A Sociolinguistic Survey of the Honduran Deaf Community

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Abstract

This survey examined the sociolinguistic situation of the Honduran deaf community, addressing topics such as deaf education, deaf social groups, language use, language attitudes, and language vitality. Two researchers collected data through sociolinguistic questionnaires and participant observation conducted in nine different Honduran cities over a period of three weeks. Results indicate that deaf Hondurans have little access to education and employment opportunities. They have a great need for interpreters and deaf awareness in the general hearing community. Deaf Hondurans identify themselves as a distinct ethnolinguistic community and desire to develop more Honduran Sign Language (LESHO) materials and Spanish literacy programs. There is disagreement among deaf communities about who uses pure LESCO. LESCO tends to vary by education and location. LESCO is becoming increasingly standardized as more materials are produced and distributed and deaf Hondurans have the opportunity to socialize together regularly.
Table of Contents

1 Honduras demographics
2 Research questions
3 Sociolinguistic factors relevant to the Honduran deaf community
   3.1 Deaf education
      3.1.1 Tegucigalpa
      3.1.2 Comayagua
      3.1.3 Siguatepeque
      3.1.4 San Pedro Sula
      3.1.5 El Progreso
      3.1.6 Juticalpa
      3.1.7 Choluteca
      3.1.8 Other cities
   3.2 Deaf religious organizations
      3.2.1 New Life Deaf Ministry
      3.2.2 Logos International
      3.2.3 Signs of Love
      3.2.4 Catholic
   3.3 Deaf social groups
      3.3.1 Deaf associations
      3.3.2 Other organizations and meeting places
   3.4 Language use
      3.4.1 Honduran Sign Language
      3.4.2 Honduran Sign Language publications
      3.4.3 Language acquisition
      3.4.4 Language varieties
      3.4.5 Language attitudes
      3.4.6 Language contact
   3.5 Social access
      3.5.1 Employment
      3.5.2 Interpreters
      3.5.3 Hearing aids and testing
      3.5.4 Media and communication
4 Conclusion

Appendix A: Sociolinguistic questionnaire
   A.1 SLQ instrument
   A.2 SLQ procedure and limitations

Appendix B: Acronyms

References
1 Honduras demographics

Honduras is the second largest country in Central America. It is about the size of Pennsylvania (about 112,000 sq km) and is divided into 18 departments.

The July 2009 population estimate for Honduras is approximately 7.8 million, of which 48 percent live in urban areas (CIA World Factbook). In 2001, San Pedro Sula had the largest population at 1.2 million, closely followed by the capital city of Tegucigalpa with 1.1 million people. For this survey, we also visited El Progreso, Juticalpa, Choluteca, Comayagua, Siguatepeque, La Ceiba, and Jesús de Otoro, as shown on figure 1. We did not visit any cities in the east or far west because reports indicated smaller and more isolated deaf\footnote{The term “deaf” is used instead of “Deaf” to refer to people with a hearing loss who may or may not culturally identify themselves with a distinct deaf identity and the use of sign language} populations.

Figure 1. Honduras map.

In many developing countries there is a sense that people with disabilities are not able to contribute to society and are seen as a burden. The appropriate terminology used in Honduras for a person with disabilities is “persona con discapacidad” (person with disabilities) so that the disability does not define the person. The National Statistics Institute (INE) (see appendix B for a complete list of acronyms) conducted a survey in 2002 and found that approximately 2.6 percent of the Honduran population has a disability. Some disability organizations do not agree with the definition of disability used by INE, therefore, they use statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO) or Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) who use a more general definition of disability. According to WHO, people with
disabilities are estimated to be 10 percent of the Honduran population; PAHO estimates 14 percent (IDRM 2004). Based on these percentages, the disabled Honduran population would be between 202,800 and 1,092,000 individuals. Over 50 percent of people with disabilities live in rural areas, mainly in the east, far west, and part of the northern coast.

The main causes for disabilities in Honduras are sickness, malnutrition, birth complications, and accidents. Deafness is the fourth major disability in Honduras after blindness. Rural areas and villages have a higher incidence of deafness than do urban areas because of the lack of healthcare (Country Profile on Disability 2002). Sometimes people view deaf children as incomplete, leading to a push for hearing aids and speech therapy. In Honduras, many deaf children share the same obstacles as abandoned street children. They have little or no education and many do not even know how to write their own name. Families may shun their deaf children or force them to work in the home. Communication with family members is usually through gestures or home signs, invented for enabling basic communication with family.

According to Dr. Jay Soper’s deaf population estimate (2008), Honduras may have had approximately 18 thousand deaf people in 2000. His estimate is based on a country’s gross domestic product to reflect the possible influence of health care access of each country. According to Logos International, a deaf ministry in Honduras, the deaf population estimate is 70 thousand. Other local workers state that there is an estimate of 100 deaf people in Choluteca and 200 deaf people in El Progreso. There are no estimates for other cities. Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula are the two major deaf centers with the most services for the deaf community.

2 Research questions

We used a rapid appraisal (RA) method of sociolinguistic survey which investigates and gathers information to provide a global view of the language community situation in a relatively short amount of time. We assessed the social factors that influence language use and could ultimately influence language development projects. In addition, we explored the question of language classification. This particular RA sociolinguistic survey gathered information through participant observation, sociolinguistic questionnaires (SLQ), and wordlists. A detailed description of the SLQ and its procedure is found in appendix A. Wordlists will be discussed in a subsequent paper. Our two main research questions (RQ) were:

RQ1: What is the sociolinguistic situation of the deaf community in Honduras?
To determine the sociolinguistic profile of the Honduran deaf community, participant observation and SLQs were used to investigate ethnolinguistic identity, language vitality, and language attitudes toward local sign varieties and Spanish.

RQ2: Is Honduran Sign Language standardized across the country?
To answer this question, we used participant observation and SLQs.

3 Sociolinguistic factors relevant to the Honduran deaf community

In this section, we address RQ1 by exploring the following factors that have significant ties to the use of sign language in the Honduran deaf community: education, social groups organized by and for deaf people, religion, community access, and language use. This information was gathered through 15 SLQs (see table 1 for participant metadata) and participant observation with deaf and hearing people who have
significant ties to the use of sign language in Honduras. Throughout this paper, the sign language used by deaf Hondurans is referred to as LESHO (Lengua de Señas Hondureñas).

