

“Taiwan Sign Language [tss] (A language of Taiwan)

- **Alternate Names:** Taiwan Ziran Shouyu
- **Population:** 20,000 (2004), decreasing.
- **Location:** Scattered
- **Language Status:** 4 (Educational).
- **Dialects:** Kaohsiung, Tainan, Taipei. 2 major dialects. Sources from which the sign language developed were indigenous sign systems before 1895, Japanese occupation and education 1895–1946, Mainland Chinese Sign Language brought by refugees in 1949 and some from Hong Kong since. Lexical similarity: 50% with Japanese Sign Language [jsl].
- **Language Use:** Decreasing, but not likely to die out, as many deaf are not candidates for cochlear implants or hearing aids. Schools, sporting events, some homes, churches for the deaf. 5 to old age. Neutral attitudes. Most interaction with hearing people uses gestures or written Mandarin [cmn], unless the Deaf person has hearing aids or cochlear implants.
- **Language Development:** Literacy rate in L1: 0%. Literacy rate in L2: 60%–70%. 4 elementary, 3 high schools. Taught in primary and secondary schools.
- **Other Comments:** Quite different from (Mainland) Chinese Sign Language [csl]; only a few signs the same or similar. Not related to Taiwanese languages. Some signs borrowed from Chinese characters, e.g. by drawing on the palm with a finger. There is also a Signed Mandarin (Wenfa Shouyu). 1,540 special education schools in Taiwan in 2002, which includes schools for the deaf.”

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Last Updated: March 23, 2015