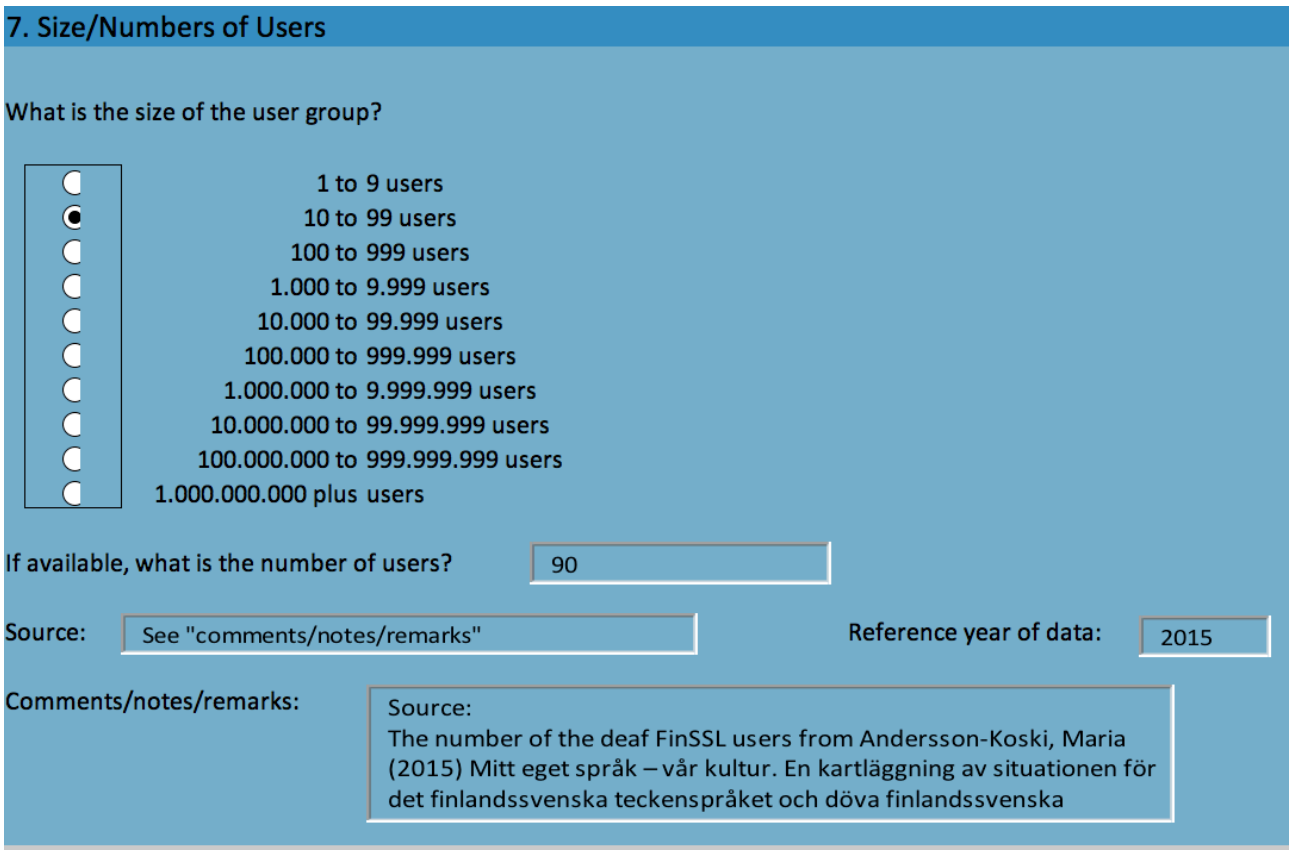
Vain kysymykset ja vastaukset 7–11



Source:

The number of the deaf FinSSL users from *Andersson-Koski*, Maria (2015) Mitt eget språk – vår kultur. En kartläggning av situationen för det finlandssvenska teckenspråket och döva finlandssvenska teckenspråkiga i Finland 2014–2015 (My language – our culture. A charting of the situation of the Finland-Swedish sign language and its deaf users in Finland in 2014–2015). Available online at the website of the Association of Finland-Swedish Sign Language Users: http://www.dova.fi/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PDF_Mitt_eget_sprak_var_kultur.pdf

Reference year of data: 2014–2015

Comments/notes/remarks:

Finnish Sign Language is the more dominant sign language in Finland. This language is used on TV news, in signed information at the Internet, within the education system, within the interpreter training. There is a lack of knowledge among the mainstream (hearing) society about the existence of FinSSL. Young people are partly non-existent since this generation to a large extent has moved to Sweden. However, among those young people that do exist there is a lack of knowledge and awareness about language topics.