During the 17-day survey, our goal was to administer at least one SLQ in each city visited and three SLQs in each major city. Our participants range between the ages of 21 and 40 due to their availability and high level of involvement in the local deaf community. From our experience, it was rare to meet a deaf Honduran over the age of 40 who used sign language as their mode of communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Hearing Status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Deaf family members</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
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Table 1. SLQ participant metadata (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Hearing Status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Deaf family members</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>La Ceiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>La Ceiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>La Ceiba</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>El Progreso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Comayagua</td>
</tr>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Choluteca</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Juticalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Hard-of-hearing</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Siguatepeque</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 Deaf education

This section gives an overview of deaf education that is available in Honduras. The Honduran school year runs from February to November. The government does not require children to attend school and the poverty level in Honduras results in many children not finishing primary or secondary school.

Less than 15 percent of disabled children are receiving special education. In 1987, four American volunteers helped start the first discussion of integrating disabled children in regular classrooms through the National Association of the Partners of the Americas, a USA organization established to link a state or region of the USA to an area in Central America or the Caribbean (McNeil 1995). The Honduran government is trying to pass a law for integration, but the National Deaf Association and some schools are opposed to it due to a concern that integration will not provide the necessary tools for students with disabilities to effectively learn.

Currently, many deaf children cannot afford public education due to costs of tuition and transportation. In addition, many parents wait until their deaf children are between the ages of six and ten before they send them to school. There are approximately 30 deaf people in all of Honduras who have graduated from secondary school. A few deaf students attend the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras (UNAH) with interpreters, and many other deaf Hondurans want to attend but are unable due to financial barriers and shortage of scholarships.
Non-profit organizations and private initiatives are the founders of most of the deaf educational centers in Honduras. Most of these educational centers are located in the capital of Tegucigalpa. The majority of them offer only pre-kindergarten and elementary grades with the goal for the students to enter secondary school with no sign language help. Some educational centers offer vocational training for older students who are unable to integrate into secondary school.

In 2005, New Life Deaf Ministry (NLDM), in collaboration with Baylor University in Waco, Texas, established the first deaf education certification program. Baylor University makes this possible by sending professors and students to Honduras to teach courses and substitute in NLDM’s deaf school. They train teachers from various departments across Honduras.

Table 2 lists all of the known educational centers for deaf Hondurans. Each school we visited in the seven target cities is described in more detail in the following paragraphs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amor en Acción</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carita de Ángel</td>
<td>Siguatepeque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro Comunitario para los Sordos</td>
<td>San Pedro Sula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro de Enseñanza especial luz y amor</td>
<td>Yoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro de Investigación y Rehabilitación Especial (CIRE)</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristiana Esmirna</td>
<td>San Pedro Sula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability school (official name unknown)</td>
<td>Danlí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia D’Cuire</td>
<td>La Ceiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escuela e Instituto Modelo</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escuelita Nazareth</td>
<td>Juticalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundación Casa Ayuda</td>
<td>Comayagua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instituto Héctor Pineda Ugarte (HPU)</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manos Felices Jardín y Escuela Cristiana para Niños Sordos</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal de Puerto Cortés</td>
<td>Puerto Cortés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republica de Honduras</td>
<td>El Progreso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidos por Amor</td>
<td>Choluteca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras (UNAH)</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.1 Tegucigalpa

There are six main deaf educational centers in Tegucigalpa. In 1989 Amor en Acción deaf school opened in Tegucigalpa. Due to a lack of funds, it now serves only as a vocational training school. They offer vocational training in upholstery, cooking, hairstyling, and sewing. At its founding, Amor en Acción used American Sign Language (ASL) as their language of instruction, but has since switched to LESHO.

Approximately 30 years ago, Centro de Investigación y Rehabilitación Especial (CIRE) was founded and has since used Total Communication as its communication philosophy. Total Communication was introduced by Gallaudet University throughout Central America and encourages the use of any mode of communication based on the needs of the individual student (Delgado 1995). Morning classes are for deaf students only and afternoon classes include other disabilities along with deaf students. Usually the cut-off age for students at CIRE is age 15, but, if they are motivated to study and show positive behavior, they can stay longer. By 2010, CIRE hopes to offer classes through grade 9. Currently, if students progress well at CIRE they are able to go on to mainstreamed secondary schools like Instituto Héctor Pineda.
Ugarte which has no interpreter. If they still need the help of an interpreter, they attend a secondary school called Instituto Modelo.

In 2003, NLDM started Manos Felices Jardín y Escuela Cristiana para Niños Sordos. It is the only accredited school in Honduras for deaf children, although it is not directly funded by the government. Each year, Manos Felices adds another grade with the eventual goal of offering classes all the way through ninth grade, which is what their accreditation allows. Families that are not able to afford tuition at Manos Felices are given the option to do volunteer service in return. NLDM believes so strongly in family participation that a Parents’ Association has developed. The pre-kindergarten class uses only LESHO and then Spanish is introduced to students in kindergarten. Manos Felices writes their entire curriculum and their students test at the same level as their hearing peers (except for Spanish tests). NLDM also offers an early childhood program. This program helps the children and families have access to better communication and have a smoother transition into preschool. All teachers at Manos Felices, whether hearing or deaf, have at least one year of apprenticeship to learn LESHO and pedagogy.

3.1.2 Comayagua

Fundación Casa Ayuda is a Catholic residential school founded in Comayagua in 1999. Some deaf students live as far away as the border of El Salvador. They offer four programs: formal education, informal education, integration center, and vocational training. After graduation, some deaf students will go to trade schools or find work in supermarkets or similar places. At the beginning of 2009, Fundación Casa Ayuda offered parents 2 weeks of training for 2 hours each day to teach them how to better help their children.

3.1.3 Siguatepeque

Escuela Carita de Angel started in 2007 as a special education school. They have three classes; one class is all deaf students and another class has older deaf students integrated with other disabled students.

3.1.4 San Pedro Sula

Escuela Cristiana Esmirna started in 1989 with 48 deaf students. In 2008, they opened a secondary school program. Teachers at Esmirna may enter with no sign language training and must quickly learn LESHO before school begins.

