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Namibian Sign Language to English and
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Namibian Sign Language to English and Oshiwambo

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Namibian

Sign

Language

to

English

and

Oshiwambo

By

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Paul Setzer

January 10, 1991

MEMBERS OF THE DICTIONARY PROJECT TEAM

We are a group of six Deaf Black Namibians who came to Gallaudet University with our two hearing teachers for fifteen months to make this dictionary. We worked with two linguists Ruth Morgan and Scott Liddell to do so. Ruth Morgan trained us to record and analyze our language. Scott Liddell was responsible for supervising the linguistic analysis and the organization of this dictionary, especially when it came to problematic signs. We were all involved in the process of providing the sign meanings and their uses in different contexts. Two of us, Sackeus Ashipala and Festus Linus were trained by Paul Setzer from the Gallaudet Art Department to illustrate the signs. Ruth Morgan coordinated the production of this dictionary and was also responsible for translating the signs into English. Ndesihafela Hashiyana and Hilifilua Haiduwah translated the signs into Oshiwambo. Marius Haikali verified the sign translations. The team members are listed below:

Ruth Morgan: Co-compiler, sign language analysis & sign organization, English text, English index & editor

Scott Liddell: Consultant: sign language analysis, sign organization & introduction

Marius M.N. Haikali: Co-compiler, sign meanings & Namibian sign language editor

Sackeus P. Ashipala: Co-compiler, photography, sign illustrations, artwork & sign meanings

Polo Daniel: Co-compiler & sign meanings

Hilifilua E.T. Haiduwah: Co-compiler, Oshiwambo translations & index

Rauna Ndesihafela Hashiyana: Co-compiler, Oshiwambo translations

Nangolo Jeremia Israel: Co-compiler & sign meanings

Festus Tshikuku Linus: Co-compiler, photography, sign illustrations, artwork & sign meanings

Henock Hango Nillenge: Co-compiler & sign meanings

Paul Setzer: Supervision and training for photography & sign illustrations

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or call (202) 651-5585.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dictionary is the culmination of a fifteen month intensive training program at Gallaudet University for a group of Deaf Namibians and their teachers. The program focused on equipping the Deaf trainees with the skills necessary for establishing appropriate services for the Deaf Community in Independent Namibia. The trainees requested training in the following areas: research of their natural sign language, sign language teaching, leadership, interpreting and written English. This dictionary reflects the sign language research training they received.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Dr Libertine Amathila, who at that time was Deputy Secretary of Health and Social Welfare of the South West African People's Organization. Dr Amathila proposed and found the support for the research program that this dictionary is based on. The United Nation's Council for Namibia generously funded this project which was administered by the Office of the United Nation's Commission for Namibia.

We are grateful to the following people at Gallaudet University who were involved in the dictionary portion of this project:

The International Center on Deafness at Gallaudet University coordinated this project and permitted the extensive use of their facilities. We are indebted to Eli Savanick, the director of this project, who gave generously of his time and advice.

John Birch, Technical volunteer International Center on Deafness patiently helped with the production and formatting of this dictionary. We could never have produced the camera ready copy without his expertise. Shawna Davies and Susan King from the Research Institute were instrumental in the production and formatting of the first draft. The Research institute generously allowed us to use their computers and photocopy machines.

Dr Robert E. Johnson, Chairperson of the Department of Linguistics and Interpreting, generously gave us the use of his department's video camera equipment for the collection of Namibian Sign Language data which formed the basis of this dictionary.

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Gabriel Adepoju, Trainer: English Grammar and written English

James Woodward, Trainer: Deaf Culture and Sociolinguistic issues in sign language research

June Zimmer, Trainer: Interpreting

Marsha Ancrum, Christina Fonseca, Tina Wix and Sherri Necessary, Administrative assistants

Nancy Creighton, made the interactive computer network available to the group on a daily basis and Kavita Pipalia assisted the students in their use of the network



FOREWORD

One day, approximately three years ago, a dynamic, vivacious woman walked into my office and introduced herself as Dr. Libertine Amathila. She told me she had been traveling in Europe and heard about events surrounding the appointment of a deaf president at Gallaudet University and wanted to know more about our programs. After a pleasant conversation she shared with me a vision. The vision was to provide training for a small group of promising deaf young people and their teachers who were currently living in a refugee camp in Angola in order to provide them with leadership skills, hopefully to be used in an independent Namibia. Being impressed by the boldness and power of this vision, I agreed to marshal Gallaudet University resources in such a way as to make the vision a reality. Several months later, six deaf and two hearing people arrived with Dr. Amathila to begin a fifteen month training program at Gallaudet University.

As I reflect upon these fifteen months, I must say that Namibia could not have sent better ambassadors. The experience of working with these eight trainees leaves me feeling I have received more than I have given. It has been fun. It has been educational. Most of all it has been a personally and professionally rewarding time. Speaking for each member of the staff, we are better people for this and will miss our friends. We also stand in awe of the challenges that await them as they return to the process of nation-building and the development of a strong Deaf Community in an independent Namibia.

Eli Savanick
Project Director and
Director, International Center on
Deafness
Gallaudet University

BACKGROUND

NOTE: The following paper was presented by the group of Deaf Namibians at the Deaf Way Conference, July 1989, organized by Gallaudet University. At that time the dictionary was in progress and Namibia was still waiting for independence. It has been included in its original form as it provides the context from which this dictionary has emerged. We have used the convention of capitalizing "D" for Deaf to refer to Deaf Culture in the same way that a capital letter is used to refer to the Namibians or French or to any other culture, a small "d" is used when deaf is used in other contexts.

The Development of a Dictionary of Namibian Sign Language

Morgan, R.Z. ; Ashipala, S.P. ; Daniel, P. ; Haiduwah, H.E. ;
Haikali, M.N. ; Hashiyana, R.N. ; Israel, N.J. ; Linus, F.T. ;
Niilenge, H.H.

We will begin this paper by explaining who we are and by giving some background information which is necessary for you to fully understand our reasons for working on this particular dictionary of Namibian Sign Language. Secondly we will discuss why we decided to make a dictionary of Namibian Sign Language and how we will use it to educate people in our country about Deafness. Thirdly we will explain our procedure for making this dictionary. We will conclude by outlining where we go from here.

We are a group of six deaf and two hearing Namibians. We have come to Gallaudet University for fifteen months. The United Nations Commission on Namibia is funding our program. The aim of this program is to learn how to analyze our own sign language, to improve our English and to get leadership training. In this paper we will be discussing how and why we are analyzing our sign language. We are working with two linguists at Gallaudet, Ruth Morgan and Scott Liddell to do this.

The situation we come from is unique and complex. We therefore need to first give you some background information before we discuss how we are making a dictionary of our sign language. We need to explain the situation we come from so you will understand how this has influenced our Deaf culture and the development of our sign language.

We were living in Northern Namibia until the late 70's and early 80's. We left our country because we felt we could not receive the education we wanted. Our education system was under the South African government which has controlled

Namibia since 1915. We went to live in Angola where we stayed until we came to Gallaudet University in the USA in 1988. We expect Namibia to be independent by December. When our country is independent we will go home and begin to improve deaf education there. We will first describe our life in Namibia and then describe our life in Angola.

Our life in Namibia

Our families are all hearing and live in traditional villages where they farm. Namibia is a country which has many different cultural groups. Thus many different languages are used in our country. We are all Ovawambo's which is the largest cultural group in Northern Namibia. Our families all speak Oshiwambo which is one of many Bantu languages spoken in Namibia. Oshiwambo has many different dialects. Some of the other languages spoken by different cultural groups there are Nama, Herero, Damara, English, Afrikaans, Oshikwangali and Oshirozi. Most hearing Namibians know several languages. Communication among different groups is common.

Even though Namibia is home to many different hearing cultural groups who speak many different languages, we don't know what the situation is for most deaf people in Namibia. The sign language situation in Namibia has never been researched before. There may be many sign languages in Namibia or there may be only one sign language. We will know this after we do our own work in Namibia.

The South African government's apartheid policy has influenced our sign language situation eg. we do not know the sign language used by white Deaf Namibians, or by San Deaf Namibians. We grew up in a country where apartheid forced members of these different groups (whether hearing or deaf) to live separately from each other. In Namibia there are separate living areas and schools for blacks and whites. Schools for the deaf have been segregated as well. When we were in Namibia there were two schools for black deaf students, white deaf students could not go to these schools. In the same way that the black and white hearing people lead separate lives, so do black and white deaf people.

Our sign language comes from that used by the students outside the classroom in the Black schools for the deaf in Northern Namibia. We therefore need to give you some details about the history of these schools for the deaf: There were two schools for black deaf students while we were living in Namibia called Engela and Eluwa. Engela was the first school for the Deaf. It was started by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia around 1970. This church was originally founded by Finnish missionaries in the late 1800's and later given over to the Namibian people themselves.

At Engela, Simultaneous Communication was used by teachers in which signs were produced following Oshiwambo word order. One of the Deaf members of our group attended Engela as a student from 1972 to 1974. He told us that the first two teachers in this school were black Namibians who had been sent to South Africa for training. The sign system used in some of the schools for black deaf children in South Africa at that time was the Paget-Gorman system. This system was created in England to teach English to deaf children. It is not a natural sign language. It was originally invented by a hearing person. This system was used in South African black schools from the 1960's. He reported that at Engela the children used the same sign vocabulary as these teachers but that the children did not follow Oshiwambo word order.

The student who attended Engela told us that he also spent a lot of time with a group of Deaf adults who worked at Engela. He often sat and watched them tell stories. They too used the same sign vocabulary as was used in the school. However they did not sign Oshiwambo. We think that the sign language used by these adults was the true beginning of Namibian Sign Language.

In 1975 the South African government started a second school for deaf students called Eluwa. All twelve students under seventeen together with their teachers were moved to this new school, leaving behind about five Deaf adults who continued to work at Engela. The student who had been to Engela was the only member of our group who had learnt the sign language used by the adult Deaf people at Engela. These students who were moved were able to take the adult sign language with them. Three other members of our group started attending this new school between 1975 and 1978. All four of us left Namibia and went into exile in 1980.

Our years in Angola

Before we came to the U.S.A in 1988, we had been living in Southern Angola for the past nine years. Due to the fact that there were thousands of Namibians living there, the different Namibian cultures could be maintained. We are all Deaf Ovawambo's. We did not meet Deaf people from other cultural groups.

How a Deaf culture was formed in Southern Angola

When we arrived in Angola the deaf people were not organized into any real community. They did not live near to each other and there was no school for the deaf. We were not influenced a lot by the Angolan Deaf Culture. We did not come

into contact with many Deaf Angolans. The few Deaf Angolans we later met used different signs and we taught them our sign language. Of the students from Eluwa, only one was mainstreamed while the other three did not go to school as there was no available school for the deaf.

The three of us who were not mainstreamed during our first year in Angola got together after we arrived. We continued to use our old sign language which we had learned at Eluwa School in Namibia. We were joined by the fourth member of our group. He had never been to school in Namibia. He used home signs only. We taught him our signs. We used to spend most of our time together. We played soccer and then volleyball with the hearing people everyday. The four of us would practice art everyday as we were not in school and did not have work. After some hearing people saw our art work we were then employed as illustrators. We could not read the English texts of the books we were illustrating. We wanted to learn how to read English so we decided we needed a school for deaf students and requested one.

Two of us were mainstreamed in separate schools at first. We did not have much contact with each other apart from the occasional visit. We socialized mainly with hearing people. We only knew of a few other deaf people who were mainstreamed and whom we saw occasionally. The mainstreamed students used different signs and gestures except for one of us who had been to a school for the deaf in Namibia, and therefore knew Eluwa signs. We picked up his Namibian signs.

Our sign language which originated at the schools for the deaf inside Namibia in the early seventies and which we have used in exile for the past ten years will be referred to as Namibian Sign Language (NSL) for the purposes of this dictionary. The label NSL is a convenient way to refer to our sign language although we know that there are probably other varieties of NSL or other sign languages in Namibia.

In 1982 a school for deaf students was started in exile. All the deaf students in the area started to go to the same school. The students who had not been attending school were joined by the students who had been mainstreamed. The start of our deaf school was important as it gave us a place to meet the other deaf people in the area everyday. The sign language we continued to use was the variety we had brought with us from Namibia which we taught to the other four pupils. There were nine students in our school when it started.

An important thing happened that influenced the Deaf people in our school. In 1980 three Namibian deaf people who had never attended a deaf school before were sent to Sweden to further their education. When they came back from Sweden in 1983 they taught in our school. They taught us Swedish Sign Language as well as the

history of Deaf people in Sweden. They also taught us math and English. This was the first time we learnt about the theory of Deaf culture. The three teachers did not know our sign language because our school had not been set up before they left for Sweden. We taught them our sign language and they stopped using their Swedish signs. Only a few Swedish signs remain in our NSL eg: Thank you and the names of some countries: Africa, Russia and Finland.

Deaf people used to socialize together after school. They played volleyball, performed plays and in the afternoons and evenings when the moon shone, they frequently told stories under a big tree in the evenings.

In summary a Deaf culture was initially formed in Namibia at the first school for black deaf students at Engela. This was carried to Eluwa in 1974 and then brought into Angola when we left Namibia. Once the school for deaf students was formed in Angola, there was a place where many deaf people could become aculturated to the Deaf community in exile.

By 1988 there were about thirty deaf students in this school. At this time the present group was selected to go to Gallaudet to receive further training so that they would be better prepared to set up future services for deaf Namibians in Angola and in Namibia itself after independence.

Why we decided to make a dictionary of NSL

We are developing this NSL dictionary because we want to have a sign language book of our own natural sign language used by Namibian deaf people in Southern Angola. We want people to know that NSL is a real language like Oshiwambo or English. We want Deaf Namibians to be proud of their Deaf culture and sign language. We want hearing people to respect our culture and our sign language. We want people to know the history of our sign language, that it was developed in Namibia in the school for the deaf and taken with us to Angola where others started to learn it. We want people to know that NSL has its own vocabulary and structure.

We also wanted to learn how to make a sign language dictionary so that when Namibia is independent we can go home and compare the sign languages used by the different cultural groups still in Namibia to our sign language variety. We will need to do a lot more research in the future to see if other Ovawambo Deaf people who stayed inside the country have the same sign language as us or if it is different. It may be that there is not one but many different Deaf cultures and sign languages inside Namibia. With independence there will be an end to separate schools for each racial group and we want to research what happens to NSL when Deaf people

from different groups are brought together in a single school for the deaf and a single adult Deaf culture.

It is obvious that we will have a lot to do when we go home. First we will need to do more sign language research. We will use our dictionary to compare our vocabulary and sign language structure to that used by deaf people from different cultural groups who remained inside the country. We will then have to create a second dictionary with our findings. After that we will be able to teach NSL to teachers and interpreters who work with deaf people as well as to the parents of deaf children.

How the NSL dictionary will be used for public education about NSL as a real language

Hearing people in Namibia and in Angola do not know that Deaf Namibians have their own sign language NSL and their own Deaf culture. We want to go back and teach Hearing people in independent Namibia about our sign language NSL and about our culture. We want to take our NSL dictionary back to Namibia to show people that Deaf Namibians have their own language and culture.

The dictionary will contain information about the vocabulary and grammar of NSL. It is important for people to understand that NSL has its own vocabulary which is different from the vocabulary of sign languages in other countries.

Our dictionary will also contain information about how our Deaf culture was formed. We will explain what we know about the history of our Deaf culture: how it was formed when the first school for the Deaf was started in Namibia and how it was moved to Eluwa and then to Angola where we became part of a free society. We will educate others about our Deaf culture, so that they understand that we have our own cultural identity and our own language NSL.

Making this NSL Dictionary

1. Collecting the signs

The signs in this dictionary were taken from videotapes of NSL. Each person in the group was videotaped the same week that they arrived in the United States. Each person told their life story on the videotape. After that the artists in the group drew many pictures of everyday life in Namibia eg: village scenes, people ploughing their fields with oxen, planting seeds, growing vegetables and harvesting them, killing animals for food, storing grain, eating, etc. (See the illustrations for sign elicitation on page xvi.) The group was videotaped as they discussed these pictures and told stories about their life in Namibia before they went into exile. Each person was videotaped.

2. Transcribing the signs

After making these videotapes, we started to transcribe them. We used a slow motion playback control to slow down the videotape. We discussed each sign in depth before writing down its meaning in English. We also wrote down information

about the sign's structure, eg: its hand shape, location, orientation, segmental structure, and non-manual signals or facial expressions. We discussed whether there were other signs that could be used to mean the same thing. If there were differences in the production of a sign, we discussed these and wrote them down, eg: different hand shapes or movements. We decided which sign was used by most people, and which signs were accepted as variants by most people. We are still busy transcribing the signs. By August we will have collected between five hundred and one thousand signs for our dictionary.

This method of getting NSL data for the dictionary takes a long time but it is the only way to really understand the structure of the language. We want to explain the structure of NSL in our dictionary as well as the vocabulary. We want to understand how verbs work in NSL, how negatives and questions are formed, how facial expression and space are used in the grammar of NSL. We need this information before we can teach others NSL.

3. Drawing the signs

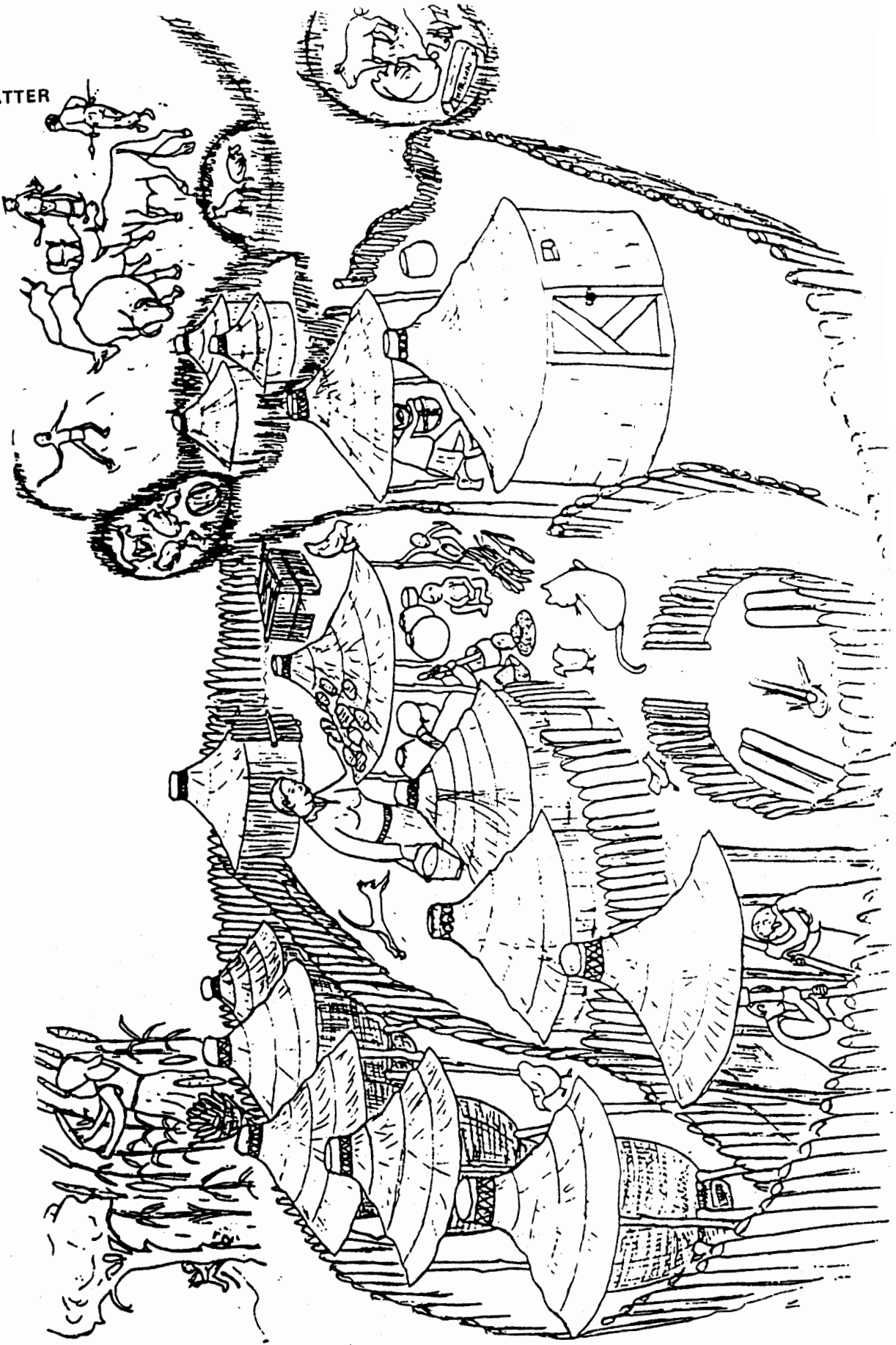
We then need to draw each sign in the most accurate and clear way for people to learn them. Two of us will be trained in the latest technical methods of sign language drawing in August. From August to December we will organize the signs for our dictionary. Each sign will be glossed in English onto an index card. We will group signs that have the same hand shape together.

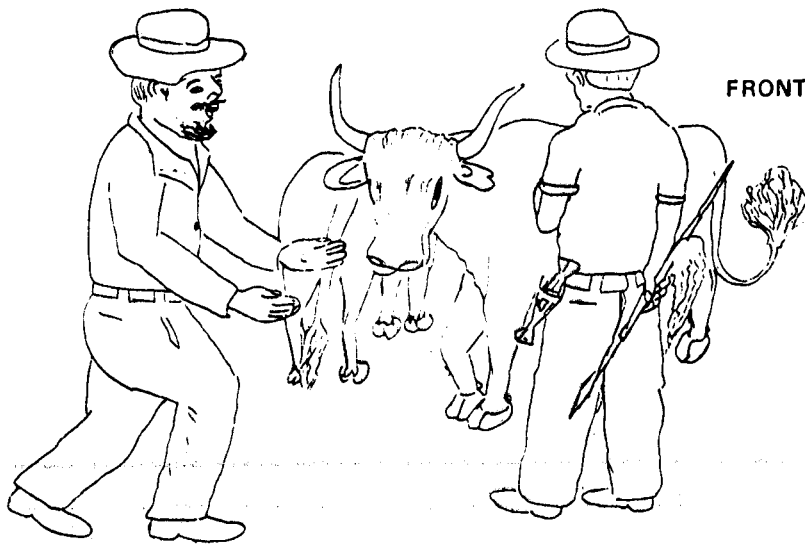
4. Explaining the signs

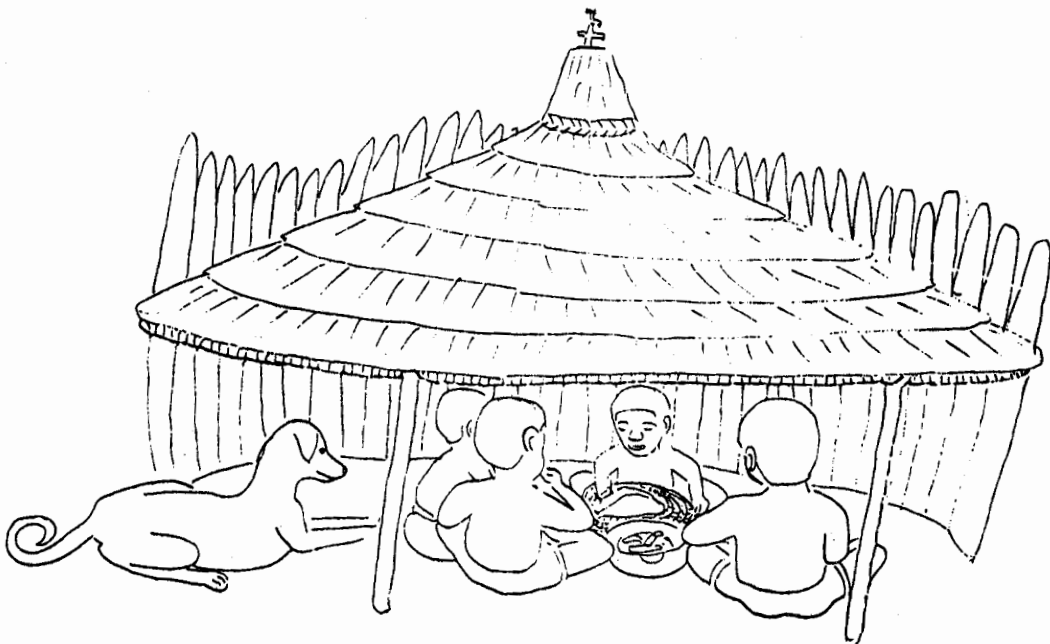
In the dictionary each sign will be illustrated using line drawings and arrows to indicate movement. The meaning of the sign will then be explained in both Oshiwambo and English. We will not use single word glosses. Notes on each sign will explain its meaning, structural information will also be included, eg: simple sign structure or complex sign structure (see Organization of this dictionary for detailed explanation).

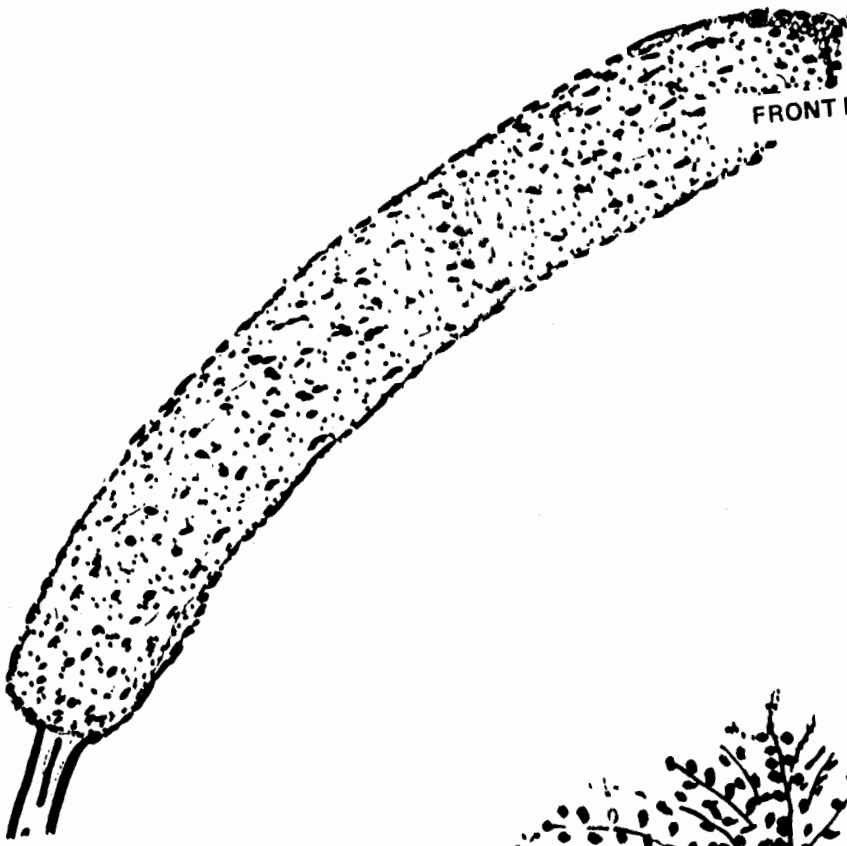
Our goals for the future

When we go back to independent Namibia we want to do more research comparing our own variety of NSL which we have used in Angola to the NSL used by the other Deaf ethnic groups who remained within the country. Once schools for the deaf become integrated for all cultures, it will be necessary to research what happens to NSL. We also want to start teaching deaf students using NSL when we go back home. We will also use our dictionary and future research to teach NSL to hearing people.

