



# Documenting the experiences of the ASL communities in the time of COVID-19

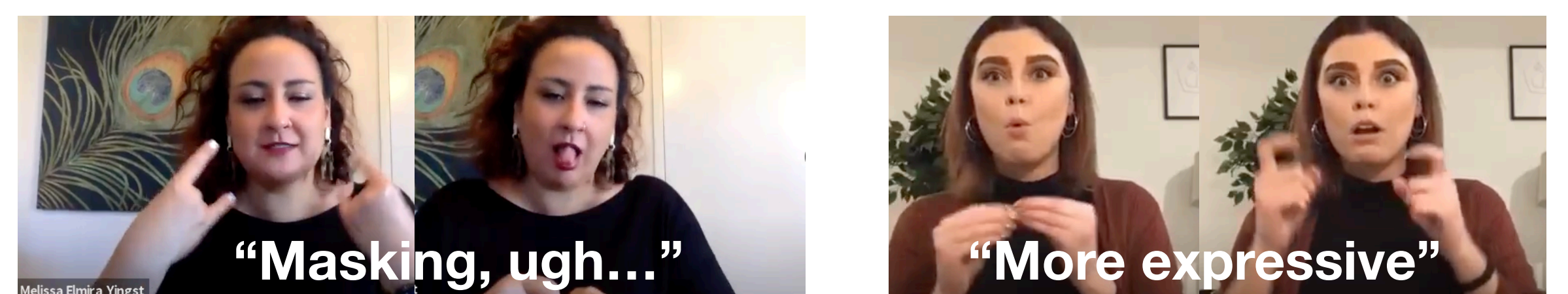
👤👤 Julie A. Hochgesang, Marjorie Bates, Ana Clark, Kayla Davis, Michael Dunham, Lucas Hamilton, Sarah Kadar, Yeh Kim, Giovanni Maucere, Andrés Martínez, Tayla Newman, Hallie Simmons, *Gallaudet University*

## Introduction

During the fall semester of 2021, Gallaudet University Field Methods course documented the experiences of the ASL communities in the time of COVID-19, or “O5S5”. O5S5 is derived from the handshapes used in ASL variants of “**document**” and “**covid**” (See top figure above). Since early 2020, the world has been in a pandemic due to COVID-19 and people have been practicing physical distancing, masking, staying home and other measures to protect one another (to varying degrees). As with any shift in human behavior, the pandemic has had a profound impact on all of us - from how we think about and discuss personal safety and health to how we interact with one another. O5S5 has documented the experiences of ASL communities during the pandemic with a focus on language and communicative practices<sup>1235</sup>.

## Themes observed in the data

- \* Shared stories about the pandemic
- \* Language practices while masked or emboxed (video-mediated communication)
- \* Linguistic innovation (e.g., ASL signs for *mask*, *covid-19*, *pandemic* ... ; numeral incorporation for vaccine boosters (range 3-4))
- \* Ideologies about language and communicative practices during the pandemic



Masking ideologies in O5S5 ASL videos

## Data Collection

# of	Data type	Task type	Setting
31	Mainly text (Written English)	Ethnographic <b>observations</b> of publicly accessible behavior	Varied - about masking, travel, Zoom discourse, etc
13	Videos (ASL)	<b>Interviews</b> with individual participants	On Zoom (unmasked) and in-person (masked)
3	Videos (ASL)	Group <b>conversations</b> of 2-4 participants	In-person indoors (masked), in-person outdoors (unmasked)
24	Videos (ASL)	3-5 minute <b>narratives</b> about COVID-19 life	(in-person and masked, on zoom unmasked, and self-submitted usually unmasked)

## Project Values



<https://youtu.be/i7sLP0ssVzA>

#O5S5ASL Mission statement and values

## Next steps

We are still processing the primary data (adding annotations, captioning, & visual descriptions) and preparing the metadata (participant and other relevant metadata) for sharing. It is slow-going #BecausePandemicFatigue. Some content is shared on our website and YouTube Channel<sup>4</sup>. We hope that this project will shed light on the varying influences the pandemic has had on our communities and provide a resource to reference, reflect on, and learn from the ASL communities.



#O5S5ASL a bit of all of our video sessions to date

<https://youtu.be/avWSLLVGVl>

## Acknowledgments

- \* Funding provided by Gallaudet Linguistics Department
- \* Our research participants 🙌
- \* Emily Shaw, Gallaudet University - collaborator

## References

1. Dwyer, A. M. (2006). Ethics and practicalities of cooperative fieldwork and analysis. In J. Gippert, U. Mosel, & N. Himmelmann (Eds.), *Essentials of Language Documentation: A Handbook* (pp. 31–66). Mouton de Gruyter.
2. Harris, R., Holmes, H. M., & Mertens, D. M. (2009). Research Ethics in Sign Language Communities. *Sign Language Studies* (Vol. 9, Issue 2, pp. 104–131). <https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.0.0011>
3. Himmelmann, N. P. (2006). Language documentation: What is it and what is it good for? In J. Gippert, N. P. Himmelmann, & U. Mosel (Eds.), *Essentials of Language Documentation* (pp. 1–31). Mouton de Gruyter.
4. Hochgesang, J. A., Bates, M., Clark, A., Davis, K., Dunham, M., Hamilton, L., Kadar, S., Kim, Y., Martínez Castiblanco, J. A., Maucere, G., Newman, T., & Simmons, H. (2021). *O5S5: Documenting the experiences of the ASL Communities in the time of COVID-19* (Version 2). figshare. <https://doi.org/10.6094/m9.figshare.16983517.v2>
5. Leonard, W. Y. (2018). Reflections on (de)colonialism in language documentation. In B. McDonnell, A. L. Berez-Kroeker, & G. Holton (Eds.), *Reflections on Language Documentation 20 Years after Himmelmann 1998*. Language Documentation & Conservation Special Publication no. 15 (pp. 55–65). University of Hawai'i. <http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/24808>