Centro Comunitario para los Sordos, a service provided by Logos International, has recently set up an early intervention program for teaching deaf toddlers and their parents the basics of communicating through sign language. Their program includes auditory testing, speech therapy, and training in sign language for deaf children and their families. Logos International is also working in collaboration with Lee University to develop a Spanish reading program to teach deaf children and adults throughout Central America.

3.1.5 El Progreso

Escuela Republica de Honduras started integrating deaf students in 2000 with a vision for all deaf children to academically perform at the same level as their hearing peers. With that in mind, the deaf students have a separate class (temporarily) to develop their signing skills so they can have a foundation in one language before adding Spanish as a second language. This class is taught by two deaf teaching assistants. Another goal is that the hearing students graduate from sixth grade knowing LESHO. Many of the parents of the deaf students are enthusiastic about learning LESHO and volunteer at the school as interpreters or aides. The second grade class has the largest amount of deaf students—making up half the classroom—and they are the only deaf students with a full-time interpreter.
3.1.6 Juticalpa

In 1998, Escuelita Nazareth was founded in Juticalpa. It is the only school in the department of Olancho serving deaf students. Since its inception, the school has held a separate class for deaf children. Class begins with deaf teachers who have trained hearing teachers how to teach the deaf students. Escuelita Nazareth also offers vocational training because most students who graduate from there are unable to attend secondary school due to economics and lack of interpreters.

3.1.7 Choluteca

Unidos por Amor was founded in 2002 in Choluteca. It is the only educational opportunity for deaf Hondurans in Choluteca. Unidos por Amor is operated by a mother and daughter team. One goal of Unidos por Amor is to educate children; however, most of their students are adults because many of the parents in this area do not allow their deaf children to attend school.

3.1.8 Other cities

Escuela Emilia D’Cuire is a special education school in La Ceiba. They have one classroom for deaf students. Teachers work with the students on an individual basis as much as possible. After receiving foundational instruction in sign language, the students begin classes in other areas. The goal is for deaf students to advance enough by third or fourth grade to be able to mainstream into a hearing class with no interpreter: therefore, deaf students do not actually graduate from this school. In 2007, there were seven deaf students integrated into local hearing schools. These seven students were 12 or 13 years old and integrated with second graders.

LESHO is said to be the communication philosophy for the deaf students at the special education school in Danlí. The classes are divided by intellectual capacity instead of grades or age. Most deaf students at this school are in their late teens. All the deaf students are studying reading and writing. Some deaf students also receive speech therapy.

3.2 Deaf religious organizations

This section describes the activities and services provided by different religious organizations in Honduras. A list of these organizations is found in table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primera Iglesia Bautista Nazaret</td>
<td>Choluteca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iglesia Bautista Betania</td>
<td>El Progreso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs of Love (Señas de Amor; est. 1998)</td>
<td>La Ceiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iglesia de Sordos Luz y Esperanza</td>
<td>Olancho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logos International (est. 2007)</td>
<td>San Pedro Sula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templo Esmirna (est. 1987)</td>
<td>San Pedro Sula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Word Ministry (est. 2007)</td>
<td>Siguatepeque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Life Deaf Ministry (est. 1996)</td>
<td>Tegucigalpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Various cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehovah’s Witness</td>
<td>Various cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.1 New Life Deaf Ministry

NLDM offers a variety of programs for deaf Hondurans. In 1996, NLDM founded New Life Deaf church in Tegucigalpa. Even deaf people from out of town are known to visit New Life Deaf Church from time to time. In 2000, a Deaf Leadership Group began within the New Life Deaf church. There are ten deaf Hondurans in the leadership group who are responsible for activities such as sermons, drama, finances, counseling, music, and Sunday school classes. Each year at a Bible Institute in Siguatepeque (2.5 hours from Tegucigalpa), the Deaf Leadership Group hosts a three-day deaf camp. The camp is for ages 14 and above and about 120 people attend camp every year.

3.2.2 Logos International

In 2007, Logos International established a center in San Pedro Sula. Currently, the ministry is in the process of redefining their goals. Audiological testing and early intervention are probably the main focuses right now as they become more mobile and reach young deaf children in various parts of Honduras. Another goal for Logos is to raise the Spanish literacy rate among deaf Hondurans.

3.2.3 Signs of Love

In 1998, Signs of Love (SoL) began in La Ceiba. This ministry is well known by the local hearing community. The mission of SoL is to work with deaf Hondurans in rural communities and in other developing countries. They are currently serving in at least five different departments in Honduras (Gracias a Dios, Islas de la Bahia, Atlantida, Yoro, and Colon). For two weeks each month, they travel to eight communities to bring language, community, deaf leadership training, deaf awareness, and Bible stories to isolated peoples. They also host a deaf camp.

3.2.4 Catholic

Most of the certified interpreters in Honduras are Catholic and live and work mainly in Tegucigalpa. One interpreter has interpreted a mass on TV. In Comayagua there are no religious services offered for the deaf community, except the masses held at the Casa Ayuda residential school which are interpreted everyday by the teachers.

3.3 Deaf social groups

This section describes the various organizations and meeting places serving the Honduran deaf community, excluding religious organizations which are discussed in section 3.2. Many of these organizations and meeting places have a major influence on the language used by the deaf Hondurans.

3.3.1 Deaf associations

In Tegucigalpa, the Asociación Nacional de Sordos de Honduras (ANSH - National Association of the Deaf of Honduras) was founded in 1979 when a deaf man from Costa Rica, Rafael Eduardo Valverde Esquivel Costarricense, came to Honduras to survey the deaf community and establish deaf associations. The deaf association has had three different names: Asociación Silenciosa de Honduras, Asociación de Sordos de Honduras, and Asociación Nacional de Sordos de Honduras. The focus of ANSH is to support the deaf community by promoting education and respect so deaf Hondurans can become self-sufficient. One of their primary goals is to unify LESHO across the country. ANSH also offers workshops and lectures on a variety of topics to the Honduran deaf community. It is now a place for young deaf people to gather and socialize; they have around 1,500 members. ANSH has a lot of prestige among the local community because of their connection to the government.