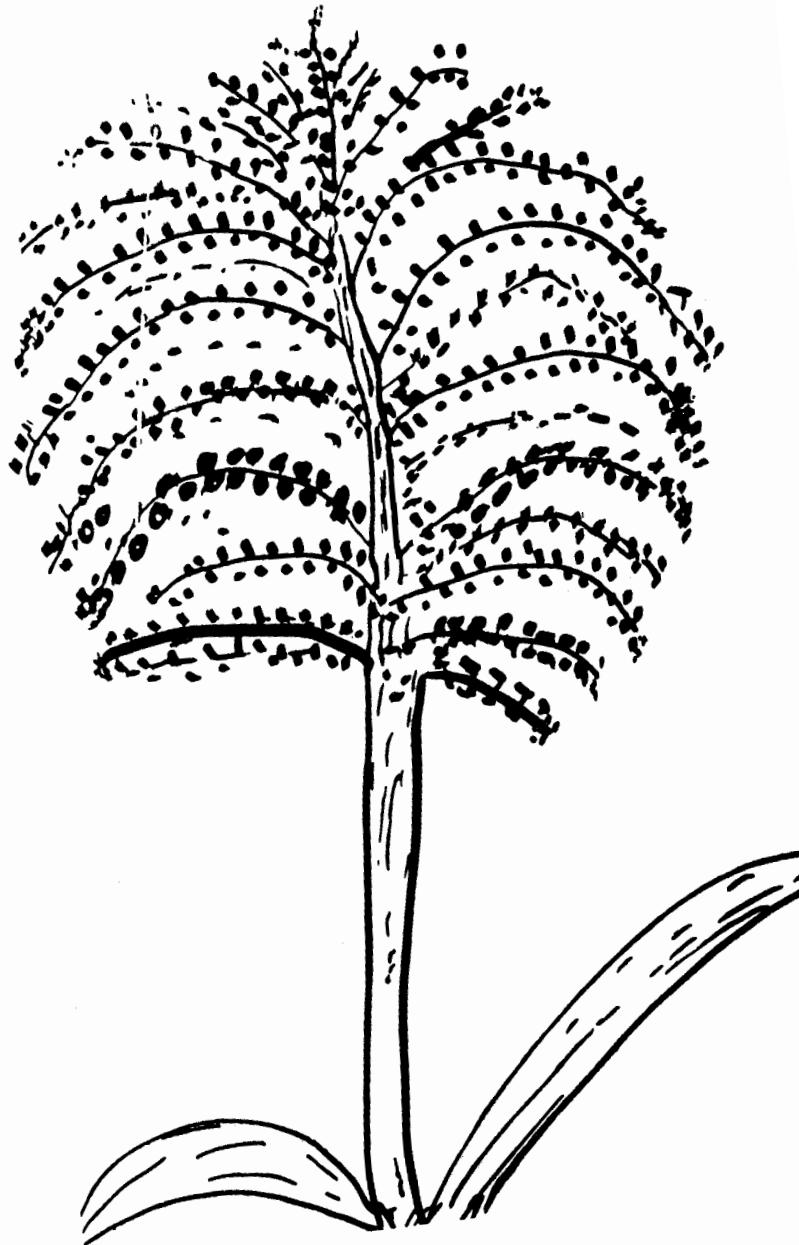
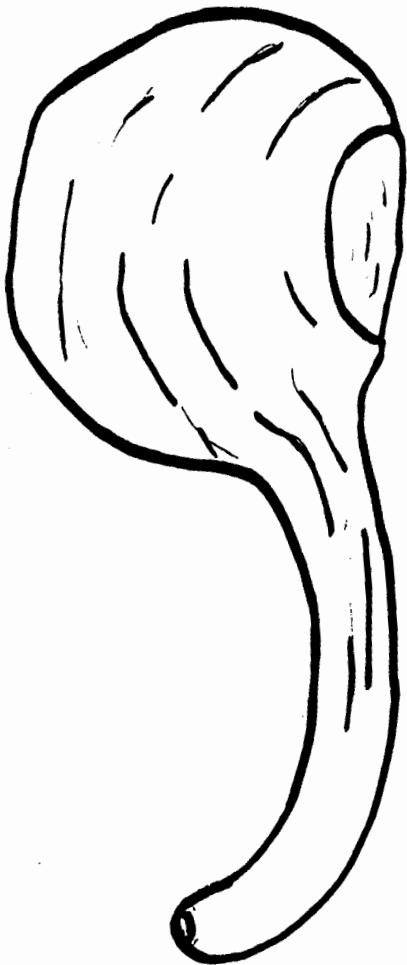




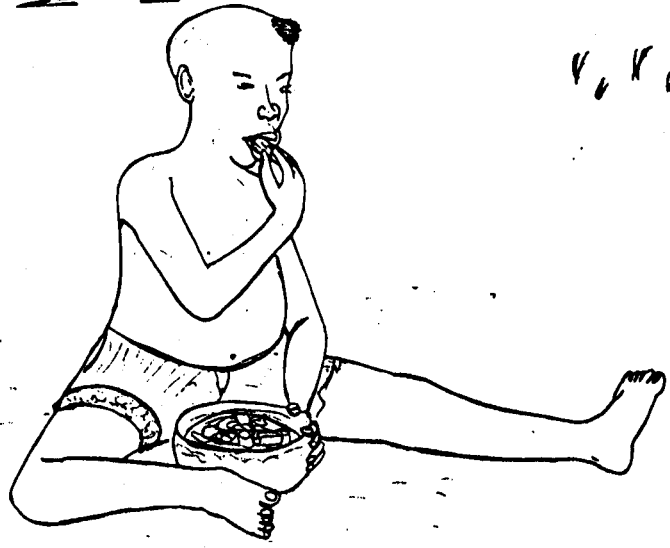
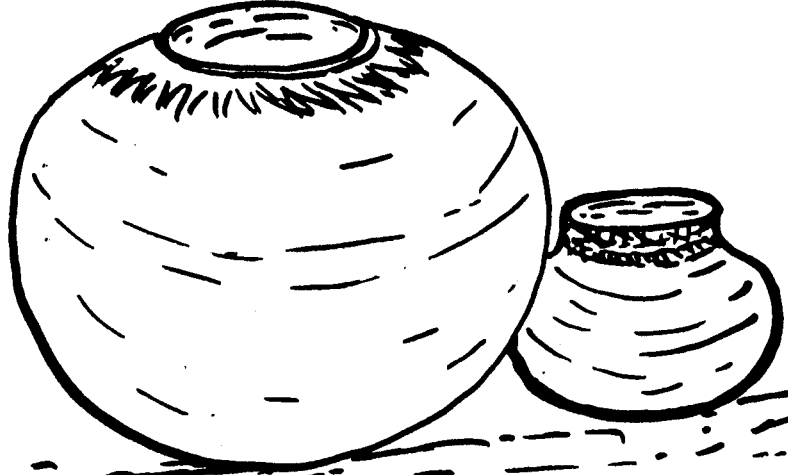
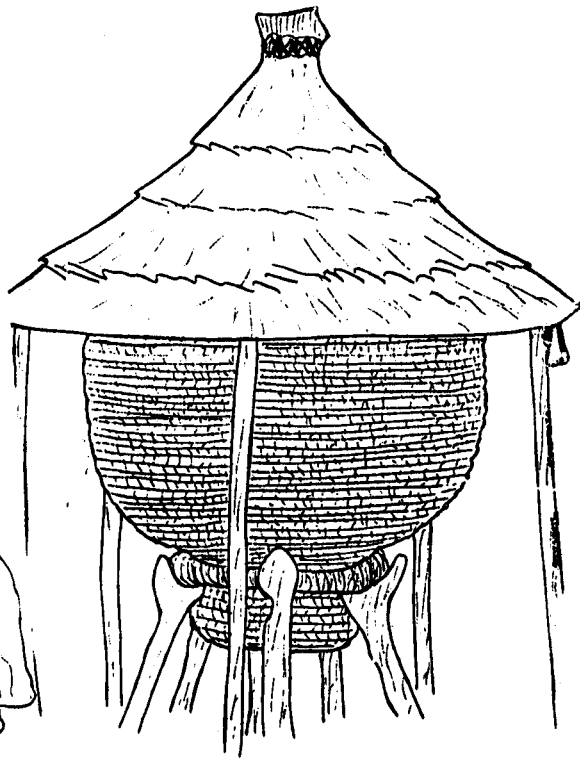
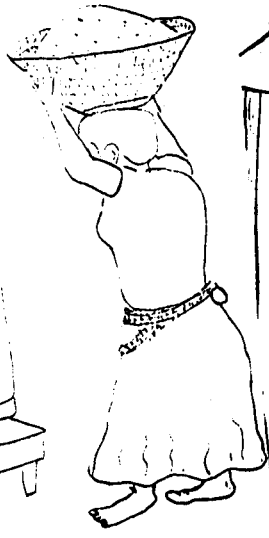
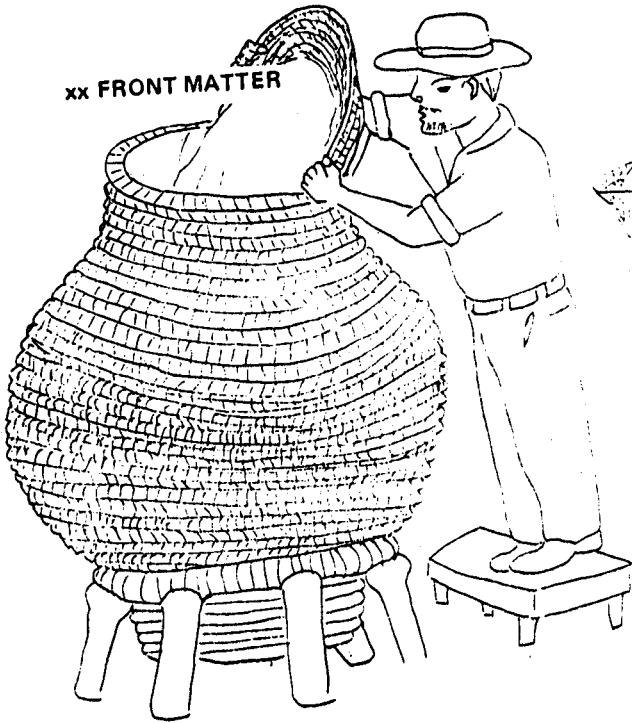




FRONT MATTER xix



xx FRONT MATTER



THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS DICTIONARY – Scott Liddell

It is only in the past two decades that natural sign languages have been properly recognized as legitimate languages which are as suitable for expressing ones thoughts as are spoken languages. Before that recognition took place, people the world over mistakenly thought that sign languages were primitive and very limited - hardly suitable for real communication. Now, however, sign languages all over the world have been properly recognized as full-fledged, legitimate languages. The signs in this dictionary come from just such a sign language - that used by a small group of Deaf Namibians who have been in exile in Angola for the past ten years.

Sign languages are not related to the spoken languages used in the same country or geographical area. In the case of Namibian Sign Language the sign language is unrelated to any of the spoken languages used in Namibia, including Oshiwambo or English. When people sign they are not attempting to use any of the spoken languages, but are simply using their own language, which happens to be signed rather than spoken.

This book is a record of the natural sign language used by the Namibian deaf community in exile. This sign language has its roots in the school sign language used in Namibia. Many

of the school signs were originally taken from the artificially developed Paget-Gorman system, which the teachers in Namibia used. The deaf students changed many of these artificial signs to fit into the grammar and structure of their natural sign language, combining them with their own naturally developed signs.

The signs in this dictionary are grouped according to handshape. Within each group of handshapes, signs are further divided into four categories:

Simple Signs
Indicating Verbs
Locative Verbs
Classifier Verbs

We have divided signs into these four categories because signs in each category have their own specific types of meaning and usage. Knowing how to use them properly will make it much easier to learn how to sign correctly.

Understanding how a sign language works can be difficult for a person unaccustomed to a visual language. Many people believe that to learn a sign language all that is needed is to continue learning signs until one has learnt them all. It is important to learn the signs, of course, but simply learning signs will not lead to mastery of the sign language. In addition, one has to learn how to produce and understand sentences. One has to be able to use signs in a way which expresses just those meanings which

the signer wishes to express, and does so in a grammatically correct way.

We can illustrate the importance of learning how to express things in a grammatically correct way with a few examples from Oshiwambo. Suppose that a foreigner were to learn some words from Oshiwambo. He might have learnt the word **eli** (English: this), the word **etanga** (English: ball), and **olakula** (English: big). This person might have also learnt to say:

Etanga eli olakula
ball this big
"This ball is big"

Now suppose this person next learns the word **omunhu** (English: person). He might next say:

Omunhu eli olakula.

Each word in this short sentence is a real word of Oshiwambo but the sentence is badly formed. The word **eli** cannot be used in this sentence when talking about a person (**omunhu**). Instead, the word **ou** (English: this) must be used. If we make that change in the sentence the result is still unsatisfactory.

Omunhu ou olakula

Part of the problem has been solved. The words **omunhu** and **ou** go together, but **olakula** (English: big) is still a problem. It cannot be used in

this sentence to describe a person. Instead, **okwakula** is correct.

Omunhu ou okwakula
person this big
"This person is big"

Merely using words of a language does not guarantee that the sentences will be properly formed. In order to make proper sentences one must know both the words or signs of a language and also know the proper ways to use them in producing sentences.

The Four Types of Signs

The major division concerns the difference between simple and complex signs. Simple signs are signs which cannot be divided into parts. To follow this analogy in Oshiwambo, **etanga** would be a simple word. If we take anything away from this word it no longer means "ball." It is a complete word and it cannot be divided into smaller parts, each of which gives us part of the meaning of the word. In contrast, **olakula** is a complex word. It is composed of two parts: **ola** and **kula**. **Kula** means "big" but begins with **ola** when describing a big ball. If we are describing a big person, we would say **okwakula** (**okwa** + **kula**).

Simple Signs

Simple signs, like simple words in spoken languages, cannot be divided into meaningful parts. The usual result

is that simple words appear the same way again and again as they are used. If we are talking about a big ball or a small ball, or my ball or a blue ball, we will say **etanga** each time. Similarly with simple signs the same form of the sign will be used over and over again because there is no grammatical reason to change the form of the sign. The sign meaning "zebra" (**ongolo yoshinamwenyo**) is a simple sign. No matter what type of zebra is being described, this sign will look like it does in Figure 1.

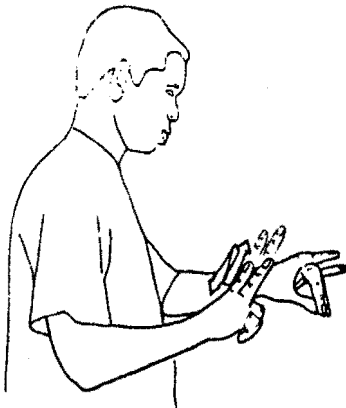


Figure 1 zebra
ongolo yoshinamwenyo

The sign meaning "zebra" will refer to a tall zebra, a short zebra, a sick zebra, or any kind of zebra. The sign does not change depending on the kind of zebra. In contrast to simple signs, complex signs do appear in different forms depending on the meaning to be conveyed.

COMPLEX SIGNS

Indicating Verbs

The first complex signs we will describe are those that indicate who is doing things or to whom they are doing them. These signs point or move in specific directions to **indicate** or show who is involved and what role they play. For example, the indicating verb meaning "argue" (**okutanguna**) includes information about who is doing the arguing. If the signer is talking about arguing with one other person, then he could produce the sign in Figure 2.

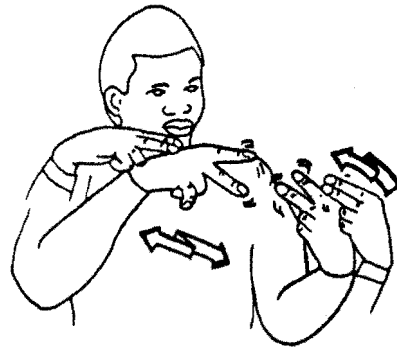


Figure 2 argue
okutanguna

In the picture the fingers of the right hand indicate (point to) the person being argued with. The fingers of the left hand indicate the signer, showing that the other person is arguing with him. In this single sign we can see what happened (arguing), and who was involved (the signer and one other person).

It is not necessary for the person the signer was arguing with to be present in order to produce the sign meaning

"argue." The signer simply proceeds as if the other person was present. In this case the signer signs as if the other person was ahead of him and to his left.

Compare this with the next sign which means "people argue with me from all sides," (**okutanguninwa wahangakenwa**), in Figure 3.

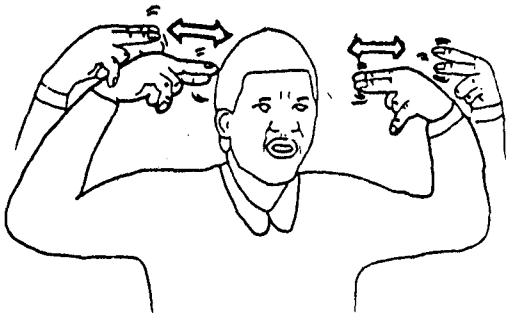
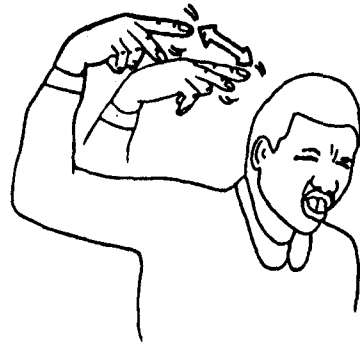


Figure 3
people argue with me from all sides
okutanguninwa wahangakenwa

This sign also contains the meaning of "argue" but the people doing the arguing are different. Now, people on both sides of the signer ("on all sides") are arguing with him. This is shown by the placement of the two hands and the direction the fingers are pointing. If the people arguing with him were both ahead of him, then both hands would be ahead of the signer with the fingertips pointing inward toward his head. This illustrates that the placement of the hands and the direction the fingers point provides information about who was doing the arguing.

In another example (Figure 4) only one person is arguing with the signer, but

that person is doing it in a way that translates as "picking on me" (**okutanguninwa**).



to be picked on by someone
Figure 4 okutanguninwa

By looking at the sign we know that there was arguing, that someone was arguing with the signer, and that they were doing the arguing and the signer was receiving the arguing.

In the next example (Figure 5) we see a case where two of us are arguing with one or more people (**okutanguna novanhu vedulife puvavali**).

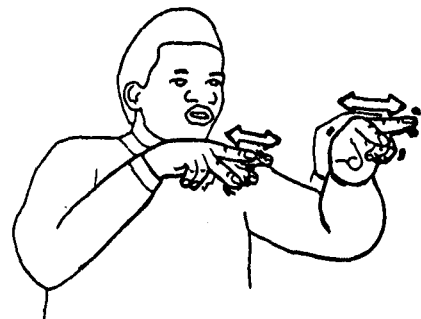


Figure 5
we argue with one or more people
okutanguna novanhu vedulife puvavali

We know that the signer is describing himself and at least one other person

arguing with others because both hands face away from him. We also know that the person (or people) arguing with them are to the left because the fingers are pointing to the left. The final example (Figure 6) of the use of the sign meaning "argue" describes two people arguing with each other (**ovanhu vavali tavatanguna**).

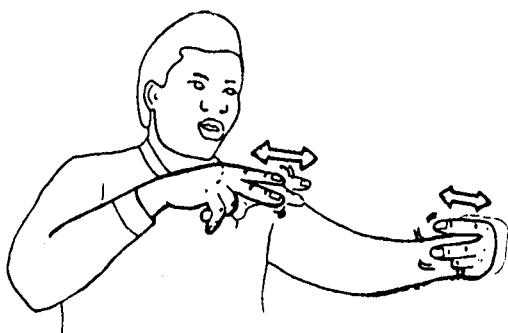


Figure 6 two people argue
ovanhu vavali tavatanguna

In this example, the two hands face each other from the right and the left. This tells us that the signer is not one of the people doing the arguing. The hands show us that one of the people doing the arguing is on the left and the other is on the right.

It should now be clear that when the sign meaning "argue" (**okutanguna**) is used, it means more than "argue." It also tells you who is arguing. All the signs which have this ability to express who is performing the action or who is receiving the action will be in the sections called "Indicating Verbs."

Locative Verbs

The signs which we have labeled as "locative verbs" also use space in meaningful ways. Locative verbs have a basic meaning and the location at which it is produced adds to that meaning. The first locative verb we will look at is related to the simple sign which means "meat" (**ombelela**). This sign is made in the space ahead of the trunk with the same handshape used in the names of many animals, including "zebra" (**ongolo yoshinamwenyo**). It is not really a coincidence that the same handshape appears in both signs and in signs which name many other animals. This handshape can be thought of as a significant symbol which appears in signs related to animals, meat, and fatness. This handshape will be seen many times throughout in the dictionary.

The first locative verb means "person with big chest and stomach" (**omunhu ena edimo lakula nonhulo yakula/inene**).



Figure 7
person with big chest and stomach
omunhu ena edimo lakula
nonhulo yakula/inene

This sign (Figure 7) contacts locations on the chest and stomach and those locations show the location of the heaviness. Had the signer placed the hands in different locations it would have a different meaning. If this sign is placed on the buttocks, it means "person with big buttocks" (**omunhu munene koikalo yaye / omunhu ena omatako makula**).

It is not uncommon for locative verbs made at a particular place to take on a special meaning of their own. This has occurred with the next sign (Figure 8).

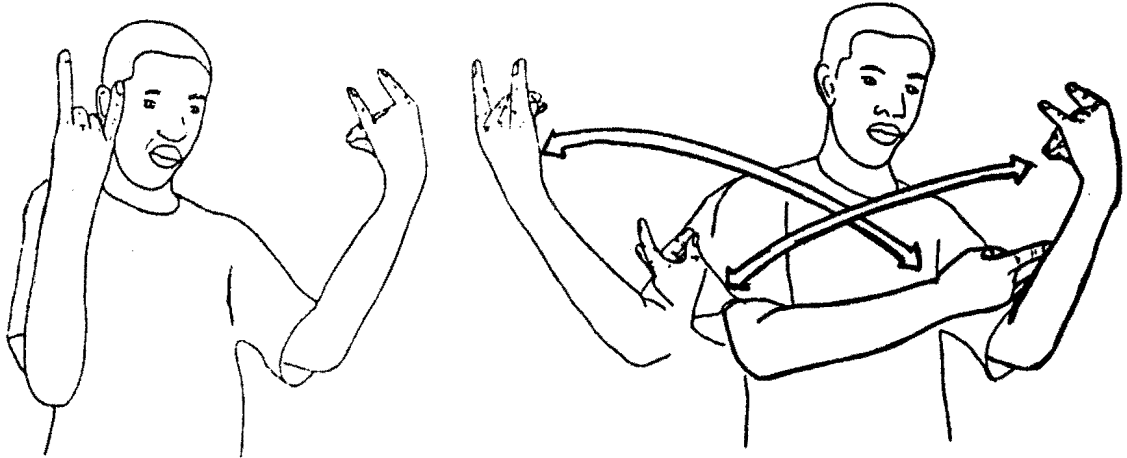


Figure 8 fat, strong man/boy
omukulunhu omulunehu ile okanona ena olutu lapama nawa/oshipombolutu

This sign looks like it should mean "person with big arms" (**omunhu ena omaoko manene**), but it means "fat, strong man / boy" (**omukulunhu omulumenhu ile okanona ena olutu lapama nawa / oshipombolutu**). Once the sign has taken on a specialized meaning like this one and can no longer be made in different places, we place such a sign in the "simple" category.

The result is that we have signs which look very much alike being placed in two different categories:

locative verb:

person with big chest and stomach
omunhu ena edlmo lakula nonhulo yakula/Inene

simple sign:

fat, strong man / boy"
omukulunhu omulumenhu ile okanona ena olutu lapama nawa
/ oshlpombolutu

For the signs which we have placed in the "simple" category, the meaning cannot be worked out the same way that a meaning of a locative sign can be worked out. The meaning must be learnt. For a locative sign, however, if one knows the basic meaning of the handshape and the movement (i.e., that it contacts the body to show a place which is big or fat) then wherever the sign is made it is possible to work out the meaning.

Classifier Verbs

The signs which we describe as "classifier verbs" are very much like locative verbs. The most significant difference is that classifier verbs have handshapes which represent people, animals, tools, surfaces, and other things.

Suppose we wished to talk about two cows walking along together (Figure 9). We would use the "animal" handshape to represent the cows. The hands show what the animals do by the way that they move and places that they go. Since the two hands move side by side at the same speed, the sign means "two cows walk along together" (**eengobe mbali tadi ende pwamwe**).

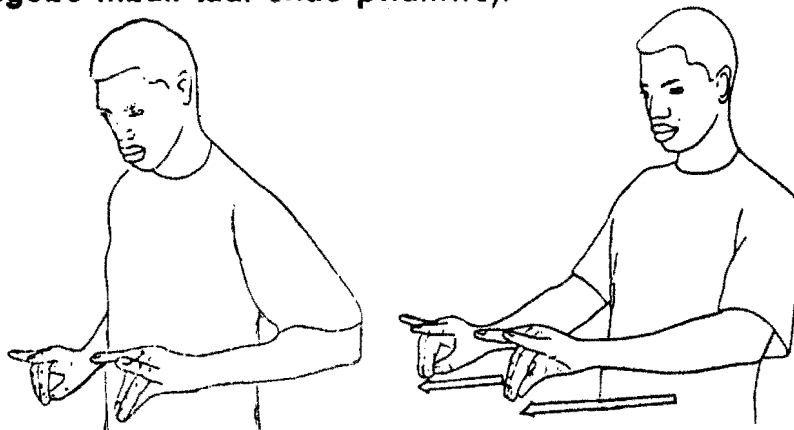


Figure 9

two cows walk along together
eengobe mbali tadi ende pwamwe

If the two cows were passing each other (**eengobe tadi pingafana**) we would describe that with the next sign (Figure 10).

