrators provide supervision and necessary trainings relating to communication approaches and sign language variety adopted by the school.

**Methodology of the study**

This study provides an account on the various communication approaches and sign language preference of teachers in all levels at the Philippine School for the Deaf.

Likewise, this paper describes the High School students' preference in relation to communication modes and sign language variety in particular situations.

For this purpose, two sets of questionnaire were devised by the researchers; one for the teachers' group and the other for the students' group. A portion of both questionnaires require teachers and students to write down specific data while the rest of the portions necessitate them to check the option

or options that they think best answer the questions.

The questionnaire for teachers consists of three parts: the first part asks questions referring to sign language ability of teachers, the second part is about the mode of communication and sign language variety used by teachers and the third part asks for teachers' opinion regarding administration's training and supervision in communication modes and sign language variety utilized by the school.

On the other hand, the questionnaire for students has two parts: the first part inquires about the communication modes and sign language variety used by students in different situations and the second part asks the students to assess their ability on the use of various communication modes and sign language variety.

**Subjects**

The subjects comprise the teachers and students of the Philippine School for the Deaf. Lower and Upper Grades teachers of the Elementary Department along with those from the High School and Vocational Departments constitute the teachers' group while learners from the High School Department compose the students' group. As for the participants in both groups, the total figures represent the number of teachers (51) and students (126) who were present when the

Table 1 Academic Teachers Profile

Department	Sex		Age					Sing Language Level				
	Male	Female	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	None	Basic	Intermediate	Advance	Interpreter's
Elem LG	0	18	6	6	4	1	1	1	5	4	3	5
Elem UG	2	8	2	1	2	4	1	0	3	0	3	4
High School	3	11	1	8	2	3	0	0	4	2	3	5
Vocational	4	5	0	4	2	3	0	0	4	3	1	1

Table 2 Students Profile

Year Level	Degree of Hearing Loss			Total	Type of Deafness		Total
	Moderate	Severe	Profound		Prelingual	Postlingual	
First Year	9	10	9	28	20	8	28
Second Year	8	10	15	33	23	10	33
Third Year	8	10	24	42	33	9	42
Fourth Year	5	13	5	23	17	6	23

questionnaires were given. A breakdown and profile of subjects can be found on Tables 1 and 2.

### Procedures

Questionnaires were distributed to teachers on March 14, 1994 during one faculty meeting. After a brief explanation about the research and how to answer the questionnaire, teachers were told that accomplished sheets will be collected on March 18, 1994 to give them ample time.

Students, on the other hand, were grouped according to year level to facilitate communication when they were asked to answer the questionnaire on March 16, 1994. Prior to this, the researcher had a briefing with respective advisers and sign language interpreters regarding the procedures in accomplishing mentioned questionnaire.

For each group, a teacher read the questions aloud while another one simultaneously interpreted every question. The rest of the advisers attended to inquiries of some students.

Analysis was based on the statistics produced from the answers of participants in both groups.

### Results

#### A. Questionnaire for Teachers

##### I. Sign Language Ability of Teachers

Results show that among the fifty one (51) teaching staff who participated, 31% (16) are in the Basic Level; 18% (9) are in the Intermediate level; 20% (10) in the Advance level; 29% (15) are in the Interpreters' level and 2% (1) has no training yet. Please see Figure 1.

As to the year when teachers have taken the sign language training, 10% (5) had their training between 1965 to 1970; 2% (1) had it between 1971 to 1975; 14% (7) had it between 1976 to 1980; 8% (4) had it between 1981 to 1985; 27% (14) had it between 1986 to 1990 and 37% (19) had it between 1991 to the present while one (1) has not taken it yet. Refer to Figure 2.

As to the training institution where sign language training was taken, twenty five teachers (49%) had their training at the Philippine School for the Deaf; twenty three mentors (45%) had it at the Philippine Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf; four teachers (8%) trained at the Philippine Norman University; one had it in a university in Bicol, a place in Southern Luzon while another one had it in a training institution in Baguio City located in the northern part of Luzon. Data are in Table 3.

