

Transmigration of American Sign Language from the American Deaf Community to the American Society

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Abstract : American Sign Language (ASL) has been developed and used by signing deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) individuals in the American Deaf community since early nineteenth century. In the last two decades, secondary schools in the US offered ASL for foreign language credit to secondary school learners. The learners who learn ASL as a foreign language are largely American native speakers of English. They not only learn ASL in US schools but also create spaces under certain interactional and social conditions in their home communities outside of classrooms and use ASL with each other instead of their native English. This phenomenon is a transmigration of language from a native social group to a non-native, non-kin social group. This study looks at the transmigration of ASL from signing Deaf community to the general speaking and hearing American society. Theoretical implications of this study are discussed.

Keywords : American Sign Language, Foreign Language, Language transmission, United States

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