

Lecture 'The development and current status of the International Sign through International Deaf Sports Events'

1. Historical Development of International Sign (IS)
 2. Importance of IS for International Deaf Sports Events
 3. The Current Status of IS
 4. Challenges and Opportunities
 5. Future Perspectives and Vision
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Introduction:

Personal Background:

- Name: Jürgen Endress
- Age: 50 years
- Country: Germany
- Identity: Doda

Professional Background:

- Current Role:
 - ICSD International Sports Director (since 2024)
- Previous Roles:
 - 15 years as ICSD Basketball Director
 - 8 years as Secretary General of DIBF (Deaf International Basketball Federation)
 - Head of Media Production and Public Relations at Deaf company

Connection to International Sign (IS):

- Experience:
 - Over 30 years of using International Sign, starting with limited use and gradually increasing through professional and international engagements.
 - Significance:
 - IS as a key tool for communication and networking on a global scale.
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1. Historical Development of International Sign (IS)

1. Origins and necessity of IS

- **Background:** In the 1950s, there was a need for a common visual language for communication at an international level, especially in the Deaf community.
- **Need:** National sign languages differ greatly, which made communication between people from different countries difficult. IS developed organically from the desire for better communication at international meetings.
- **Beginning:** IS was first used informally when Deaf people from different countries began to use improvised gestures and signs.

2. First use at international sporting events

- **Pioneering work:** The first systematic use of IS took place at the early Deaflympics and international congresses of the Deaf.
- **Examples:** As early as the 1924 Deaflympics in Paris, approaches to a common visual language became visible, although this was not labelled as IS.
- **Institutionalisation:** From the 1960s onwards, IS was specifically used at international sporting events to facilitate communication between athletes, coaches and officials.

3. Milestones and changes over time

- **Standardisation:** In the 1980s and 1990s, IS was further developed and standardised through the work of interpreters and linguists.
- **Influence of new technologies:** The proliferation of video platforms and online media has helped to document and disseminate IS.
- **Today:** IS is used professionally at all major international events, including the Deaflympics and World Championships, and is supported by trained interpreters.

2. Importance of International Sign (IS) for international Deaf sports events

1. IS as a means of communication for athletes, officials and spectators

- **Bridge between cultures:** IS enables direct communication between Deaf people from different countries, regardless of their national sign language.

- **Practical examples:** Athletes use IS to share instructions and strategies during competitions, officials use it for announcements, and spectators can be more easily involved in the event.
- **Efficiency:** IS minimises misunderstandings and ensures clear communication in stressful and complex competition situations.

2. Promoting inclusion and understanding

- **Strengthen community:** IS creates a common platform that brings all participants - athletes, officials and spectators - together and creates a sense of the global Deaf community.
- **Breaking down barriers:** By using IS, all participants feel included, regardless of their origin or cultural background.
- **Uniqueness:** IS shows how the Deaf community is finding innovative ways to promote inclusion and understanding on an international level.

3. Challenges of using IS in a multicultural environment

- **Cultural differences:** Some gestures or signs in IS can be interpreted differently in certain cultures, which can lead to misunderstandings.
 - **Varying levels:** Not all athletes and officials are equally familiar with IS, which requires training and interpreters.
 - **Resources:** The use of professional IS interpreters is necessary but time-consuming and costly, especially at major events.
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3. The current status of International Sign (IS)

1. The current use of IS at ICSD events

- **Anchoring in events:** IS is an integral part of all international Deaf sports events such as the Deaflympics, World Championships and ICSD Congresses.
- **Access:** IS is used for opening and closing ceremonies, press conferences and daily announcements to ensure that all participants are informed.
- **Success:** IS helps to ensure the smooth running of events by overcoming communication barriers.

2. Standardisation and development of new vocabularies

- **Dynamic language:** IS is constantly evolving to incorporate new terms and concepts from sport, technology and society.
- **ICSD influence:** ICSD works with interpreters to integrate new sports or specific terms into IS.

- **Documentation:** Video and online resources promote standardisation and help new generations to learn IS.

3. Collaboration with interpreters and other professionals

- **Professional interpreters:** Trained IS interpreters are used at large events, often working in real time and requiring high precision.
 - **Workshops and training:** The ICSD offers training courses to train officials and volunteers in dealing with IS.
 - **Common goal:** Close co-operation between interpreters, linguists and sports experts ensures that IS remains an efficient and versatile form of communication.
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4. Challenges and opportunities of International Sign (IS)

1. Barriers to the spread of IS

- **Cultural differences:**
 - IS is not equally accepted everywhere, as some national sign language communities perceive it as 'artificial' or less authentic.
 - Different cultural backgrounds can make it difficult to interpret individual signs.
- **Limited availability of experts:**
 - The need for professional IS interpreters often exceeds the available capacity.
 - There are few formal training programmes for IS, which slows down the development of new professionals.
- **Lack of standardisation:**
 - Although progress has been made, IS remains less standardised than many national sign languages.

2. Advantages of the further promotion of IS

- **Increased acceptance:**
 - Promoting IS strengthens the global Deaf community and demonstrates the power of shared communication.
 - With increased adoption, more people could have access to IS training and resources
- **Increased networking:**
 - IS enables athletes, officials and organisations worldwide to work more closely together.
 - Especially at international sporting events, IS promotes fast and efficient communication across language barriers.

- **Innovation potential:**
 - The further development of IS could help to utilise it more outside of sport - for example in education, technology and global politics.
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5. Future perspectives and visions for International Sign (IS)

1. How can IS be further developed?

- **Promotion through education:**
 - Develop and expand IS training programmes for Deaf people, interpreters and officials.
 - Integrate IS into educational programmes to promote wider use in the Deaf community.
- **Technological support:**
 - Use of modern technologies such as apps and online platforms to document and disseminate IS.
- **Research and innovation:**
 - Continuous linguistic research to further standardise IS and adapt it to new requirements.

2. Role of the ICSD in the promotion of IS

- **Role model:**
 - The ICSD, as a key player, can emphasise the importance of IS at international sporting events.
- **Workshops and seminars:**
 - Organising events that specifically promote IS, such as training for interpreters and participants.
- **Collaboration:**
 - Partner with universities, NGOs and technology companies to further develop IS.

3. Potential for expansion to other international platforms

- **Outside of sport:**
 - IS could also play a greater role in international organisations such as the World Federation of the Deaf, the WFD, to engage the Deaf community globally.
- **Inclusion in society:**
 - By spreading IS, more international projects could include Deaf people and promote inclusive communication.
- **Global networking:**

- IS has the potential to become an important tool in international diplomacy, education and co-operation.
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A Personal Closing

"Over the past 30 years, I have witnessed how International Sign not only facilitates communication but also strengthens community. Together, we can continue to develop this language and make the world even more inclusive for the Deaf community."

Jürgen Endress - ICSD International Sports Director