With reference to the year when teachers have started using sign language, nine teachers (17.5%) began using the language between the years 1965 to 1970. From 1971 to

Table 3 Institution where sign language was taken

Institution	Department			
	Elem-Lower Grades	Elem-Upper Grades	High School	Vocational
PSD	9	2	7	7
PRID	7	6	8	2
PNU	0	0	1	0
Baguio	0	1	0	0
Bicol	1	0	0	0

PSD Philippine School for the Deaf

PRID Philippine Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

PNU Philippine Normal University

Table 4 Year When Teachers Have Started Using Sign Language

Year	Sign Language Level				
	None	Basic	Intermediate	Advance	Interpreter's
1965-1970	0	3	0	2	0
1971-1975	0	1	0	1	0
1976-1980	0	1	0	2	0
1981-1985	0	2	0	2	2
1986-1990	0	8	0	1	1
1991-present	0	2	1	0	0

1975, four teachers (8%) have started using it and between 1976 to 1980, there were eleven teachers (22%) who started using sign language. Another nine teachers (17.5%) have used it from 1981 to 1985 while between the years 1986 to 1990, there were fourteen teachers (27%) who started using sign language. From 1991 to the present, there were four teachers (8%) who began using it. Table 4 has details.

Regarding the length of time teachers have been using sign language, there are fourteen teachers (27%) who have been using it for one to five years; ten teachers (19.5%) for six to ten years and eleven teachers (21.5%) for eleven to fifteen years. Furthermore, five teachers (10%) have used signs for sixteen to

twenty years; another five teachers have used it for twenty one to twenty five years and six teachers (12%) have been using sign language for more than twenty six years now. Please see Table 5 for this.

## II. Use of the Different Modes of Communication and Sign Language Variety

### 1. Communication Mode Used by Teachers

In the classroom, teachers (91.7%) preferred to use Simultaneous Communication most. Manual Communication (44%) came second which is closely followed by gestures (42.9%). The fourth preference is the oral approach (33.3%) and interactive writing (25%) is the last. Three of the fifty one teachers have selected Total Communication as their only preferred mode.

**Table 5** Length of Time When Teachers Have Started Using Sign Language

Year	Sign Language Level					Total
	None	Basic	Intermediate	Advance	Interprecters	
1- 5	1	6	1	1	5	14
6-10		3	1	1	5	10
11-15		3	2	2	1	8
16-20		1	2	2	2	7
21-25		1	2	1	0	4
26-30		2	1	3	2	8

**Table 6** Modes of Communication Used by Teachers

Communication Mode	Setting	
	Inside the Classroom	Outside of the Classroom
Oral only	4th	4th
Manual only	2nd	2nd
Simultaneous Communication	1st	1st
Gestures	3rd	3rd
Total Communication	5th	

Outside of the classroom, Simultaneous Communication (94.3%) again ranked first among the given options. Manual only (48.1%) placed second, followed by gestures (37.8%) in the third order and oral only (30.8%) in the fourth rank. One teacher has selected Total Communication as his mode while another one preferred interactive writing. Refer to Table 6.

**2. Sign Language Variety Used by Teachers**

In relation to the sign language variety used inside the classroom, SEE2 (Signing Exact English) (74%) is the most preferred kind. ASL (American Sign Langufbe) (62.5%) ranked second; SEE1 (Seeing Essential English) (45.5%) placed third, while LOVE (Linguistics of Visual English) (41.3%); PSE (Pidgin Sign English) (24%) and CASE (Conceptually Accurate Signed English) (17.64%)

**Table 7** Sign Language Variety Used by Teachers

SL Variety	SETTING	
	Inside the Classroom	Outside of the Classroom
ASL	2nd	2nd
CASE	6th	6th
SEE1	1st	1st
SEE2	3rd	4th
LOVE	4th	3rd
PSE	5th	5th

occupied the fourth, fifth, and sixth place, respectively.

Outside of the classroom, the teachers again selected SEE1 (69/4%) as their most preferred variety. ASL (61.4%) came second and LOVE (44.8%) is in the third place. Occupying the fourth, fifth and sixth rank are SEE2 (41.7%); PSE (29.2%) and CASE (19%) respectively. Table 7 has the details.

**Table 8** Mode of Communication and Sign Language Variety Preference of Teachers and Students

Mode of Communication & SL Variety	Teachers Can Best Express Themselves	Teachers can Best be Understood	Students can Best Express Themselves
Oral only	7th	8th	8th
Manual-ASL	5th	3rd	2nd
Manual-SEE1	2nd	2nd	1st
Manual-SEE2	3rd	4th	7th
Manual-LOVE	4th	6th	4th
Manual-PSE	6th	7th	5th
Manual-CASE	9th	9th	7th
Simultaneous Communication	1st	1st	3rd
Gestures	8th	5th	6th

3. Mode of Communication Teachers can Best Express Themselves

Teachers said that they can best express themselves through Simultaneous Communication (67.6%) first; Manual SEE2 (59.2%) second; Manual SEE1 (42%) third and Manual LOVE (40.7%) fourth. Other modes by which they can better express themselves include Manual ASL (36%); Manual PSE (24.4%); Oral only (24%); gestures (21.7%) and Manual CASE (17.6%) which occupy the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth, respectively. Please refer to Table 8.