Currently there are three deaf and three hearing people on staff. The ANSH presidency is a two-year term and a person cannot be re-elected. Elections are held in October on odd numbered years. Orquídea
Esmeralda Centeno Sierra was elected director of ANSH in 1979 and continues to serve in that capacity to this day. She is late-deafened and learned sign language in adulthood. She is considered the first deaf person to earn a degree from a Honduran University. Many people have positive perceptions of Centeno’s tireless effort to unify the deaf community across Honduras.

According to the ANSH website (2009), they have established affiliated deaf associations across Honduras in these cities: Intibucá, Tela, El Progreso, San Pedro Sula, Puerto Cortés, Olancho, and Danlí. The deaf association in San Pedro Sula fell apart in 2008 and, according to their former president, they hope to reestablish it soon.

### 3.3.2 Other organizations and meeting places

Since soccer is a major sport in Honduras, deaf Hondurans have formed their own league across the country to compete against each other. Deaf women go to soccer games and practices to watch and chat on the sidelines. In Tegucigalpa, weekly soccer games and practice bring about 50 deaf people together from all social groups. In most cities soccer practice is held on Sunday afternoons. Most often deaf people gather at a nearby mall or restaurant before heading to the soccer field for practice. There are plans to make a national deaf soccer team to compete against other Central American countries.

In Tegucigalpa there are a few deaf Hondurans who meet at the central park around five in the evening on Friday and Saturday. Some deaf people gather at Instituto Héctor Pineda Ugarte on Saturdays, when ANSH offers LESHO classes.

In San Pedro Sula, deaf Hondurans meet at the Burger King near the central park throughout the week. It is most popular on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays when 30–40 deaf people congregate. They start to gather around three o’clock and most leave just before sundown because that area of town can be dangerous. Most of the deaf people who go to Burger King are between the ages of 20 and 40 and the majority of them are male.

In La Ceiba, Sunday is social time for the deaf community; however they do not have a specific time or place to socialize on a regular basis. Most deaf people gather at friends’ homes, like they do all across Honduras. It is common for deaf Hondurans to mingle with each other, instead of with the hearing community, because communication is easier. One exception is the ANSH director, who says that she interacts more with the hearing community to bring deaf awareness. Deaf participants also mentioned they might socialize with hearing people if their deaf friends are occupied or as a result of work dynamics. Two other organizations assisting deaf Hondurans are El Centro de Capacitacion Especial (CECAES) and Grupo Hondureño de Apoyo a Personas Sordas (GHAPERS).

### 3.4 Language use

This section addresses RQ1 and RQ2 concerning language attitudes, acquisition, standardization, and vitality. LESHO continues to develop as deaf people interact more on a regular basis and as materials are created and distributed across Honduras.

#### 3.4.1 Honduran Sign Language

One deaf ministry states that there was no official sign language in Honduras until the last 5–10 years; therefore, many deaf adults do not know any sign language. Amor en Acción credits the development of Honduran Sign Language to ANSH. “…the Honduran government has proclaimed sign language as the mode of communication for the deaf living in Honduras…” (Partners for a Greater Voice 2009).
Some hearing Hondurans still hold the misunderstanding that LESHO is not a language or that it is another form of Spanish. One deaf student was instructed to read Spanish sentences using sign language. The teacher proceeded to guide her in fingerspelling every word which, in her opinion, meant the student could read, though it was not clear that the student fully understood the meaning of the sentences.

### 3.4.2 Honduran Sign Language publications

In 1992, the Peace Corps created a guide for parents of deaf children. It is about 35 pages of hand-drawn illustrations and signs. The beginning of the guide includes signs of normal child development and how to test for normalcy. Throughout the guide, suggestions are given to parents to help their child develop and be included in society, such as learning to enjoy music and play games. A little over 100 signs are illustrated including the alphabet and some numbers. Many of the signs appeared similar to ASL and similarity would be expected since they are highly iconic signs like “big” and “small”. It is unknown whether this guide was actually published and distributed in Honduras (Enamorado 1992).

During 2000–2002 the elected ANSH president began compiling a list of 500–700 signs, which were later replaced by signs from other ANSH leaders after he stepped down from the presidency. In 2006, with the help of Handicap Internacional, ANSH produced their first sign-language dictionary called *Comuniquenomos Mejor*. It contains line drawings with the Spanish word underneath each drawing. Some drawings have an extra picture to illustrate the word. It is 164 pages and arranged by topic. The dictionaries sell for 300L (about 16 USD). ANSH has distributed their dictionary to schools and deaf associations across Honduras and highly recommends people in the deaf communities to follow the signs presented. They have 1,000 more signs ready to create a second dictionary after finding available funding.

NLDM created a LESHO reference CD for American volunteers to familiarize themselves with some basic signs that are different than ASL before arriving in Honduras. It is a trilingual CD containing LESHO, Spanish, and English. The CD was videotaped in a local Honduran studio and has recently been revamped to incorporate a menu with easier navigation. To create the CD, a group of eight to ten deaf Hondurans, along with a hearing person, agreed on what signs to include. More groups in more places have used their CD than they originally expected, and they continue to receive requests for a second one. They plan to create a second CD with 150–200 more LESHO words that the deaf community uses at NLDM. A committee of six deaf Hondurans will make the final decision about what signs to use. If the six of them are not able to come to a consensus about the signs, then they will go into the deaf community and do a survey about the usage of the signs eliciting them through concepts or pictures rather than Spanish words. NLDM also hopes to publish some LESHO workbooks for school which would be useful across Honduras.

SoFL produced a LESHO dictionary called *Diccionario de lenguaje de Señas de la Costa Norte de Honduras* which is intended to reflect the sign variety used by the deaf community along the north coast. This project was funded by a Rotary International grant. Evidence of sign change was noted during the collection of signs over a period of time. Deaf Hondurans helped pick which signs they wanted to use and include in the dictionary. This was a challenging process for the dictionary developers because the language was still developing (Holden 2004). This dictionary is arranged by category. Each sign contains a Spanish translation written in three different fonts, and the signs and illustrations are hand drawn by a deaf Honduran.