The language users live spread out from each other and do not have possibilities to use their language on everyday basis. Instead the majority sign language, i.e. Finnish Sign Language is often used.

Signed supported speech is popular. Most of the courses that are arranged are about signed supported speech and not natural FinSSL.

On 19 January 2016, the Ministry of Justice published a report on the overall situation of the Finland-Swedish sign language (Ministry of Justice reports and guidelines 2/2016, for further information contact oikeusministerio@om.fi). According to this report, the Finland-Swedish sign language is particularly endangered, and a comprehensive programme would be needed to revive it.

The government has started to give funds for the revitalization of Finland-Swedish sign language. A research and training project on the Finland-Swedish sign language funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture was launched at the HUMAK University of Applied Sciences (2015–2017). This project produced small-scale studies and a description of the language itself, and trained expert instructors of Finland-Swedish sign language who can now act in such roles as teachers of sign language to families, special needs assistants, translators and instructors of interpreters. In 2018 a FinSSL interpreter training project (2018-19) started at HUMAK (funded by ministry of Education and Culture).

It is crucial to understand that any administrational or educational solutions (FinSSL instruction for families with deaf children, early childhood education, primary education level etc.) or training programs for professionals do not give quick improvement to the severe endangerment. The process of revitalization is extremely slow. - In addition to this kind of work in societal level it is also a question about the individual child whose need to grow as a member of a sign language community is at risk and his/her situation is to be solved as well (in the framework of implementation with the few resources available).

8. Proportion of Users within the National population

What is the proportion of users within the total population of the country?

- ( ) (Almost) all
- ( ) More than 50%
- ( ) Less than 50%
- ( ) Less than 10%
- (•) Less than 1%
- ( ) No one

If available, what is the specific proportion (%)? 0,016 %

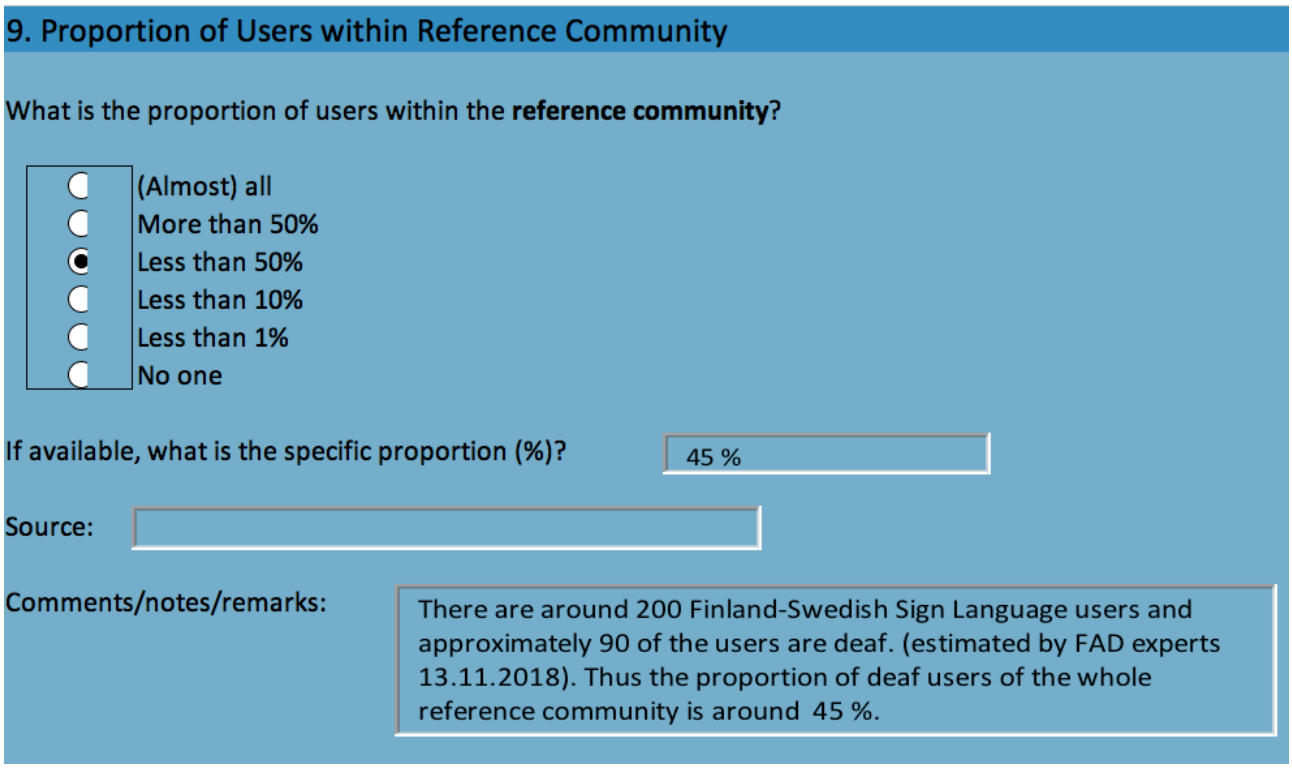
Source:

Comments/notes/remarks: In October 2018 there were 5 521 533 inhabitants in Finland of which 90 deaf users of FinSSL is 0,016 %.

If available, what is the specific proportion (%)?

In October 2018 there were 5 521 533 inhabitants in Finland of which
90 deaf users of FinSSL is 0,016 %.

Source: see question 7



REFERENCE COMMUNITY = community of potential sign language users, which consists of all deaf people (except those deafened due to old age), hearing relatives of deaf people, and other

If available, what is the specific proportion (%)?

There are around 200 Finland-Swedish Sign Language users and approximately 90 of the users are deaf. (estimated by FAD experts 13.11.2018). Thus the proportion of deaf users of the whole reference community is around 45 %.

- It was for a long time believed that there are some 300 users of the Finland-Swedish Sign Language, of whom one half would be deaf. However, a survey carried out between 2014 and 2015 found that the number of deaf users of this language is around 90, most of whom are at a rather advanced age. (see source below)

Source:

Report of the Government on the Application of Language Legislation 2017. Government publications 10/2017. Prime Minister's Office, Helsinki 2017.
https://oikeusministerio.fi/documents/1410853/4734397/VNK_H1017_Report+of+the+Government+on+th

e+Application+of+Language+Legislation+2017_net_3+%28002%29.pdf/c33a5105-74ff-466d-88d3-798f54d819bc/VNK_H1017_Report+of+the+Government+on+the+Application+of+Language+Legislation+2017_net_3+%28002%29.pdf.pdf)

Comments/notes/remarks:

See further: Ministry of Justice (2016), p. 8: Selvitys suomenruotsalaisen viittomakielen kokonaistilanteesta (A report on the overall situation of the Finland-Swedish sign language). Surveys and guidelines 2/2016.

10. Age Distribution of Users

What is the age distribution of users of the language?*

Generation	Number of Users
Younger generations (<15 years)	10
Middle generations (15-65 years)	20
Older generations (>65 years)	60

Source:

Comments/notes/remarks: The figures are estimations.

The number of the deaf FinSSL users (marked with asterisk *) from Andersson-Koski, Maria (2015) Mitt eget språk – vår kultur. En

* If the actual number is not available, please insert an approximate value.

Generation	Number of Users
Younger generations (<15 years)	appr. 10* + 10
Middle generations (15-65 years)	appr. 20* + 60
Older generations (>65 years)	appr. 60* + 40

Source:

The number of the deaf FinSSL users (marked with asterisk *) from *Andersson-Koski*, Maria (2015) Mitt eget språk – vår kultur. En kartläggning av situationen för det finlandssvenska teckenspråket och döva finlandssvenska teckenspråkiga i Finland 2014–2015 (My language – our culture. A charting of the situation of the Finland-Swedish sign language and its deaf users in Finland in 2014–2015). Association of Finland-Swedish Sign Language Users
http://www.dova.fi/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PDF_Mitt_eget_sprak_var_kultur.pdf

The number of other FinSSL users is an estimation by FAD experts on the grounds explained in the question 9.

Reference year of data:
2014–2015 and 2018

Comments/notes/remarks:

By the major evaluative factors of language vitality the Finland-Swedish Sign Language is severely endangered (see UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group of Endangered Languages 2003; CLT/CEI/DCE/ELP/PI/2003/1).

11. Generational Use

What is the generational language use?