4. Mode of Communication and Sign Language Variety Teachers can Best be Understood by Students

According to the participants, they can best be understood by students through Simultaneous Communication (83.3%). This is followed by their use of Manual SEE1 (51%); Manual ASL (38.5%); Manual SEE2 (34.2%) and gestures (35%) which placed second, third, fourth and fifth. Other modes and sign language variety by which they can be understood are Manual LOVE (31.5%); Manual PSE (25%); Oral only (20.7%) and Manual CASE (14.3%) which are ranked sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth, respectively. Refer

to Table 8 for details.

5. Mode of Communication and Sign Language Variety Students can Best Express Themselves as Perceived by Teachers

Based on the teachers' point of view, students can best express themselves through Manual SEE2 (48.8%), closely followed by Manual ASL (48.3%); Simultaneous Communication (47.2%) and Manual PSE (38.5%). Other modes and sign Language variety include gestures (34.5%); Manual SEE1 (33.3%) and Oral only (24.3%), respectively.

**III. Training and Supervision**

1. Teachers' Knowledge of the Different Communication Modes

Most of the teachers (61%) claimed that they have enough knowledge of the various communication modes, others (35%) said that they know little of it and two of them (4%) said that they know much about this topic.

2. Students' Understanding Based on Teachers' Perception

When asked whether the teachers think their students understand them while teaching, majority (74.5%) of them answered "yes" and some (17.5%) said "sometimes"; two teachers (4%) think they are not understood by students, while two (4%) more teachers

have no answer.

### 3. Students' Expression of Themselves Based on Teachers' Perception

The teachers were also asked if they think the students can express themselves well. Many of them (63%) said "yes"; some (35%) answered "sometimes" and one of them (2%) said "no" meaning the students cannot express themselves well.

### 4. Need for More Sign Language Trainings

In response to the question "Do you think there is a need for more sign language trainings?", forty two (82%) of the teachers answered "yes" and nine (18%) of them said "maybe" there is a need. Nobody answered "no".

### 5. In-service Trainings in Relation to Communication Modes and Sign Language Variety

The last question asked was "Do you think you are properly and constantly supervised in relation to methods of instruction, communication modes and sign language varieties the school adopts?". "Yes" is the answer of thirty five teachers (68.5%); "maybe" is the answer of eight teachers (15.5%) and "no" is the answer of seven teachers (14%). One of the teachers (2%) has no answer.

## B. Questionnaire for Students

### I. Communication Mode and Sign Language Preference of Students

#### 1. Communication Modes Students Like Their Teachers to Use

It is evident that the High School students want their mentors to simultaneously use speech and signs in school. Data gathered show that 50% of the First Year students, 72.4% of the Second Year, 92% of the Third Year and 74.1% of the Fourth Year students would like their teachers to utilize the oral

and manual approach. The manual only method placed second in all year levels (35.7%, 60.6%, 52.6% respectively) but for the Third Year level which has interactive writing (42.9%) as their second choice. The oral only ranked third in all year levels (28.6%, 12.1%, 36.5% respectively) excepting the Third Year which has manual only (23.8%) as their third choice. Interactive writing is the fourth choice among the First (7.1%) and Second Year (3%) students while gestures is for the Third (16.7%) and Fourth Year (31.5%) students. The oral only approach (2.4%) is the fifth choice among the Third Year level while interactive writing (26.3%) is for the Fourth Year level. The First and Second Year students, however, have only four preferable modes in the above mentioned order. Please see Figure 3.

#### 2. Communication Modes Students Like to Use

Students in all levels (57%, 97%, 100%, 85.5% respectively) preferred the oral and manual approach over other approaches. The second preference include gestures for the First (17.9%) and Third Year (52.4%) students; interactive writing (30.3%) for Second Year and gestures (42.6%) and oral approach (42.6%) for the Fourth Year students. The third preference include interactive writing for the First (3.6%) Third (42.9%) and Fourth (32.4%) Year while gestures (15.1%) is for the Second Year. The fourth preference among the First (1.1%) and Third (2.4%) Year students is the oral only approach. The Second Year students prefer only three modes while the Fourth Year students use four approaches with two having equal percentage. Refer to Figure 4.

