

**TRANSLANGUAGING IN DEAF COLLEGE STUDENTS:
A DISCURSIVE ETHNOGRAPHY IN NORTHERN ENGLAND**

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Abbreviations

ASL = American Sign Language

BDA = British Deaf Association

Bi-Bi = Bilingual Bicultural

BSL = British Sign Language

CALP = Cognitive Analytic Linguistic Proficiency

CRPD = Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disability

CSW = Communication support Worker

DWP = Department for Work and Pensions

FE = Further Education

GCSE = General Certificate of Secondary Education

ICF = International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

JCIH = Joint Committee on Infant Hearing

LASER = Language of Sign as an Educational Resource

LSCh = Lengua de señas chilena [Chilean Sign Language]

NDCS = National Deaf Children's Society

NHSP = New-born hearing screening programme

SLPs = Sign Language Peoples

SSE = Sign Supported English

UKIM = United Kingdom Independent Mechanism

UN = United Nations

UNCRPD = UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UPIAS = Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation

WFD = World Federation of the Deaf

WHO = World Health Organization

ZPD = Zone of Proximal Development

Abstract

This thesis began as an ethnographic study on deaf college students' literacies in the North of England. The well-documented gap in academic attainment of deaf students when compared to age-equivalent hearing peers raises questions over the opportunities afforded by settings for promoting learning. Deaf college students in England underperform hearing peers in ways that may not be explained by additional special educational needs alone. Redefining the project in terms of translanguaging meant focus on the use of semiotic resources unbounded by named languages. Articulation with sociocultural and poststructuralist perspectives emphasised the semiotic and discursive nature of processes involved in communication, learning and subjective positioning.

The main objective is interpreting deaf students' translanguaging practices and subjective stances towards them. Following an ethnographic approach, analytical work was extended over time. Materials generated for analysis include reflective journal entries, field notes, photos, interviews, language portraits and analytical memos. Five participants (18, 19 and 28 years old) at one college agreed to join the study, all of them profoundly deaf and BSL users.

Overall, this study argues that semiotic repertoires should be considered as emergent dynamic properties of shared communication spaces. The flexibility found in deaf students' translanguaging practices stands in contrast with evidenced asymmetries in communication and the enactment of subjective positions that value semiotic resources differently. Differences in sensory orientations and lack of shared resources with hearing peers and teachers are sources of complexity that may produce less opportunities for dialogical learning and that were only partially ameliorated in the observed college setting.

Declaration

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Why literacies of deaf students – the problem

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2021), 5% of the world population has a ‘disabling’ hearing loss. An accumulated body of research – mainly drawn from economically rich countries, therefore leaving out the nearly 80% of deaf individuals living in low- and middle-income countries (WHO, 2021) – evidences deaf students’ under-attainment at the end of their schooling when compared with their hearing peers. On average they leave school with a reading level comparable to that of 10 years old hearing children (Qi & Mitchell, 2012).

The past decades have seen rapid changes, which include the greater public recognition and use of signed languages (British Deaf Association, 2014; Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, 2019). This includes efforts in the United Kingdom, such as the BSL Scotland Act (2015) and the current campaign ‘BSL Act Now’ for a BSL law in England. There has also been an increase in early access to hearing, sound, and language as a result of technologies such as new-born hearing screening, digital hearing aids, cochlear implants (JCIH, 2013; Morton & Nance, 2006; National Deaf Children Society, 2016; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2003; Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 1998). While cochlear implants improve audibility and are enabling deaf children to access the languages of the environment (McConkey Robbins, Waltzman & Green, 2004), they have not transformed deaf children into hearing children (Archbold & Mayer, 2012), which seems to have dissipated some of the early hopes and fears associated with these technologies. Just a few decades ago, Lane (1992) suggested that cochlear implants

were an intrinsically oralist artifact that would deplete Deaf¹ culture. Deaf cultures proved to be much more resilient, and d/Deaf peoples nowadays have incorporated more access to speech into their repertoires and are more likely to behave as bimodal bilinguals (Marschark & Lee, 2014).

Despite all these changes, literacy levels by age 16 remain difficult to improve (Marschark et al., 2015; Nagle et al., 2016). In the UK context, existing research remains limited regarding evidence of an overall significant improvement since the first study of the literacy of deaf pupils in 1979 (Conrad, 1979) and followed up 20 years later (Powers, Gregory & Thoutenhoofd, 1999). In England, GCSE attainment at age 16 remains one grade behind hearing peers, a gap that has been documented over the years (National Deaf Children's Society, 2020).

While deafness used to be blamed for d/Deaf populations' underattainment (Svartholm, 1994), debates in the 20th century traced more specific influences (Spencer, 2016) in potentially de-pathologizing ways. This included, for example, the importance of a strong first language as a basis for literacy development. Deaf children arriving at school with a fluent signed or spoken language have literacy skills more commensurate with their hearing peers (Hratinski & Wilbur, 2016). The 21st century also brings more specific conceptualisation to the fore (Spencer, 2016). For example, early proponents of bilingual education for deaf students relied on a notion of cognitive

¹ I will follow here the convention of distinguishing between 'deaf' as referring to people with atypical hearing and 'Deaf' to refer to a cultural-linguistic minority (Ladd, 2003). Participants in this study will be referred to as 'deaf' to not presume cultural affiliations, whereas 'd/Deaf' will be used for wider and more abstract notion of populations. The plural in 'populations' or 'peoples' will subsequently be preferred to avoid homogenising assumptions and recognise heterogeneity (Young & Temple, 2014).

academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1981; Pickersgill & Gregory, 1998; Svartholm, 1994) brought from studies done with hearing bilinguals. The difficulties in transference of skills from one language to the other were pointed out (Mayer & Akamatsu, 1999; Mayer & Wells, 1996) by emphasising the disjuncture in modalities between signed and spoken/written languages. However, further evidence has suggested the possibility of transference being performed by deaf students through wider language-based cognitive skills (e.g., metacognition), widening the idea of transference itself (Cummins, 2006; Swanwick, 2016).

Making sense of research conducted with d/Deaf populations has been and continues to be a challenge. Relatively small populations, sometimes termed a low incidence of deafness, means that findings in the field can be inconsistent due to the low number of participants in studies (Spencer, 2016). Besides, d/Deaf populations are considered highly heterogeneous (Young & Temple, 2014). Some studies suggest that deaf children may have cognitive profiles different from hearing children in terms of visual perception and attention, among other cognitive processes (Marschark & Hauser, 2008; Marschark & Knoors, 2012). Also, individual differences between deaf children only seem to have increased over the past years. The already varied profiles in terms of etiology of deafness, age of diagnosis, socioeconomic status, or parental support among others, now must consider, for example, variations related to cochlear implants: age of implantation, type of implant, etc. (Archbold, 2015; De Raeve, 2015). This context provides a sobering counterclaim to any scientific production that too hastily creates homogeneous groups and generalises their findings to whole populations of d/Deaf peoples.

This panorama sets a double difficulty. On the one hand, it is undoubtedly relevant that deaf children and young people are provided the opportunity to engage on equal

terms in more literacy activities so they can become more proficient readers and have better school progress and work choices in the future (Garberoglio, Cawthon & Bond, 2014; Marschark et al., 2012; Toscano, McKee & Lepoutre, 2002). The educational goal of ensuring language development and promoting deaf students' potential is still ongoing (Spencer, 2016).

On the other hand, explanations for the persistence of deaf students' educational under-attainment are usually focused on the individual level of analysis (e.g. Kelly & Barac-Cikoja, 2007), producing deficit views that ignore the developmental role of sociocultural contexts in guiding the learning processes of deaf students (Wertsch, 1991). When monolingual discourses that equate linguistic hybridity with deviance (Yildiz, 2012) are coupled with such deficit views, victim-blaming perspectives deepen social and educational inequalities and hinder the development of multilingual repertoires and identities (Bagga-Gupta, 2010; Burman, 2017; García, Flores & Spotti, 2017; Swanwick, 2017; Vygotsky, 1962).

Besides, accounts of research processes too often fail to recognise the political aspects of research or avoid them outright to defend the scientific status of their endeavour (Allan & Slee, 2008). This normalising rationality produces the ideological neutralisation of concepts linked with difference and diversity, which leaves theoretical assumptions unquestioned, potentially reducing the complexity of studied phenomena (Báez, 2004; Matus & Infante, 2011). Of course, this problem is not restricted to the field of education of d/Deaf peoples. Textbooks on inclusive research and teaching, with their emphases on delivering technical knowledge to practitioners, are 'problematic because they convey children's pathologies, including cultural attributes, as fixed and uncontested deficits. This remains a fundamental and, all too

often unacknowledged, problem for inclusive educational research' (Allan & Slee, 2008, p. 2).

In this way, socially isolated units of analysis coupled with deficit views of deaf students foreclose reflections about the responsibility of communication and learning contexts on gaps in literacy. This results in victim-blaming perspectives that deepen social and educational inequalities (Báez, 2004; Burman, 2017; Youdell, 2006).