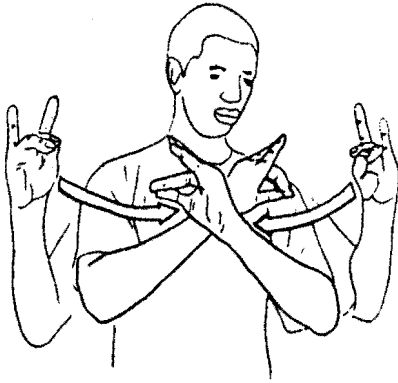


Figure 10
two cows pass each other
eengobe tadi pingafana

The meaning is clear because the two hands pass each other, thus showing that the two animals pass each other. If the two cows were approaching one another (Figure 11) we would make the two handshapes approach one another as in the following example.

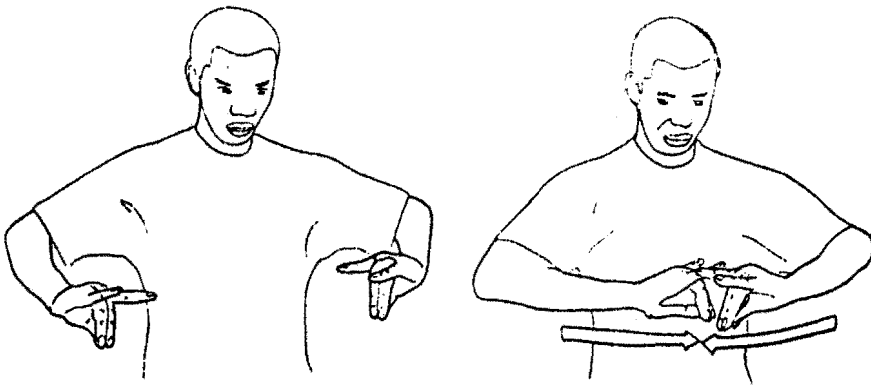


Figure 11 cows walk towards each other
eengobe tadi shakene

A different handshape is used to represent a bird. The next example (Figure 12) shows how we would describe a bird flying and landing on a cow's back (okadila taka nambele kombuda yongobe).

The handshape used by the right hand (the "bird" handshape) represents the bird while the "animal" handshape represents the cow. The movement of the right hand shows the movement of the bird as it flies toward and lands on the cow's back (okadila taka nambele kombuda yongobe).



Figure 12
bird lands on cow's back
okakila taka nambele
kombuda yongobe

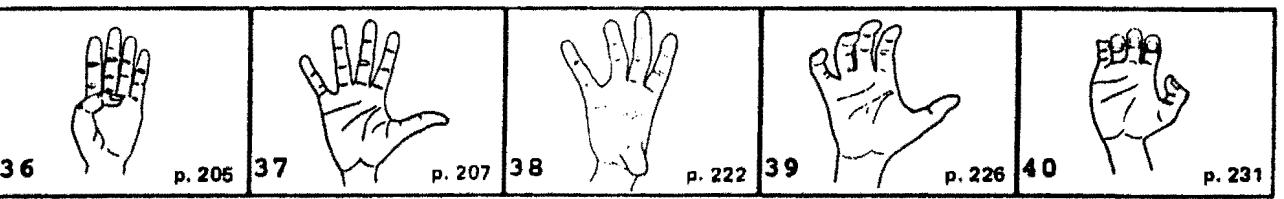
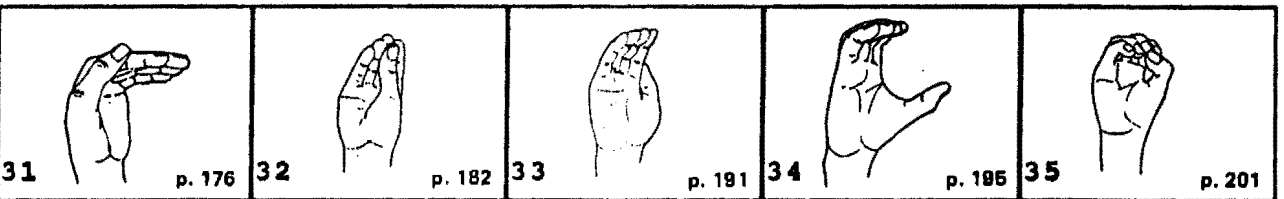
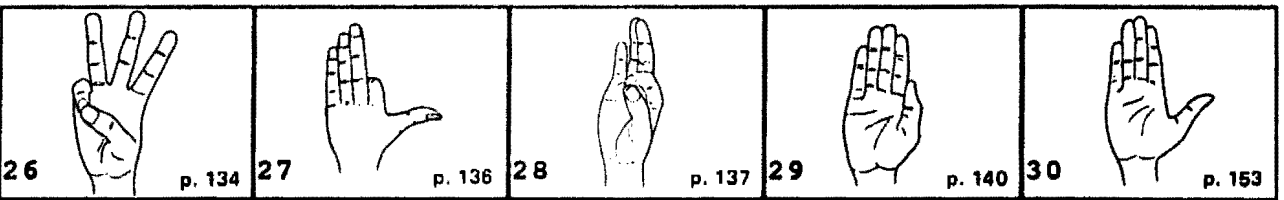
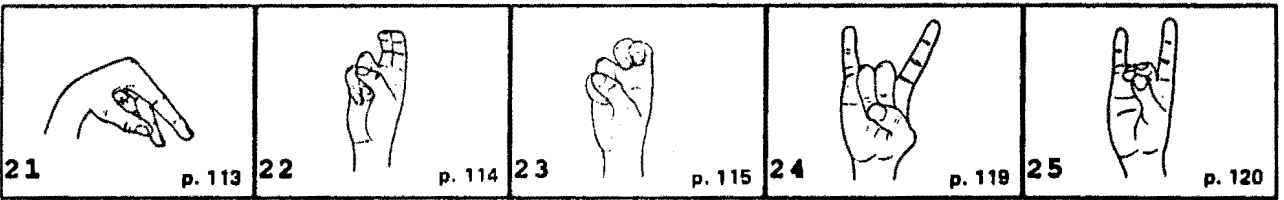
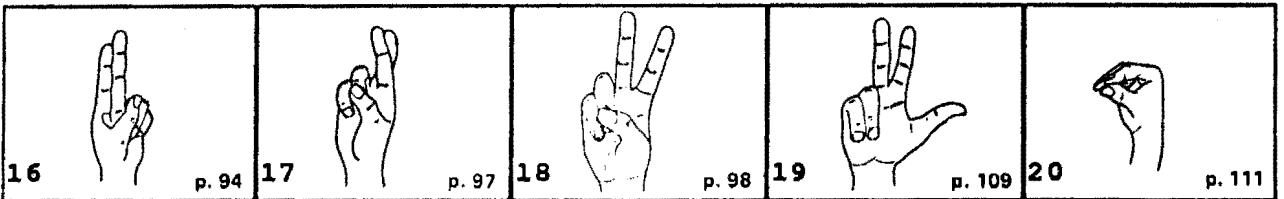
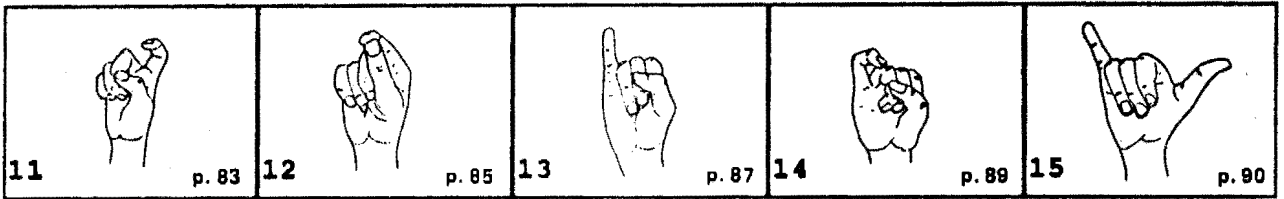
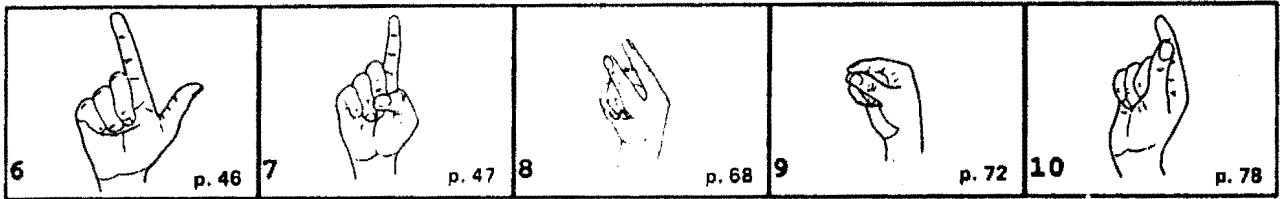
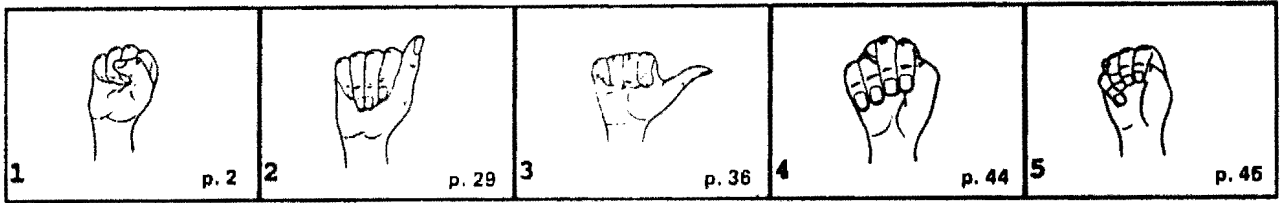
This ability to show where things are, whether they are moving or still, and even how two things are interacting is the characteristic which is common to classifier verbs.

Learning Namibian Sign Language

No matter what a person wants to learn from a teacher, it is essential that the teacher be a master of what is being taught. The masters of Namibian Sign Language are the deaf people who use it day in and day out as their own language. Because they are the masters of Namibian Sign Language they will make the best teachers of the language.

Learning Namibian Sign Language is a challenge equal to learning any spoken language. Books can be a useful guide in the learning process and we hope that this dictionary will assist many people in the process of learning and understanding Namibian Sign Language. Carefully working through this book can be of assistance in the learning process, but it is not possible to carry on a conversation with a book. Learning Namibian Sign Language well will necessitate having deaf teachers. This can happen formally in a classroom or less formally in social interaction with deaf people.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
FOR NSL HANDSHAPES



HOW TO USE THIS DICTIONARY

1. TO FIND THE WRITTEN TRANSLATION OF A SIGN

USE THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

If you know Namibian Sign Language and you want to find the English or Oshiwambo translation of the sign, start with the table of contents. Look for the handshape of the sign you want to look up and then go to the page number that appears next to it. (See page XXX.)

GO TO THE HANDSHAPE SECTION

You will find all the signs with this handshape in this section. Signs are also grouped according to meaning eg: all the "cow" classifier signs are grouped together.

Signs which involve a change in handshape are grouped at the end of the section according to the first handshape.

There are some exceptions where signs are classified according to the second handshape eg: **beautiful**. **Beautiful** belongs to a set of signs which all include the handshape meaning **good**. Thus beautiful is signed as **FACE GOOD** and is included with the other signs in this set which all include the **GOOD** handshape: **delicious, lucky, unlucky, clever, sick, stupid, healthy and clean**. All these signs have different initial handshapes.

Look for the sign you want in all the sign categories for the handshape.

The sign you want might be found under **Simple Signs, Indicating Verbs, Locative Verbs or Classifier Verbs**. The English and Oshiwambo translations of the sign appear next to the illustration.

2. TO FIND THE SIGNED TRANSLATION OF AN ENGLISH/OSHIWAMBO WORD OR

PHRASE, LOOK IN THE ENGLISH OR OSHIWAMBO/KWANYAMA INDEX

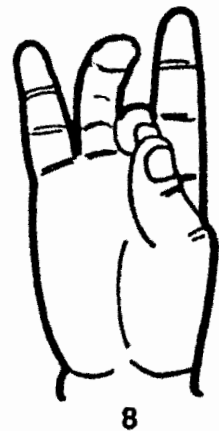
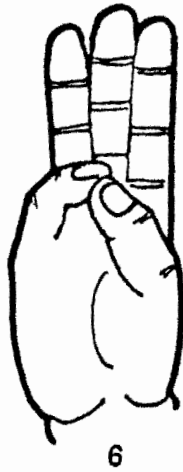
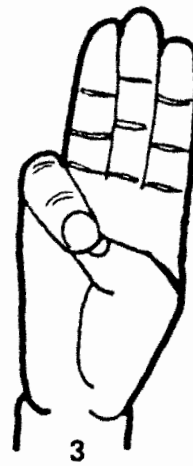
If you know the English or the Oshiwambo/Kwanyama word and you want to know the sign translation of that word, use the English or Oshiwambo/Kwanyama index. Look up the word in the index and next to it you will find the page number for the sign. Go to the page and you will find the English or Oshiwambo/Kwanyama word that you are looking for with an illustration of the sign next to it.

3. COMPARE WITH OTHER SIGNS

All the signs with the same handshape are in the same section of the book. Look at the other signs in the handshape section with similar meanings to the sign you are interested in. Look at the differences in movement between signs with the same handshape and similar meanings. Compare signs from different categories in the same handshape section eg: simple signs, indicating verbs, locative verbs and classifier verbs.

Also look in the index to find other signs with the same meaning which have different handshapes and are found in other sections of the dictionary.

SIGNS FOR NUMERALS





11



12



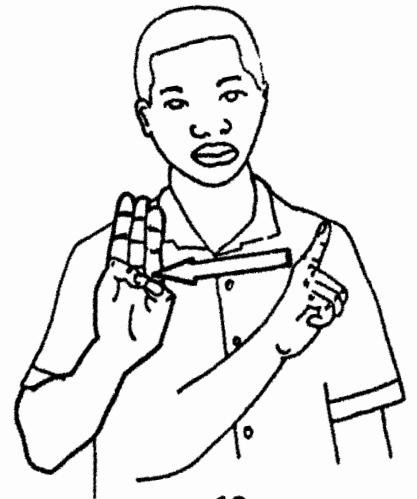
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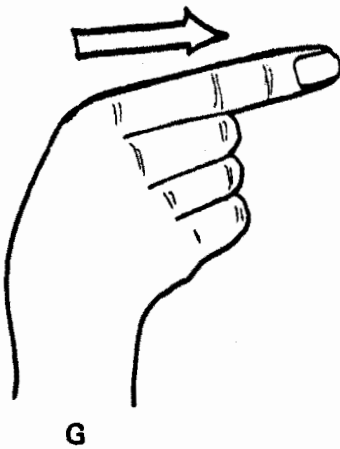
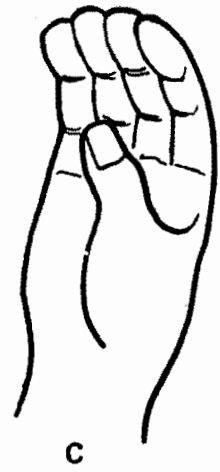
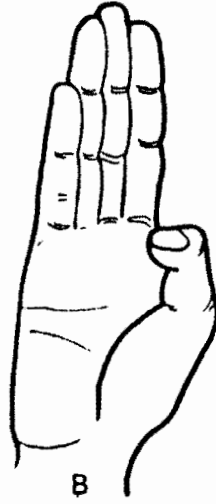
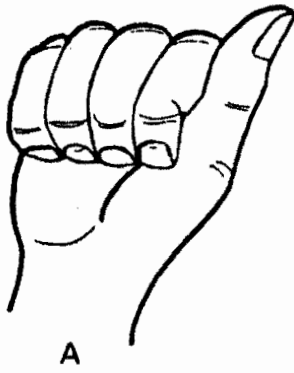


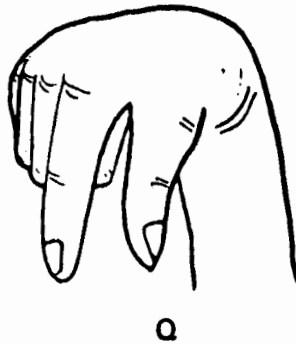
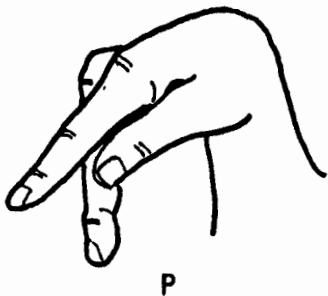
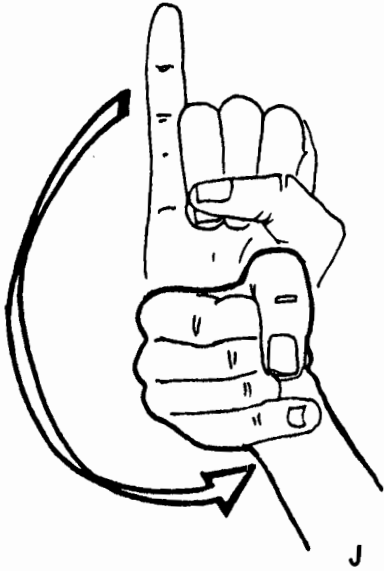
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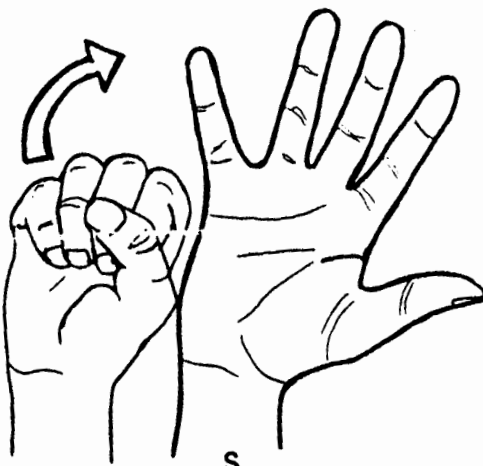


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ALPHABET







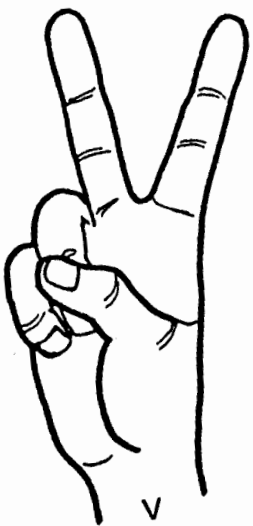
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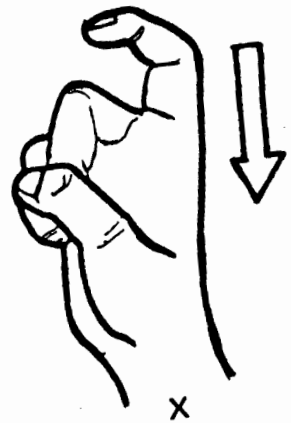
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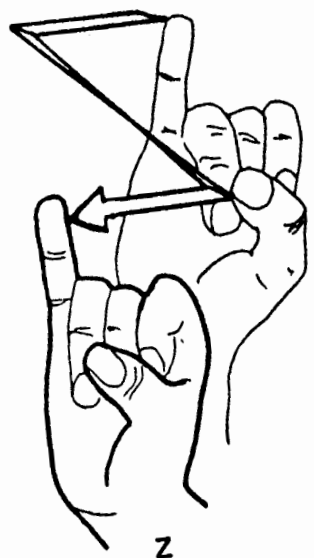
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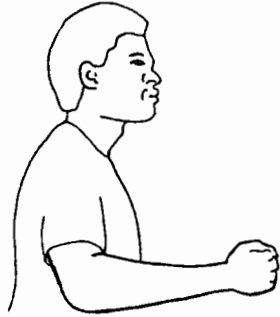


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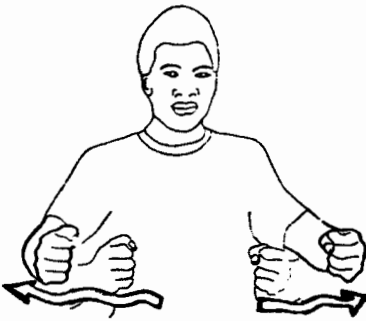
Z

NAMIBIAN SIGN to ENGLISH and OSHIWAMBO



child

okanona/okaana



children

ounona/uunona



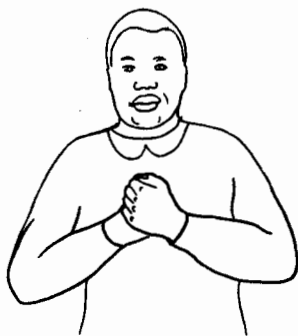
mother/woman/wife

meme/omukulukadi/omukulukadi omuhombolwa



father/man/husband

tate/omulumenhu/omulumenhu a hombola



parents

oonakudala/oonakuvala



grandfather

tate kulu a dala tate ile meme



grandmother

mEEKulu a dala meme ile tate



blackboard duster

oshidimifo shokoshipelende



cane

omweenge



drink brewed from millet flour

oshikundu/suurdeug



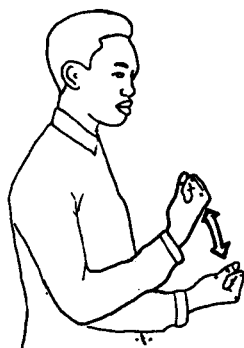
to drink

okunwa/nwa



Russia/USSR

Russia/USSR/Lusia/Lwasha



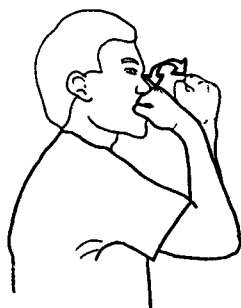
ball

etanga lokudanauka



soap

ofewa yokulikosha/othewa yokwiiyoga



to eat a coconut

okulya onduंगा



land/ground

oshilongo/edu



to scream

okuyeyaana/okukuwa



big

shakula/shinene



boss/director/employer

omuhona/omuwiliki/omnyandji woi longa



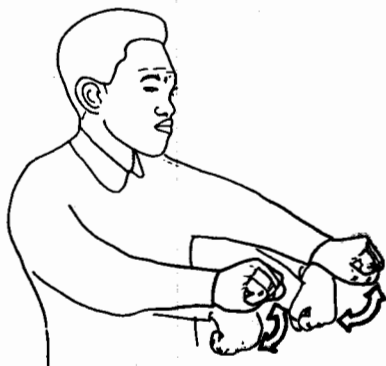
power

eenhono/oonkondo



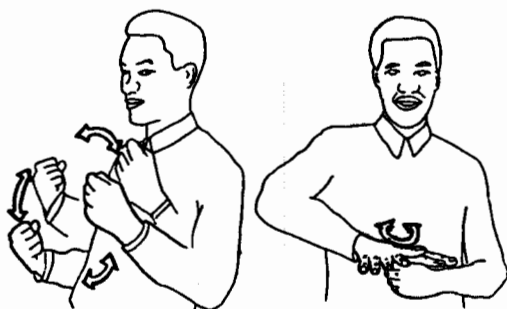
what

oshike



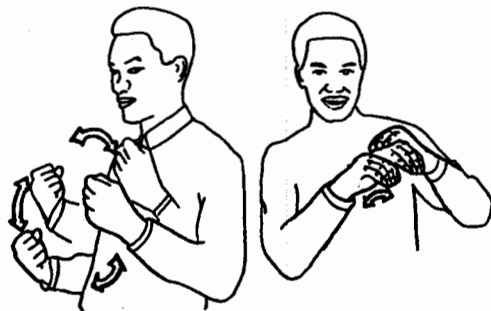
motorbike

okapakapaka



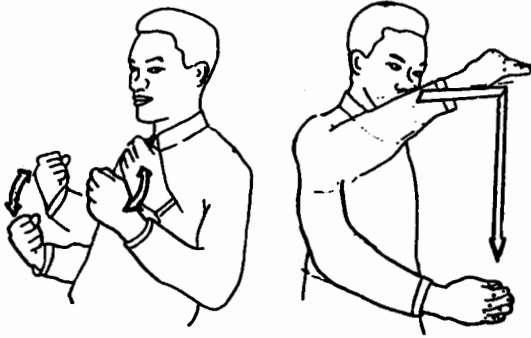
truck for transporting goods

etuwa lakula loku humbata omitwalo/omkonga



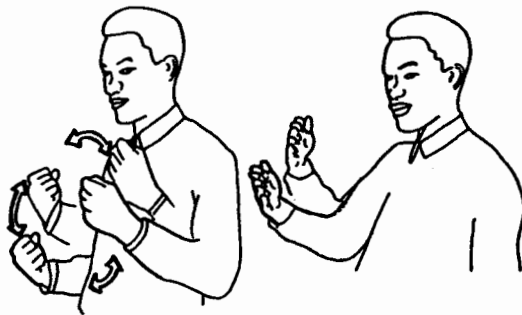
volkswagen beetle

okatuwa kokashima/okavolkswagen



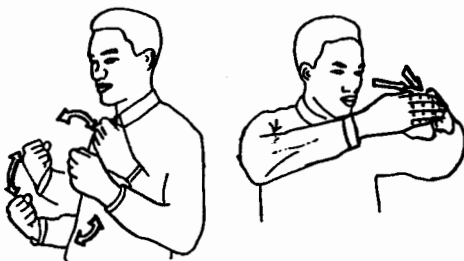
van/combi

okumbi



scania (army vehicle)

osikania (otuwa yovakwaita)



scania (army vehicle)

osikania

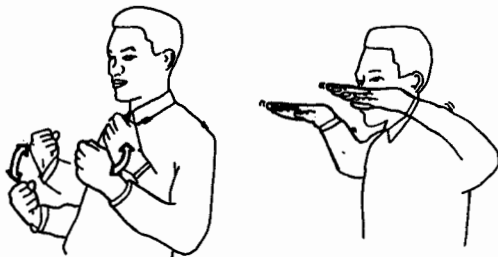


casspir (army vehicle with open roof)



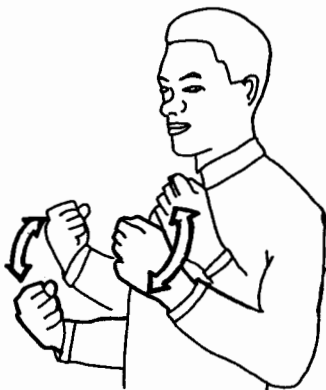
ekasipeli

horror (army vehicle)



ehuulala (otuwa yovakwaita)