#### 3. Communication Modes Students Like to Use with Their Families

For the First (42.5%) and Fourth Year students, the most popular mode is the oral and manual approach while home made signs is for Second (54.5%) and Third (88.%) Year students. The second most popular modes are home made signs for the First (32.1%) and Fourth (46.1%) Year students; manual only (30.3%) for the Second Year and oral and manual (42.2%) for the Third Year students. The third most popular modes are manual only for First (25%) and Third (38.1%) Year students; oral and manual mode (18.2%) for the Second Year and oral only (41.8%) for the Fourth Year students. Oral only (14.3%) for the First Year; gestures (15.1%) for the Second Year; interactive writing (23.8%) for the Third Year and manual only (38.9%) for the Fourth Year ranked fourth, Gestures for the First (3.6%) and Fourth (28.4%) Year students; interactive writing (6%) for the Second Year and oral only (11.9%) for the Third Year ranked fifth. The First Year students have only five preferred modes while the Second Year, Third and Fourth Year levels have oral only (3%), gestures (1.9%) and interactive writing (27.8%), respectively as their last preference. Please see Figure 5.

#### 4. Communication Modes Students Use with Their Hearing Friends

The most preferred mode among the First (39.3%) and Fourth (49%) Year level is the oral and manual approach, while the Second Year has interactive writing (42.4%) and the Third Year level has gestures (71.4%). The manual only (28.6%, 47.6%) then the oral only (14.3%, 40%) followed by interactive writing (7.1%, 38.5%) and last by gestures (3.6%, 32.4%) placed second, third, fourth and fifth, respectively for the First and Fourth Year students. The Second Year level has gestures (30.3%), manual only (27.3%), oral and man-

ual (18.2%) and the oral only (6%) for its second, third, fourth and fifth, respectively; while the Third Year level has oral and manual (57.1%) and interactive writing (57.1%) in the second rank and oral only (11.9%) and manual only (11.9%) and manual only (11.9%) in the third rank. Refer to Figure 6.

#### 5. Communication Modes Students Use with Their Deaf Friends

In communicating with their deaf friends, the High School students have ranked the manual approach (46.4%, 66.7%, 55% and 71.4%, respectively) as the most popular mode. Ranked second is the oral and manual mode (39.3%, 24.2%, 50% and 57.5%, respectively). Gestures (14.3%, 45%) and interactive writing (3.6%, 19%) occupied the third and fourth place, respectively among the First and Third Year students. Interactive writing (12.1%) followed by gestures (9.1%) for the Second Year; and the oral only (36.5%) followed by gestures (29.9%) and interactive writing (28.1%) for the Fourth Year placed third, fourth and fifth, respectively. The First, Second and Third Year levels have only four commonly used modes which are in the above mentioned order. On the other hand, the Fourth Year level has five commonly used modes. Please see Figure 7.

#### 6. Communication Modes and Sign Language Variety Students Think They Can Express Themselves Well

Seventy five percent (75%) of the First Year, 85% of the Second Year and 88% of the Third Year students think that they can best express themselves through manual form particularly in American Sign Language (ASL). The Fourth Year students (74.1%), however, think that it is through SEE (Signing Exact English) that they can best express themselves. Simultaneous Communication

comes second for the First Year (7.1%) and Fourth Year (71.9) while it is SEE for the Second Year (12.1%) and Third Year (50%). PSE (Pidgin Signed English) (3.6%) and oral only with SEE ranked third and fourth, respectively, for the First Year, while Simultaneous Communication (6%) with oral only (3%) gestures (3%) and interactive writing (3%) occupy the third and fourth rank, respectively for the Second Year. Simultaneous Communication (38.1%) PSE (24%) and interactive writing (24%), gestures (19%) and oral only (5%) occupy the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh rank, respectively for the Third Year. ASL (69.9%), PSE (67.6%), interactive writing (56.2%), gestures (54.6%) and oral only (43.5%) occupy the third, fourth, sixth and seventh rank, respectively for the Fourth Year level. Refer to Figure 8 for this.

