

“Finnish Sign Language [fse] (A language of Finland)

- **Alternate Names:** FinSL, Suomalainen viittomakieli, SVK, Viittomakieli
- **Population:** 5,000 (2006 Institute for the Languages of Finland–KOTUS). 5,000 deaf and 10,000 hearing signers (2006 Institute for the Languages of Finland–KOTUS). 5,000 deaf signers (2014 EUD). 26,500 (2014 IMB).
- **Location:** Scattered
- **Language Status:** 5 (Developing). Recognized language (2011, No. 61, Institute for sign language status).
- **Dialects:** 2 major dialects from the Finnish (17 schools) and Swedish (1 school) communities. Signed Finnish, used by some teachers of the deaf, is distinct. Developed originally out of Swedish Sign Language [swl], but now distinct. Closely-related to Finland-Swedish Sign Language (FinSSL) [fss], but FinSL users generally have difficulty understanding FinSSL unless FinSSL users adapt towards FinSL. Some borrowing from Finnish [fin]. (Hoyer 2004.) Not intelligible with Danish Sign Language [dsl].
- **Typology:** One-handed fingerspelling.
- **Language Use:** Used by deaf people whose families speak Finnish [fin] and who attended schools that used Finnish as the language of instruction (Hoyer 2004). The government pays interpreters to accompany the deaf to hospitals, college, church, etc. Interpreters required in court.
- **Language Development:** Films. TV. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible portions: 1989.
- **Other Comments:** Fingerspelling system similar to French Sign Language [fsl]. First deaf school founded 1850s. Government-paid interpreters. Interpreters required in court. Instruction for parents of deaf children. Many classes for hearing people. Christian (Protestant).”

Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.)
2015. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Eighteenth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL
International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

Related Readings

Jantunen, Tommi

2008 The Equative Sentence in Finnish Sign Language. *Sign Language & Linguistics* 10(2): 113.

Jantunen, Tommi

2012 Acceleration Peaks and Sonority in Finnish Sign Language Syllables. *The Sonority Controversy* 18: 347-382.

Hietanen, Jari, Jukka Leppänen, and Ulla Lehtonen

2004 Perception of Emotions in the Hand Movement Quality of Finnish Sign Language. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 28(1): 53-64.

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