

**[Abstract in English]**

**Promotion of sign language research by the African Deaf community:  
Cases in French-speaking West and Central Africa  
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**Abstract**

This article is based on a draft of a joint plenary talk by the two authors at the 8th World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL8) held on 20–24 August 2015 at Kyoto University, Japan.

In part 1, Kamei, a hearing cultural anthropologist from Japan, reports generally on sign languages in West and Central Africa. Although most countries in these areas use French as their official language, we observed an influence of American Sign Language (ASL) vocabulary. Andrew J. Foster, a Deaf African-American pastor, and his Deaf African colleagues conducted missionary activities in the area of West and Central Africa. Through their activities following the independence of African countries in the 1960s, urban Deaf communities created a new creole sign language using ASL vocabulary, written/spoken French, and indigenous African signs. Through our research, we have established that the sign language used in this region is not a dialect of ASL, but an independent sign language created by African Deaf communities. This article proposes a new name for this language: *Langue des Signes d'Afrique Francophone* (LSAF).

In part 2, Yédê, a Deaf researcher and sign language instructor in Côte d'Ivoire, presents his experience with collaborative research in West Africa. In 2009, we began research training workshops for Deaf people in Côte d'Ivoire and established a Deaf research team organized by Yédê. He is the author of five books on sign language:

- (1) The first sign language dictionary in Côte d'Ivoire (September 2012)
- (2) Three sign language manuals for technical education and vocational training prepared for Togo, Burkina Faso, and Niger (May 2014)
- (3) A manual of bilingual literacy in sign language in Côte d'Ivoire (September 2014).

Through his report, he demonstrates the importance of entrusting a primary role to Deaf people in the activities of research on sign languages in Africa. If Deaf people continue to be limited to the role of “signing models” for hearing researchers, research cannot continue in the absence of

the researchers. However, if Deaf people are well trained and become researchers themselves, they are able to continue to study and use the results of research to advocate for linguistic rights for the Deaf.

In conclusion, we show future perspectives for autonomous and united research collaborations among local Deaf research teams in West and Central Africa.

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