7. Sign Language Variety Students Like to Use Best

Among the three sign language varieties given as option, ASL is the variety which students in all levels like to use best. SEE as selected by the First (32.1%), Third (52.4%), and Fourth (91.7%) Year is the second in rank. PSE, however, comes very close to SEE as it ranks second among the Second (3%) and Fourth (91.7%) Year students and third among the Third Year (14.3%) students. Please see Figure 9.

## II. Ability on the Use of Various Communication Modes

Of the listed communication modes the High School students in all levels rated themselves “good” in ASL except for the First Year students who rated themselves “fair” in using ASL. The First and Third Year students say they are “good” at interactive writing while the Second and Fourth Year students rated themselves “fair” at it. In

using Simultaneous Communication, the First and Fourth Year students gave themselves a “fair” rating while the Second and Third Year claimed they are “good” at it. In Speech, Speechreading and Fingerspelling students in all levels gave themselves a “fair” rating. In hearing/listening ability, students in all levels have “fair” rating except for the Third Year level who gave themselves a “poor” rating. In using SEE, all levels have “fair” rating but for the First Year level who gave themselves a “poor” rating.

## Discussion of the Results

### A. Questionnaire for Teachers

#### 1. Teachers’ Sign Language Abilities

Although the high percentage of teachers in the lowest level is compensated by the equally high percentage of staff in the interpreters level, this situation is still quite alarming. It is worthy to note that in the Philippines teachers belonging to the highest level are expected to be adept in both expression and reception of information through signs, vocabulary of which range from the simplest to more complex ones. Those in the Advance level are taught technical terms and vocabulary pertaining to several fields of endeavour like trade, sports, medicine and education among others. In the Intermediate level, teachers are given additional survival vocabulary enough for them to communicate with the deaf, topics of which are about daily life activities. In the Basic level, trainees are taught basic conversational vocabulary. It can be stated, therefore, that only twenty five (25) teachers in the Advance and Interpreters’ level can be considered efficient in sign language. Please refer to the figure below for details.

Age and sign language level show signifi-

Table 9 Age and Sign Language Level

Teachers Age	Sign Language Level					Total
	None	Basic	Intermediate	Advance	Interpreters	
21-29	1	5			3	9
30-39		2	4	3	8	17
40-49		3	3	2	3	11
50-59		5	1	2	2	10
60-65		1	1	2		4

cant relation. Teachers whose age range from 21 to 29 has a total of three interpreters while those in the 30 to 39 age group has eight interpreters. A decreasing number of interpreters is shown by ages 40 to 49; 50 to 59 and 60 to 65 with interpreters having three, two and none respectively, in each age bracket. It may be observed that teachers in the 30 to 39 age group has the highest number of interpreters probably because they have been in the service for more than five years already so that they have enough time to accomplish things such as that of being an interpreter. Please see Table 9 and Figure 10 for a complete data.

Sex and sign language level likewise, indicate relationship. Data shows that there is one interpreter for every four to five male faculty and one interpreter also for every three to four female faculty. Simply stated, of the nine male faculty, two are interpreters while of the forty two female faculty, twelve are interpreters.

Furthermore, it is relevant to note that there is a higher percentage of interpreters among academic teachers (33%) than those teachers who belong to the Vocational department (11%). This is shown in Table 1.

The length of time teachers have been using sign language show adverse relationship. Those who have been using sign lan-

guage for one to fifteen years have produced eleven interpreters while those who have been using it for over sixteen years have only produced four interpreters. Refer to Table 5 and Figure 11 for this. A probable explanation could be that it was only in 1977 when a sign language training institution was established and teachers in earlier years took their training in the school alone which do not yet offer a course for interpreters.

**II. Preferred Modes of Communication and Sign Language Varieties of Teachers**

The communication behavior of most teachers in the classroom is best described as Simultaneous Communication (Lucas, Lowenbraun 1989). At present approximately 65% of the public school programs in the United States serving hearing impaired children use some kind of Simultaneous Communication which consists of both an oral and a variety of contrived manual code for the manual component (Mayer, 1990). In Japan, 63% of schools for the deaf use oral method as main teaching method supplemented by manual method (Kusanagi, et al, 1990). In the Philippines, many schools have also adopted Simultaneous Communication, one of which is the Philippine School for the Deaf (PSD).