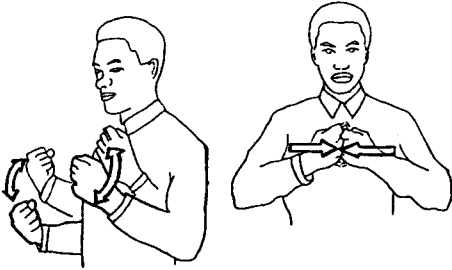
car



oshihauto/otuwa

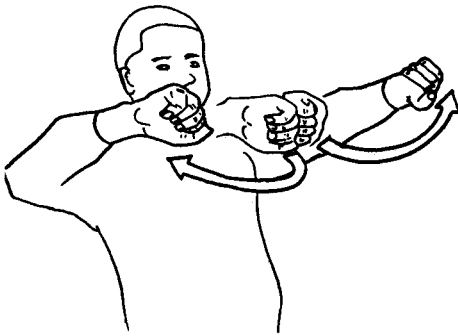


car accident



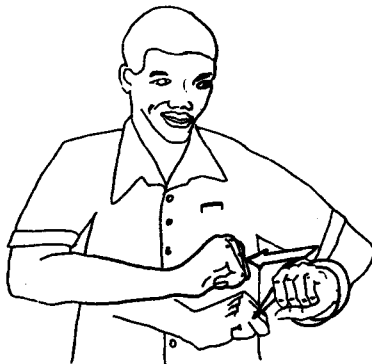
okulidenga mumwe koitukutuku (oituwa)/oshiponga shoshihawto

cupboard (two-door)

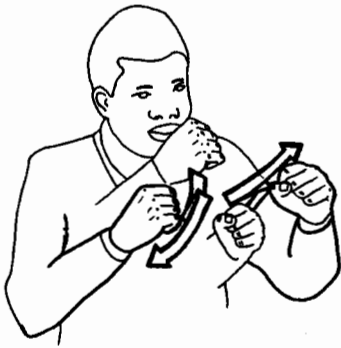


osikopa yomivelo mbali

to tie a knot



okumanga/okuditika edita



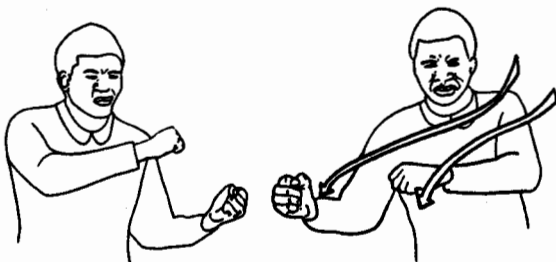
to box (fight)

*omaudano eengonyo/okulidenya
neengonyo/okubokisha*



to fight

okulwa/okulidenga



to wrestle

okukondja/okulinwapo eendjubu



to cook (stir normally)

okuteleka (okupilula nawa)



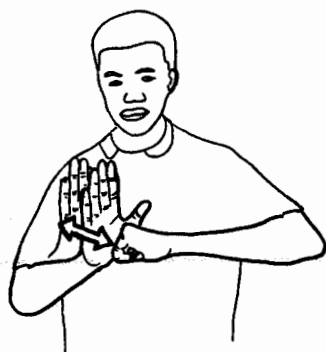
hard/tough/difficult

shikuku/shidjuu



strong

sha pama/shi na eengho



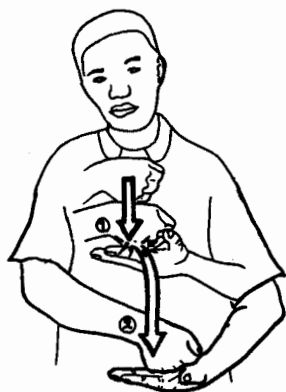
grass

omwiidi



to start/begin

okuhovela/okutameka



to try

okukendabala/okukambadhala



to treat problem using traditional medicine

ouhaku wopashiwana



traditional doctoring by the person who gives medicine

ounganga/oundudu

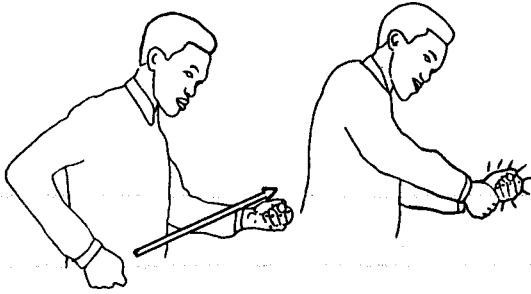


official stamp

oshihako shopambelewa

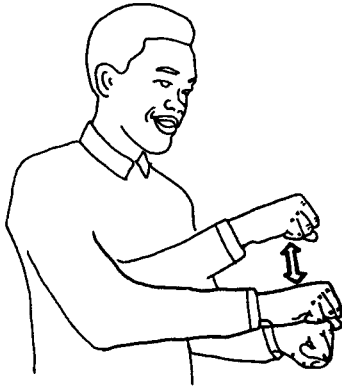


to hit/serve a volleyball



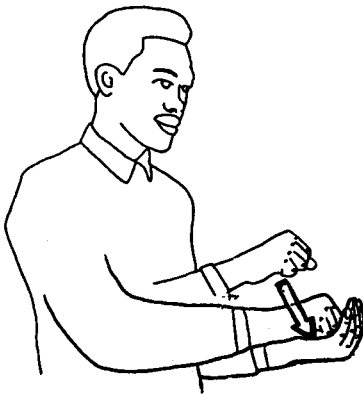
okuumba/okudenga etanga lokeenya

stone



emanya

pillow

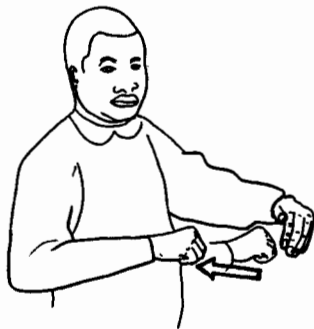


oshiwilo



desk

okasikopa



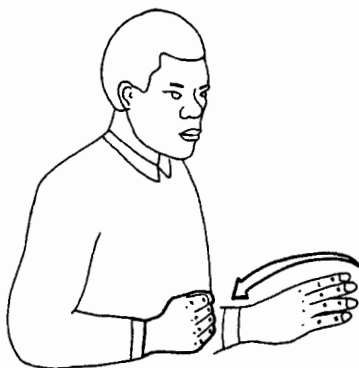
desk

osikopa



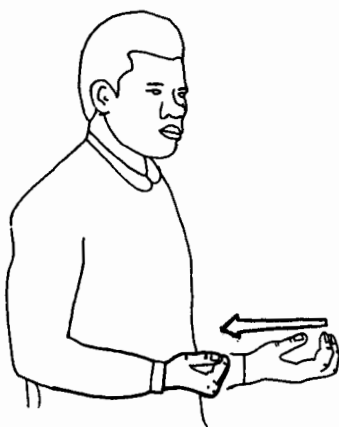
berries from red milkwood tree

eenyandi



thing

oshinima



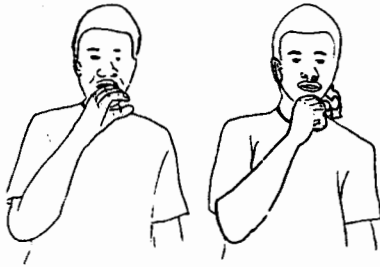
have

okukala u na



to indicate age [note: "have twelve" means that a person is twelve years old]

tashi ulike eedula domunhu ngashi: eedula omulongo nambali



orange (fruit)

elalandje



Oshakati

Oshakati



born

edalo/okudala

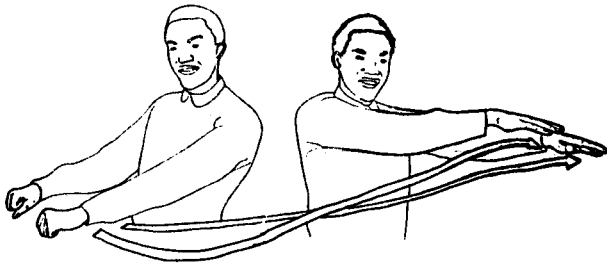


born

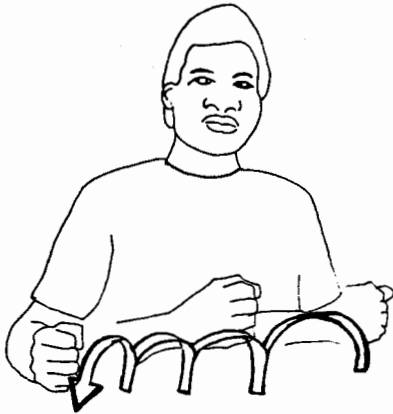
edalo/okudala



to move to another place

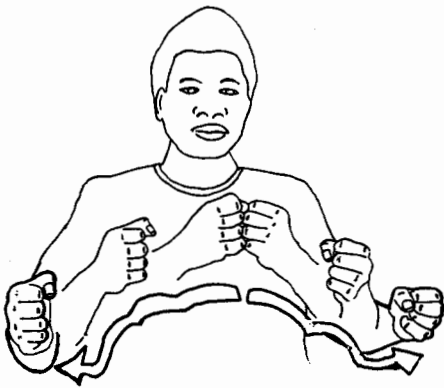


okutembukila/okulundulukila



children in a line

ounona ve li momukweyo



children in a circle

ounona ve li mongonga



to scoop traditional drink out of container with calabash

okupinda oikunwa nomhindo



to pour out

okutila ile okutilashi/pima



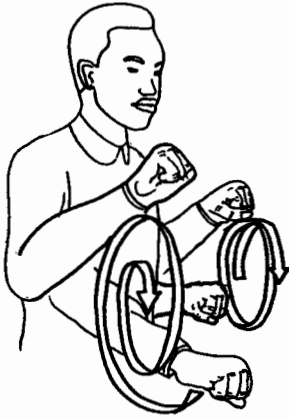
to carry bucket by handle

okwiingida eemele



to ride a bicycle quickly

okulonda okafangufangu/ombasikela to shingilile



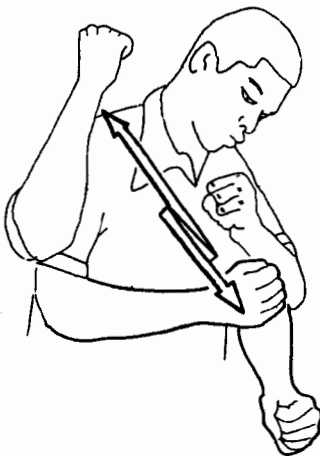
to ride a bicycle slowly

okushinga ombasikela kashona nakashona



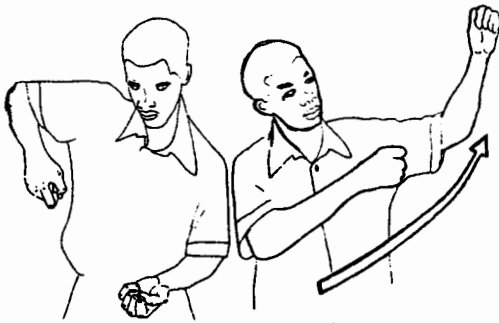
to cook (stir vigorously)

okuteleka (pilula neenghono)



to pound millet into grain

okuxwa



to dig with a spade

okufa noshihupulo



to pick up heavy object

okutumba oshinima shidjuu



to carry on shoulder

humbata kepepe



to carry long thin object across shoulders



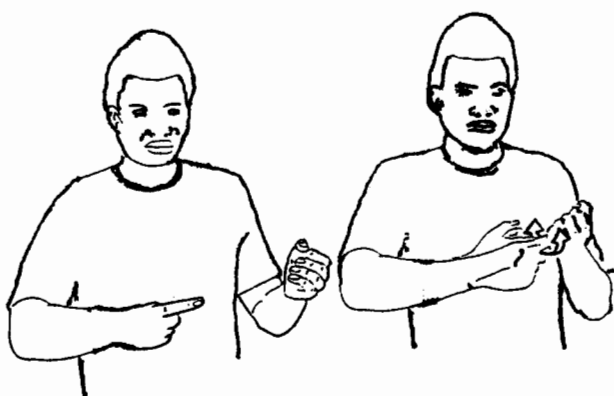
okuliindikila

to shake fruit off branch



okushikaashika oyimati koshitai/okunyema oyimati koshitai

to squeeze marula fruit by piercing with a sharp implement

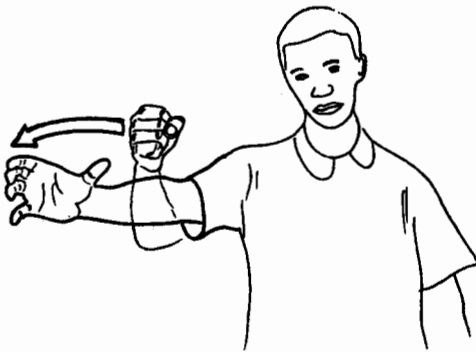


okukola



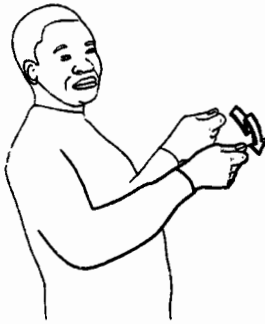
to strain juice from marula fruit

okudinda oshinwa



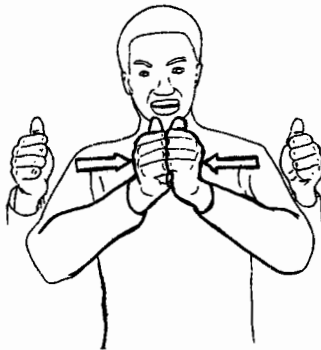
to give/move something

okulundulula ile okuyandja oshinima ngaashi otuwa, ile oikwatelwa



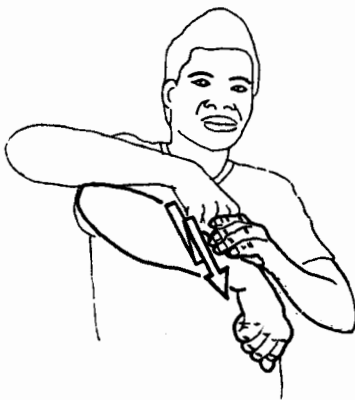
to switch light on/off

okupakumifa eelamba



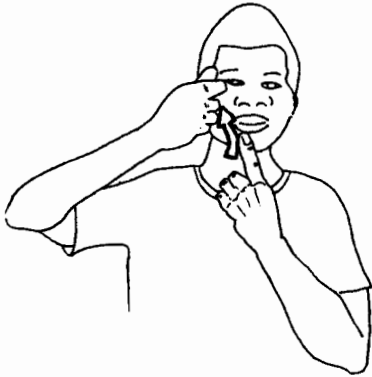
with

pamwe/na



kind of beer made from a grain, the beer is ladled using a calabash

okupinda otombo nomhindo



millet

oshilya



lemon

elamuna



money

oimaliva/eembongo



to sell



okulandifa



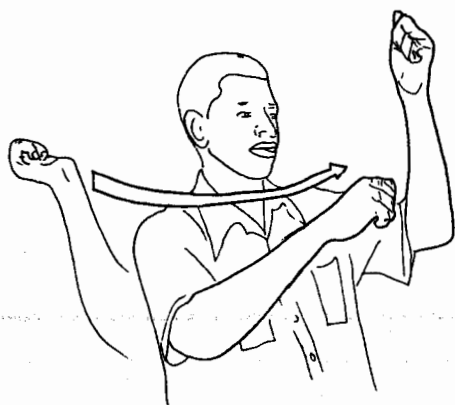
person pays me, the sign is directed towards the person who is paid

fute nge



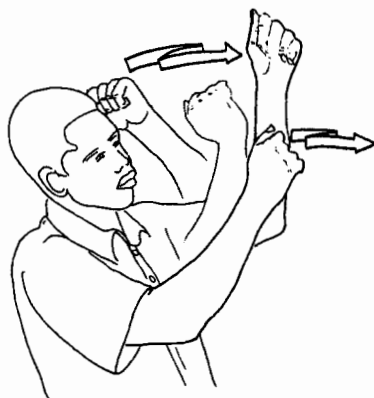
I pay you, the sign is directed towards the person who is paid

mu futa/va futa



to hit spade with stick

okupomhola koshihupulo/okuta oudilamepya



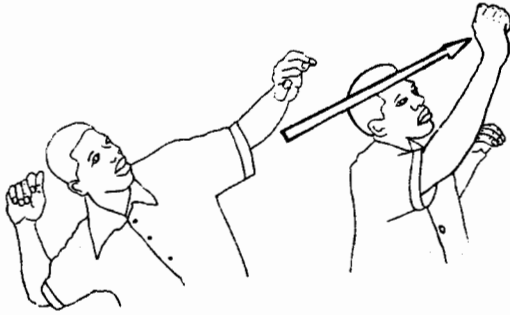
to knock fruit off tree using stick

okushopola oyimati



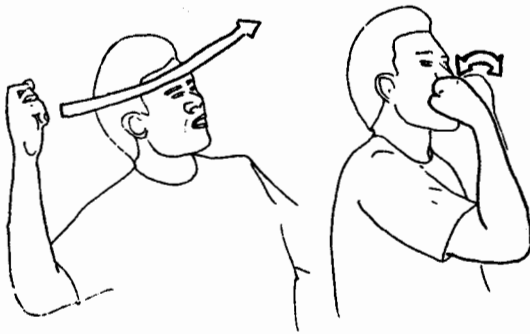
to water plants using hosepipe

okutekela nomunino



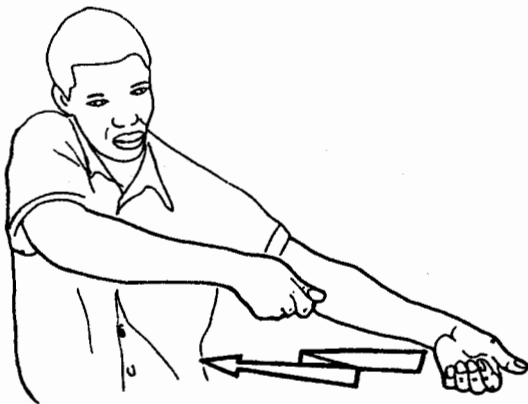
to throw something

okukupulashi sha



to throw something at a coconut (to knock it down from a tree)

okukupula eendunga



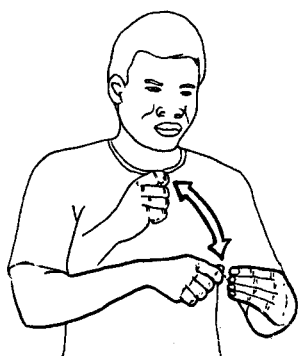
to hoe

okulima



to knock with a hammer

okupamhala no hamala



to split dried marula kernel open with an axe

okutenda eengongo



delicious



oshinima shinyenye/shi wa

lucky

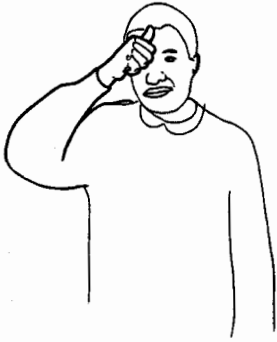


elao

unlucky

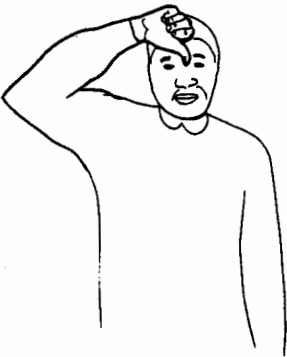


omupya



clever

eendunge/oineya



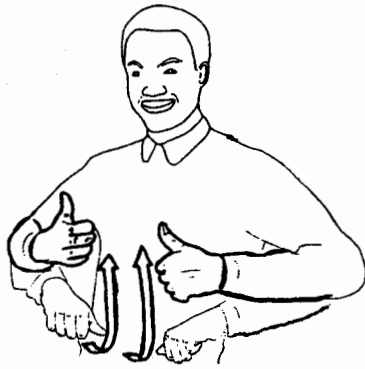
stupid

oulai/uugoya



sick

okuvela/okweehama



healthy

oulinawa/oukolele



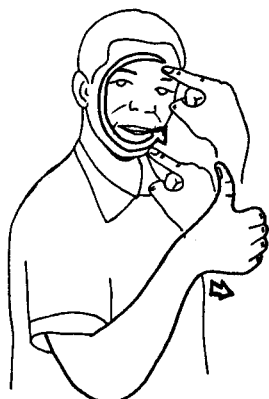
to clean

okuwapaleka/okuyeleka



beautiful

ouwa wokoshipala/ouwa woshinima



beautiful

ouwa



to go behind/to the back of a person

okushuna monima/okuhondjaunina



rude/behave badly

okulunduka



to breast-feed

okanona taka nyamu/okunyamifa okaana



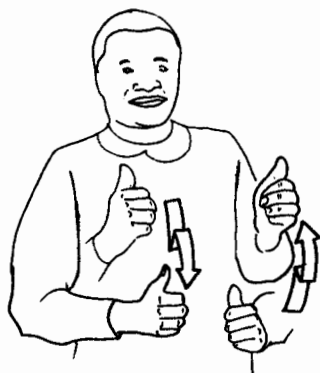
pity

onghenda



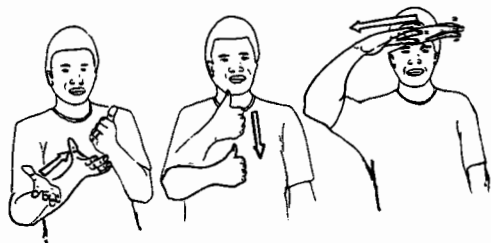
great pity

onghendu inene/ohenda onene



which

shilipipo/shinipo



alcohol

omalodu malula



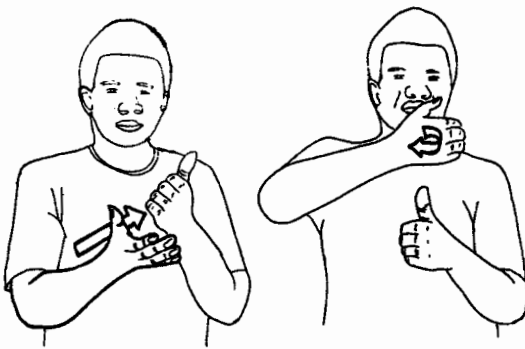
alcohol (strong)

omalodu madjuuu/mapunga keelela/omatatula mutima



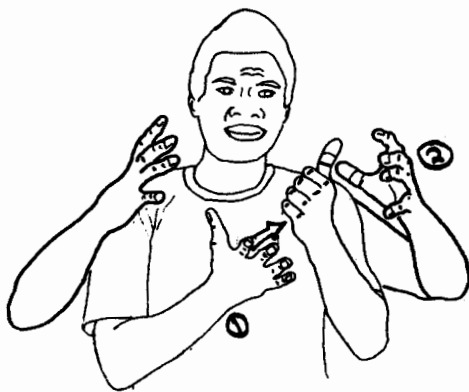
alcohol that can make one drunk

oikowifa



alcohol in a bottle

ekende lomalodu malula



alcohol in a big bottle-like urn

ekende lokee ngudi



stamp

ositombe yonhumwafo/ositambe yombapila



to milk a cow

okukanda ongobe



Namibia

Namibia

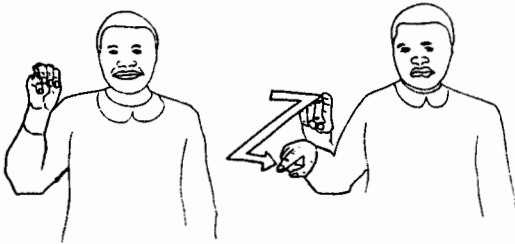


Nigeria

Nigeria



Mozambique



Mozambique/Mosambikwe



big

shakula/shinene



Luanda

oLuanda/ombala ya Angola



1. church 2. Sunday

1. ongeleka 2. osoondaha



Monday



omaandaha

to say/speak



okutya/okupopya

hearing person



omunamatwi



to hear

okuudako kwomatwi/okuuvako kwomatsi



to whistle

okushika omwilwa/okuhika omwilwa



English

oshiingilisa



man



omusamane

to lose a game

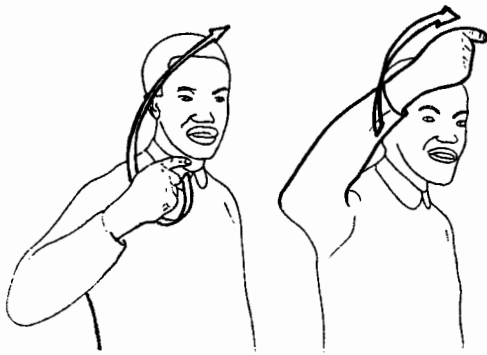


okunyika mowela/moukalata ile okufindwa momaudano

to see



okumona



future

onakuyiwa/komesho



drunk

okukolwa

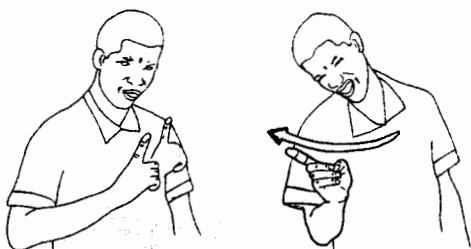


never

nande nande



person runs fast/person disappears into the distance



meendelelo okwa kana po

but



ndele/ashike

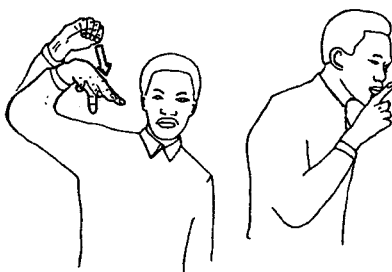
others



vamwe vali



hot sun



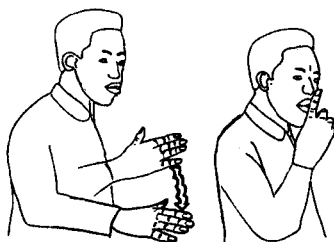
omutenya wa pupyala/mupyu/omutenya wa twa