### 3.4.3 Language acquisition

In general, deaf Hondurans learn LESHO through deaf friends and family. Hearing people tend to learn LESHO through various classes and LESHO publications. Many teachers of deaf students learn LESHO through their school, ANSH, or at UNAH where LESHO classes are offered. A few people learned sign
language from a Puerto Rican who offered a few classes in Honduras. Over 3,000 people (1,000 deaf) have taken LESHO courses through ANSH.

Perceived signing skills of deaf and hearing individuals (figure 2) shows 15 deaf participants gave their perspective on signing skills of hearing and deaf people. The majority of our deaf participants said they change their signing when communicating with hearing people, explaining that they sign slower and use more gestures. However, there are a few hearing people who are skilled signers and deaf people are comfortable signing the same way with them as with their deaf colleagues.

ANSH is the leading force in LESHO classes and has been offering them since their beginning in 1979. These courses are offered in most of the associations across Honduras. ANSH requires that LESHO only be taught by deaf Hondurans, using their curriculum, based on their dictionary. In Tegucigalpa, they offer four-month LESHO courses for 300L (about 16 USD) and scholarships are available for people with deaf family members. The courses are usually held at Instituto Hector Pineda Ugarte (HPU). Separate classes for hearing and deaf people of varying ages range from 18–25 students.

In Tegucigalpa, NLDM offers LESHO classes for parents of deaf students on Saturdays with the purpose of teaching the same vocabulary that their children are learning in school. Each of the six courses is 10 weeks long. They introduce new signs through gestures and objects, instead of writing the Spanish word on the board. At the end of each class session, everyone receives a paper which includes a picture, a line-drawing of the sign, and the Spanish word. The first class of parents to complete all six courses will graduate in 2009. NLDM creates their LESHO curriculum and plans to adjust it for community teaching.

LESHO classes are offered through SofL deaf ministry in various villages where deaf people are more isolated. These LESHO classes are not segregated and are open to anyone in the community, unless the hearing people hinder the learning process of the deaf Hondurans, in which case they restrict the classes to deaf people and their families. Ideally, SofL wants everyone to learn LESHO. Some deaf Hondurans consider it their source of education, since they do not have access to a real school. Currently they have LESHO classes once a month in eight locations. Typically, after SofL starts classes in a village, the deaf people are no longer despised in the community, in fact, they are respected and treated as the sign language leaders. SofL also teaches LESHO to deaf students once a week at Emilia D’Cuire in La Ceiba.

In a few cities, like El Progreso, Juticalpa, and Siguatepeque, LESHO is taught in deaf Honduran homes. Families of deaf children in La Esperanza and Jesús de Otoro want to learn more LESHO but there is no funding available to provide for someone from ANSH to teach them.

3.4.4 Language varieties

When asked if signing was the same across Honduras, 80 percent of our deaf participants said that the signing is different (see figure 3). Sign language seems to vary primarily by location and education levels.
Deaf communities from different regions disagree about which communities use pure LESHO and which use more ASL. All Honduran deaf schools say they use LESHO but it may be just a label because some deaf schools, according to our perspective, appear to use very little signing or a sign variety containing more ASL influence instead of pure LESHO. Deaf people in southern Honduras say they use pure LESHO, unlike those in northern Honduras who use more ASL and vice versa. In the churches we visited, instead of using pure LESHO when preaching, the deaf pastors consciously include large amounts of dramatization and gestures because many people in their congregation have low conventionalized signing skills. ANSH is currently investigating the signs used by rural deaf Hondurans because they believe deaf people who have not been influenced by much ASL to be the best informants of natural Honduran Sign Language.

Participants in Tegucigalpa reported some variation of signing due to differences in educational levels. There is an elite group who are more educated, most having studied through the Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships (CASS), many of whom are now in leadership positions. When speaking with those involved in the CASS program, we noticed that they sometimes mouthed English words with their signs. The second group consists of those with average (for deaf Hondurans) language skills in LESHO. The last group consists of those who depend mainly on gestures and illustrations. A participant stated that deaf people along the north coast use more illustrative signs whereas the capital, Tegucigalpa, uses more initialized signs as a result of being more educated. The signing in Siguatepeque and Comayagua are related to what is used in Tegucigalpa but San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba are very different. One deaf man from Comayagua visited Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula and found it harder to communicate in the north. In general, deaf people in Comayagua mix more with deaf people in Tegucigalpa and Siguatepeque and less with those in San Pedro Sula. The deaf community in Tegucigalpa has the most interaction with deaf people in other cities.

Around the year 2002, the first deaf camps started gathering deaf people from different regions. At first, they had a hard time understanding each other. Soccer teams are noted to have the best communication with people across Honduras because they have more contact with deaf people from other regions.

Participants from many different cities repeatedly mentioned that La Ceiba has the most distinct sign variety of any city in Honduras. One common example shown by participants all over the country, as evidence for the variation in La Ceiba, is the sign “SI” (yes), which in La Ceiba is signed by flexing the pinky finger (like Mexican Sign Language), while in other parts of Honduras, the ASL sign for “YES” is used. Also, the signing in La Ceiba is slower than in Tegucigalpa, which makes communication between the two communities difficult. Our participants from La Ceiba interact mostly with deaf people in Tela and prefer that over Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Deaf communities in San Pedro Sula and El Progreso interact often and use the same sign language. Many deaf people in San Pedro Sula did not learn sign language until they were in their later teens.
The few deaf Hondurans who knew of deaf people in Choluteca, said they do not know sign language due to the lack of education and interaction with deaf people, which is also common in other cities where deaf people are isolated. We encountered more home signs while talking with deaf people in Choluteca.

Language is becoming more standardized as the Honduran deaf community has more opportunities to socialize. Clear communication is desired across Honduras and nobody wants to compel other regional communities to change their sign dialects. There is more focus on providing better opportunities and access to language development, rather than on language standardization. Participants believe that, in time, LESHO will develop a more diverse vocabulary because more schools are using it as their language of instruction. Some schools are using more initialization in their signing in hopes that deaf children will learn Spanish better, but it leaves them not knowing either language fluently.

### 3.4.5 Language attitudes

There is a wide range of attitudes concerning sign language use in different regional locations across Honduras. Some smaller deaf communities feel oppressed by larger deaf communities.