In this research, teachers were asked if they actually use or prefer to use Simultane-

ous Communication. It was found out that teachers do implement their school program's policy on communication and sign language system. Simultaneous Communication, as preferred by 86% of the teachers was the most liked mode inside the classroom. This was followed by manual only, gestures, oral only and interactive writing, respectively. Total Communication was selected by about three teachers as their most preferred mode. However, considering that the school lacks amplification and devices requisite of the philosophy, it can not be assumed that teachers really use it as a method of communication. Further, Total Communication has been used to mean nothing more than the "Simultaneous Method" in many programs (Reagan, 1985) so that teachers may have meant the same.

In conversing with the students outside of the classroom, Simultaneous Communication still has the highest partiality taking into account that forty teachers have ranked it as their first option. Manual only, gestures and oral only were the other choices. It is apparent that mentors convey messages to the students in the same way as what they practice in the classrooms for the basic reason that these are the methods they are capable of and are used to. Refer to Table 6.

One goal for the use of a highly visible manual form of the English language along with the aural-oral approach, is to accelerate the acquisition of English during early years and to increase the level of English proficiency achieved by the hearing impaired population (Crandall, 1978). Aware of this and in adherence to the school's policy, forty mentors have almost unanimously picked SEE2 as their preferred sign language variety. ASL ranked second, followed by SEE1.

LOVE, PSE and CASE placed fourth, fifth and sixth, respectively.

The same result is obtained in the selection of sign language variety outside of the classroom wherein SEE2 is again the most popular choice and the other options occupied the same rank as in the above. Possibly, one reason why ASL is not so popular among teachers is that ASL is such a unique language that has many visual characteristics, uses many idioms and has a very unfamiliar pattern so that one may find difficulty in using it (Gustason, et al, 1980). Please see Table 7.

To express themselves very well, it is imperative that teachers consider the mode which they are most skilled at and are most experienced with. As Simultaneous Communication is the most preferred mode, it is, as presumed, the prime mode selected by 50% of teachers by which they can best convey their message. Next in rank are the manual forms namely ; SEE2, SEE1, LOVE, ASL, and PSE, respectively. The oral only method was not a very popular choice as it only placed seventh, followed by gestures (eighth) and CASE (ninth). Details are in Table 8.

Being the first choice of teachers so that they can best convey messages, Simultaneous Communication is also naturally the most liked mode by which they can best be understood by learners. It is worthy to note that one teacher has commented that she uses almost all of the modes depending upon whom she is talking to. This remark along with the collected data in this study show that teachers are truly sensitive to the needs of the students.

In the Philippines, Special Education teachers are those who have taken a minimum of 18 units of Special Education in the

graduate program in addition to being Bachelor's degree holders. Taken in different specialization areas as teaching the deaf, blind, mentally gifted and other exceptionalities, this program provides adequate information and background which are beneficial to those who are teaching or who wish to teach exceptional children.

Relative to this, teachers were asked if they have sufficient knowledge particularly regarding communication modes used in teaching the hearing impaired. Their answers showed that 61% of them have enough knowledge, 35% said they have little of it and 4% stated that they know much about this.

The school, on its part, provides in-service trainings and seminars to enhance and supplement previously acquired knowledge. In this regard, teachers were asked of their opinion about trainings the school offer. Data revealed that 41% of the teachers think they have enough of it, whereas, 31% of them think otherwise. Uncertainty is shown by 26% of the respondents who answered maybe they have enough.

The desire for more sign language trainings is exhibited by 82% of mentors while 18% of them are not sure whether there is a need for such or not.

With reference to the administration's supervision, 68.5% said they are properly and constantly monitored, 15.5% are indecisive, 14% said they are not and 2% has no answer.

Despite the training programs the school offer, responses of teachers signify their wanting for more that would yield fresher information about educating the deaf such as topics pertaining to sign language varieties currently used and communication modes presently adopted. Administrative supervision

is likewise essential.

## *B. Questionnaire for Students*

### **I. Communication Modes and Sign Language Variety Preference of Students**

Lang and his fellow researchers in their study asked teacher and student respondents to rank characteristics of effective teachers. Two of those characteristics which were highly rated by both faculty and students include the teacher's using of sign language clearly and communicating expectations and assignments clearly (Lang, et al, 1993). It is without doubt that these traits are in communion and are a product of teachers' proficiency in sign language and modes of communication. These may also be due to the use of communication mode and sign language variety that both the teachers and the learners understand.