hot fire



omundilo upyu

hot water



omeva mapyu unene



feverish

oupyu womuveli/oshidu/olwiidhi



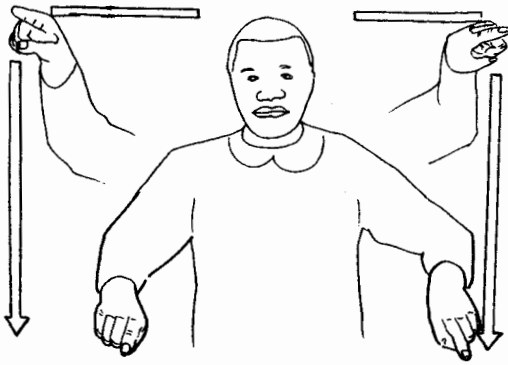
very eg: very hard/difficult

shikukutu unene/shidjuu unene okuninga



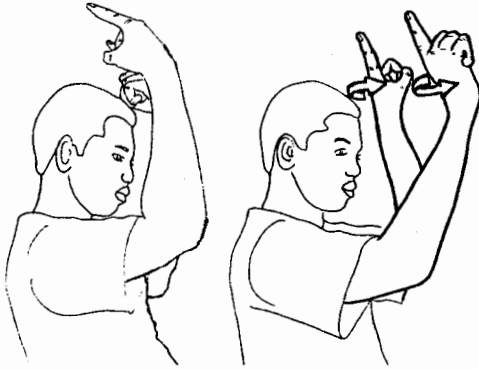
to meet

okushakena/okutsakanena



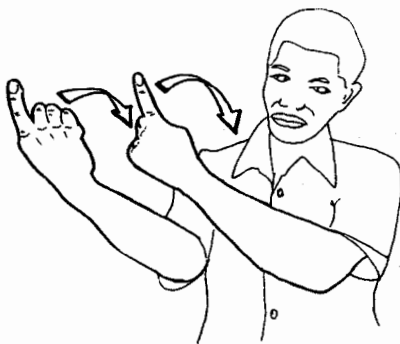
cupboard

osikopa



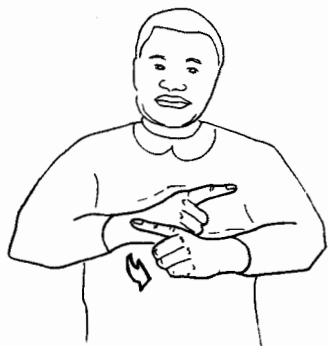
eland antelope

ongalangombe



carry items at the ends of a stick which is placed over the shoulder

omutengi



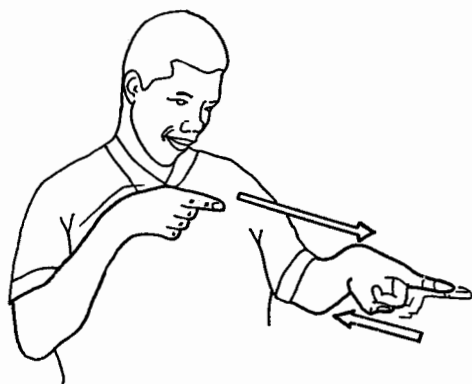
government

epangelo



to laugh

okuyola



to pass a grade/be highly skilled/beat another

okupita nonghatu/onghulungu



to pass a grade/be highly skilled/beat another

okupita nonghatu yopombada



to be evenly matched/equal skill

okuhelifyapo mefiyafanepo/outike pamwe mefiyafanepo



time

efimbo



time eg: the time is twelve 'o clock



efimbo: otundi onhimulongo nambali

now



paife/ngashingeyi

always



alushe



until



ofiyó

quick/fast



eendelele ile onhapo

quickly



meendelele



fast

onhapo/eendelelo



after

konima



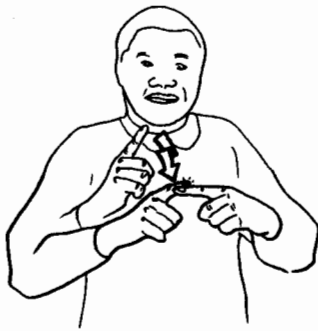
tin

okandooha



international

*shaaveshe ngaashi: omahangano oilongo yililile
nokulilile elimumwe/shopaiwana*



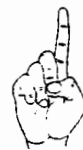
electricity

olusheno

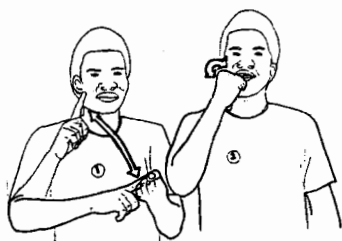


drink brewed from grain flour

omalodu oiya

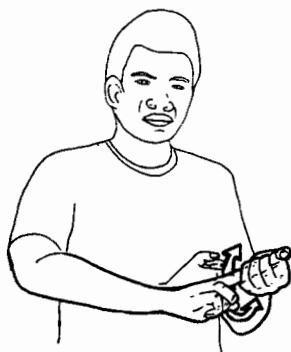


nut fruit of marula tree



ongongo yokukola

palm "apples", fruit of fan palm



eendunga

healthy



oukolele/okuveluka/okuuda nawa



helicopter

edakadaka



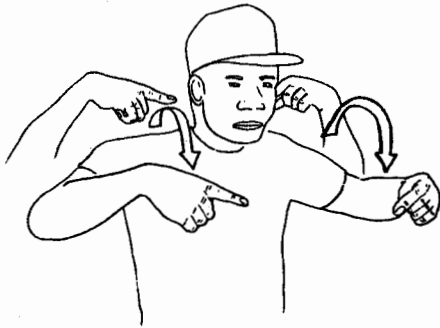
person tells me, the sign is directed towards the person who is told

lombwelenge



I tell you, the sign is directed towards the person who is told

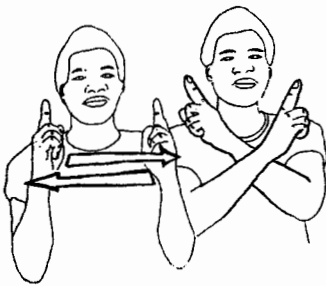
ame ohandi ku lombwele



the downward movement of the hands indicates the outline of parallel ropes going straight down from the ox's shoulder [note: this handshape can trace out different arrangements of ropes]

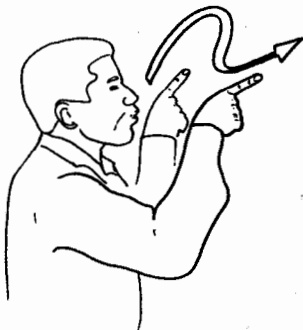
ondjoko yeengobe/oishilolopa yokondjoko

people walk around



tava pingafana/ovanhu tava pingafana ile endaenda

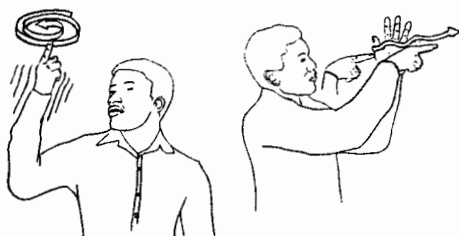
air force plane flies fast in a configuration



odila yopakwaita tai tuka meendelelo



helicopter flies in a straight line



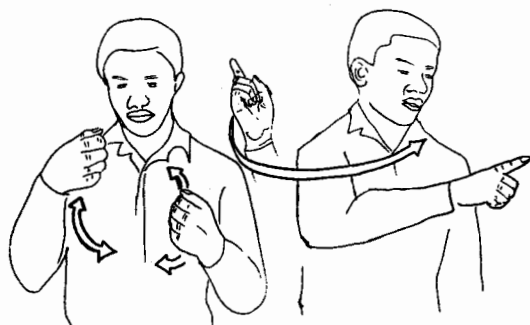
edakadaka tali tuka



1. four-wheel drive goes fast 2. dog goes 3. children roll

1. *ofoowila tai endelele/foowila tai shingililwa* 2. *ombwa tailotoka tayii olumbabela* 3. *ounona tava alangata*

car goes past



oshihauto sha enda po/sha pita po



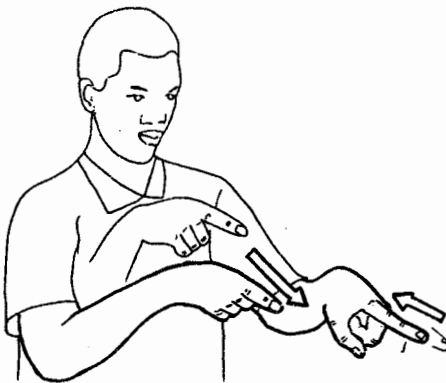
cars travel toward each other

oituwa yashakena ombaadilila konyala yelidenga mumwe



one car passes another car

oituwa tai li piti pominghulo



one car is able to go faster than another car [note: the lower hand indicates the faster car]

efaafano loyeendifo monhapo



one student passed another and went into the next grade [note: the upper hand indicates the more advanced child]

omunhu apita mongudu omo eli tayi kongudu tayilandula



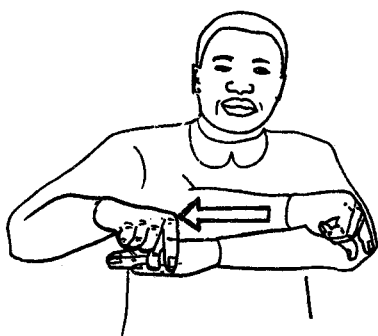
monkey winds tail around a tree branch

munghina ta dingile omushila moshitai



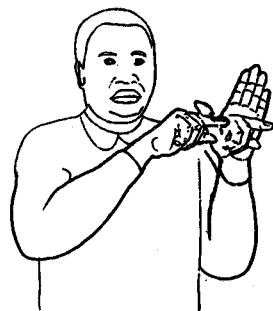
priest

omufita weongala



ruler (for measuring)

okatendifo

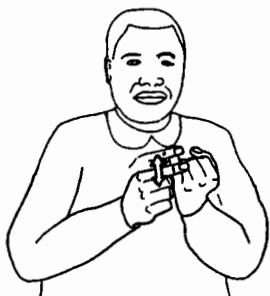


blackboard

oshipelende



thin



ounini woluto

small dates



eembe



injection in the buttock

okuvendwa metako



injection in the upper arm

okuvendwa mepepe



object with the thickness indicated by the distance between the thumb and finger eg: a tabletop

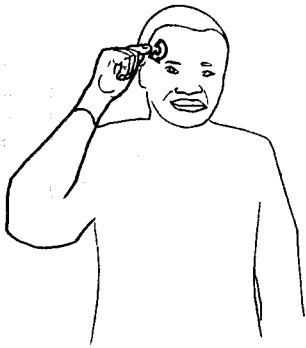
nghee tomete ounene woshinima



elephant waves trunk



ondjaba tai nipi omukati



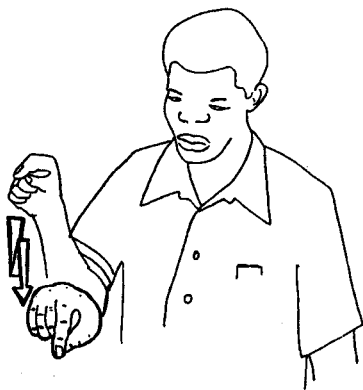
to remember

dimbulukwa



boring/lousy

okufya unye

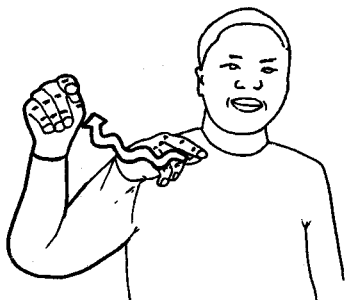


bird

okadila

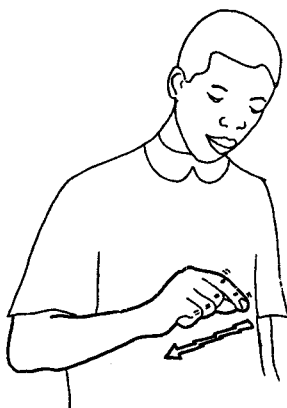


chalk



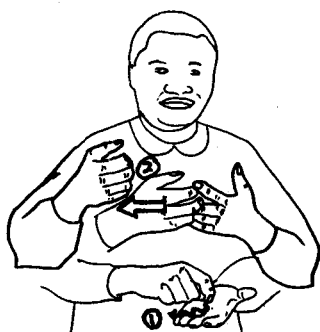
omya

to write

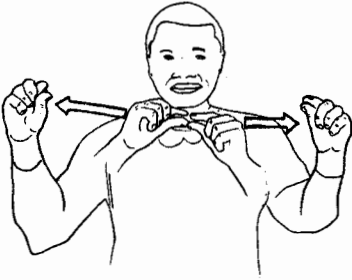


nyola

pencil



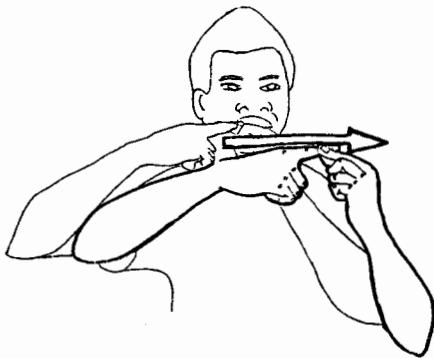
opena yekala



electric light

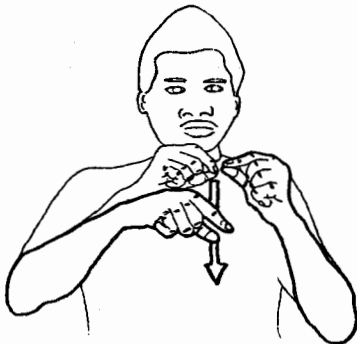


ouyelele wolusheno



cane

omweenge



traditional brandy

ombike/owalende



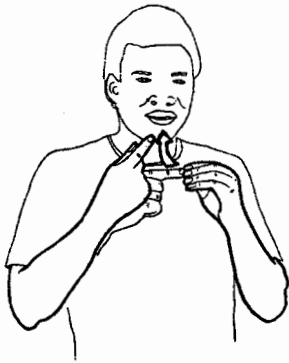
radio

okakola keenghundana



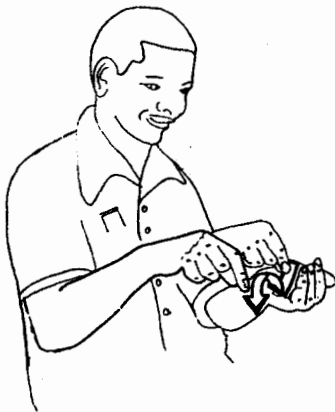
grain plants grow taller [note: the level that the hands reach indicates the height of the grain]

oilya tai kulu



to take out inside of marula nut with an implement

okutongona ongongo



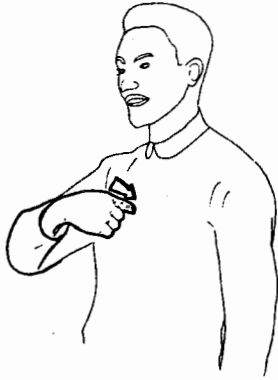
to plant a seed

okukuna



to stir with small/medium size spoon

okupilulifa onguto



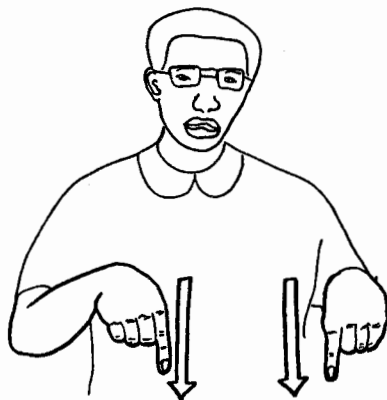
me

ame



here

apa



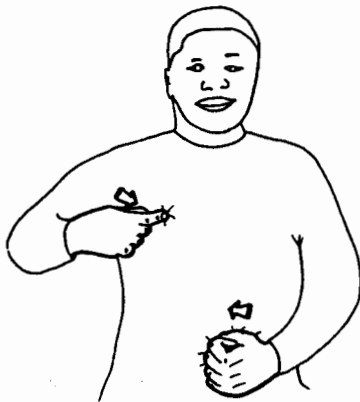
here

apa



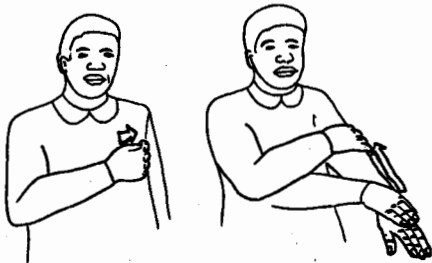
girl

okakadono



boy

okamati

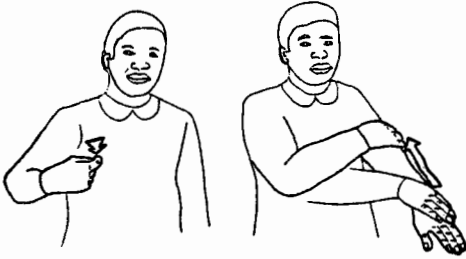


sister

omumwameme kadona

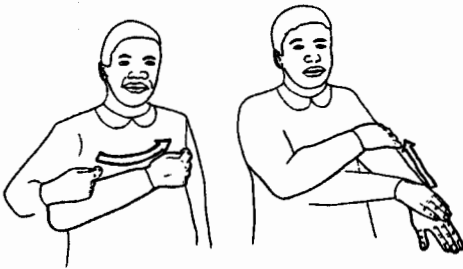


brother



omumwameme mati

brother and sister



omumwameme omumati nokakadona

village



omukunda



country

oshilongo



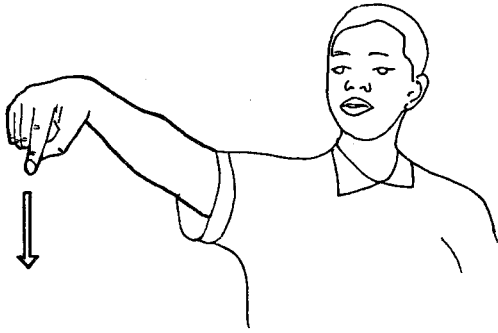
shop

ofitola



to sell

okulandifa



there

kwinya



snake (small)

okayoka



name

edina



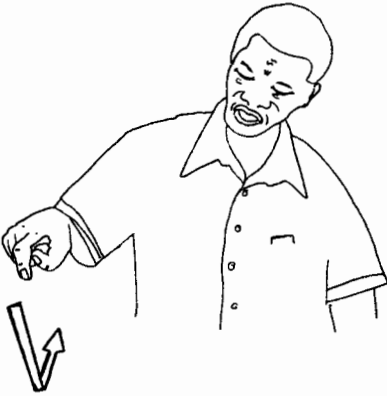
Finland

Finland/Ofinlanda



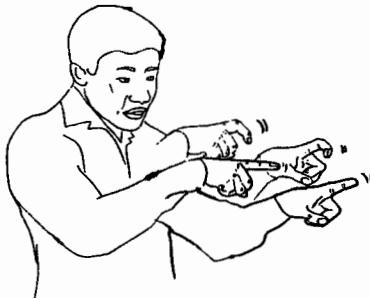
to dig with a pick

okufa nombike



to dig with a pick with difficulty

okufa nombike noudjuu



person/animal follows a person/animal

okushikula, okulandula



little/small

shishona/shinini



banana

ombanana



TV/television

oradio yomudidimbe



to whistle

okwiifana nomwiltwa/okushika omwiltwa



to gossip

okuhokola



hospital

oshihakulilo/oshiipangelo



plate



okayasha



object with the shape indicated by the shape of the movement eg: a car

oule wotuwa, ha omutamo wotuwa



object with a square shape eg: a box, the shape of the movement describes the shape of the object

omutamo woshipakete, ha oule washo



wife (formal sign)

omukulukadi a hombolwa



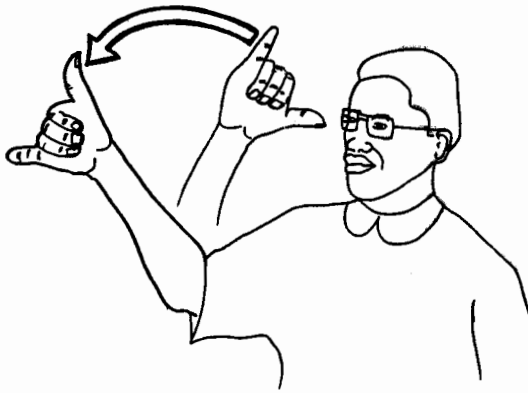
husband (formal sign)

omusamane a hombola



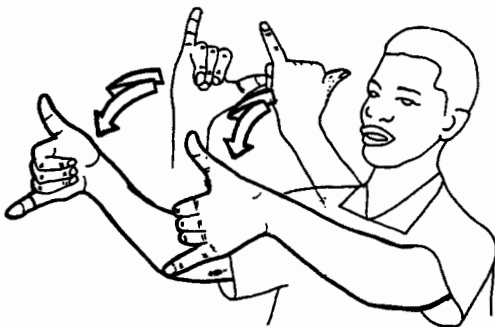
1. Kwanza-sul 2. satan

1. okwanza-sul 2. saatana



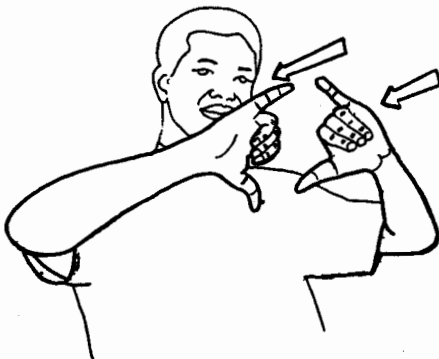
I dislike/reject/hate you, you are bad, this sign is directed towards the person who I dislike/reject/hate

okutalako omunhu nayi



I dislike/reject/hate all of you, you are all bad, the repetitions show that I dislike all of you

okutalako ovanhu aveshe vayi moilonga yavo



person dislikes/rejects/hates me, person thinks that I am bad, this sign is directed towards the person who is disliked/rejected/hated

outondwe/okuhehole/omunhu e tonde nge



aeroplane flies in an upward direction

odila tai tuka shambadalu



bird flies

okadila taka tuka



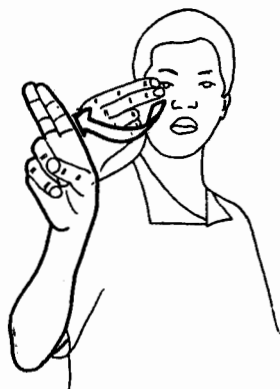
aeroplane lands, to land

okuwila kwodila, okunambela kwodila



aeroplane takes off, to take off

okutukapo, ngaashi odila



to say no to someone

okwaanya/okutinda



pregnant (early:late)

oufimba/eetelelo (okapunda kanini/okupitwa:okukulifa)



I tell you, the sign is directed towards the person who I tell

okulombwela/handi ku lombwele



you tell me, the sign is directed towards the person who is told

ove lombwele nge



this person and I are discussing/meeting, the sign is directed towards the people who are discussing

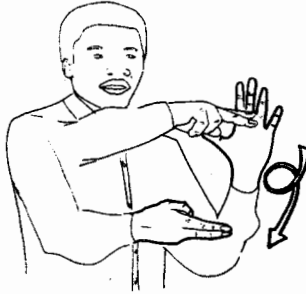
okukundafana/hatu kundafana

Indicating Verbs

okukundafana/hatu kundafana



person falls from tree



omunhu ta u komuti

monkey jumps from branch to branch



munghima ta koloka noitai

to stir with a small/medium sized spoon eg: with a
teaspoon/tablespoon



okupilula nonguto yokulifa, yinini,yopokati ile yakula



Angola



Angola



Tuesday



etivali

to look for an object



okukonga sha

truck with open back/lorry

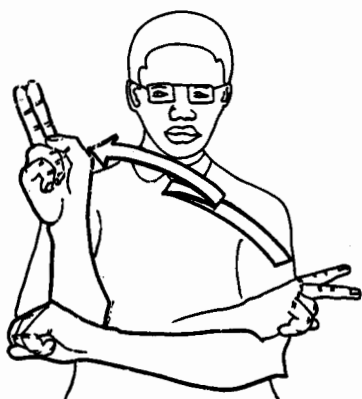


otuwa yekangwa konima



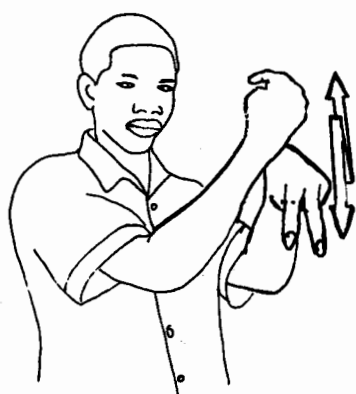
break time

okafudo



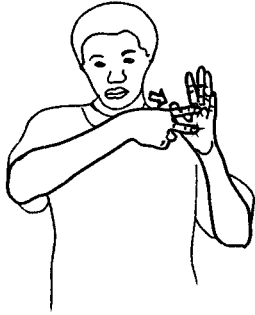
vacation/holiday

efudo



dig with a kind of hoe

okufa netemo



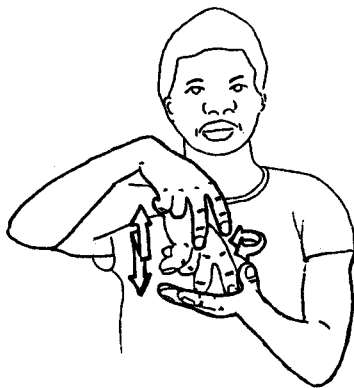
electric plug

opulaka yolusheno



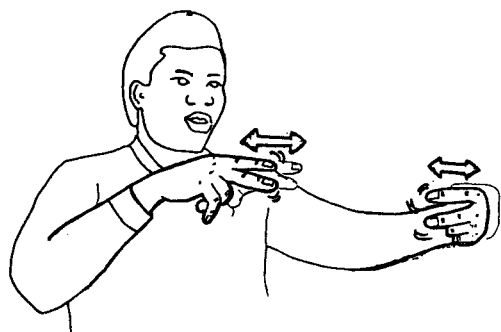
to come

ila



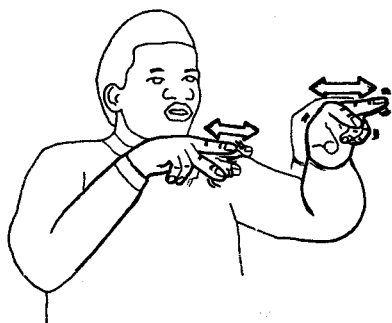
to dance (traditional)