In La Ceiba, ten years ago, the communication utilized by the deaf community was considered to be gestural and not standardized, at which point LESHO classes began. According to a participant in Tegucigalpa, deaf people in La Ceiba want their signing to be distinct from the rest of Honduras, although according to NLDM, their signing is at least 80 percent similar to what is used in Tegucigalpa. After comparing the ANSH dictionary and SofL dictionary, we found that 74 percent of the signs included in both dictionaries were the same.

Deaf teachers at UNAH do not associate with ANSH. The ANSH director is concerned that those teachers are not aware of new signs that are used in the deaf community and may be inventing their own signs. She also believes that educational centers should use the same sign language manuals, instead of creating their own, but she respects them for fulfilling the need for manuals.

Deaf people in San Pedro Sula are labeled as the jokesters and are not very welcoming of deaf people from other cities, especially Tegucigalpa. Some informants think that the signs in Tegucigalpa are ugly. A few signs used in Tegucigalpa have bad connotations when used in San Pedro Sula and vice versa. Deaf people all over Honduras are becoming more independent and want to have their own signs, which may become a challenge for unifying LESHO. Deaf leaders in El Progreso consider their signing the best and do not want to change it.

We asked participants to rank which city had the most beautiful sign language. A little less than half of our participants said that all sign language is equally beautiful. Others ranked Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula in the top three cities. Again, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula ranked at the top for being the cities that offer the most services to deaf people. La Ceiba and El Progreso were the next best places in this category. When asked to rank cities for most intelligible sign language, participants consistently placed Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula in the top three. However, deaf participants from San Pedro Sula and El Progreso ranked the intelligibility level of sign language in Tegucigalpa lower than any other participants. People were least aware of deaf opportunities in Juticalpa and Choluteca.

In general, deaf Hondurans feel free to sign in public. Only a few are afraid of being taken advantage of or assumed to be involved in a gang. When asked about the importance of knowing sign language and Spanish literacy, nine out of 15 participants indicated that knowing sign language is most important. Four out of 15 participants said that knowledge of sign language and Spanish are of equal importance in order to associate with both hearing and deaf communities.
In order to determine what characteristics are important for a leader in the Honduran deaf community, we asked nine participants to rank the following five characteristics: deafness, knowledge of sign language, literacy in Spanish, well educated, and ability to voice. Being well educated, deaf, and having a knowledge of sign language were ranked in the top three as the most important characteristics for a leader in the Honduran deaf community (see figure 4). All the participants gave little value to being able to voice. Almost every deaf leader we met in the Honduran deaf community was well educated, according to deaf Honduran standards, and many of them received education in another country.

![Figure 4. Ranking of desired characteristics of leaders in the Honduran deaf community.](image)

We met a deaf adult in Jesús de Otoro whose communication system seemed to be quite distinct from LESHO. He uses a lot of classifiers and is able to communicate at a decent level. Hearing people he worked with are able to communicate with him through their signing system. He is friends with five other deaf people in town. Some of his signs were very iconic, like male and female. Some hearing people did not consider his signing to be a valid language and want deaf people to use LESHO, as it is used in the large cities.

A deaf Honduran said that his deaf mother uses old Honduran Sign Language, including the two-handed alphabet. The fingerspelling used by his mother looks similar to the alphabet used in Guatemala. The reactions to the two-handed alphabet were negative and they considered it an underdeveloped sign language. Old Honduran Sign Language is described as using a lot of mouthing. Now ANSH is teaching people to sign with as little mouthing as possible. We were unable to meet any deaf Hondurans over the age of 45 who could tell us more about old Honduran Sign Language. The young man who grew up with a deaf mother said he did not learn sign language until his teens, which is when he learned LESHO. Also in San Pedro Sula, many deaf people said they did not know sign language until they learned LESHO. In La Ceiba, a deaf lady said she learned “old Honduran signs” when she was younger, which she equated to ASL and, later in life, she learned “new signs” which she equated to LESHO. There may be deaf people who still use old Honduran Sign Language but do not consider it a language, when compared with the prestige of LESHO.

### 3.4.6 Language contact

LESHO is said to have changed from the last generation because of the contact people have had with ASL. Across Honduras, LESHO is similar to ASL in grammatical aspects. LESHO has shared vocabulary with both ASL and Mexican Sign Language (LSM). The two main sources of ASL influence in Honduras are American missionaries in Honduras and deaf Hondurans who studied in the USA. One of the few certified interpreters in Honduras wants more research done on native Honduran Sign Language because she says that it has been replaced by LSM, ASL, and LESCO (Costa Rican Sign Language). Language contact from other countries occurs mainly in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.
North Americans are typically involved in three deaf camps every year with over 100 campers. Deaf people from all over Honduras attend these camps. About every two years, interpreting and deaf education college students from the USA come to Honduras to help train teachers of deaf children. Every year about 100 people from the USA also volunteer in La Ceiba. However, SofL tries to get ASL people to use LESHO to discourage the deaf Hondurans from becoming fascinated with ASL and desiring to replace LESHO because the USA is held in high esteem among the deaf community in Honduras. In addition, an ASL dictionary is found in almost every city visited, although it was not always in use.

In 2007, there was an American who taught ASL in Siguatepeque. In Comayagua, Casa Ayuda deaf school started using ASL from an ASL dictionary and in 2001 they switched from ASL to LESHO. The school director said the change of sign language was easy for the students but a challenge for the teachers. Some students can now switch back and forth from ASL to LESHO. Deaf people in El Progreso learned a form of ASL first from a USA volunteer. In San Pedro Sula, there has been ASL influence from Bible studies and videos, though deaf people report not understanding ASL. Furthermore, the Jehovah’s Witnesses brought ASL to Honduras, although recently some have showed interest in learning LESHO. Due to CASS graduates dominating the deaf community with ASL, a lot of LESHO has been lost, although that may not have been their intention. They use more ASL expressions and nuances that have yet to be developed in LESHO.