In relation to this, students were asked to name the kind of communication mode that they want their teachers to use. Their responses reveal that they want their teachers to use the oral and manual approach with manual only as their two most preferred modes. This coincides with their teachers' communication mode preference which are Simultaneous Communication and manual only. See Tables 6, 8 and Figure 3. Researches in the United States likewise report that Simultaneous Communication forms are also naturally used by many deaf and hearing individuals (Mear, et al, 1992).

Many schools in the United States encourage deaf children to speak and sign simultaneously (Maxwell, et al, 1985). In Japan, speech is encouraged in the Lower School and signs and fingerspelling are used in the Higher School division (Kusanagi, et al, 1990). Students in the Philippines are urged too, to

use signs and speech.

To determine whether the students of PSD are satisfied over these forms, their personal opinions were taken. Their answers conform with what the school encourages them to use. In expressing themselves their most preferred form is the oral and manual mode followed by gestures. In conversing with their families, varying answers were gathered such as oral and manual along with home made signs as their first preference. This is followed by gestures. With the addition of interactive writing, the same modes are used when they communicate with their hearing friends. It is worth saying that deaf students with deaf parents are a tiny minority. Majority of their family members are hearing individuals who are not skilled in using sign language. As this is a sad fact among Filipino families with deaf siblings, both the hearing and deaf members resort to a number of modes where in communication will take place with facility. The same case is true with the students' hearing peers and acquaintances. A common observation is that when a hearing individual who wishes to talk to a deaf student does not know any sign or fingerspelling yet, conversants use the interactive writing that is, exchanging messages through pen and paper. Anyway, it does not matter how well these students can be understood in the structured milieu of their school, what is important is that they are able to understand and be understood by their peer and their peer group on their own level and according to their standards (Downs, 1977).

When sharing experiences and views with deaf acquaintances, students use the manual approach. Further, respondents stated that they can express themselves well through ASL and SEE. The sign language variety

that they like best is the ASL followed by SEE and PSE. Please refer to Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8.

In this study, it is evident that students find it easier to converse with each other in sign language particularly in ASL because they belong to the same group. Researchers say that ASL is cherished by the deaf community (Mear, et al, 1992) and it is the dominant sign language of the deaf community (Stewart, 1993). Further, ASL provides a language of "group solidarity" that is not generally shared with hearing individuals (Reagan, 1985). These are perchance, the reasons why ASL is the most favored among the sign language varieties. Refer to Figure 10.

It should not be disregarded that SEE and PSE are also among the favorites of students. Motivated by teachers who spell out the significance of MCE systems, deaf students do make efforts to use these syntactic signed varieties in school.

## **II. Students' Ability on the Use of Various Communication Modes**

In relation to the students' ability on the use of various communication modes, majority of the students think they are good if not excellent in using ASL. In speech, speechreading, use of SEE and hearing and listening skills, a high percentage say that they rate "fair" if not "poor" in these modes. Fingerspelling ability was rated "fair" by majority of the students while interactive writing and Simultaneous Communication were rated "good" if not "fair".

Programs offered in school include the development of speech, speechreading, auditory training and fingerspelling incorporated in spelling activities of English classes. These programs hope to improve mentioned abilities of students which are indispensable

in the utilization of various modes of communication.

Apparently, responses of the students in terms of the skills that teachers persevere to develop in them are not satisfactory. This, however, is in conjunction with other researches reporting that there is a frustrating paradox in the education of the deaf; that those skills which the child must master and on which the teacher concentrates are those about which least is known (Colten, 1977)

### Conclusions

1. Teachers and students have common communication mode preference. This implies understanding between two groups. Such comprehension greatly contributes to the teaching-learning process.

2. Fifty percent of teachers are only in the Basic and Intermediate levels which means that they have not yet acquired adequate sign language skills to effectively communicate with the deaf. It is suggested that efforts on the part of both the teachers and administrators be taken to improve present situation which is not really ideal.

3. More sign language trainings and seminars relating to the modes of communication and sign language varieties should be organized so that proper implementation of these approaches will be effected. Further, teachers will be abreast with more recent trends and approaches.

4. Regular monitoring and supervision is likewise urged to determine whether modes of communication policy is properly implemented.

5. The use of Simultaneous Communication requires listening, speechreading, finger-spelling and syntactic signing skills. There-

fore, programs for the students in these areas should be given thoughtful consideration so as to enhance and improve skills of students.

6. SEE and PSE which are likewise preferred by students aside from ASL should be given attention. Teachers should familiarize students on how these sign language varieties should be properly used to achieve desired expectancies.

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