

Information leaflet for participants “Cross-signing”

You have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by the International Institute for Sign Languages and Deaf Studies (iSLanDS). The research project is about communication between sign language users from different countries, and the title of the project is “Cross-signing”. We are researching how Deaf people are able to develop communication amongst each other, even if they do not have any shared language.

This leaflet gives you information about the project and your participation in it. One of our research team members will go through these questions and answers with you, and if you have any further questions, you can discuss these any time.

What are the aims of this research?

Our research will highlight the great skills of sign language users when they are communicating with each other across language boundaries. We want to know what exactly Deaf signers do when they have to communicate with another Deaf person who uses a different sign language. We study the linguistic structures of these signed communications, we run communicative experiments, and we ask the Deaf signers about their experiences with this kind of communication. Our findings are also important for a better understanding of International Sign. Results from this research could be used later to help Deaf people who move to a different country and have problems accessing support because they use a different sign language.

Why have you invited me to participate?

We have invited you because you have excellent knowledge of your sign language. This project is about people with high linguistic skills, and we think you are suitable to participate. You may not know much English or International Sign, or other sign languages. That is not a problem, because we are interested in how you communicate with other Deaf signers, who use other languages. Also, we have invited you because you are able to travel to India and stay with us for some time (about 6 weeks).

What if I want to drop out of the research?

Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate, and if you start taking part in the project, you can stop any time. You do not need to give us any explanation if you want to stop. At every step of research, we will review the progress with you; we will confirm that you want to continue, and you can discuss any feedback or concerns. You can stop participating at any time.

What will I do in your research study?

If you are from abroad, you will stay with us at Dr ShakuntalaMisra University (DSMU) in Lucknow, India for some time, about 6 weeks, but it can be somewhat shorter or longer. While you are at DSMU, you will participate in a number of linguistic tasks and experiments, and there will be a lot of video filming of your signing. You will meet other signers from different countries, and we will study how you all manage to communicate with each other.

We will ask you to have informal conversations with signers from other countries, and we will interview you afterwards about your experience with trying to communicate. We will also ask you to do a game activity with several other signers, which is a linguistic experiment. You can participate in all these activities if you are happy to do so, or you can opt out of some of the activities if you do not feel comfortable.

What else can I do when I am at DSMU?

You will be able to participate in other activities that we run at DSMU, for example training in linguistic research, community leadership training, or conferences and workshops. So joining this project will be a great opportunity for you to develop new skills.

Will I be employed by iSLanDS or DSMU?

No, you will not be employed by us, so participating in this research is not a job. You will have the status of a visitor, and you will not receive a salary.

What are the benefits and risks for me if I participate?

If you participate, you will be part of an exciting project that highlights the great linguistic skills that Deaf signers have. You will be able to develop many skills during your time with us, and these skills can be very useful for yourself and your local Deaf community after you return. We will also pay you a living allowance when you are in India, and we will pay all your travel expenses. If you participate, you should be aware that you will have to travel to Lucknow, India, and you will not be covered by our University's insurance. You should also be aware that other people may see your video recordings, so others may recognise your face and may understand what you are saying.

How will my contribution be recognized?

We will publish this research, and we plan to mention all participants (including yourself) in a thank-you note. If you do not want your name to be mentioned, just tell us, and we will keep it confidential.

Will my data be kept confidential?

For this research, we will need to ask you personal questions, such as your name, which languages you know, where and how you have been educated, etc. Only the research team will have access to this personal information, and it will be confidential. The video recordings will not be linked to your personal information, but your face will still be visible on the videos. After video filming, we will go through the recordings with you. If there is anything that you would not like us to keep, just say so, and we will delete it and remove it from our data. The consent form has several options for you to decide how you want us to use your data, who will be able to see it, and in what format. You should think about these options carefully. Even if you chose some options initially, you can always change them later if you want. You do not need to give us any reasons for your choices, and we will only use your data in the ways you have agreed to. You can also choose how long you want us to keep your data.

Where will you keep my data?

Digital data will be kept on our server (a computer that is connected to the Internet) on campus. Anonymised information about your data can be seen by anyone on the Internet, but personal information and videos are locked. Access to these files is protected by passwords, and only the research team has access to all the files. It is possible to make individual files accessible to other people, but we will only do this if you want us to. For some

of the videos, there will be additional DV tapes, and we keep these locked in our offices. There will also be some documents on paper, and we keep these safely locked away too.

How long will you keep my data?

Usually, we keep research data for five years and then delete them. If you want us to keep our data longer, you can say so on the consent form, and we will agree the details with you. Otherwise, after five years we delete the digital video files and erase the DV tapes.

Will you let me know about the progress of your research later?

Yes, we will note your contact details, and you will get updates and reports from us about the research. You will also get personal feedback from us.

What if I have a concern or complaint?

If you are not happy with something, either now or later on, you can complain to our University's Ethics Committee through Simeon Hart (SHart1@uclan.ac.uk). Simeon will forward your concerns to our Ethics Committee.

What if I need more information?

If you still have questions, you can contact Tashi by email (abradford1@uclan.ac.uk), Skype (QTlinguini), or Facebook (Tashi Bradford), or contact the project director, Prof. Ulrike Zeshan, who is leading this research. Her contact details are:

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