In San Pedro Sula, daily gatherings at Burger King draw a crowd from different parts of Honduras, as well as other countries. We noted three deaf Guatemalans and one deaf person from El Salvador hanging out and looking for work. Honduran CASS graduates mentioned that the deaf community in Honduras has had occasional contact with deaf people from Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Belize. Every year there is a deaf camp in Guatemala where deaf people from nearby countries, including Honduras, attend. In addition, deaf people from all over Latin America and the Caribbean attend a Congress for deaf people and interpreters, which is held in different countries every two years.

### 3.5 Social access

This section discusses social access issues which deaf Hondurans have concerning such things as employment, interpreter availability, hearing aids, and communication.

#### 3.5.1 Employment

According to the 2002 INE Household survey, 68 percent of people with disabilities of working age are unemployed, whereas only 49 percent of the total employable Honduran population is unemployed. In general, 73 percent of the employed people with disabilities are self-employed (IDRM 2004). Currently, the Grupo Hondureño de Apoyo a Personas Sordas (GHAPERS) is working toward finding job placements for deaf Hondurans. The Ley de Promoción de Empleos para Personas Minusválidas (Law of Promotion of Employment for persons with disabilities) was established in 1999. It states that persons with disabilities should have access to equal employment. There is to be at least one disabled person for every 20 to 49 employees.

The Deaf community, parents, teachers and Sign Language interpreters had sent a report to the University of Honduras director to show that according to the survey of National Statistics Institute of Honduras in 2002, there were 34,775 Deaf people at the national level, from which 85% are excluded from the fundamental rights like education, employment and participation in political and public life (WFD, 2008, p. 3).

Deaf people indicate that they need more opportunities to learn specialized trades. Some leaders in the deaf community say that deaf Hondurans often accomplish more at work than their hearing co-workers because they are not distracted by conversations, yet they may receive less pay. In 2009, a group of eight deaf people
from Gallaudet University and NTID were planning to come to Honduras to initiate a participatory community-development project. They hoped to brainstorm with deaf Hondurans about the lack of job opportunities and ways to improve that situation. The outcome of this activity is not yet known.

The U.S. Agency for International Development sponsors the CASS. “The program works with rural communities in Central America and the Caribbean to promote development through scholarships for technical training, leadership and community service” (STLCC 2008). In each country, potential leaders with disabilities, or hearing people interested in becoming sign language interpreters, are chosen as scholarship recipients. Regardless of the fact that deaf recipients often do not have high school degrees, they are able to excel in their college courses in the USA. Many of the deaf CASS alumni find employment when they return to their home country. Among the Honduran deaf community, CASS graduates have the best jobs, which are usually obtained through CASS contacts. Most CASS jobs are in computer science and accounting. However, CASS graduates say there is still discrimination against deaf people in the workplace.

Typical jobs for deaf Hondurans, who did not have the opportunity to be a part of CASS, are as supermarket clerks, janitors, carpenters, painters, welders, seamstresses, and cargo boat workers. Some deaf teachers can only work part-time or as assistants, if they do not have their secondary education certificate. UNAH (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras) made exceptions to their requirement for teachers so that deaf Hondurans can teach the LESHO classes. In San Pedro Sula, Logos International has a job corps where they help deaf people get proper identification and papers so they can apply for a job. They also have connections with local grocery stores that are willing to hire deaf people even if it is only a seasonal job. A couple of deaf leaders in Juticalpa said that deaf people without jobs do not usually take the initiative to find a way to make money, choosing instead to stay home and be dependant on their family.

3.5.2 Interpreters

A local deaf leader mentioned the great need for hearing people who work with the deaf community to have in-depth training, giving them a deeper understanding of the nature of sign language. In 1999–2004, UNAH was the first university in Central America to offer an accredited interpreter program. During that time, NLDM provided 90 percent of the classroom teaching and established the curriculum. Currently, the interpreter program is on hold although the LESHO classes are still offered as electives. As of 2008, there are five to eight certified LESHO interpreters in Honduras who have completed the interpreter training program at UNAH, although some of them do not work as interpreters. Oftentimes, the only interpreters available are teachers at deaf schools who may not even be solicited because of their low signing skills. Half of our deaf participants said that hearing people are not helpful because they do not have the patience to communicate. The other deaf participants said that the hearing people who are helpful are those connected to deaf ministries and organizations, or others, like doctors, who are willing to take the extra time to communicate.

3.5.3 Hearing aids and testing

Hearing tests and hearing aid fittings were offered once a week every year in Santa Rosa de Copan, starting in 1994. Two years later, Central American Medical Outreach (CAMO 2009) connected with Teletón Rehabilitation Center to establish a hearing clinic in Santa Rosa de Copan. It was the first hearing clinic made available to the lower income population of Honduras. Prices of hearing aids are based on what the client can afford. Many people who have received hearing aids are finding a better quality of life as they discover more respect in the community. In 1995, there were at least three similar rehabilitation centers in Honduras (Stevenson 1995).

Logos International is able to test and monitor hearing capabilities. They have the only audiology equipment in Honduras that is able to test babies. They also provide information concerning cochlear
implants and other digital procedures. Logos hopes that more families learn about their center so deaf children can receive hearing tests and obtain the necessary aids and therapy to better develop their language abilities.

3.5.4 Media and communication

In 2004, there was only one television channel out of twelve which broadcasted news with closed captioning. A Catholic television channel now offers closed captioning for many of its programs. However, there are still no strategies set up to facilitate communication for deaf people in times of natural disasters, civil emergencies, or crimes. Since many are not literate in Spanish, deaf Hondurans want to see an interpreter on television. It is also unlikely that deaf Hondurans have a computer, although, a few may have access to a DVD player. A large percentage of deaf Hondurans own a cell phone, so they can stay in contact with each other through texting.

4 Conclusion

Concerning the sociolinguistic situation of the Honduran deaf community, the most active deaf communities and three largest schools for deaf people are located in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Outside of these cities, reliable deaf education is hard to find. Families of deaf children need access to information about deafness and how they can best help their deaf children. In every city in Honduras there is also a need for more interpreters and access to better employment. Interpreters are needed for secondary schools so that deaf people can have the correct paperwork to obtain a decent job. Many deaf people see the need for more LESHO materials. They want to see more dictionaries on DVD and Spanish literacy programs.