- ○ All generations
- ◉ Reduced among younger generations (<15 years)
- ○ Limited to middle and older generations (15 years and older)
- ○ Confined to older generations (>65 years)
- ○ Restricted to a few elders
- ○ No use

Comments/notes/remarks:

Many deaf language users have emigrated to Sweden after that the only school for this language group was closed down in 1993 (Borgå/Porvoo). This decision shows the government's indifference at that time and it has severely endangered FinSSL. Most language users

Comments/notes/remarks:

Many deaf language users have emigrated to Sweden after that the only school for this language group was closed down in 1993 (Borgå/Porvoo). This decision shows the government's indifference at that time and it has severely endangered FinSSL. Most language users are elderly people – since the "middle generation" has emigrated to Sweden due to lack of schooling/education opportunities in Finland. The language users live far from each other. The main population of FinSSL users are of old age. They do not have the physical condition needed to travel long distances for meeting other FinSSL users.

There are very few opportunities for the children to meet the older generation and in this way learn the language. The children (who mostly have CI) are influenced by Finnish Sign Language since there is a huge lack of teaching material and teachers of FinSSL.

Why CI is a threat to the language: The hearing parents do not get adequate information about the existence of sign language or the possibilities for the child to become bilingual in a spoken and signed language since the doctors and the other medical staff often have negative attitudes towards signing.

SSL (used in Sweden) has influenced FinSSL, due to the fact that many deaf FinSSL users have got their (secondary) education in Sweden. Also some SSL users have immigrated to Finland and are a part of the FinSSL deaf community today.

Please see also the KEY OBSERVATION in chapter 5.2.4.4. Children's right to sign language in *Report of the Government on the Application of Language Legislation 2017. Government publications 10/2017. Prime Minister's Office, Helsinki 2017.* Available online https://oikeusministerio.fi/documents/1410853/4734397/VNK_H1017_Report+of+the+Government+on+the+Application+of+Language+Legislation+2017_net_3+%28002%29.pdf/c33a5105-74ff-466d-88d3-798f54d819bc/VNK_H1017_Report+of+the+Government+on+the+Application+of+Language+Legislation+2017_net_3+%28002%29.pdf.pdf

"A child's possibility of learning sign language: The practices of different authorities that prevent or obstruct the possibilities of a child who is born deaf or with a hearing impairment to learn sign language in addition to spoken language should be examined and action should be taken to improve the situation if necessary."

[full chapter:]
5.2.4.4 Children's right to sign language

According to the preliminary work on the Sign Language Act (359/2015), the right to their own language and culture of children who use the sign language has given cause for concern among the sign language community. (HE 294/2014 vp, p. 36.) The statements submitted to the Ministry of Justice for the purposes of this Report have also brought up concerns, particularly over the right of children who are born deaf or with a hearing impairment and their parents to learn sign language and receive education provided in this language.[314]

Cochlear implants and sign language

Almost all children who are deaf or with hearing impairments today receive a cochlear implant as part of medical rehabilitation provided by the healthcare services with the aim of enabling communication based on hearing and learning spoken language. During the rehabilitation period of a child who has received an implant, the family may be urged to stop using sign language as it is no longer needed. The use of sign language is also often believed to slow down the child's process of learning to hear and speak. However, research-based information does not support this idea[315]. Not all children achieve sufficient spoken language skills with the implant, and it thus does not benefit them. Some children also need sign language or communication by signs to support their linguistic development. A child with a cochlear implant also encounters everyday situations where using the device is not possible. In those situations, sign language is a natural method of communication.[316] Simultaneous or alternative teaching of the sign language may often be in the best interests of a child who is born deaf. Otherwise the child may be left without an effective means of communication, and their learning and personality development are put at risk.[317]

Providing teaching of sign language is discretionary

Provisions on the right of the hearing parents of a deaf child to receive teaching of sign language as part of adaptation training are contained in the Act on Services and Assistance for the Disabled. This service depends on the availability of appropriations, and a recommendation from the treating physician or other healthcare professional is often required.[318] The provision of teaching of sign language is discretionary, and there are thus major differences between the municipalities regarding the grounds for granting this services and the number of hours that are granted. Some

municipalities require a medical statement, and some physicians do not recommend the use of sign language before the benefits of a cochlear implant for helping the child learn to speak have been investigated. In some municipalities, the number of teaching hours is insufficient for learning a new language, and in others, no teaching of sign language is granted as there are no appropriations.[319] Rather than teaching of the sign language, families are sometimes only offered the teaching of supportive signing[320].