The present study hopes to present a contribution to these long-standing debates on deaf students' education (Spencer, 2016) by exploring deaf individuals' literacy skills from the relatively novel theoretical lens of translanguaging (Swanwick, 2017) and from epistemic frames that interrupt practices of exclusion and inequalities. Therefore, this study represents an effort at asking things differently – through the changes produced by carrying out research questions with the insights provided by new conceptual language. The coming chapters will detail the framework as well as the research processes and the potential contributions that spring from analyses.

1.2 Why I study literacies in deaf students – my trajectory

An understanding of why the problem is relevant is not necessarily a clarification of why it became important to me. Why would I personally invest my time and career to such endeavour? In my personal experience, I get asked many times why I work with deaf individuals. People usually expect personal accounts of why deaf relatives or friends became a source of inspiration. My first encounter with deaf people actually happened much later in life.

My undergraduate apprenticeship experience consisted in creating a (not so successful) project for encouraging reading habits in young people living in custody – also termed 'young offenders' in English. Once that finished, my University

supervisor offered me a position as assistant in one of her projects due to my interest in reading and literacy. Her project was focused on researching deaf school students' use of reading strategies in informational texts. The project considered a robust sociocultural and socioconstructivist framework that my professors developed over time (Sebastián & Lissi, 2016). This also included a strong promotion of Deaf cultures and bilingual bicultural education (discussed on Chapter 2) on behalf of the lead researcher. Thus, this first encounter framed my conceptual understanding of the matters regarding deaf education, as well as promoting an intellectual curiosity that moved from mere literacy to the ways deaf students can learn to deal with different kinds of texts.

The impact of reading about the matter is not the same as encountering deaf individuals in the world. I entered the project with the commitment of learning Chilean Sign Language (LSCh – Lengua de Señas Chilena). I was amazed by my first LSCh teacher, Verónica. She was a Deaf person from a proud multi-generational Deaf family and a strong LSCh user. I usually saw her borrowing books in English from my supervisor – a feat of multilingualism that is rare in Spanish-speaking Chile – or how she shared experiences of travelling to other countries and learning different sign languages in them. In contrast, deaf students that I found in the schools I visited were often lacking general world knowledge or had only weakly learnt Spanish or LSCh – if any language at all. This initial contrast struck me and shaped my first thoughts on the matter. Somehow, there was a potential for something more in deaf individuals that, whatever were the reasons, was not being promoted. I wanted to know why d/Deaf peoples could have so different literacy levels and what allowed that unjust difference to carry on.

My master's thesis was developed inside that project. Due to my basic LSCh level and data availability limitations, I analysed hearing teachers' interviews about their experiences with deaf students. These limitations shaped my initial ambitions for what should be the next step. I wanted to be able to communicate with deaf students directly for my next project, and I would make sure my doctoral project included that.

Back then, I focused on teachers' constructions of deaf students according to the axis of normalcy and difference. This was partly a product of the theoretical incursions provoked by my participation in another research group: Normalcy, Difference and Education – an interdisciplinary platform that valued the work of reconceptualising problems for shedding new light on old problems. This meant that my conceptual baggage was not only enriched by particular strands of theory, including many poststructuralist ideas (e.g., Derrida, 1967) but also by a more general attitude towards social sciences, which included a suspicion towards rigid disciplinary boundaries, power-neutral theorisations of difference and deviance, and the under-theorisation of research problems.

Thanks to a scholarship, I managed to come to the study at the University of Manchester. Being here and learning about the specific context of d/Deaf peoples in the UK changed the way I understood the matter. In Chile I learned a narrative that seemed standard, and that I rehearsed every time I wrote a piece about education of d/Deaf peoples: most deaf children are diagnosed later in their life (around 2 years old), deaf students reach school age without any (spoken or signed) language strongly developed and are divided roughly half and half between being educated in mainstream contexts with specialist services provision or in special schools, most of them not exclusively for the deaf (Lissi, Sebastián, Vergara & Iturriaga, 2019).

As will be discussed later in more detail (Chapter 2), the panorama in England is different. Firstly, here I met other Deaf academics who became my colleagues. Once more, my personal experience reflected the idea that there are d/Deaf persons who can become highly proficient in academic areas and guide my learning and socialisation processes. This time, however, strong signing skills were coupled with strong written English and circumstantial spoken English skills. There is a fluidity of linguistic competencies that were difficult to observe in Chile. Secondly, the panorama in education included early diagnosis, extended provision of services and interventions like hearing aids and cochlear implants, and a standard preference for mainstream environments. These experiences impact upon deaf students' access and preference for languages and thus shape in a different way the way they can communicate with others and the availability for tools for learning. Most importantly for me, was the expectancy of flexibility due to at least partial access to different languages, which was in contrast with (what now I perceive as) the rigid binary boundaries between types of deaf students in Chile, with clearly associated trajectories and preference for languages. This flexibility, both as expected in the literature and as observed during the study, meant a profound re-conceptualisation of the main phenomenon of study and, once more, a reconsideration of what d/Deaf peoples are capable of.

1.3 What comes next – the thesis

This thesis follows a journal format. Therefore, it is organised in chapters as per traditional thesis but Chapters 5 to 8 include publishable pieces for journal articles.

Chapter 2 will establish the empirical framework in which this study is based. The chapter will begin with a description of the different discourses that aim at describing d/Deaf peoples and, in doing so, try to define their needs and the institutional arrangements needed to fulfil them. After that, the consequences of such discourses

for the education of d/Deaf peoples are considered through the description of the approaches that historically have shaped the way education is delivered to deaf students. This is followed by a review of previous studies on deaf students' classroom experiences and the consequences of those experiences for communication and learning. Reviewed studies highlight the importance of communication flexibility for post-secondary deaf students beyond dominion of singular languages. The importance of multilingual and multimodal repertoires stands somehow in contrast with a binary or mutually exclusive notion of the discourses reviewed on the chapter, bringing notions of plurality and multiple intersecting identities to the fore. This is followed by a review of the context of deaf students in England, historically, geographically, and politically situating the study.

Chapter 3 is devoted to exploring the main concepts through which theoretical approaches are brought together, including phonocentrism (Derrida, 1967), ideology (Laclau, 2014), learning (Vygotsky, 1978), and identity (Bakhtin, 1984; Holland et al., 1998; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). The chapter finishes by visiting some of the theoretical debates produced by the juxtaposition of theoretical approaches in this framework.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology of the study as well as discussing some of the theoretical-methodological consequences that remain in need of exploring. Following an ethnographic approach (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), the chapter recognises the already analytical and theoretically informed nature of inquiry by organising the first sections according to three moments of analytical work carried out prior to, during, and after contact with participants. Analyses prior to contact include initial conceptualisations on the role of staff and the impact of my presence, including contact with gatekeepers and access to different spaces in college. This is followed by a description of the process of changing the main concept leading the study from literacy

to translanguaging in a way that allows observing deaf students' practices in finer detail. After describing the participants that accepted to partake in this study, analyses during contact with the participants is explained. This includes the proposal of a discursive ethnography (Smart, 2012) and a description of the situations that were observed. The chapter continues by presenting analyses carried out after contact with participants. This includes how ethnographic notes, language portraits and interview videos were analysed. The proposal for a dialogical discourse analysis (Larraín & Medina, 2007), given its novelty and complexity, is described in a separate section. The next section deals with the dilemmas that emerge when language is not considered a neutral medium (Denzin, 1997), problematising the exercise of translation. Ethical reflections are covered in the following section, centring the discussion on principles of ethical inquiry. The chapter finishes by assessing the study against a set of quality criteria in qualitative research, not without considering the appropriateness of different notions of quality for a study of this nature.

The following chapters include the publishable contributions in this thesis. Chapters 5 to 8 involve pieces that not only rescue different sections of the analyses produced in this thesis but that also were written considering the differing audiences of target journals. Analyses can, therefore, appear as fragmentary and not necessarily respecting the idea of a common comprehension underlying the analyst' point of view. It is not until Chapter 9 that a more general narrative is offered. In that sense, the reader is given two options. One possibility is exercising patience and letting each piece undergo the challenge of being understood on its own terms, as a single piece of research, before obtaining a general perspective in the final chapter. Another option is jumping to Chapter 9 and reading the first section before going back to Chapter 5, thus being able to approach each piece with the double gaze of the particular and the more

general comprehension. The structure of this thesis is, of course, not neutral and reflects an invitation to the readers to produce their own understanding through the partial pieces before assessing it against the researcher's comprehension. In this way, the possibility of more than one reading is opened, a gesture that accompanies critiques of the author's supposedly total appropriation of the meaning produced in texts (Bakhtin, 1984).