Reports on language attitude, use, and vitality indicate that there is disagreement among deaf communities about who uses pure LESHO and who has more ASL influence in their signing. Tegucigalpa is home to ANSH, which is the leader in pushing forward standardization of LESHO. The majority of schools with deaf students claim to use LESHO as their language of instruction and most own a copy of the dictionary published by ANSH. Learning LESHO is becoming more popular in Honduras and many classes are being offered in various cities, again most of them using the ANSH dictionary. ASL influence continues as Americans volunteer and deaf Hondurans have the opportunity to study in the USA.

Despite our efforts, a clearly-defined example of old Honduran Sign Language was never found. Further research is needed to determine whether one actually existed before modern LESHO. If old Honduran Sign Language still exists, it will most likely become extinct due to the increasing prestige of LESHO. There is a high possibility that LESHO will be standardized because of the increasing socialization of deaf people across Honduras through annual camps and soccer games, as well as the influence of ANSH.

Appendix A: Sociolinguistic questionnaire

This section describes the components of the SLQ as well as the administration procedure used in Honduras. The SLQ was designed to gather demographic and sociolinguistic information from individuals involved with the local deaf communities. It has been adapted from SLQs used in previous surveys by the Americas Area Sign Language survey team.

A.1 SLQ instrument

English and Spanish questionnaire templates were created in Microsoft Word containing open fields for descriptive answers and fields for closed questions with answers such as “yes/no” or level of importance. Table 4 lists the SLQ questions used in Honduras with both hearing and deaf people. The questions
focused on gathering a wide variety of information about the social situation of the deaf communities and
sign language use and attitudes of the participants.

Questions 1–7 collected metadata (personal background information) for any person who was providing
language data. Questions 8–18 could be used with hearing or deaf people and gathered basic
demographics of the deaf community. The final section (questions 19–39) probed language use and
attitudes specifically among deaf individuals. The SLQ also included a brief description of the research
project, opportunity for the participant to indicate consent to be involved in the project, and allowed the
participant to indicate what level of access others could have in the future to the language data they
provided.

Table 4. Sociolinguistic questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant information:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Approximately how old are you now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Do you have any deaf family members? If so, who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Where do you currently live?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How many years of education have you completed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Please name the school(s) you have attended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Where do you interact with deaf people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. At what age did you first start signing? Where and instructed by whom?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deaf services and meeting places:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. List associations and organizations serving deaf people in your area, indicating their role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9. Do deaf people attend religious services? If no, explain why not. If yes, please answer
  the following: What services do they attend? Why do deaf people attend services? What
  language(s) does the service use? How many deaf people attend these services? |
| 10. Do deaf people meet at any other places than you listed above? How often and with what
   activities? |
| 11. Please list the deaf schools in your area. How many years of education do these schools
    offer students? Please identify the communication philosophy of each school (oral,
    bilingual, TC, etc.) |
| 12. Are there interpreters available in your area? If so, please answer the following: How
    many? How are they trained? Where do they work? How many of these would you
    consider to be skilled interpreters? |
| 13. Please list any published materials about the sign language in your area. |
| 14. Do deaf people in your community interact with deaf people from other places in
    Honduras? If so, please answer the following: Which other communities? Where and
    why do they meet? |
| 15. Have deaf people here interacted with deaf people from other countries? If so, which
    countries? |
| 16. What type of jobs do most deaf people have in Honduras? |
| 17. Do most deaf people in your area have a DVD player and/or computer in their house? |
| 18. Please list the leaders (hearing or deaf) of your local deaf community. |
### Table 4. Sociolinguistic questionnaire (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Where do deaf people learn sign language in your community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. How many deaf people sign in your community? How well do they sign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. How many hearing people use sign language in your community? How well do they sign?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Do deaf people sign the same with hearing people as they do with each other? If no, how do deaf people sign differently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Do you interact more with deaf or hearing people? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Do deaf parents sign with their hearing children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Do hearing parents sign with their deaf children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. How do deaf people feel when signing in public?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Are hearing people supportive of the deaf community? Explain your answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Do all deaf people in Honduras sign the same? If no, what factors lead to different signing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Do you want everyone in Honduras to sign the same? Explain your answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. What is the name of the sign language in your area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Is your sign language like the sign language of any other country? If yes, which one(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Do you think that it is better for deaf people to use sign language or spoken language? Explain your answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. How well do you read and write Spanish?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. What type of language materials (e.g. Bible, dictionary, interpreter training manual, sign literature, etc.) do you want to be developed? How and where would you use them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. What does your deaf community need most to succeed in life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. When choosing a president in your deaf association/organization, how would you rate the following five characteristics (deaf, sign well, able to speak, able to read/write, well educated)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Best city in Honduras for deaf people to live in (most services, education, support, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. What place with sign language is the easiest to understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. What place has the most beautiful sign language?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Notes:

**A.2 SLQ procedure and limitations**

All the data was collected by two SIL researchers who communicated through Honduran Sign Language and other signs and gestures and Spanish. After explaining the purpose of the questionnaire, obtaining volunteer consent, and identifying the participants’ desired accessibility of the data, the questionnaire was administered. Participant responses were recorded by the researchers on paper or typed into their laptop. Upon completion of the survey fieldwork, the questionnaire forms were imported into Microsoft Excel for easier analysis of participant responses.

Because the sampling method was based on whoever was willing and available to talk with us, we tended to work with participants who were more extroverted, educated, and the leaders of each community. It is not a comprehensive representation of micro-cultures within each deaf community.
Appendix B: Acronyms

ANSH  Asociación Nacional de Sordos de Honduras
ASL   American Sign Language
CASS  Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships
CECAES El Centro de Capacitacion Especial
CIRE  Centro de Investigación y Rehabilitación Especial
GHAPERS Grupo Hondureño de Apoyo a Personas Sordas
HPU   Instituto Hector Pineda Ugarte
INE   National Statistics Institute
LESCO Costa Rican Sign Language
LESHO Honduran Sign Language
LSM   Mexican Sign Language
NLDM  New Life Deaf Ministry
NTID  National Technical Institute for the Deaf
PAHO  Pan American Health Organization
RA    Rapid Appraisal
RQ    Research Question
SLQ   Sociolinguistic Questionnaire
SofL  Signs of Love
UNAH  Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras
WHO   World Health Organization

References