*okudana omaudano wapashiwana ngaashi:
eenghama/omupembe n.sh.t.*



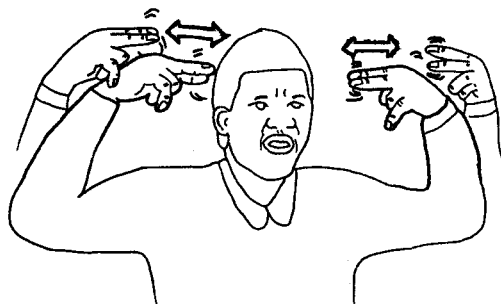
two people argue, the sign is directed towards the person being argued with

ovanhu vavali tava tanguna



'we argue with one or more people, the sign is directed towards the people being argued with

hatu tanguna nomunhu umwe ile ve dulife po



people argue with me from all sides, people pick on me, the sign is directed towards me (the person being argued with)

okutanguninwa nda hangakenwa



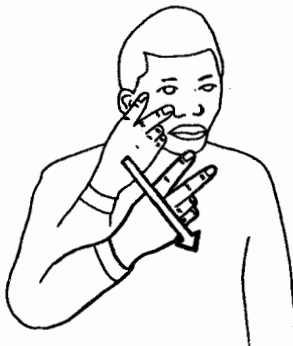
person argues with me, person picks on me, the sign is directed towards me (the person being argued with)

okutombolwa (mokati kovanhu)



to spread rumours/tell many people, the sign is directed towards the people who are told the rumours

okutandavelifa omutoto



to see something, the sign is directed towards whatever is seen

okumona sha

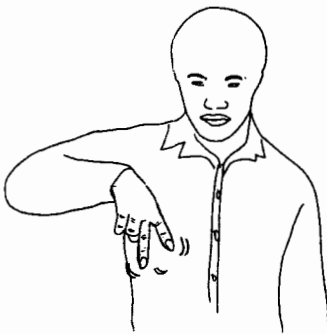


two fruit fall from tree



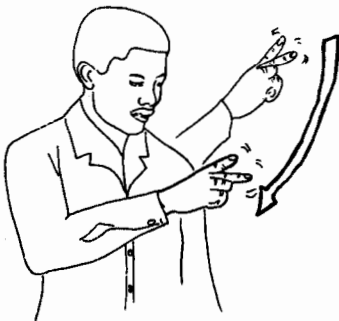
oyimati ivali tayuu komuti

person treads water

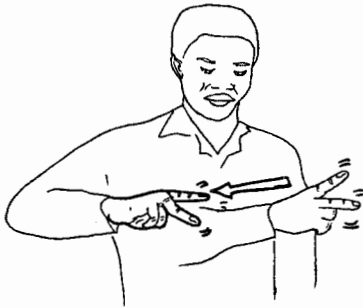


omunhu ta yoo okayumbu

person swims downwards



omunhu tayoo hauka mokule mokati komeva/ta ningine



person swims

okuyowa wakaama kombada yomeva/okukaama



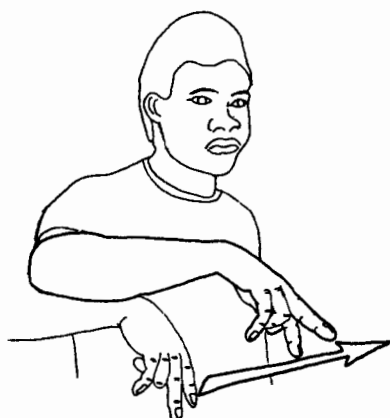
person swims backstroke

omunhu tayoo eli ongali



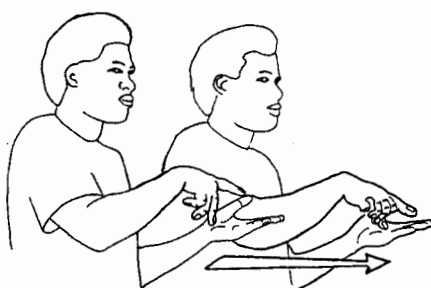
person swims around

omunhu ta yoo ta dingonoka



person/animal walks (informal sign)

omunhu ta ende oshinamwenyo tashi ende



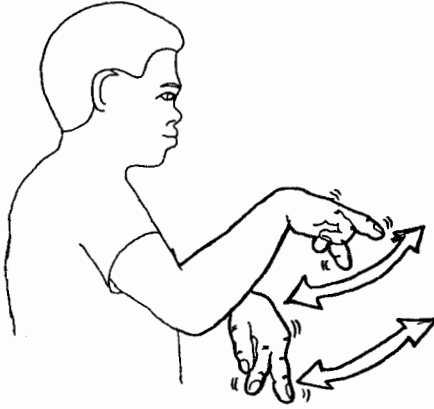
person/animal walks (formal sign)

omunhu ta ende oshinamwenyo tashi ende



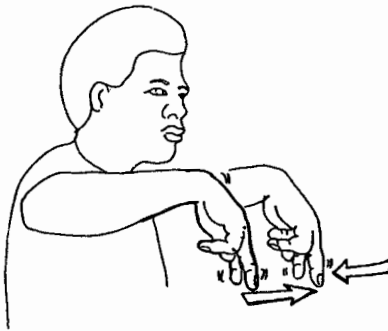
cow walks

ongobe tayi ende



people walk past each other

ovanhu tava pingafana



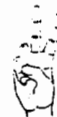
people/animals walk around

ovanhu tava endaenda, oinamwenyo tai endaenda



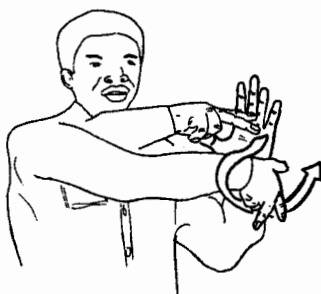
person/animal climbs down tree

omunhu/oshinamwenyo ta (shi) londoloka komuti



person/animal climbs up tree

omunhu/oshinamwenyo ta (shi) londo komuti



monkey swings from one tree to another

munghima ta nuka komuti ndele ta nukile komuti mukwao



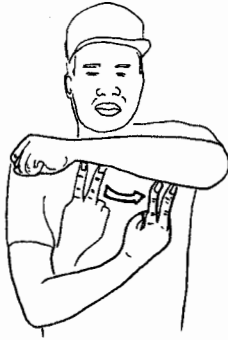
person straddles branch

omunhu te li shiki konghabe yoshiti



person swings from branch

omunhu te li shiki koshitayi



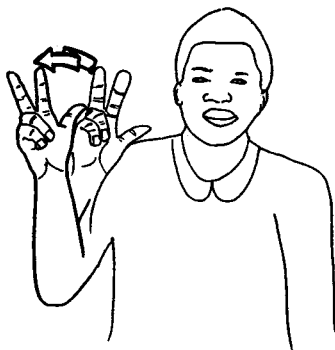
wooden stakes on yoke

outi vondjoko/oishikei



berries from red milkwood tree

eenyandi



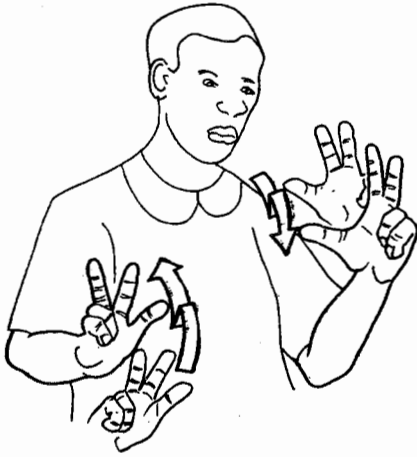
who

olyelye



duck

ombaka



dandy/natty

oufuuli



person who gossips

omunhu haambe/omunhu ha hokola ovanhu



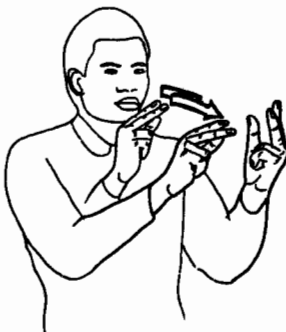
rich

ouyamba



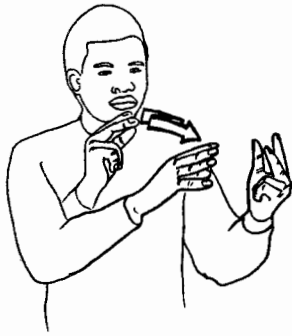
teacher

omuhongi/omulongi



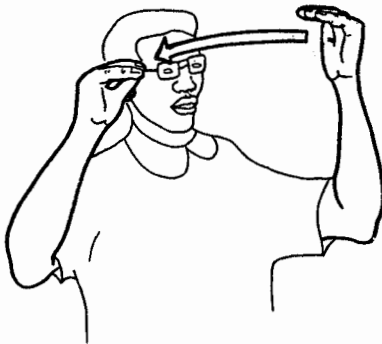
to teach (one person)

okulonga omunhu umwe



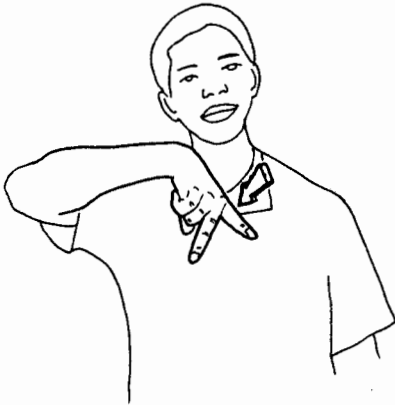
to teach (more than one person)

okulonga ovanhu vedulife puwumwe



school

ofikola



priest

omufita weongala



Kenya

Kenya



again

natango



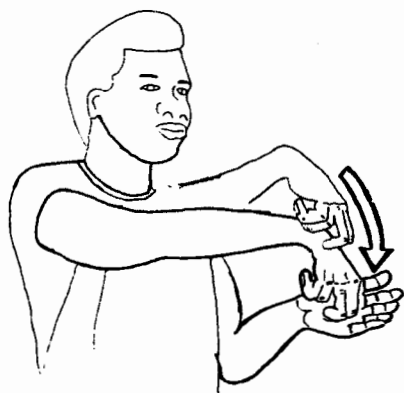
person swims by kicking legs

okuyowa to fangaula omeva nomaulu



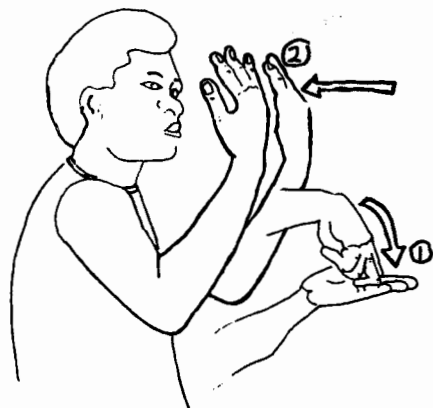
person swims up towards surface

omunhu tajuuka momeva



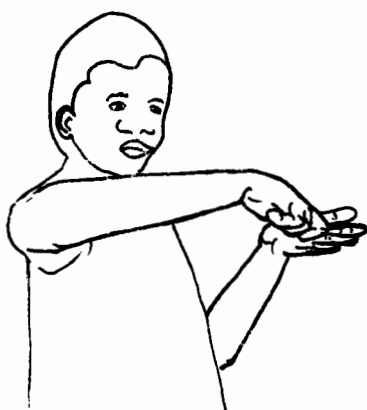
person sits

omunhu eli omutumba



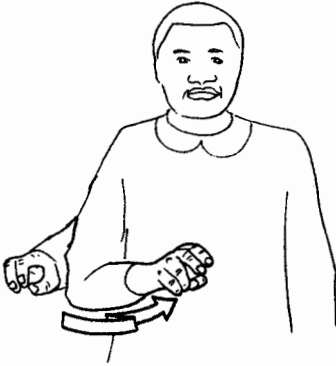
audience sits facing me

ovapwilikini veli omutumba va taalela nge



animal sits

oinamwenyo ili omutyonghe



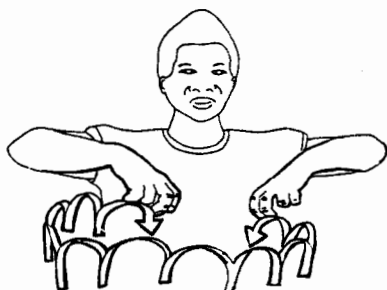
why

molwashike



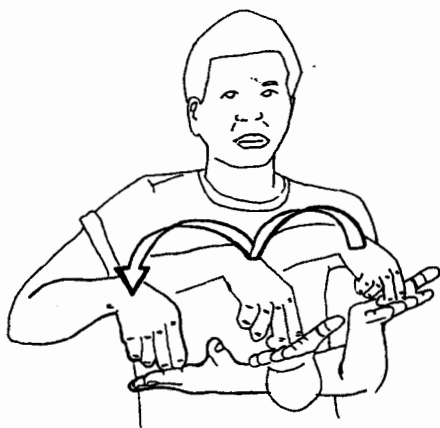
many people sit down (crowd)

ovanhu vahapu veli omutumba mongudu



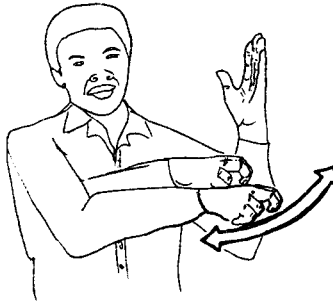
people sit around the table

ovanhu veli omutumba va dingilila oshitaafula



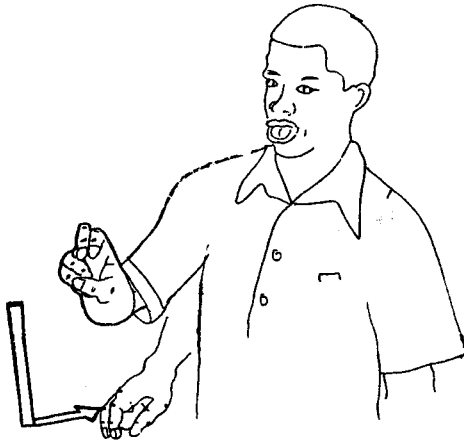
three people sit in a line

ovanhu vatatu veli omutumba momukwenyo



person swings

omunhu te lishiki



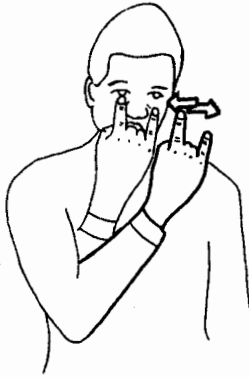
hoe

lima



to dig with a hoe

okufa netemo



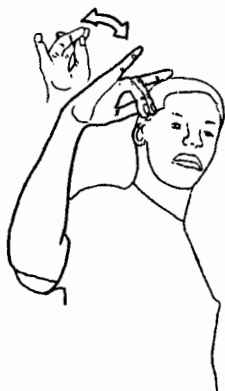
person looks at me carefully, the sign is directed towards the person who is looked at

omunhu ta tale nge/omunhu o tongolola nge



animals

oinamwenyo



giraffe

onduli

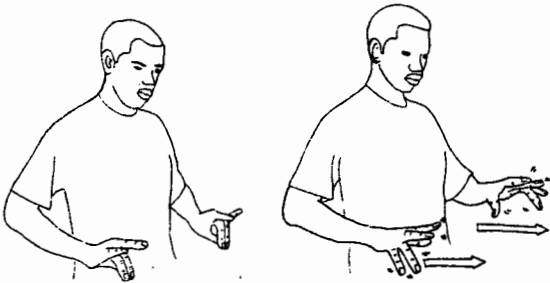


cow

ongobe yodidi

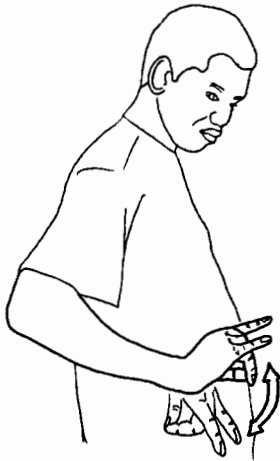


many cows walk



eedidi dihupu tadi ende epambango

calf

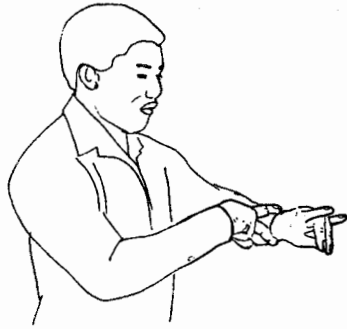


okatana

cow moo's

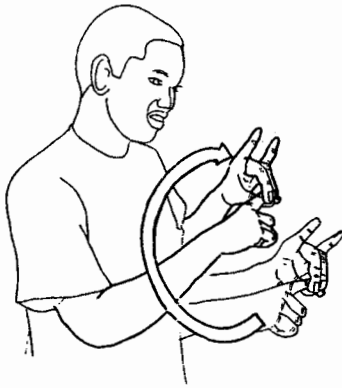


ongobe tai komo ile tai lili



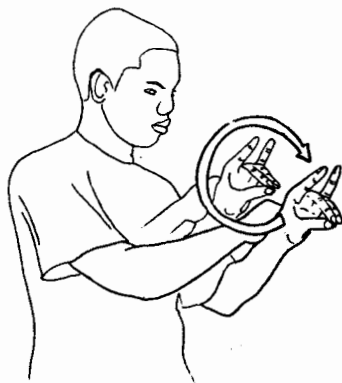
yoke

ondjoko yeengobe



horse

onghambe

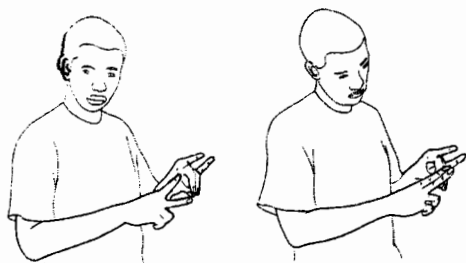


camel

ongamelo

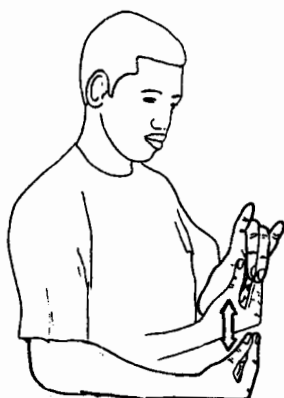


sheep



odi yoshimuna

goat



oshikombo

monkey



lunghima/ondjima/munghima



cat

okambishi



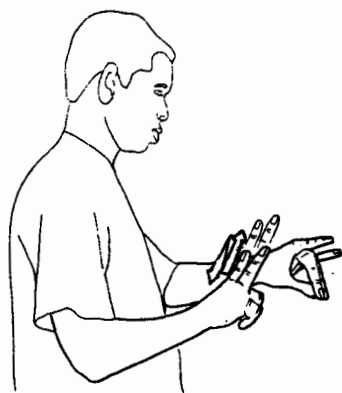
elephant

ondjaba



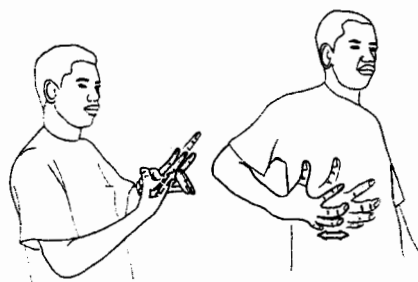
rhino

omhanda



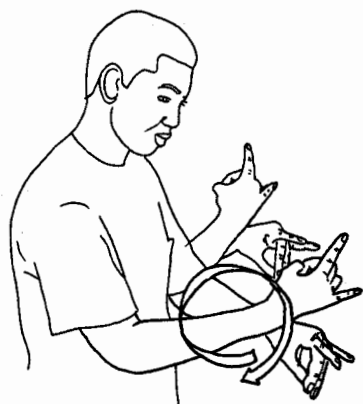
zebra

ongolo yoshinamwenyo



zebra

ongolo yoshinamwenyo



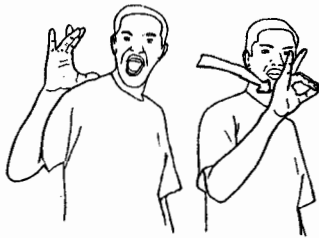
rabbit

okandiba/okalimba



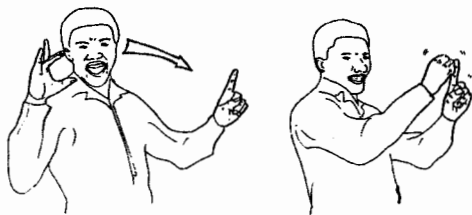
dog

ombwa



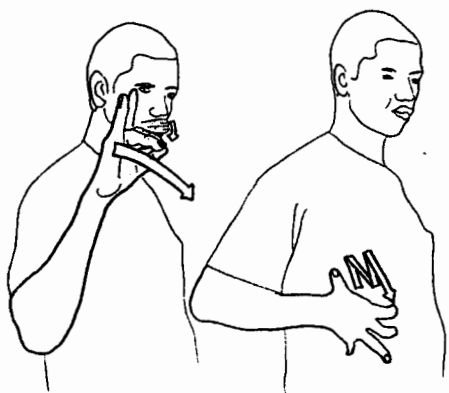
lion

onghoshi



lion catches animal

onghoshi tai kwata oshinamwenyo



leopard

etotongwe



tiger

ongwe

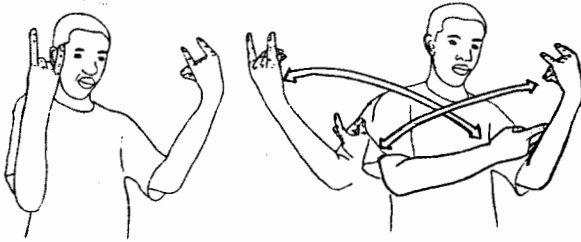


meat

ombelela



fat, strong man/boy



omukulunhu omulumenhu ile okanona e na olutu lwa pama nawa/oshipombolutu



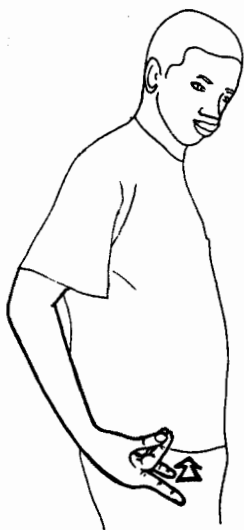
many fat, strong women/girls

omukulukadi ile oukadona ve na omalutu a pama/oipombolutu



person with big chest and stomach

omunhu e na onhulo nedimo lakula



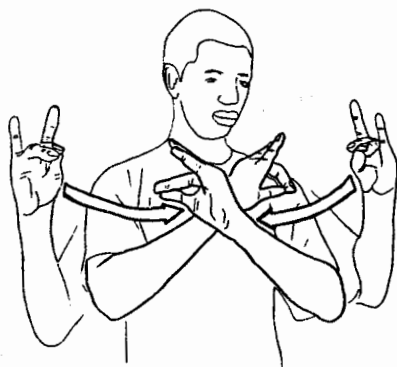
person with big buttocks

omunhu munene koikalo yaye/omunhu e na omatako makula



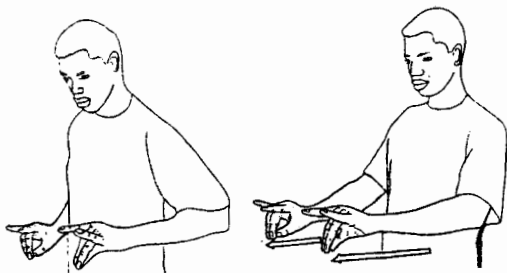
cow eating

ongobe tai li



two cows pass each other

eengobe mbali tadi pingafana

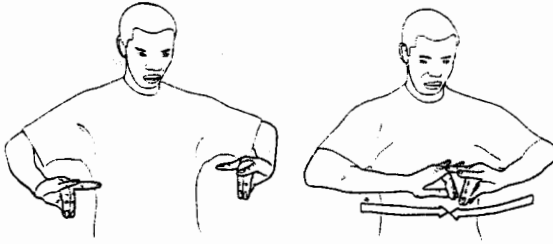


two cows walk along together

eengobe mbali tadi ende pwamwe



cows walk towards each other



eengobe tadi shakene

baby animal suckles from mother

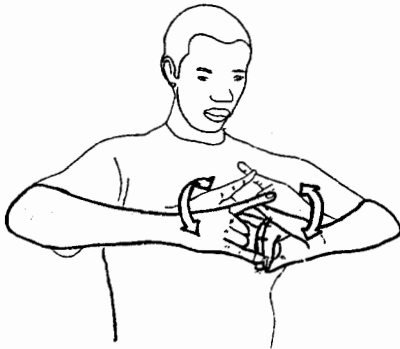


okanimwena taka nyamu

baby animals suckle from mother while she's lying on her side

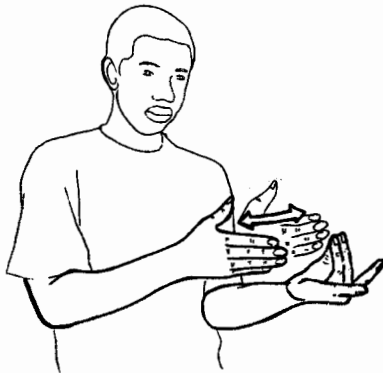


ounimwena tava nyamu manga ina a nangala kolupati



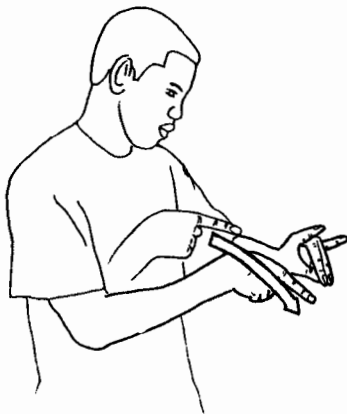
animals fight by interlocking horns

oinamwenyo tai lidenge/tai litu



to cut open animal/butcher animal

okudutula oshinamwenyo/okudipaa oshinamwenyo



to kill a cow with a spear

okutoma odidi neonga



bird lands on cow's back

okadila taka nambele kombuda yongobe (yodidi)



elephant waves trunk

ondjaba tai nipi omukati



Wednesday

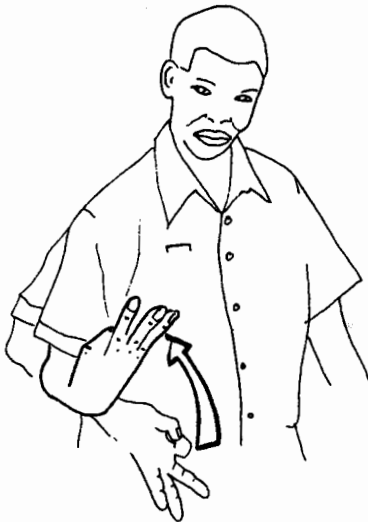


etitatu



to dig with a fork

okufa nolukoolo



to pick up grass with a fork

okufindula omwiidi nolukoolo



Namibia/map of Namibia

Namibia/okaalita kaNamibia



naughty

oupote/oufifiti



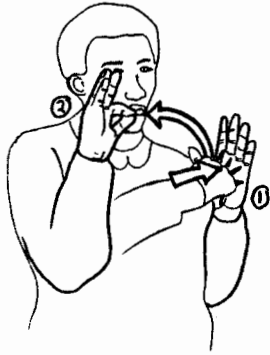
1. man 2. Ovamboland 3. snuff

1. omusamane 2. Ovamboland 3. ofenya



tea

otee



herbal tea

oimbodi yotee



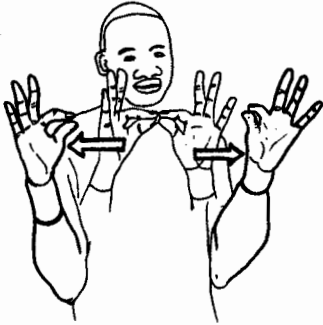
to drink tea

nwa otee



to stir tea with a teaspoon

pilula otee nokanguto kashona/nokanguto kotee



stick

oshiti/okati



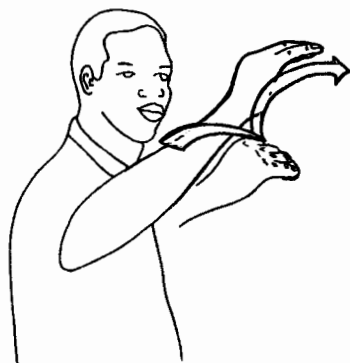
hello

okupopifa/haloo



to look for

konga



later

komesho/konale



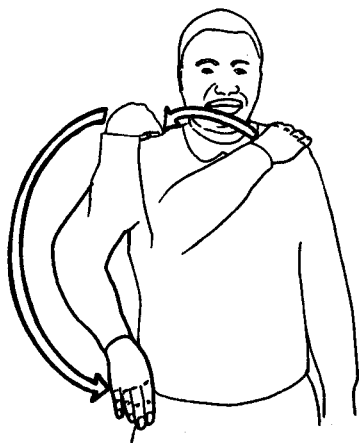
to report/inform on someone

okushitongako/okulopota/okulyako omunhu mukwao



brother/sister

omumwameme-muti ile omumwameme-ka-dona



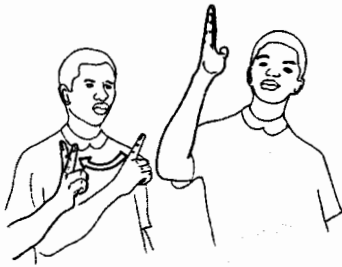
chairperson

omunashipundi



chair

oshipundi



noon

pokati komutenya/etango lili pokati komutwe

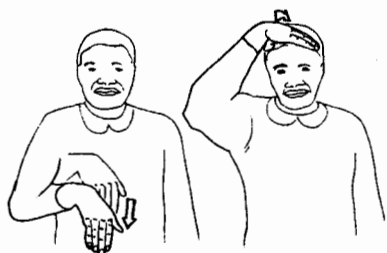


South America

South America/Amelika yokouninginino

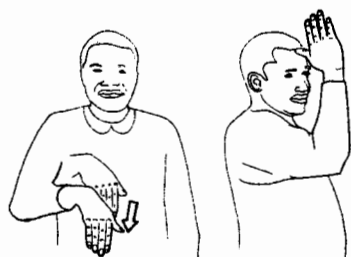


South Africa (of the African National Congress)