Chapter 5 (Paper 1) rescues the reflections produced prior to contact with the college that accepted to join this study. During this stage, reflections were written on my status as a hearing, non-British person trying to access the physical space of deaf students' college and, more importantly, the symbolic space of Deaf cultures in Northern England. Reflective journal fragments were used to reflect on the importance of sign language skills, the ontological consequences of narratives circulating local Deaf communities and the variety of subjective stances that preclude a homogeneous production of subjectivities in Deaf cultures. These reflections frame the epistemological possibilities and limitations of knowledge claims made from my position as a researcher. This exercise in reflexivity was intended to take the genre beyond the personal and emotional tribulations experienced during the process and focus on access as a matter of cultural and political contact between subjects with different backgrounds and power positions. The paper corresponding to this chapter is ready to be submitted to *Disability & Society*. This journal was chosen because not only it is one of the most relevant journals in Disability Studies but it has had publications specifically centred on the role of hearing researchers working with d/Deaf populations.

Chapter 6 (Paper 2) reports analyses of ethnographic notes during observations of deaf college students' translanguaging practices. The focus of this piece is on how those

practices change according to the context of interlocution in which they are deployed. This includes a change in classroom contexts and the communicative preferences of people in them. Findings are presented in three moments: translanguaging being expanded due to the need and possibility of using more semiotic resources, translanguaging being restricted in situation in which semiotic resources are considered unnecessary or ineffective, and translanguaging being channelled from English to visual and gestural resources and back again. In this way, this piece shows one of the first conceptual basis for considering semiotic repertoires not merely as properties of individuals but also encompassing the social and communicative situation of each instance of interlocution, including the material world at hand and the affordances it produces. The impact of this piece for a pedagogy that recruits translanguaging for deaf students entails highlighting the importance of promoting translanguaging in whole classrooms to avoid implicitly reinforcing the subordination of deaf students to hearing-normative ways of communication. The paper corresponding to this chapter has been submitted to the *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, co-authored with Alys Young. As co-author, Alys produced a few paragraphs while also editing and structuring the rest of the paper, with 10% of the work attributed to her. This journal was chosen because it is one of the most prestigious journals on education of deaf students and so targets academics and practitioners in a single source.

Chapter 7 (Paper 3) focuses specifically on episodes of communication breakdown during observations and how they were dealt with by deaf students and their interlocutors in communication. Analyses of these episodes allowed interpreting them as expressions of underlying asymmetries in communication that deaf students face on an everyday basis in college. These asymmetries include language knowledge,

sensory orientation, and subject matter knowledge. While there were moments in which the responsibility for sustaining communication was shared with others, most of the time deaf students had to adjust themselves to others' preferences through translanguaging practices, possibly overburdening them and restricting the expression of their linguistic identities. This piece analyses a few episodes, reflecting the ways communication was facilitated most of the time during deaf students' experiences in college. However, they also show how the introduction of Communication Support Workers (CSWs) solves some problems while adding more complexity to communicative situations. In other words, deaf students have become accustomed to deal with complex multi-party communicative situations. The paper corresponding to this chapter is ready to be submitted to the *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. This journal was chosen because this piece fits the main concern of the editors: it discusses empirical work on communication asymmetries to consider issues of fair conditions for participation in classrooms for deaf students, which is relevant for discussions on notions of inclusion.

Chapter 8 (Paper 4) reports analyses of interviews to 4 deaf students. Students' talk about their experiences is interpreted, from a dialogical (Bakhtin, 1984) point of view, as discourse; that is, as constructions recruiting patterned ways of speaking (i.e., genres) and social voices (i.e., others' perspectives) to take a position regarding the themes discussed. There was a simultaneity in discourse being about translanguaging, detailing the way resources are selectively recruited for different purposes, and in discourse being translanguaged, with participants adjusting their communication to what they assumed would be my preferences. Analyses show layered positions towards different semiotic resources, with deaf students enacting multilingual and multimodal repertoires while also expressing preference for certain resources and

specific communication situations over others. There is a contrast in ideological positioning, with deaf students accepting the dominance of hearing-normative ways of communication in some situations and expressing a longing for alternative, Deaf-led communication in others. This piece, therefore, shows the extent and limits of a discourse of pluralism in semiotic resources that is implicit in translanguaging by depicting how multilingualism and flexibility are not always experienced as liberatory. There are several degrees of (dis)identification with semiotic resources that might help explain levels of (dis)engagement with learning activities at college. The paper corresponding to this chapter is ready to be submitted to the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. This journal could be particularly interested in the methodological innovation and analyses offered in this piece.

Chapter 9 frames the contributions and consequences of this study. As was mentioned earlier, the chapter begins by providing an overall narrative that helps to situate the different analyses presented in the publishable pieces on the researcher's more general understanding. The piece focuses on the different meanings of the sign ADJUST as found in, and outside of, college, and how it represents a discursive knot that, like a prism, reflects the various discourses that circulate, making translanguaging serve different purposes. The next section discusses the contribution of studies as framed by ethnographic and discursive approaches, setting up the conceptual language through which this study can be judged. The following section adds another moment of reflexivity, discussing how my conceptualisation of language and communication changed after the experience of performing this study. The next section recapitulates the study contributions according to different possible audiences, including academics and researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers in the field of education of deaf students. The section that follows briefly states what was left behind for producing a

coherent, unitary thesis and therefore what remains as possibly disrupting the narrative constructed so far. The final section in this chapter will provide reflections on possible future directions of research from the findings produced in this study.

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Chapter 2: Context and rationale

This chapter will state the discourses that have been used to define d/Deaf peoples and their needs, the educational approaches that have been developed for them, and the context of deaf students' classroom experiences, as reflected in studies about deaf students' communication skills, statutory frameworks that define d/Deaf peoples' rights and knowledge produced so far about the situation of deaf college students in England.

2.1 Plural discourses for defining deaf people's needs

Defining the place of d/Deaf peoples in our social worlds is a contentious matter, as there are multiple ways of constructing what it means to be deaf, each of them with different consequences. These constructions are not merely academic concerns; organizations espousing these definitions co-exist, competing to define deaf individuals' needs. Deaf children under their services will be further socialised to adapt to those definitions (Lane, 1995). D/deaf peoples' needs arise from the juxtaposition of experiences and norms. Norms allow judging people's experiences, making gaps visible and calling for intervention. Thus, the definition of needs is a matter of debate from situated points of view, not arising from universal norms of desirability.

Here this project will follow Ladd (2003) in talking about the impact of discourses in the (re)production of identities of d/Deaf peoples. The world is brought into being through discourse, and each discourse constructs its own canon of truth (Ladd, 2003). From Foucault (1979), Ladd (2003) takes the idea of discourses making visible cultural patterns in what seem social 'givens', rendering visible power relationships. From Gramsci (1971), the notion of ideologies representing the interests of different groups perpetually competing for acceptance helps to explain domination by consent:

ideologies represented in belief systems persuade dominated groups to accept the imposed cultural hierarchy, devaluing their own cultures.

2.1.1 Medical discourses

The description of medical discourses cannot be done without an immediate valuation of them; medical views of deafness are so entrenched in hegemonic common sense that they become recognisable – and therefore a matter of analysis – only from the vantage point of their alternatives. This includes the social model of disability and the cultural-linguistic minority model of Deaf people. Other proposals of hybrid medical-social models have emerged, as in biopsychosocial models (e.g., World Health Organisation, 2001) and they will be reviewed later in this section.

The influence of medical discourses can be traced back to at least the eighteenth century (Lane, 1984). While this period saw a polysemic interpretation of d/Deaf peoples, combining admiration and pity (Davis, 1995), this account will necessarily restrict such variations to trace the origins of deficit notions in medical discourses. Modernist meta-narratives, privileging notions of scientific ‘truth’ and social progress, were fertile soil to produce standards of normalcy. These, in turn, allowed and required the defining of deviances with connotations of lack and tragedy (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002). Deafness became particularly visible during the Enlightenment due to the entanglement of several discourses, including: (1) the privileging of scientific and technological progress against the idea of ‘Nature’, positioning the child, the deaf, and the wild as living examples of individuals untouched by civilization and requiring intervention (Davis, 1995; Ladd, 2003); (2) construction of Nation-States via standardisation of languages and monolingual ideals, cementing a long-lasting rhetoric in which sign languages isolate deaf individuals from their (hearing)

communities and positioning d/Deaf signers as peoples requiring assimilation into majority society (Davis, 1995; Yildiz, 2012).

These developments led to the idea that deaf individuals cannot be considered to have a proper language until they master the speech and written language of a hearing majority (Davis, 1995). Structural conditionals reinforced this, such as the need to speak and write to be considered a citizen in some European cultures (Lane, 1984). In this way, what Ladd (2003) terms, the ‘pedagogical conditional’ began to spread in Europe – deaf individuals needed education to achieve their full humanity. In this discourse, it is not necessarily the paternalistic hearing master but the emergence of normative ways of communication (e.g., speech and lipreading) what allows a deaf individual to achieve the human status (Ladd, 2003; Reé, 1999).

Medical discourses arose before a proper understanding of audition existed, but drew knowledge from the fields of anatomy, acoustics, biology, and electricity to obtain a quasi-scientific status (Ladd, 2003). Contemporary medical discourses give an emphasis to audiological definitions of deafness, set against a hearing acoustic norm (Lane, 1995). From this perspective, deaf individuals are constructed as biologically deficient, needing a cure and assimilation into mainstream spaces of society (Ladd, 2005). Lane (1995) argues that these discourses sustain a whole industry of audiological and rehabilitation services, requiring the dissemination of medical constructions of deafness and the socialisation of deaf children into those norms to sustain themselves.

