

## Changes in the Finnish Deaf Performance Arts Since the 1950s

Maija Koivisto

Folk High School of the Deaf, Helsinki, Finland

Finnish Deaf Culture Days have been reflecting changes in the identity of sign language community in the period 1956–2006. Presentation is based in my Master of Education research. The principal material was collected from the mass media of sign language community. The research used Paddy Ladd's theory of post-colonialism in Deaf culture and Stuart Hall's concepts of cultural identity. Through the research was seen that Finnish Deaf Culture Days were going through process of post-colonialism that can be separate into four different periods, as follows: 1) The reign of Finnish Language (1956–1969), 2) Period of Visualism (1970–1978), 3) Period of "Actual" sign language (1979–1996) and 4) Period of Sign languagehood (1997–). These periods can also be seen reflecting the post-colonialism process of sign language community as a whole.

### Bio:

Maija Koivisto is Finnish Deaf native signer. She has Master's degree in Education from University of Jyväskylä. There she took Finnish Sign Language and Drama Education as subject studies. She works currently as teacher at Folk High School. She teaches Deaf Culture, Finnish Sign Language, Finnish written language, drama and other subjects. She gives presentations about Deaf Culture and has responsibility for open Polytechnic University (HUMAK) program with Finnish Sign Language studies.