South Africa

South Africa (of the Afrikaners/Boers)



South Africa

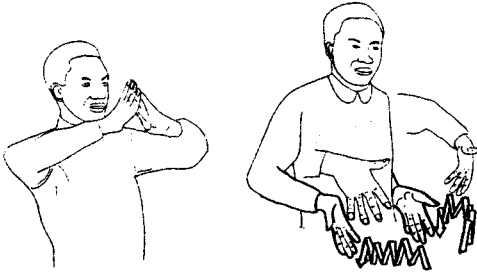
house



eumbo

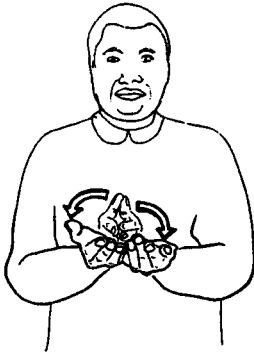


traditional home



eumbo lomiti

book

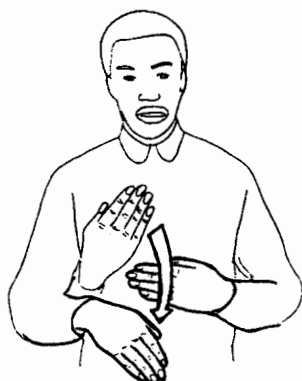


embo

finish [note: used to mark the completion of a major idea]



sha pwa/ofilu/okupwa/okumana



finish [note: used to mark the completion of a major idea]

ofilu/upwa/mana



happy

okuuda nawa kwokomwenyo/okuhafa



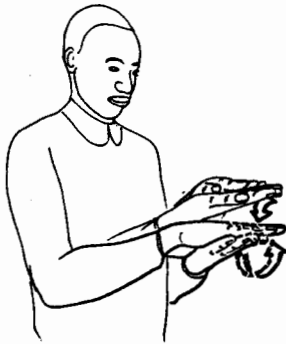
unhappy

okuhena ehafo/okuuda nai kwokomweny



come/come from

okuuya/okudja/ila



to pack

longela oinima



to enter

okuyamo/ilamo



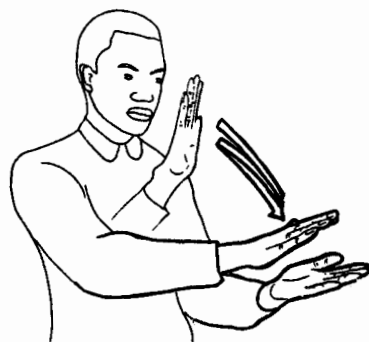
wall

ekuma



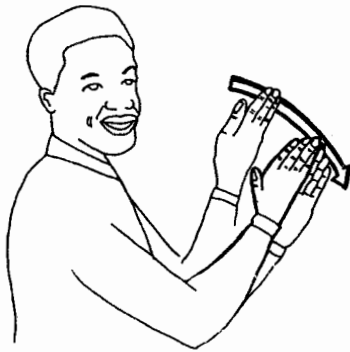
floor

olukolongo



to stay

kala



to run away because of being afraid to fight

okufadukapo wa tila olwoodi/wa tewa kumukweni



open

uyuuluka/egulula



close

lidila/tuvika



before (in relation to someone or something)

fimbo/manga



before/long ago

malenale/tetetete



Botswana

Botswana/Oshawana

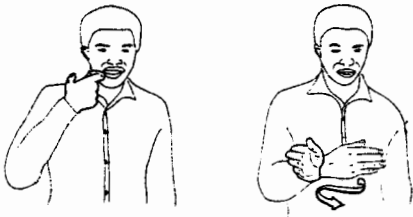


to send greetings to another person, the sign is directed towards the person who is greeted

okulombwela omunhu e mu popife/popifilepo



fish swims



oshi tai yoo

to chop with a machete



okuka nekatana/ka nekatana

to dig with a spade

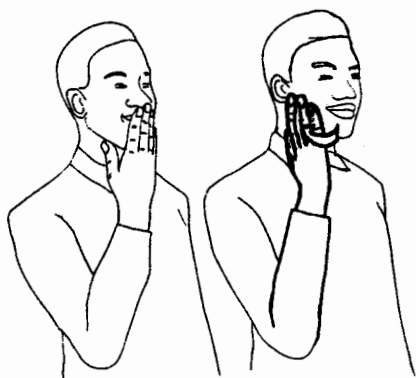


okufa noshihupulo/fula noshixupulo



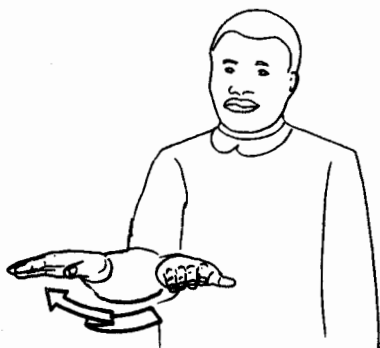
spade picks up ground from heap and lifts it onto truck

okuxupila edu moshihauto



deaf

ombolo



when

onaini/unake



where

openi



Zambia

Zambia/Ozambia



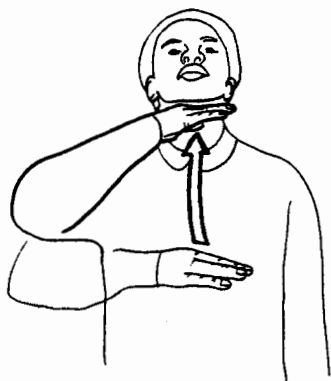
movie/film

okino



sort of/more or less

shilingoo ngaho/haso naana



full/satisfied

okuyada/okukuta



SWAPO

ehangano la Namibia/OSWAPO



to forget

dhimbwa



you (plural)/all of you

amushe/ne amuhe



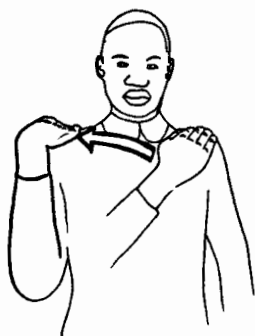
to like

okuhokwa/ohokwe



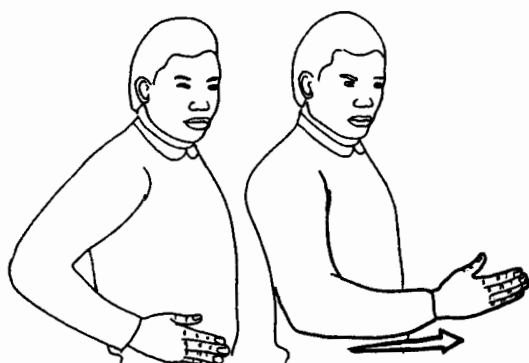
to love

ohole/okuhola



leader/commander

wovakwaita/omuwiliki omukulunhu



to want

okuhala



hungry

okufyondjala



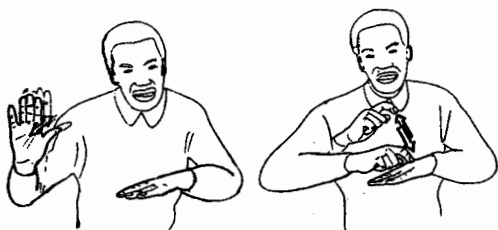
to wait

tegelela



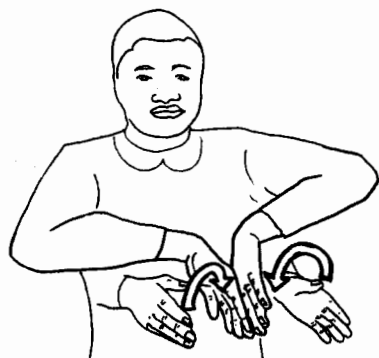
to wait for a while/a long time

teelela manga/teelela efimbo lile



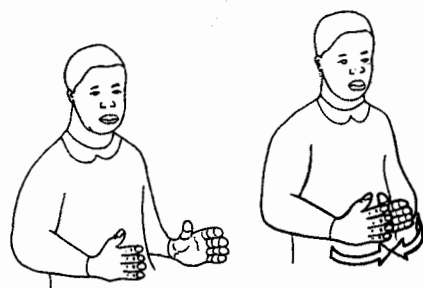
to wait for a short time

teelela efimbo lixupi



how

ngahelipi/ngiini



extended family/relatives

edimo ile epata



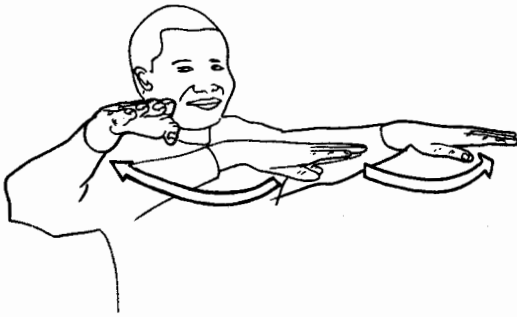
organization

ehangano



Angola

Angola/Oangola



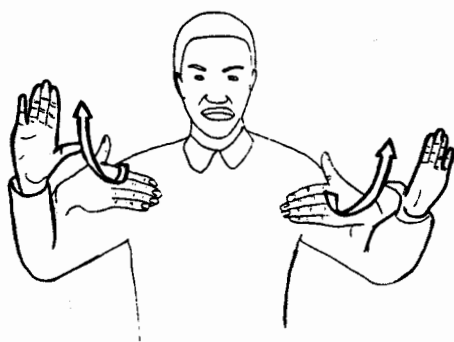
shelf

eelaye



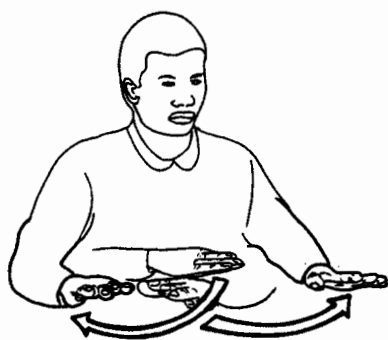
volleyball

etanga lokeenyalala



finish [note: used to mark the completion of a major idea]

sha pwa/ofilu/mana



free

manguluka/mangulula

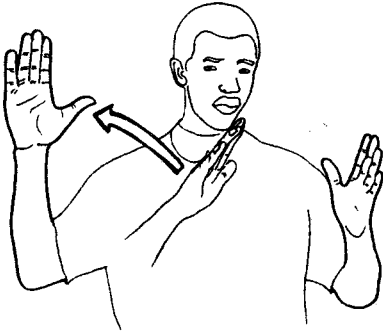


a lot/very

shihapu/ unene



very loud noise



eweelero lihapu unene/ la pitilila

job

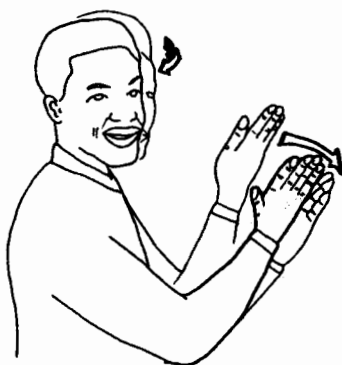


oilonga

traditional doctor who diagnoses problem

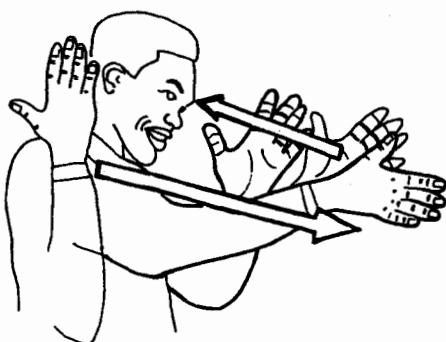


onganga/omunyanekeli



you can't beat that

ito piti/ito dulu oku shi ninga



someone ran away

okutya sha kwaau a tadukapo (okufindwa ngaashi)



pages

omopandja



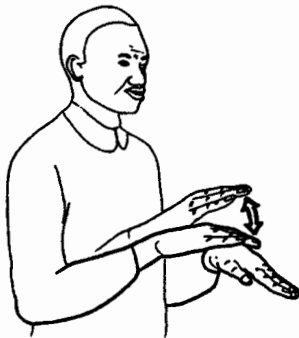
same

shelifa/faafana



also

oshoyo/ngaashiyo



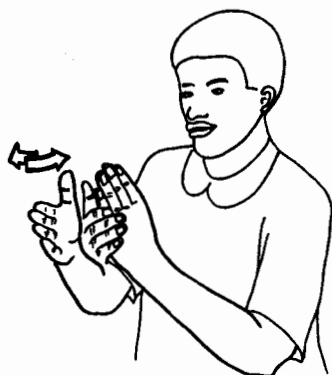
example

oshiholelwa/oshihopalelwa



to help

ekwafo



door

omuvelo



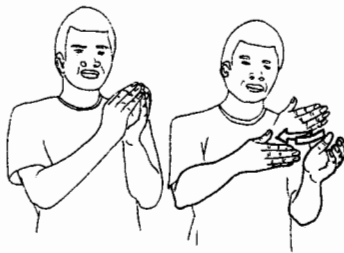
to close a door

idila omuvelo/edhila omweelo



to open a door

yuulula omuvelo/egulula omweelo



pawpaw

epapaye

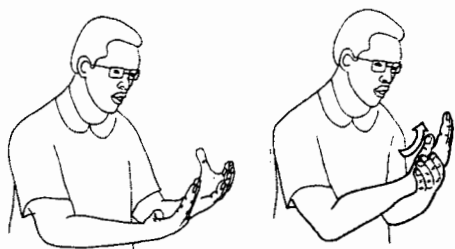


vaseline

ovaseline omaadi okuvava



new



shipe

old



kulupa

elder



omukulunhu kedalo (melandulafano)



young

okanona kedalo/omunyasha



selfish

okulihola ove mwene/ouluva



Europe

Europe



thank you

iyaloo



thank you

iyaloo/okupandula



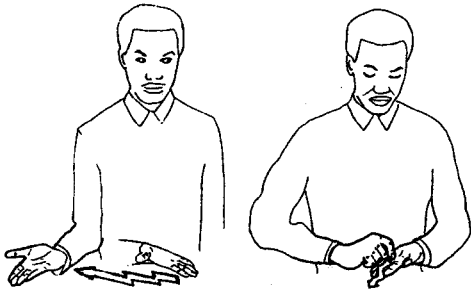
to sleep

okukofa/eemofi



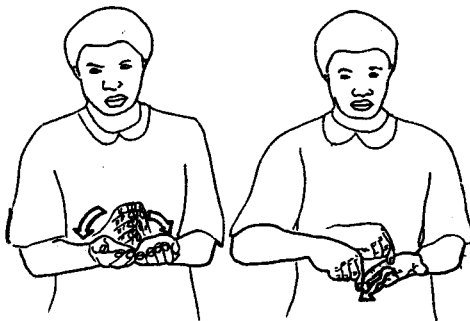
sofa

etyofa/oshipundi shipu shokuyaamena



paper

ombapila

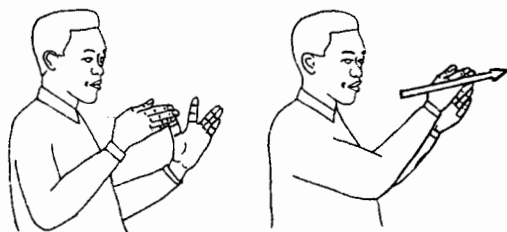


exercise book

eshifo shokunyolwa

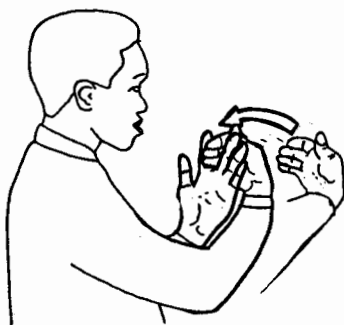


through, the sign indicates the direction in which the object/person is moving through something



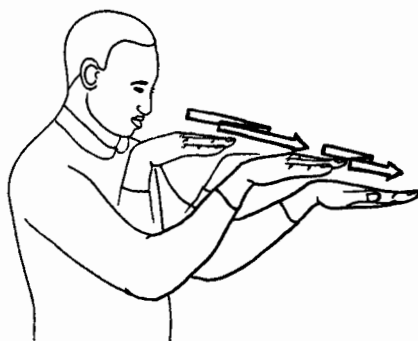
okupitila

through, the sign indicates the direction in which the object/person is moving through something



okupitila

I teach you, the sign is directed towards the person who is taught



okuhonga ofikola ile keshe tuu



animal grows taller [note: the height of the hand indicates the height of the animal]

okukula kwoshinamwenyo omufika tau i pombada



to carry large container on head

okuhumbata oshinima shakula komutwe



to carry small container on head

okuhumbata sha shinini komutwe



to pick up and put curved container on head eg: clay pot or basket

okuhumbata komutwe evela/oshitoo nosho tuu



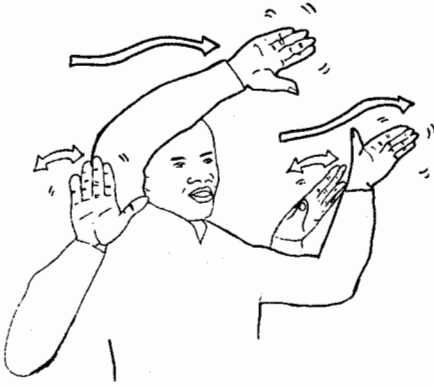
fish swims

oshi tayi ende momeva/oshi tai yoo



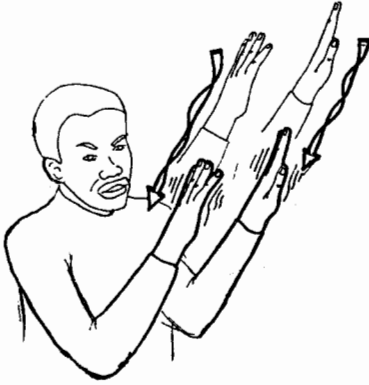
bird flies

okadila taka tuka



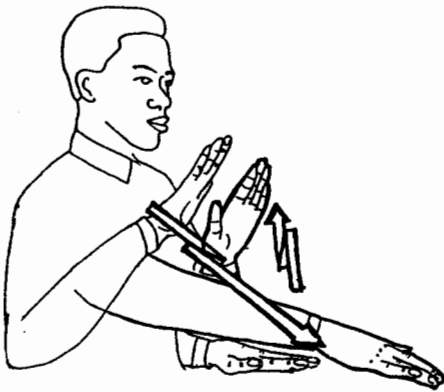
many birds fly

oudila vahapu tava tuka



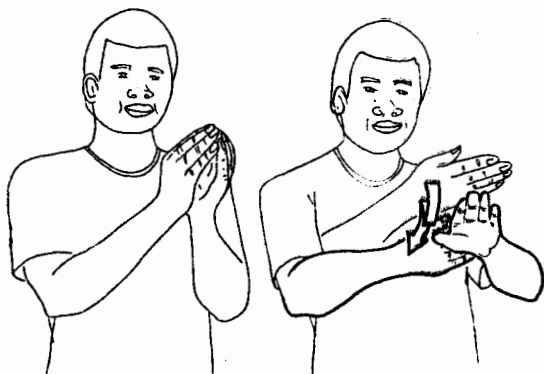
to rain heavily

odula tayi diinine



person walks

omunhu ta ende



to peel a pawpaw

okuyuuna epapaye

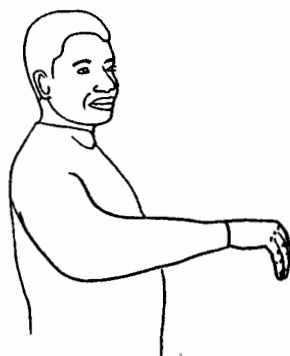


chair



oshipundi

table



oshitaafula

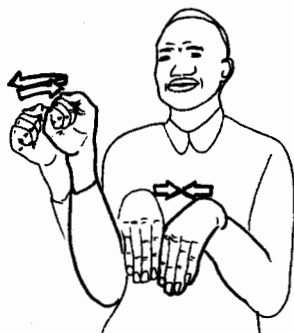
1. to make/create 2. to do



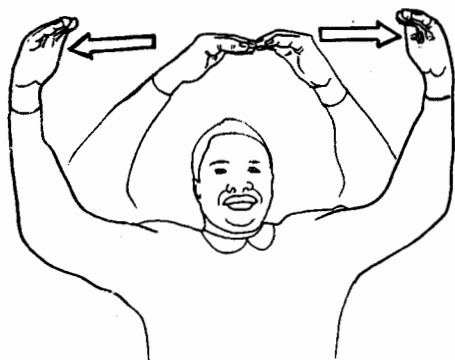
1. *okuninga kwoshilonga* 2. *okushita*



what are you doing?



oto ningi shike?



ceiling

onhala

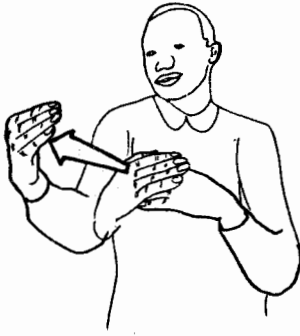


near

popepi



far



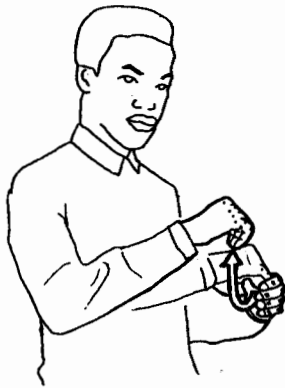
kokule

money



oimaliwa

wooden pounding block/mortar for stamping
corn/millet



oshini



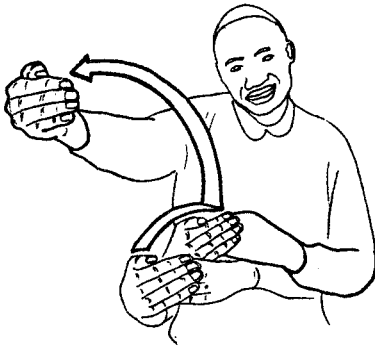
office

ombelewa



to hide

holama/hondama



the location of the hands indicates the location of one place in relation to another eg: one person lives here and another lives over there

okupukulula omunhu onhele



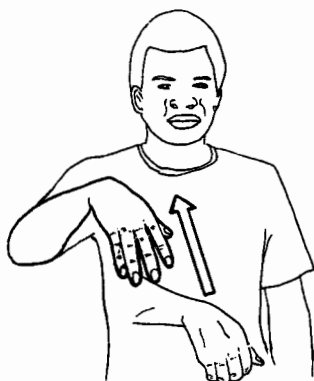
to chop with an axe

okuka nekuva/keka nekuya



vehicle with a short bonnet, if the hands moved out further before moving vertically down, it would show a vehicle with a longer bonnet

nghene to ulike omutamo, oule nolumbubu lwoshihautu



to take the cooking oil from the wooden pounding block where kernels of marula fruit are ground into oil

okutapa odjove koshini



Saturday

olomakaya



to know

okushivasha



don't know

okushivasha/okwaatseyashi



nothing

kapenasha



to eat

okulya



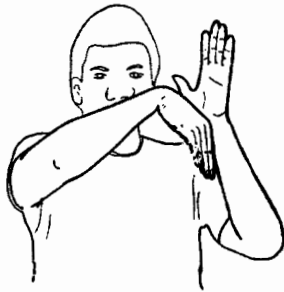
natural fruit from indigenous tree

eenghwiyu



fruit

oshiyimati/oshiimati



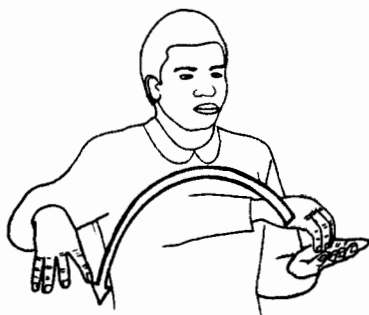
fruit

oshiyimati/oshiimati



to put

okutula/tula



to take/subtract

kufapo/kufamo



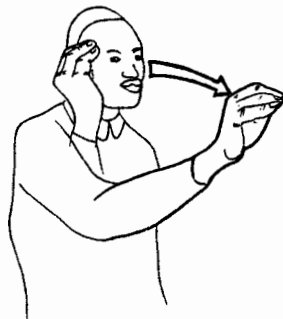
poor

oluhepo/okuhepa



you teach me, the sign is directed towards me (the person who is taught)

okuhongwallonga ndje



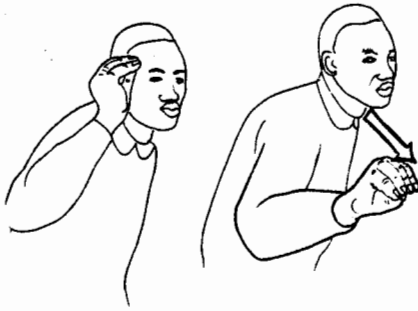
you don't know anything, the sign is directed towards you (the person who doesn't know anything)

ove kushiisha/ino tseyasha



I don't know anything, the sign is directed towards me (the person who doesn't know anything)

ame kandishishalinandi tseyasha



she/he doesn't know anything, the sign is directed towards the person who doesn't know anything

ye keshiisha



I have nothing, the sign is directed towards me, the person who has nothing

ame nghinasha/kandinasha

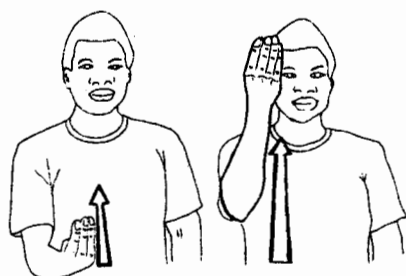


I don't know any sign, [note: could also mean
"doesn't know how to write"]

ame kandishishi edidiliko lasha

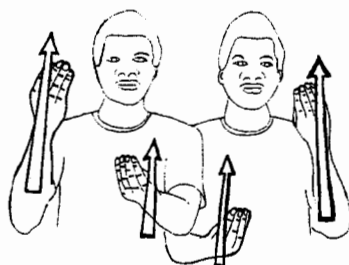


child grows up



okanona taka koko/okaana taka kulu

many children grow up



ounona tava kulu/aanona taa koko

young grain plants grow [note: the height of the hands indicates the height of the grain and the distance between the hands indicates the length of the row]