Medical discourses have been continually contested, and yet they remain as the hegemonic view and therefore they are the background against which other discourses

struggle (Ladd, 2003). One of the most recognisable discourses of resistance came from social models of disability, which will be explained next.

2.1.2 Disability discourses

The core ideas behind a social model of disability stemmed from a Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) document (UPIAS, 1976), proposing a central idea: the problem with disability is not the physical impairment itself but the disabling barriers of society (Oliver, 2013). Mike Oliver joined the group and coined the term ‘social model of disability’ (Oliver, 1983). This was a direct response to over-medicalised and individualistic conceptions of disability (Shakespeare, 2010). The social model of disability acquired prominence during the 1980s and the 1990s (Barnes, 2019). Disability movements inspired by the social model reject segregation in institutions and are particularly concerned with what they perceive as the hegemony of special education in schools (Barnes, 2019; Oliver, 2013).

The social model of disability helped to create a collective sense of identity in people with disabilities (Oliver, 2013), effectively building a political movement and promoting an agenda of social change (Shakespeare, 2010). The category of disability meant that d/Deaf peoples were subsumed under the same label as other groups (Ladd, 2005), which was contentious specifically for those who regarded themselves as a cultural-linguistic minority. Spokespersons in the disability rights movement expect an alliance with deaf groups to bolster their movement and push for common legislation (Shakespeare, 2010). Also, international legislation like the Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disability (CRPD) (UN General Assembly, 2007) and British legislation like the Equality Act (2010) often assumes d/Deaf peoples are disabled.

According to Ladd (2005), the disability label cannot adequately reflect Deaf people's experiences and cultural lives. For example, disability legislation focuses on the barriers that arise in the interactions between individual and their environments and therefore miss out the more collectivistic concerns associated with legislation concerning languages and cultures (Valente & Boldt, 2016; WFD, 2018; Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007). However, the matter has been recently discussed in the calls of the World Federation of the Deaf (2019) for not rejecting disability labels given the benefits of mutually developed political agendas and legislation, and the positive benefits in developing intersectional d/Deaf identities.

The disability label is currently associated with matters of cultural affiliation, referring to individuals who do not necessarily participate in a DEAF-WORLD (more on that in Chapter 5) or share a Deaf culture (Lane, 1995). Some Deaf people reject being labelled as disabled to distance themselves from social discrimination (Lane, 1995), which may obscure the fact that some d/Deaf peoples experience impairments and identify as disabled (Corker, 1998; Young & Temple, 2014). In any case, Deaf individuals might live under the pressure to conform to disabled identities in the eyes of institutions to access services (e.g., interpreters) and overall equal citizenship (Lane, 1995).

These discourses on Deaf peoples as cultural-linguistic minorities represent another pole of resistance against medical discourses. In doing so, these discourses also address the pitfalls of a social model of disability (Ladd, 2003) while opening their own conundrums. They will be the theme of the next section.

2.1.3 Deaf discourses

The definition of a Deaf identity is difficult to trace, since Deaf cultures are embedded in, and subordinated to, majority cultures (Ladd & Lane, 2013). After so many years of cultural colonisation, expressions of Deaf identity may reflect the experiences of hearing hegemonic groups asserting dominance over d/Deaf peoples (Humphries & Humphries, 2011). In other words, there is no expression of a Deaf identity outside of a praxis of decolonisation that puts into question the acceptance of the other's dominating culture (Ladd, 2003). Indeed, asserting, and in some cases 'discovering', a Deaf identity after decades of negation can be a life-long process (Ladd, 2005).

The proposal of a Deaf identity and the existence of Deaf communities and cultures is a way of engaging with ideas previously produced by majority societies about d/Deaf peoples and countering them (Bahan, 1997; Baker & Cokely, 1980; Ladd, 2003; Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996). There are many neighbouring notions that have been woven into a discursive network, including ideas of Nation (Davis, 1995) and ethnicity (Erting, 1978; Lane, Pillard & Hedberg, 2010). Ethnicity goes beyond hereditary notions of kinship to include, among other aspects, common languages, traditions, and cultures in which a series of values are reproduced; artistic expressions related to common experiences; spaces of socialisation and boundaries with other social groups. Deaf cultures share these traits with other minority ethnic communities (Ladd & Lane, 2013).

Another neighbouring concept is that of Sign Languages Peoples (SLPs) (Ladd & Lane, 2013). Batterbury, Ladd and Gulliver (2007) proposed the idea of SLPs as communities that define themselves in terms of language, culture, epistemologies, and ontologies. A history of colonialism and dispossession makes SLPs similar to other indigenous groups, and therefore in need of legal protection to defend their educational, linguistic and cultural rights (Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007). In this

sense, it is noteworthy how these discourses also draw from already mentioned modernist narratives of ontological authenticity and Nation building (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002; Yildiz, 2012) to produce an empowering alternative.

Deaf people participating in common DEAF-WORLDS share a distinct culture (Lane, 1995; Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996). The definition of identity from this perspective is not necessarily equated with the label of ‘deaf’ in English but corresponds better to the label of DEAF in signed languages, which may reflect different meanings and stronger self-definitions not related with audiological status alone but also influenced by sign fluency, growing up surrounded by DEAF people or acting according to DEAF norms (Humphries & Humphries, 2011) – hence the preference for ‘Deaf’ in English to make a distinction (Ladd, 2003). It is common to see deaf signers asking about being DEAF in terms of degrees – ‘is he DEAF enough?’ by which is meant a degree of cultural affiliation and identity (Humphries & Humphries, 2011).

Deaf discourses do not assume that Deaf experiences are undifferentiated. There is internal stratification in Deaf communities, including the distinction between Deaf élites with their own professional middle classes, and Deaf subaltern groups that have been denied access to meaningful quotas of power (Ladd, 2003). Another source of complexity comes from the discussion on hybrid identities existing within SLPs and the ongoing debate over their place in Deaf communities (Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007). Other authors express the difficulty of aiming at single identities and prefer to speak of bicultural identifications for d/Deaf peoples to become successful members of their majority societies (Humphries & Humphries, 2011).

Moreover, the notion of intersecting identities allowed a discussion over the frictions that members of other cultural, religious, and ethnic groups experience in Deaf communities. This includes moments in which Gay and Lesbian individuals are treated as “less Deaf” (Bienvenu, 2007), when there seems to be an erasure of Deaf women’s experiences in Deaf historical accounts (Kelly, 2007), or when Deaf individuals do not feel at home in Deaf communities that are predominantly white and Christian (Ahmad, Atkin & Jones, 2002; Dunn, 2007). Indeed, Deaf studies require a constant adjustment to the increasing complexity of Deaf communities to avoid a rigid and ahistorical assumptions (Myers & Fernandes, 2010).

To overcome essentialist frameworks of identity that install fixed or static notions of what it means to be Deaf, Ladd (2003, 2005) proposed the term Deafhood. Deafhood proposes a processual view of identity exploration, in which each deaf individual performs an exploration through critical encounters (Ladd, 2003). Deafhood aims at including all the possible ways in which deaf individuals might self-define, so there is no right or proper way of performing this search (Ladd, 2005). In English, the term ‘Deafhood’ reflects notions of Deaf selfhood, as a process of ongoing self-reflection (Ladd, 2003), whereas in sign languages, the sign for DEAFHOOD is a compound combining signs for DEAF and GUT or INTUITION, reflecting how Deafhood comes from the lived experience of deaf individuals (Humphries & Humphries, 2011). Deafhood is aimed at creating a unifying yet pluralistic vision focused on potentialities to overcome division and horizontal oppression. According to Ladd and Lane (2013), hybridities may affect acculturation and therefore blur notions of Deaf ethnicity, but they do not affect Deafhood as the permanent construction of a Deaf selfhood (Ladd & Lane, 2013).

For Kusters and De Meulder (2013), Deafhood can lead to misunderstandings since it simultaneously expresses two qualities: it is a strategy of consciousness-raising that opens analyses of oppression and colonisation, and it designates an ontological core of experience that is reserved for (biologically) deaf people only. While Deafhood has undoubtedly opened opportunities for self-exploration and emancipation, it has an essentialist core that opens additional problematics – when is a person “deaf enough” to mobilise Deafhood? (Kusters & De Meulder, 2013). The key, Kusters and De Meulder (2013) state, is in remembering that strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1996) is about using essentialist notions to produce emancipation rather than falling into full essentialism. After all, Deafhood is dynamic and invites to change. In a similar vein, De Clerck (2017) recognises that the strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1996) in Deafhood has been useful as an emancipatory tool. However, the possible exclusionary effects of this strategy cannot be dismissed. An attention to the situated and partial aspects of d/Deaf experiences, including an awareness of competing identities, is needed (De Clerck, 2017). This necessarily opens up reflections regarding communication and technologies beyond taboos – can deaf people speak? Can they use cochlear implants? Should they listen to music? Kusters and De Meulder (2013) argue that these variations should be considered acceptable individual choices and not be confused with political oppression.

