

Establishment of NRASLI and History to Start Up the National Meeting of JSL Interpretation.

In 1968, we discussed for the first time the issue of how to secure the information for deaf people and the necessity of sign language interpretation at a national level. The 1st National Meeting of JSL Interpretation was held as an annex to the 17th National Congress of the Deaf Japanese in Fukushima.

In 1974, National Research Association for Sign Language Interpretation (NRASLI) was established. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in sign language and sign language interpreting as well as sign language interpretation. Currently, we have 47 affiliate chapters all over Japan and members are about 11,000.

From 1985, NRASLI started to hold national meeting twice a year, Summer Session and Winter Workshop.

Beginning of the Winter Workshop



Increasing the number of the participants and the issues to discuss, it had become difficult to develop the discussion of the previous year. Therefore, the Winter Workshop would hold a *discussion style*, which would be held independently from the Summer Session, *lecture style*.

As the Winter Workshop discussions based on the previous year, it is important for all participants to have common background information of the last discussion. A rule was established to have reports about the activities of each prefecture. The chairman of each workshop was assigned to the board members of NRASLI, and the co-researcher was assigned to the members of the Japanese Federation of the Deaf (JFD), co-operator of movement.

Participants would share this knowledge with their affiliate chapters to build upon or develop new activity from the experience of workshops. Following up to the next year's workshop, participants would have discussions about what they learned and new activities they have been able to implement.

Report on the Winter Workshop 2013

The 29th Winter Workshop was held at the Chukyo University in Nagoya city for 2 days, 23 and 24 February 2013. We had 987 deaf and hearing participants from every prefecture of Japan and 100 volunteers each day supported the event. We had 13 session meetings of different themes and listened to research presentations and discussed the theme each participant previously registered.

Here are some of those themes:



<Interpretation services and its role>

A presentation was about how to coordinate the services and support newly registered interpreters. Besides OJT training and field report, they reported that a mutual supervision was essential among interpreters.

We discussed 24/7 and emergency service and agreed in the necessity of employment of SLIs at the government offices. JFD has been working on establishing the standards of SLI service provision and the new guideline. It may lead to get rid of the gaps in regions. But we always have to consider the situation of each region.

<Sign language>

There were 2 reports on this theme. One was a DVD presentation that introduces a deaf teacher with his personal history, which relates to local place-name signs. Another was a story about how to collect local signs and edit a book. Some communities have reported the process of making DVDs or books of their own local signs. We could share information each other.

Also we learned new expression from the book “*New Sign Language 2013*” published by JFD.



<Sign language learning circles>

In Japan, there are many groups where they communicate with local deaf people. These groups are called “sign language circle”. Circles provide opportunities to learn sign language for not only family members of deaf persons or teachers of schools for the deaf but also any hearing persons who are interested to learn JSL.

Four presentations of their activities were given.

One of them was studies of its history. There were some people who were too interested in developing their sign language skills and didn't know what to do. After they knew the backgrounds of the launch of Circle and its movements, they could understand the goals of Circle clearly. They came to realize that to learn sign language is to figure out deaf people's lives.



Another report was about an emergency drill especially for deaf people. They carried out the drill with the support of firehouse and found a problem on communication. We discussed what would be the role of Circle members in case of emergency.

Also we shared information about how to manage Circle.

In the venue, there were counters for selling books and DVDs published by JFD or NRASLI where many participants could get updated information.

All presentations given in the event counted 32 and they were practical reports and their challenges. We have learned each other and shared information over the two days.

Reported by:
Etsuko Umemoto
WASLI Asian Representative
Manager of the International Division of NRASLI
Japan