Consequently, some children and families that need sign language are left without an effective common language and interaction. This means that children who have been born deaf or with severely impaired hearing and their parents living in different parts of the country are treated very differently depending on the practices and appropriation policies in their municipality.

The authorities' attitudes

The statements received by the Ministry of Justice indicate that in addition to lack of information, negative attitudes towards bilingualism in families using the sign language occur among social welfare and healthcare service personnel. They express concerns over the learning of spoken language and linguistic development in the hearing children of parents who use the sign language. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that the care staff do not recommend that the parents use sign language to support spoken language with a child who has been born deaf or with a severe hearing impairment.[321] The attitudes of many authorities reflect the idea that sign language is only an assistive device.[322]

Decisions on a child's language

The Finnish Association of the Deaf estimates that only about 5% of the children who are deaf or have severe hearing impairments are born to families where the parents already know sign language. The hearing parents in around 20 new families need to be taught sign language every year. For hearing parents, learning sign language can be compared to learning other foreign languages.[323] Some parents of children with hearing impairments have felt that when assessing the child's needs related to linguistic development and offering information to parents, the perspectives of hearing technology and medicine are mainly emphasised. The parents' experience has been that healthcare units do not offer sufficient expert information on sign language and bilingualism to support the parents in making decisions on the child's language.[324]

Decisions made on behalf of a child in an early phase may have far-reaching consequences for inclusion in different life stages at home, in early childhood education and care, at school, in hobbies and in the labor market alike. Language choices and hearing aid solutions should thus be examined as mutually complementary, not mutually exclusive possibilities. A child must have the possibility of communicating with others at all times. Effective language (spoken and sign language) supports the child's psychological, social and cognitive development. Language is also a key part of a child's identity. Families should have the right to choose the language they use for communicating within the family.[325] The Advisory Board on Sign Languages (Institute for the Languages of Finland Kotus) noted in its statement that legislation should place a clearer obligation on social welfare, healthcare and education authorities to ensure that a child who is deaf or has a hearing impairment is given an opportunity to learn one of the sign languages used in Finland.[326]

[314]http://oikeusministerio.fi/fi/index/toimintajatavoitteet/perusoikeudetjademokratia/kielilaki/kielellistenoikeuksienseuranta.html

[315] Cf. e.g. Takkinen, Ritva 2013. Sisäkorvaistutetta käyttävien lasten viittomakielen ja puhutun kielen omaksuminen (Learning of sign language and spoken language by children with a cochlear implant). In Lähivertailuja 23. (Main editor) Annekatrin Kaivapalu, (ed.) Pirkko Muikku-Werner, Johanna Laakso, Katre Oim and Maria-Marem Sepper, pp. 392–393.

[316] Statements of the Finnish Association of Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (10 June 2016), the Advisory Board on Sign Languages (Institute for the Languages of Finland Kotus, 10 June 2016) and the Central Union for Child Welfare (6 June 2016) to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.

[317] Statement of the National Institute for Health and Welfare to the Ministry of Justice 31 May 2016, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.

[318] HE 294/2014 vp, p. 36.

[319] Statements of the Finnish Association of the Deaf (10 June 2016) and the National Institute for Health and Welfare (31 May 2016) to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.

[320] Statement of the Finnish Association of Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children to the Ministry of Justice, 10 June 2016, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.

[321] Negative attitudes to bilingualism are described in such sources as Karoliina Nikula's doctoral dissertation Lapsen hyvää edistämässä. Syntymäkuurojen lasten sisäkorvaistutehoitokäytännön sosiaalieettistä tarkastelua (Promoting The Good of The Child. A Social-Ethical Analysis of Cochlear Implants in Children Born Deaf). 2015; https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/157048/Lapsenhy.pdf?sequence=1.

[322] Statement of the Finnish Association of the Deaf to the Ministry of Justice, 10 June 2016, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.

[323] Statement of the Finnish Association of the Deaf to the Ministry of Justice, 10 June 2016, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.

[324] Statements of the Finnish Association of the Deaf (10 June 2016) and the Central Union for Child Welfare (6 June 2016) to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.

[325] Statements of the Finnish Association of the Deaf (10 June 2016) and the Central Union for Child Welfare (6 May 2016) to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016. See also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 30) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Articles 24 and 30).

[326] Statement of the Advisory Board on Sign Languages (Institute for the Languages of Finland Kotus) to the Ministry of Justice, 10 June 2016, Ministry of Justice 1/58/2016.