According to Ladd (2003), Deaf discourses allow for identifying waves of neocolonialism oppressing Deaf people nowadays, including: (1) Mainstreaming as a policy of cultural assimilation that isolate deaf individuals out of Deaf spaces (Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007); (2) Oralist discourses in education that aim to marginalise or eradicate sign languages and cultures from the education of d/Deaf peoples (Ladd, 2005; Ladd & Lane, 2013); (3) Cochlear implants and gene therapy as

technological attempts at removing deafness, after centuries of hegemonic discourses constructing SLPs' inferiority (Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007). Cochlear implants, however, are not always perceived as a threat to identity by Deaf people, as cultural frames regarding these technologies vary (Humphries & Humphries, 2011). More than technology in itself, the accompanying interventions are considered harmful when they discourage signing (Humphries & Humphries, 2011).

Myers and Fernandes (2010) have critiqued the use of metaphors of colonialism in Deaf studies, for it suggests a polarised and fixed relationship between d/Deaf peoples as the oppressed and hearing people as the oppressors which, according to them, cannot be the basis for mutual respect between peoples. Also, this polarisation is translatable into a chasm between speech and signing, making difficult the possibility of equality between languages. I partially agree with their point, given how binaries between languages and between in/authentic ways of being do not necessarily reflect the plurality in d/Deaf populations (Young & Temple, 2014). However, their argument also reflects a dismissal of the importance of conflict for plural and democratic societies (Mouffe, 2013). Putting binaries into question in service of non-hierarchical and diverse ways of life requires traversing the binaries, not negating their existence, thus positing antagonisms that temporarily empower those groups that have been historically disadvantaged (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). This may require strategically accepting some degree of essentialist ways of thinking about identities to produce unity in transformative action (Spivak, 1996).

So far, this chapter has reviewed the medical and social models of disability and the Deaf identity discourses. The simultaneous existence of all these discourses means that d/Deaf peoples live at a crossroads for defining their identities, and other people might define their identities differently from the way they would define themselves,

adding tension that might put identities into question (Humphries & Humphries, 2011). Such heteroglossic background (Bakhtin, 1981) composes the space in which identities of deaf individuals are crafted. This polyphonic character should not be equated with equal footing of all perspectives, nonetheless. A history of oppression has led Deaf communities to develop a double consciousness (Du Bois, 1989; Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007) or internalised oppression (Ladd & Lane, 2013), in which the perspective or ‘voice’ of the oppressor is found within the oppressed (Freire, 1986), devaluing all traits related with culturally Deaf peoples and valuing those associated with ‘Hearing’ (Ladd, 2003) people. This produces horizontal oppression and violence (Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007) that calls for affirmative action that could truly give d/Deaf individuals an opportunity for open exploration of the potentialities of being d/Deaf.

2.1.4 Analysing discursive dichotomies

Discussions over the previously presented discourses – often presented as ‘models’ and therefore as incompatible with one another – have led to efforts at problematising what are perceived as restrictive frameworks for conceiving people’s needs and identities. These efforts are not concerted and express different projects. They can be organised according to three strategies identified so far: (1) creating a new integrative model that transcends dichotomies; (2) exploring one side of the dichotomy that has remained insufficiently explored; (3) sustaining the dichotomies while troubling their fixed character. Each will be reviewed next.

The strategy of transcending dichotomies can be seen in the integration of social and medical models of disability in the biopsychosocial model of disability espoused in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (World

Health Organization, 2001). This model aims at producing a descriptive classification of individual and environmental components of disability. It includes factors associated with the body, the individual and society to produce complex profiles of individuals' functioning (WHO, 2001). The ICF model is considered a universalistic model that provides an objectivist, multifactorial and multidimensional approach to disability, with scientific validity and empirical validation (Shakespeare, Watson & Alghaib, 2017).

The ICF model's (WHO, 2011) effort at integration is limited due to how its objectivist and scientifically driven perspective rests on the de-politicisation of disability. Indeed, it falls short of many of the challenges that many authors have proposed for conceptions of disability, including an analysis of the intersecting dimensions of oppression in the experiences of people with disabilities, and a critical assessment of the standards of normalcy being mobilised to construct the seemingly neutral and descriptive categories of 'disability' and 'impairment' and the notions of difference that stem from them (Goodley, 2013; Thomas, 2004).

The second mentioned strategy aims at exploring the conceptual distinction between disability and impairment and exploring how the latter has remained less explored and therefore under-theorised. Mirroring feminists' discussions over the bracketing of 'sex' and denial of a 'sexual difference' in theorisations of women's experiences, proponents of this critique have stated that the impact of impairment in daily life must be included in accounts of disability (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001). This allows talking about an embodied ontology that, while remaining critical of the over-medicalisation of disabled people's lives, can account for moments in which biomedical interventions would be more appropriate (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001).

The re-theorisation of impairment has been done from many different perspectives, producing contradictory effects for this strategy. Shakespeare and Watson (2001), for example, state that not all disabling barriers can ever be tackled for they are ‘inextricable aspects of impairment, not generated by the environment’ (p. 17). Their theorisation is complex, and it would be difficult to attribute them a notion of impairment restricted to biological features of isolated bodies. Yet in some of their writing it may appear so, adding a sense of contradiction.

It remains crucial then, for this strategy of re-theorisation of the body, for impairment not to be considered a pre-social or pre-cultural property of bodies. Corker (1999) argues that theories of embodiment reinforce a foundational notion of impairment in detriment of considering its discursive and interactive aspects. Also, the unitary and stable character of impairment relies on an oppositional category of normalcy (Corker, 1999). Lane, Pillard and Hedeberg’s (2010) similarly discuss how physical difference is included in ethnicity rather than being an incidental trait, integrating features of Deaf bodies into cultural frameworks for enacting identities.

Suggestions of pre-social biological features separating the impaired from the non-impaired is a feature of essentialist thinking, occluding the interrogation of discourses and practices in which disability, impairment and normalcy come into being and construct the subjectivities of the self and other (Thomas, 2004). Similarly, the notion of ‘experience’ of impairment (e.g., physical pain as a private experience) may imply notions of truthfulness and authenticity akin to biological foundationalism and determinism (Corker, 1999). There are, nonetheless, efforts at re-theorising impairment and experience from other, non-dualist, non-modernist frameworks (e.g., Goodley, 2007, 2013; Thomas, 2004), including a cultural politics of impairment with an emphasis on bodily becomings rather than fixed notions of bodies (Goodley &

Roets, 2008). A similar notion of becoming is being proposed to understand the embodied, fluid and situated experiences of d/Deaf peoples (De Clerck, 2017).

The third strategy mentioned implied sustaining dichotomies while troubling their fixed boundaries. It comes from postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives (e.g., Corker, 1999; Goodley, 2007; Thomas, 2004) and involve a special concern with notions of multiple and intersecting identities and a validation of difference against notions of normalcy that render it subordinated and undesirable (Corker, 1998, 1999; Shakespeare & Watson, 2001). These conceptualisations of difference are relevant for understanding, for example, why some people in the Deaf community choose not to be labelled as people with disability (Corker, 1998; Thomas, 2004) and allow gaining an awareness of the situated, performative role of discourses and local knowledges instead of dealing with structures that may occlude people's variable experiences (Corker, 2010). Contemporary research on Deaf Translated Selves is exemplary in depicting how some culturally Deaf people choose to speak for themselves in circumstances in which interpreters are available, aiming at the importance of the representation of self to others in varied situations (Napier, Oram, Young & Skinner, 2019).

As was discussed earlier, deaf individuals have varied levels of affiliation with Deaf communities and cultural-linguistic minorities, medical notions of disability, social notions of disability or none of the previous options. These are ways in which individuals answer matters of minority-majority relationships and their place in them (Corker, 1998). For Corker (1998), different kinds of binaries can be enacted. Some of them perpetuate essentialist notions of d/Deaf and disabled identities, producing social divisions that may restrict human diversity into partial accounts. In such cases, people are expected to identify with one side of the binary, hindering the expression

of complex, fluid subjectivities and hindering a common political agenda. This fragmentation is potentially disempowering when it produces group divisions (i.e., social groups are not able to perceive their similarities with other groups) and alienation (i.e., individuals suffer estrangement with aspects of themselves) (Corker, 1998).

The different discourses reviewed on this section are, then, available standpoints from which deaf individuals can enact their subjectivities, defining for themselves and others their place in society, their needs, and struggles. It is no surprise that education became a clashing point for all these perspectives, being one of the spaces where culture, history and language are enacted and transmitted (Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver, 2007). Indeed, by being educated deaf children are socialised into the different discourses, each with their own construction of the deaf person (Lane, 1995). In the next section, a description of the different programmes developed for educating deaf students will allow for an assessment of the potential impact of the different discourses reviewed so far.