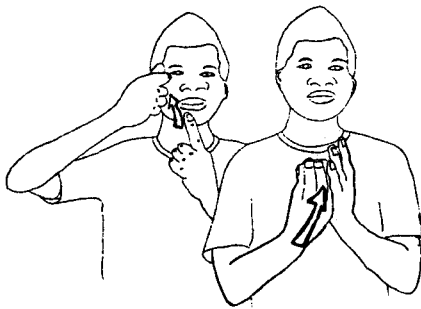


oilya tai kululiiya tayi koko



row of plants grow taller [note: the height of the hands indicates the medium height of the plants and the distance between the hands indicates the length of the row]

oilya tai kulu nawa



millet grows

oilya tai kulu



bad

owii/uuwinayi



history/story

ondjokonona/ehokololo



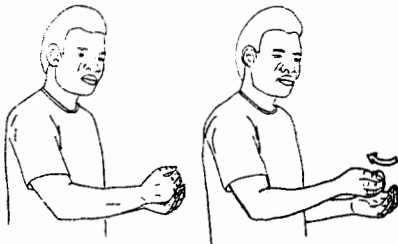
cooking oil made from kernels of marula fruit

odjove



to scoop marula oil from wooden pounding block/mortar with clay cup

okupinda ondjove koshini



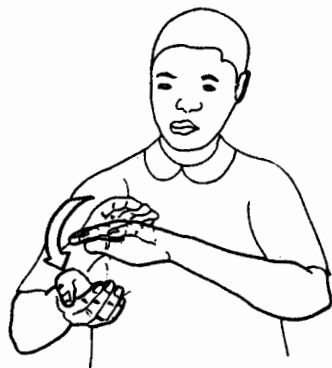
cooking fat/butter

omaadi okulya



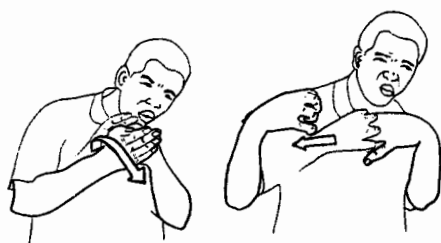
to arrive

okufika



late at night/a dark night

kwatoka/oufiku kwalaula



night

oufiku/uusiku



elephant waves trunk

ondjaba tai nipi omukati



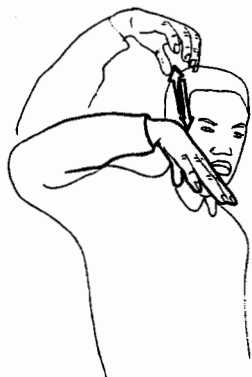
to collect millet, use hand to sweep into container

okwoongela, okuyukila ile okukombelela oilya moshikwatelwa



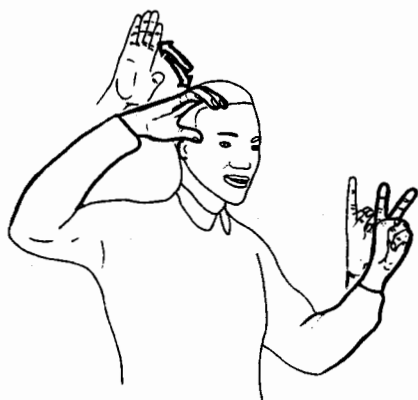
month

ohani/omwedi



year

odula/omuvo



to stay eg: stay for years

okukala: okukala eedula



friend

kaume/kuume



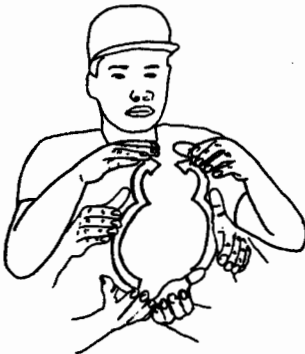
to catch a person

okukwata omunhu



clay pot, object with a rounded surface

omutungilo ngaashi oshitowo/olumbubu lwoshitoo



gourd for storing traditional beer/milk, object with a rounded surface

nghee toudike omutungilo u li ongonga ngaashi oxupa, oshikola ile oshitoo



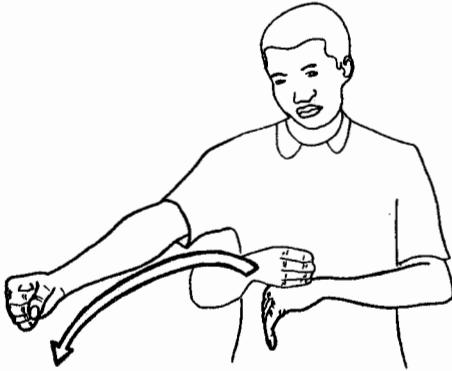
to pick up round container and drink from it

okunwa omukongho/okuyandja ile okutumba oshikwatelwa shinasha ngaashi oshikola ile oshitoo



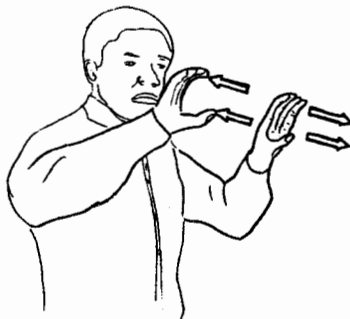
to drink from a cup

okunwa mokakopi



to move/take cup

kufapo okakopi/ekopi



yoke, object with a rounded, broad surface [note: the distance between the thumb and the fingers indicates that it is of medium width]

ounene/wondjoko



person climbs tree

omunhu ta londo komuti



to pound with stick

okutwa nomushi



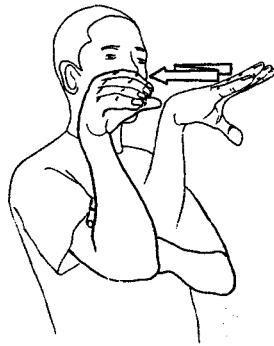
to carry curved object on shoulder

okuhumbata kepepe



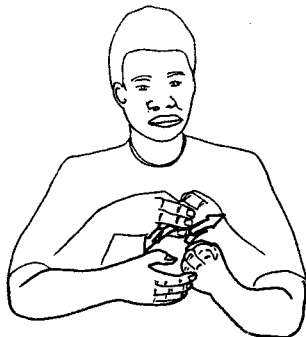
to pour edible grain from curved container into large grain storage basket

okutula/okutula ile okututula oilya mokaanda



elephant uses trunk to pick up scent of quarry

ondjaba tai fimbula nomukati wayo



to peel lime/orange/lemon

okuyuuna ongongo,elamuna ile elalandje



year

omudo/odula/omvula



morning (informal sign)

ongula



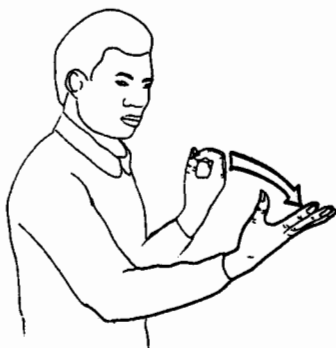
light is on

okutema olamba, otoshe/olusheno



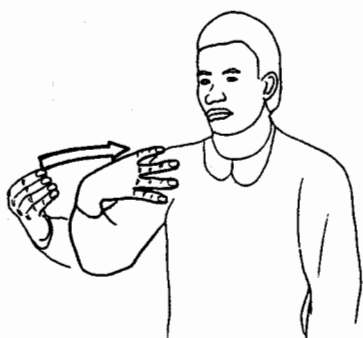
many

shihapu/oshindji



I give a present to you, the sign is directed towards the person who is given a present

ohandi kupe omaano



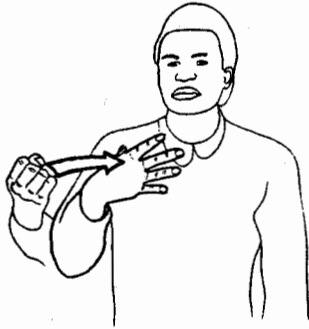
you give a present to me, the sign is directed towards me (I am given a present)

owa pa nge omuano/owa pendje omagano



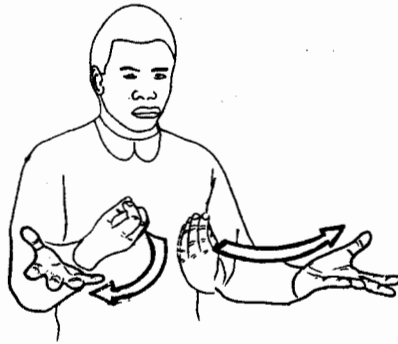
you give something to me, the sign is directed towards me (I am given something) [note: later I return it]

ove owapange sha/ okuyandja sha



he/she gives something to me, the sign is directed towards me (I am given something) [note: later I return it]

ye okwapange sha



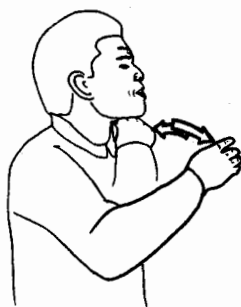
I give something to them, the sign is directed in an arc towards them (they are given something) [note: later they return it]

okuyandja oshinima konima ve shi alule



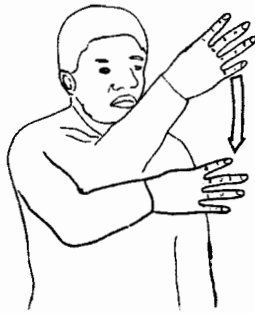
Thursday

etine



lousy

shii/itashi hokwifa

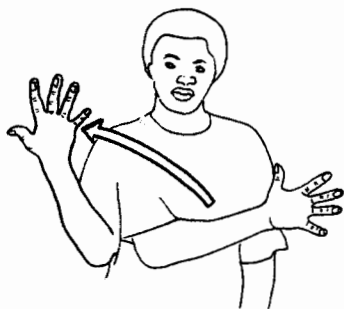


four fruit fall from tree

oyiimati ine tai u komuti



Friday



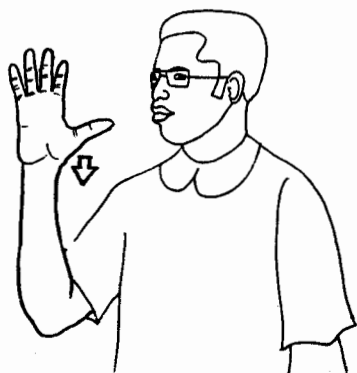
etitano

week

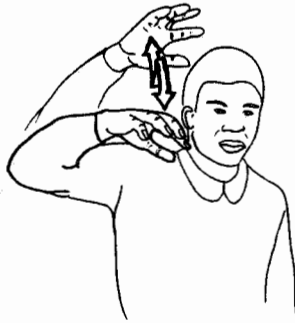
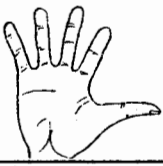


oshivike/oshiwike

tree



omuti



to rain

odula/omvula



to rain

odula/omvula



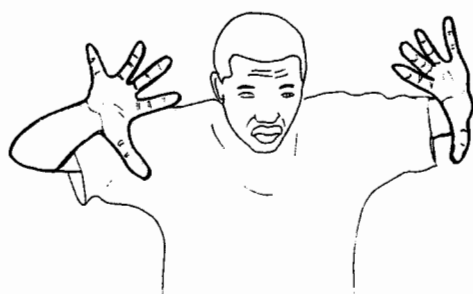
angry

okuhanduka/okugeya



fingerspelling

okushanga kokeenyala/eshango lomomhepo



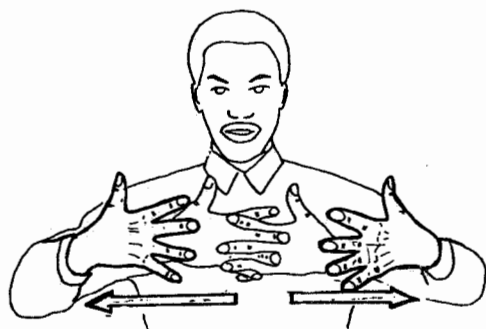
kind of buck (branched antlers)

oludi lweenyati



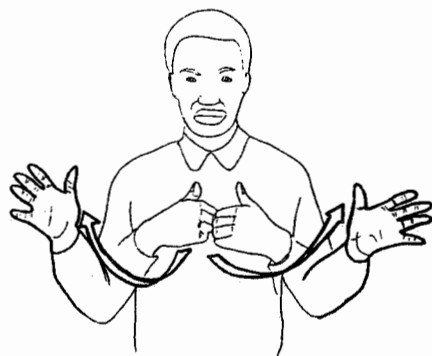
clothes

oikutu



border

onhaua



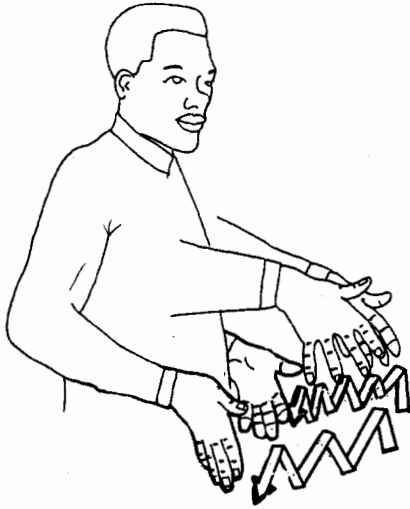
finish [note: used to mark the completion of a major idea]

shapwa



sign language/to sign

okuudika kwokeenya



traditional house/home

eumbo lomiti



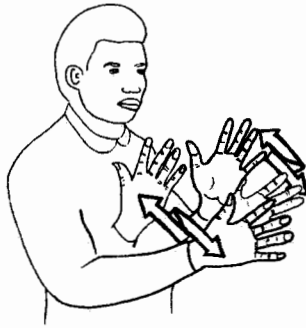
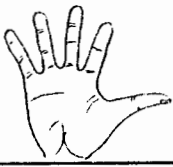
farm

epya/ofaalama



big farm

epya ile ofaalama yakula



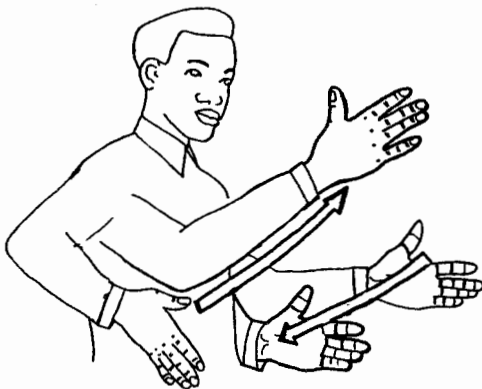
work/to work

okulonga/oilonga



what work are you doing?

oholongo shike?/oilonga yoye oyashike?



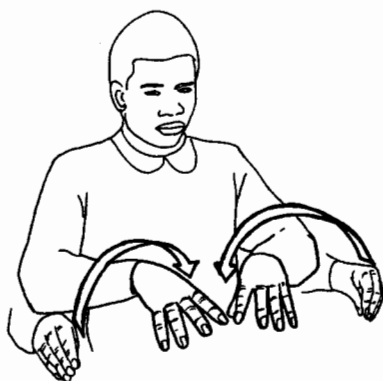
to run away

okufadukapo



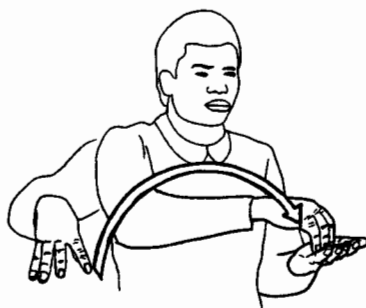
light is off

okudima/ouyelele wa dima



to put/add

tulapo/wedamo



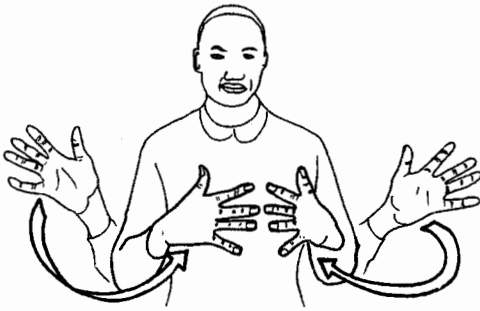
to put/add

tulapo/wedamo



to work (plural) eg: many people work in different places

okulonga oilonga ilili nokulili



people gather in one place

okwoongala ponhele imwe



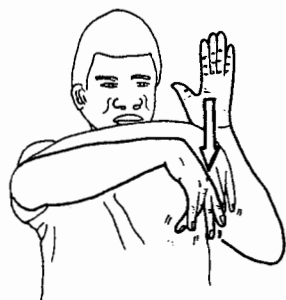
to rain lightly

odula tai nyanyangele



insect climbs up tree

okapuka taka londo

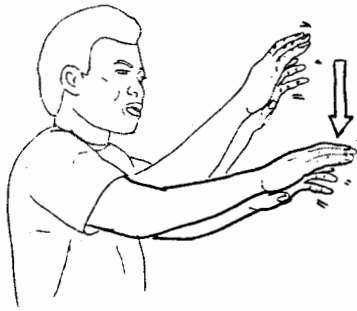


fruit falls from tree

oyiimati tai u komuti

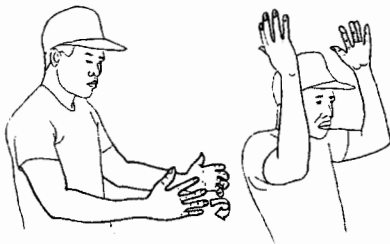


fruit falls from marula tree



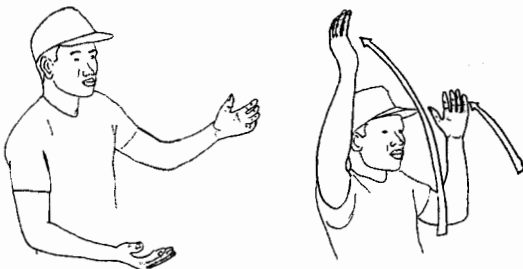
eengongo ta di u komwoongo/omwoongo tau umbu

to put curved container on head



okutumbila sha komutwe noku shi humbata

to pick up very large curved container and place on head



okutumbila sha shinene komutwe



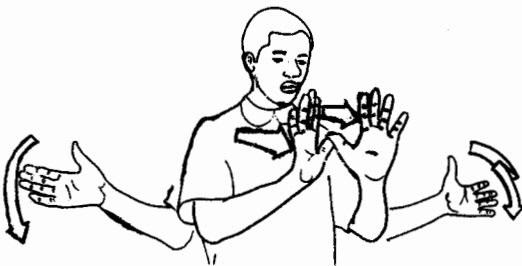
ground [note: the flat handshape indicates the broadness of the surface, the straight movement indicates that it is flat]

edulalalakana



animals walk

oinamwenyo tai ende



herder brings cattle to a stop

omafitangobe a fikameka/kanghameka eengobe



people walk in a line

ovanhu tava ende veli momukweyo



animals walk in line

oinamwenyo ya twa omhola



convoy of trucks/many trucks

okanivoi/olweendo loituwa ihapu la longekidwa owina



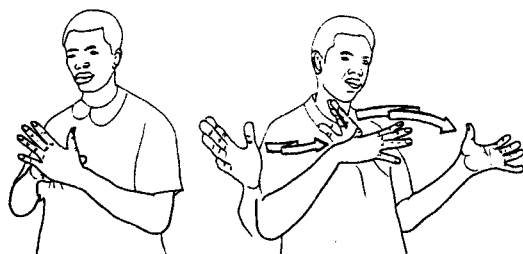
cow path/road, the movement of the hands describes the width and shape of the path/road

oluvanda ile/oshinghoti sheedidi



waves in the water

omakufikufi



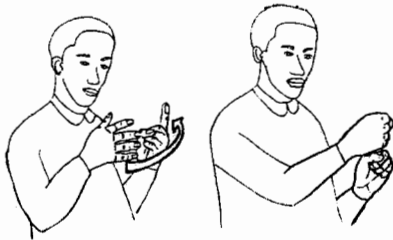
wind blows through grass

omwiidi tau pepwa komhepo



all students progress at same rate [note: the height of both hands are the same, indicating the same rate of progress]

aveshe va pita nonghatu imwe



to catch a person

okukwata omunhu

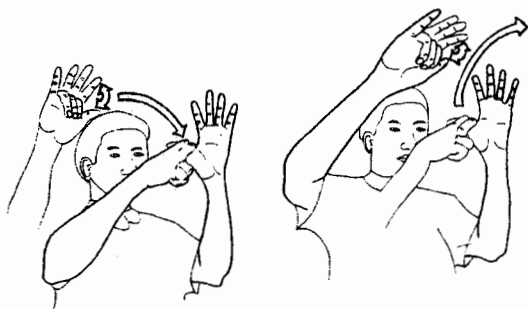


to catch a person

okukwata omunhu



bird lands in tree and flies away



okadila ka wila komuti ndele taka tuka ko



berries from red milkwood tree

eenyandi



to make something from clay

okuma sha nedu/monhata



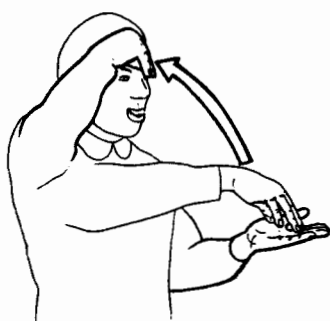
leader/queen/king

omuleli/ohamba yomukainhu/ohamba yomulumenhu



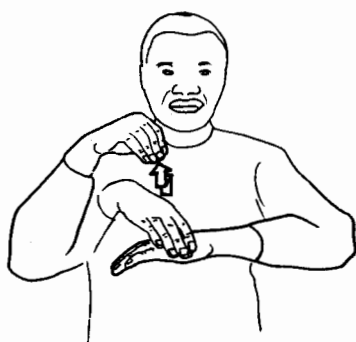
president

omulele woshilongo



to learn

lihonga/lilonga

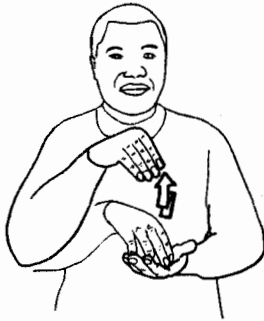


Sweden

Sweden/Oswedeni

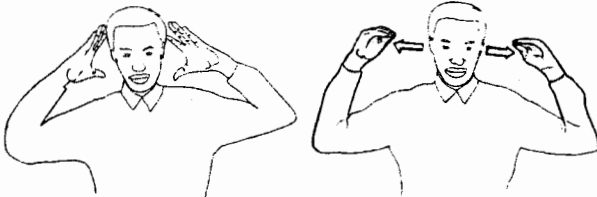


flour/warehouse



oufila/elimba lokutuvikila

to become deaf



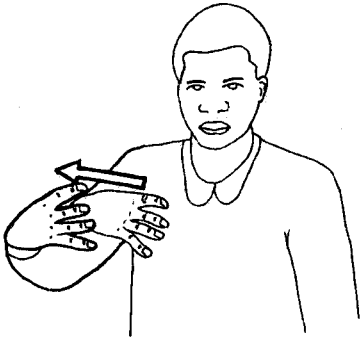
okuninga ombolo



two people talk to each other, the sign is directed to the people who are spoken to



ovanhu vavali tava popi



rich

ouyamba



rake

oshihalaka/olukoolo



row of flowers grow [note: the height of the hand indicates the height of the flowers and the number of repetitions of the sign indicates the length of the row]

omukweyo mule weengala



to rake

okuhalaka/okukoola



to rake with difficulty

okuhalaka neenghono/okukoola noudjuu



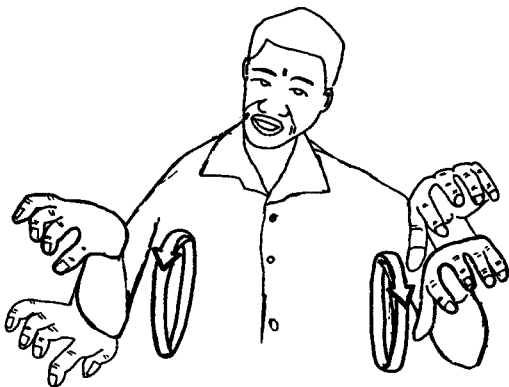
to rake carefully

okuhalaka noukeka/koola nawa-nawa



many people rake together in a long line

ovanhu vahapu ta vahalaka ve li epala londjaba



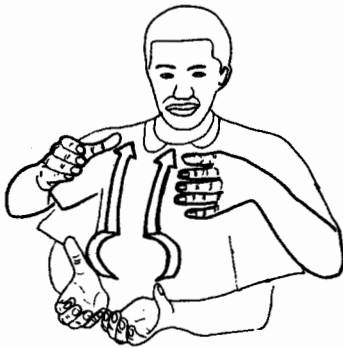
cat's paws move (pounce/climb/run)

omakasha okambishi (taa nuka/londo/tondoka)



to shake basket so waste from millet blows away on wind

okuyela oilya



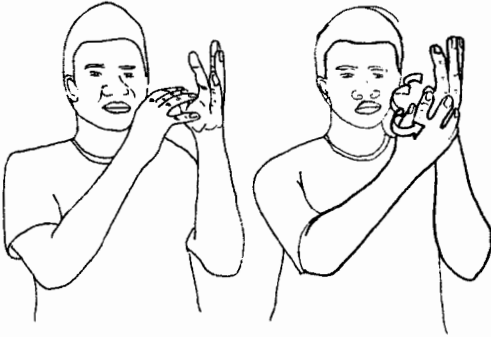
to drink from a tall container eg: carton

okunwa mokahalasha



to make oil from kernels of marula fruit using carved wooden implement which is held by both hands and twisted

okuyenga odjove



tree laden with fruit

omuti wa ima nawajinene



watermelon

ekanuwa/enuwa



snake slithers along

eyoka tali lipweda

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