2.2 Approaches to educating deaf students

2.2.1 Oralist approaches

Oralism emerged in the 1880s, with the Milan congress being a significant milestone (Ladd, 2003, 2005; Murgel, 2016). One of its main tenets is that speech must be developed without the support of natural signed languages or any artificial communication system, placing an emphasis on auditory perception and residual hearing (Beattie, 2006; Murgel, 2016). This includes isolating deaf children from other signing deaf individuals (Ladd, 2005). Oral approaches in education are premised on the importance of normalisation (Beatti, 2006; Murgel, 2016), and therefore of speech

for communicating with hearing communities into which most deaf children are born, and for accessing a curriculum and developing literacy skills (Watson, 1998).

Oralism has been translated into different teaching approaches, including the early contribution of Ewing and Ewing's (1954) *Speech and the deaf child*. However, approaches are not always clearly distinguishable from each other in theory nor in practice (Watson, 1998). Beatti (2006) found more than 20 different names that could be gathered under the umbrella of oral approaches. Such variety of approaches can be classified in a linear continuum between those that restrict communication to auditory-verbal means (i.e., unisensory) and those that admit some degree of visual-gestural means (i.e., multimodal) to support the specification of aspects of spoken language that may not be accessible to deaf individuals (Beatti, 2006; Marschark & Spencer, 2006).

Another axis of variation is between those approaches that emphasise the direct instruction of skills and those that prefer the creation of settings that mimic the natural situations that promote spoken language development on a daily basis (Beatti, 2006). The latter approaches are inspired by Van Uden's (1970) 'maternal reflective method', in which parent-child communication is taken as the primary example of natural and meaningful contexts for language development. This forms the base for many contemporary approaches indebted to oralism, called 'natural auralism', or oral/aural and auditory/aural approaches. The labelling of 'natural' marks a shift from early oralist techniques; from explicitly teaching language structure rules to deaf children with an emphasis on repetition, to the construction of meaningful communicative experiences according to features identified as naturally boosting language development (Watson, 1998). There is a great focus on structuring parent-child and teacher-student interaction according to these premises and encouraging deaf children

to make use of their residual hearing (Beatti, 2006; Watson, 1998). Since audition should be privileged over vision, lip-reading and gestures are partially allowed in some versions of this approach but not natural sign languages (Watson, 1998).

Technological developments such as neonatal hearing screening, digital hearing aids and particularly cochlear implants have animated proponents of oral approaches (Beatti, 2006; Watson, 1998), as well as a tendency in many countries towards mainstream approaches to education for deaf students rather than special schools (whether supporting oral or signing approaches) (Marschark & Spencer, 2006).

Oralism has been contested by different groups throughout history, including Deaf communities and hearing allies, but has persisted and influenced 20th and 21st century discourses on d/Deaf identities and education. While in many cases, the implementation of Oralism was not absolute but in degrees – e.g., banning sign languages from classroom level only – it was successful in eliminating ideas of Deaf-led education at the beginning of the 20th century (Ladd, 2003) and the promotion of sign languages in education (Ladd, 2005) in economically rich countries. It is expected, however, that due to the recognition of sign languages in many countries and research signalling the positive impact of sign languages on deaf individuals' socioemotional development, more flexible multimodal approaches become promoted within oral approaches in the future (Marschark & Spencer, 2006).

2.2.2 Total Communication approaches

The first meaningful challenge to Oralism came from Total Communication approaches during the 1970s and 1980s (Holcomb, 2016). The term was presumably taken from Mead's (1964) description of the whole compound of linguistic and paralinguistic behaviour that sustains societies across generations, and it refers to the

full spectrum of ways of communication deaf children have available (Baker & Knight, 1998; Holcomb, 1970).

There is a great deal of ambiguity in Total Communication. It mainly refers to a philosophy or set of general tenets that should structure teaching and the promotion of plural ways of communicating (Spencer & Tomblin, 2006). However, it has also been used interchangeably with, and therefore has been reduced to, systems of simultaneous communication (also referred to as 'SimCom') in which speech and signing (or manual codes different from sign languages) are used simultaneously (Baker & Knight, 1998).

Total Communication is premised in giving a choice to deaf children in terms of communication, so it needs to include and differentiate sign language, spoken language and mixed systems as Sign Supported English (SSE) (Baker & Knight, 1998). It includes the explicit 'goal of providing an amalgam of input and flexible opportunities for output that maximize the child's ability to communicate' (Spencer & Tomblin, 2006, p. 168).

Critiques of the approach point at how the overall mixture of communication resources affected the quality of language learning. The simultaneity of signing and speech in particular is controversial given the necessary subordination of the structure of one language to the structure of the other, reducing their capacity for conveying meaning (Baker & Knight, 1998). This led to the preference for artificial manual systems such as Signed English and Signing Exact English over natural sign languages in Total Communication approaches (Spencer & Tomblin, 2006), promoting flexible multimodal but not necessarily multilingual communication.

Total Communication has been applied in many and sometimes inconsistent forms, and not always under optimal conditions. For example, deaf children did not have adequate sign language role models available and teachers of the deaf did not always have the linguistic development for supporting the demands of such a flexible approach (Spencer & Tomblin, 2006). This approach had progressive effects by allowing signs to enter the classroom after decades of oralism (Baker & Knight, 1998). A resurgence in Total Communication and Simultaneous Communication has been produced by discussions over its benefits for older deaf college students with cochlear implants in classrooms (Blom & Marschark, 2015; Blom, Marschark & Machmer, 2017).

2.2.3 Bilingual bicultural approaches

During the 1980s, bilingual bicultural, or ‘bi-bi’ approaches began to circulate from Scandinavia (Svartholm, 1993) and were implemented in the UK during the 1990s (Swanwick, 2010). These approaches aim at using the signed language of the local Deaf community and the language of hearing majority society in their written (and sometimes spoken) modalities. The emphasis is placed on visual means to unlock access to the curriculum (Knoors, Tang & Marschark, 2014). The stated goal of bi-bi approaches is allowing deaf children to access language for learning from birth (Swanwick, 2016) and to participate in both a hearing society and the DEAF-WORLD (Pickersgill, 1998).

A bilingual bicultural approach aims at structuring classroom interactions in a way that signed and spoken languages are given equal status. Also, Deaf adults are considered relevant role models for early exposure to sign languages as fully developed and natural languages (Pickersgill, 1998). Initially, bilingual curriculums were concerned with keeping languages separate for teaching purposes (Pickersgill,

1998) but that is being reconsidered nowadays to reflect theoretical discussions on bilingual repertoires as single dynamic sets of resources for meaning making instead of being bounded in discrete linguistic systems (Swanwick, 2016).

A curriculum structured in this way encourages skills transfer between languages. Bilingual approaches are founded on a theory of interdependency (Cummins, 1981) between languages in bilingual learners, referred to as Cognitive Analytic Linguistic Proficiency (CALP). This was interpreted as a common underlying linguistic proficiency between languages that allows the transfer of skills from one to another, allowing the development of signed languages as ways to support spoken languages literacy (Knoors, Tang & Matschark, 2014). Sign languages were promoted as primary languages due to their accessibility. In this case, 'primary' refers not to the order in which languages are learnt, since most deaf children are born to hearing non-signer parents, but to their role in scaffolding cognitive development (Svartholm, 2014).

The validity of this claim for deaf students has been critiqued, given how the first and second language do not mirror each other's modalities, making it difficult for transference to occur (Mayer & Akamatsu, 1999; Mayer & Wells, 1996). Despite these critiques, there is limited evidence of correlations between sign language proficiency and reading proficiency after thresholds in sign language development have been met (Hermans, Knoors, Ormel & Verhoeven, 2008; Hermans, Ormel & Knoors, 2010), even after Cummin's (1981) underlying proficiency conditions are not met (Knoors, Tang & Matschark, 2014). Swanwick (2016) emphasises that the critique to transference has been carried out under a limited notion of such transference. Cummin's (2006) transference includes conceptual knowledge, metacognitive strategies and pragmatic skills, not only linguistic and phonological knowledge (Swanwick, 2016).

Bilingual bicultural approaches were underpinned by the increasing recognition of sign languages as proper languages (not just modes of communication that would parallel in an impoverished way the characteristics of spoken languages) thanks to linguistic research carried out during the 1960s (Stokoe, 1960). In the UK, sign bilingualism was supported by the relevant work carried out by the LASER (Language of Sign as an Educational Resource) study group and research in Bristol and Durham Universities during the 1980s (Swanwick, 2010). Given the successful promotion of oralist approaches, bi-bi approaches were only partially adopted in ad-hoc manners, perhaps with the exception of Scandinavian countries, in particular Sweden and Finland, which fully endorsed them (Ladd, 2003; Svartholm, 1993). The first guidance in the UK was *Sign bilingualism: a model* by Pickersgill and Gregory (1998), created using evidence for bilingual education with hearing children due to lack of research with hearing ones (Swanwick, 2010). This guidance was revisited later in *Sign bilingual education: policy and practice* (Swanwick & Gregory, 2007), considering the difference between bilingual individuals and being educated in a bilingual way, as well as including much evidence and case studies that were not previously available (Swanwick, 2010).

Despite their momentum in the 1980s, bilingual programmes are in decline nowadays (Knors, Tang & Marschark, 2014), in part due to attainment gaps in deaf students educated according to bilingual models (Svartholm, 2010, 2014). In the UK, increasing provision in mainstream settings also means that bilingual education had to adapt, considering less availability of congregated education for deaf students (Swanwick & Gregory, 2007). Besides, changes in early diagnosis and the provision of digital hearing aids and cochlear implants are changing the linguistic profiles of deaf individuals (Watson, Hardie, Archbold & Wheeler, 2008), making necessary a

reformulation of bilingual programmes to reconsider the role of spoken languages along other resources, reflecting the greater multilingual and multimodal flexibility of d/Deaf peoples' range of resources (Swanwick, Hendar, Dammeyer, Kristoffersen, Salter & Simonsen, 2014; Swanwick & Tsverik, 2007). Even today, bilingual programmes also face the challenge of meeting the conditions for promotion of visually accessible language, including teacher training and sign fluency (Svartholm, 2014).

The presentation of these approaches, far from being a merely historical record, is relevant for any project dealing with translanguaging. It not only sets out the way specific practices of translanguaging were shaped by the education system. The impact of these approaches was so profound, that even nowadays they set the framework for understanding interventions and professional identities in the field of education of deaf students. Professionals are repeatedly asked their allegiances, and interventions are – sometimes hastily – evaluated according to this framework of educational approaches.

2.3 Deaf college students' contexts

This section will review studies on deaf college students' communicative competences, experiences of communication in classroom contexts, and the resulting opportunities for learning. As will be highlighted throughout this section, evidence points towards the utility of developing flexible communication competences and plural repertoires rather than single languages. The second part will review the specific conditions for deaf college students in England, including statutory frameworks and changes in identification of deafness and hearing amplification and enablement.

2.3.1 Deaf college students' learning and classroom experiences²

² This section has been partially reproduced in paper 2 (Chapter 6) of this thesis.

On leaving school, literacy in the dominant national language (e.g., English literacy) predicts enrolling in, but not completion of, post-secondary education. Predictors of success in college students are not so much audiological or single language abilities but communication flexibility (Convertino et al., 2009; Stinson et al., 1996). In contexts in which deaf students are educated along hearing peers, communicative competences (beyond mere language abilities) associated with academic success may include skills such as learning how to use an interpreter or an equivalent communication assistant, repair communication breakdowns and matching the register of their audiences (Antia et al., 2009). Similarly, Dammeyer, Lehane and Marschark (2017) found that for individuals who achieved college degrees, hearing aids or cochlear implants (i.e., speech perception) were not associated with attainment but the use of support services and devices like FM systems, mobile video interpreting and texting devices did.

Studies of classroom learning and communication at college level shows that deaf students can equally learn from directly signed instruction as from real-time text (Stinson, Elliot, Kelly & Liu, 2009), written texts (Borgna, Convertino, Marschark, Morrison & Rizzolo, 2011) or qualified interpreters (Marschark, Sapere, Convertino & Pelz, 2008). These last results must be taken with caution, as Marschark's studies on deaf college studies included highly educated students that may not be representative of wider d/Deaf populations. However, on average, deaf college students still are found to learn less from a signed lecture or texts than their hearing peers (Borgna, Convertino, Marschark, Morrison & Rizzolo, 2011).

Simultaneous Communication has been proposed for providing access to English as a second language (Mayer & Leigh, 2010) and as a useful backup system for students with cochlear implants (Knors & Marschark, 2012). Blom and Marschark (2015)

show a positive relationship between use of Simultaneous Communication and learning in situations with difficult material in deaf college students with cochlear implants. Compared to using an interpreter, whose relying of meaning will always be asynchronous, SimCom's subordination of signed languages to English structure provides a level of redundancy that is beneficial for when information is missed, misheard or novel (Blom & Marschark, 2015).

With all the changes to identification of deafness and hearing enablement and amplification (more on that later), deaf college students nowadays (in rich nations) are not the deaf students of the past. Of course, that does not make them hearing students (Raeve, 2015). There is cumulative evidence for deaf students' reading difficulties not merely being about reading and/or sensory access but reflecting different cognitive profiles (Marschark, 2009). Deaf college students overestimated their learning level as compared to hearing peers (Borgna, Convertino, Marschark, Morrison & Rizzolo, 2011). Also, deaf college students were found to be less likely than hearing peers to activate examples of general terms or concepts in taxonomic and world knowledge tasks. This affects their capacity for contrasting similar concepts, objects, situations or events and reflects a less coherent and consistent organisation of knowledge (Marschark, Convertino, McEvoy & Masteller, 2004). In sum, deaf students' success at learning in classroom environments requires more competences than languages use and perception, including executive function, working memory, and pragmatic skills, among others (Raeve, 2015).

Feeling understood and relaxed about communication supports deaf students' learning (Long, Stinson & Braeges, 1991). Interpreters are mentioned by deaf students as crucial to ease of communication and understanding of lecturers' concepts (Foster, Long & Snell, 1999). Interpreters are a frequent accommodation for deaf students in

post-secondary settings in the US and Australia, but less so in the UK (Marschark et al., 2005; Powell, Hyde & Punch, 2014).

Interpreters are constantly challenged when mediating communication between different parties for various reasons, including the need to mark contextual and indirect communication in the environment or lag time between source and target languages which leads interpreters to abbreviate (Cawthon, 2001; Foster, Long & Snell, 1999; Napier, 2004; Schick, Williams & Kupermintz, 2006). Also, the situation of interpretation produces divided attention as the deaf student must pay attention to the interpreter instead of, for example, the instructor manipulating objects or projecting visuals (Foster, Long & Snell, 1999; Powell, Hyde & Punch, 2014). When compared to deaf-only classrooms, deaf students in mainstream classrooms in post-secondary settings report being more sensitive to the pace of instruction and give more emphasis to avoiding communication breakdowns (Richardson et al., 2010).

Beyond academic attainment, there are no significant differences in perceived quality of life in deaf college students who use cochlear implants and privilege spoken language and those without cochlear implants and who prefer signed language. Hence, use of signed languages and cochlear implants need to be seen as mutually exclusive during adolescent and adult years (Marschark, Machmer, Spencer, Borgna, Durkin & Convertino, 2018). After all, deaf young adults (in rich countries) are more likely to function as bimodal bilinguals nowadays (Marschark & Lee, 2014).

Overall, access to a signed communication system or a natural signed language can be beneficial for deaf students with cochlear implants (Marschark & Lee, 2014; Raeve, 2015). For example, spoken words supported by signs (i.e., bimodal input) can strengthen speech perception (Giezen, Baker & Escudero, 2014). No single approach

can be beneficial for every deaf student given the populations' heterogeneity (Marschark & Lee, 2014). This stands in contrast with the ways languages are represented in educative settings' language ideologies (La Bue, 1995). This includes a divergence between observed complex, multimodal and multilingual practices, and a reductionistic ways of talking about languages, attributing identities, highlighting boundaries between languages, and immediately pairing audiological status with linguistic orientation and competence (Bagga-Gupta, 2010; Maxwell, 1985). Compensation strategies for these assumed differential competencies produce less opportunities for learning and simplified content, reproducing disadvantages (La Bue, 1995).

Having provided this general overview of deaf college students' communication experiences and opportunities for learning, the next section will focus on the English context for deaf college students.

2.3.2 Deaf college students in England

The situation of deaf students in England will be explained according to statutory frameworks defining their needs, along with technological intervention shaping deaf students' communication resources as well as their education experiences.

2.3.2.1 Statutory frameworks

Informed by discourses that understand deaf students as people with disabilities, the UK along with many countries have interpreted inclusion for deaf students as placement in mainstream settings (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2017; Murray et al., 2018; World Federation of the Deaf, 2018; UK Independent Mechanism, 2017, 2018). For example, the Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disability (CRPD) (UN General Assembly, 2007) emphasises full

inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream settings in the education system. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), however, acted as advisors for the CRPD, pushing for a 'sensory exception' in the Article 24 on education for considering deaf students' linguistic needs (BDA, 2014; WFD, 2019). Despite this, there are concerns that these exceptions are interpreted as promoting practices of content transmission and translation thus transferring responsibility for learning in mainstream settings to deaf students and their interpreters (Murray, Snoddon, De Meulder & Underwood, 2018; Snoddon & Murray, 2019).

In terms of language protection, the Equality Act (2010) in the UK provides support under the principle of reasonable adjustments, conferring d/Deaf peoples support not provided to other minority language users. The British Deaf Association (2014), while admitting the benefits of advocating for disability rights for accessing majority societies, also demanded a separate agenda for education and language issues. A disability rights perspective (usually but not always) focuses on accommodations for deaf individuals whereas minority language rights focus on communal aspects such as language recognition, bilingual education and communicative competence of social groups (Valente & Boldt, 2016; WFD, 2018).

Also, the UK government recognised BSL in the Department for Work and Pensions (2003) as an indigenous language among others, although did not provide for legal rights associate with this recognition (BDA, 2014) with the exception of Scotland where the BSL Scotland Act (2015) was passed. The bill goes beyond the concern for interpreters as stated in the Equality Act (2010) by recognising BSL as an indigenous language and not merely a communication support (Macpherson, 2015).

The rights of deaf students are therefore protected by different instruments, producing contradictions. For example, in 2017, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) in responding to the UK quinquennial report on progress made against the UNCRPD, echoed the UKIM (2017, 2018) and recommended, on the one hand, for placing more students with disabilities in mainstream settings in line with a disability rights perspective and, on the other, following language rights concerns, allocating more resources for BSL interpreters and BSL training for deaf children, their classmates, and families.

2.3.2.2 Changes in diagnosis and interventions

Between 2001 and 2006 England first, and then the UK as a whole, enabled a universal new-born hearing screening programme (NHSP), joining an international standard in rich countries in which deafness is identified within the first weeks of life, enabling intervention before one month of age (JCIH, 2019; Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 1998; Yoshinaga-Itano, 2003). In England, approaches to early intervention aimed at a shared or informed decision-making process. Parents or legal guardians receive advice from different professionals on matters of early language development to promote signed language, spoken language or both. They are also advised regarding educational placement, use of hearing aids or other hearing devices, and early cochlear implantation when deemed necessary (JCIH, 2013; Mehta et al., 2019; Morton & Nance, 2006; NDCS, 2016).

There are concerns, however, regarding the protection of an informed choice principle. Professionals might not make parents or legal guardians fully aware of the full range of choices, biasing the process and limiting opportunities for developed signed multilingual skills, thus reflecting a deficit conception of deafness (Young, Hunt, Carr,

Hall, McCracken, Skipp & Tattersall, 2005; Young, Jones, Starmer & Sutherland, 2005; Young, Carr, Hunt, McCracken, Skipp & Tattersall, 2006). The way professionals establish communication with parents is also likely to impact on the decision. Parents value good explanations, openness, inclusion in conversations between professionals and approachable styles (Tattersall & Young, 2006; Young & Tattersall, 2005). The system protects the parents' or caregivers' decisions over communication approaches as they do not show a bias towards any single approach (Young, Hunt et al., 2005), although they may require support in making sense of the information delivered to them (Young, Jones, Starmer & Sutherland, 2005).

Professionals in the system perceive the benefits for deaf children and their families, although they face varied challenges, including: (1) establishing inter-agency work with possible misinformation regarding the role of co-professionals (McCracken, Young, Tattersall, Uus & Bamford, 2005; Young, McCracken & Tattersall, 2005; Young, Tattersall, McCracken & Bamford, 2004); (2) variety in allocation for appointments and other practices (e.g., routine tests and referrals) that may reflect inequalities in service quality (Uus, Bamford, Young & McCracken, 2005); (3) need for more specialist training to work with deaf babies and their families (Uus, Bamford, Young & McCracken, 2005).

Promoting bilingualism in cochlear implant users is potentially beneficial as there is evidence of signed languages not interfering with, and actually promoting the development of spoken language in deaf children with cochlear implants (Davidson, Lillo-Martin & Chen Pichler, 2014; Uhlén, Bergman, Hägg, & Eriksson, 2005). There are reports of deaf children with cochlear implants and early access to sign language developing spoken language almost similar to norms for hearing children (Nelfelt & Nordqvist Palviainen, 2004) although some variance has been acknowledged (Uhlén

et al., 2005). While CIs produce a general shift towards spoken language communication, signed language continue to be used in a flexible and situational manner (Watson, Archbold & Nikolopoulos, 2006). Signed languages can still be part of the repertoires of deaf children with cochlear implants (Christiansen & Leigh, 2004; Cramér-Wolrath, 2013).

2.3.2.3 Post-secondary education of deaf students in England³

Most deaf students in England are currently educated in mainstream settings (including being in resourced provision, that is, a separate unit) rather than attending special schools (NDCS, 2019). After finishing mandatory secondary school education at 16 years old, further education (FE) disproportionately accounts for their next education and employment destination in comparison with hearing young people (NDCS, 2018; Young, Oram, Squires & Sutherland, 2015). FE in England can be defined as post-secondary education not provided in schools, sixth form colleges or higher education institutions, delivered both part-time and full-time, in some cases with practical skills apprenticeships incorporated. In England it is a legal requirement that young people stay in a programme of study, training, or employment until 18 years old (DfE, 2014).

The disproportionate number of deaf students attending FE when compared to hearing peers is attributed to many reasons, including: (1) an accumulated deficit in educational attainment that would prevent access to other educational and occupational options, (2) FE being recommended, by default, to those perceived to have learning difficulties in England, a category into which some deaf young people fall, (3) the perception of deaf students being unprepared for adult life, with FE

³ This section is partially reproduced from paper 2 (Chapter 6) in this thesis.

providing an opportunity for this transition. Indeed, FE may constitute a moment of change in deaf young people's lives, including the possibility of being educated along with other deaf peers for the first time in an educational environment that is other than a spoken language environment for the first time (Fordyce, Riddell, O'Neill & Weedon, 2013; Young, Oram, Squires & Sutherland, 2015; Young, Squires, Oram, Sutherland & Hartley, 2015). Research indicates that deaf students report a positive experience overall, although some perceive communication and learning support arrangements to be inflexible (Young, Oram et al., 2015). Analysis of attainment data shows that deaf young people in FE still under-attain relative to hearing peers in ways that cannot be explained by special educational needs alone. This implies that the way that education is arranged for post-16 years old deaf students may be an influential factor in their underperformance (Young, Squires et al., 2015).

In order to study deaf college students' literacies in a way that does not reproduce reductionist discourses and disadvantaging assumptions, the conceptual tools developed under the framework of translanguaging will be explored. As will be discussed in the next section, this provides a novel way of conceiving deaf students' resources for communication and learning in classrooms and beyond.

2.4 Translanguaging

Translanguaging as a term was first coined to describe the hybrid communication practices of Welsh students in a bilingual setting. The way they would change between languages, mixing certain elements of them, or move between different modalities of spoken and written language; all of this motivated the creation of a concept that would reflect the emphasis on the action of moving within and across languages for communicating, rather than respecting the boundaries of languages (Williams, 1994). The term 'languaging' comes from '*lenguajear*', a neologism coined by Maturana and

Varela (1984) in their effort for overcoming the idea that communication involves the transmission of abstract content from one end to another. Linguaging, instead, refers to a mutual linguistic-behavioural coordination throughout time. The phenomenon designated by translanguaging has already been named from other perspectives, creating the neighbouring concepts of flexible bilingualism (Creese & Blackledge, 2010), polylingual languaging (Jørgensen, 2008) or translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013), among others.

Translanguaging begins by recognising that the notion of separate languages as bounded entities might be insufficient for analysis of language use and language in action (Jørgensen et al., 2011) since the variety of signs being used for communication may not reflect languages as discrete sets of resources (Blackledge & Creese, 2014). The focus is on action over the elements that get clustered together when people communicate (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011).

This concept includes a critique of conceptions like code-switching since they focus on authorised codes and may neglect the diversity found within such codes (Bailey, 2012). Translanguaging also unsettles the idea of diglossic functional separation usually operating in conceptions of bilingualism or multilingualism (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; García, 2009). This also could have repercussion in notions of literacy, or even multiple literacies, as the concept entails mastery over discrete dominions of knowledge, usually defined by a system of signs or a mode having their own 'grammar' (e.g., Van Leeuwen, 2005).

Translanguaging shows synergies with other developments in human semiosis, like Goodwin's (2000) studies on semiosis during face-to-face human interaction. Goodwin (2000) describes how people inscribe different types of signs to sustain

communication, achieve some degree of mutual understanding and coordinating sequences of actions in *contextures of action*. This involves a layering of publicly available signs like technical vocabulary, pointing gestures and handshapes, systems of colour classifications and a general mutual visual orientation. It is the total recruitment and enmeshment of signs of different nature what allows people to coordinate their understandings and therefore their actions (Goodwin, 2000).

While translanguaging brings with it the opportunity of deeper attention to detail in face-to-face interaction, it also involves a recognition of how identities are forged referencing wider social worlds. Such is the project advanced by Blackledge and Creese (2014) who propose a relation between translanguaging and heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981). In this way, translanguaging also considers how different semiotic resources have a history of use, and how their deployment in human communication creates acts of mutual positioning through a process of ideological becoming (Blackledge & Creese, 2014).

Bringing translanguaging into classrooms aims to produce a resource against linguistic insecurity by attacking the myth of balanced bilingualism (Blackledge & Creese, 2014). The articulation with heteroglossia allows for understanding of how increasing the variety of resources used for communication also allows different worlds views and ideological positions to enter classroom dialogue (Blackledge & Creese, 2014). This indexicality of heteroglossia, or the reference to wider cultural worlds, is the link between the situated practice of (first order) languaging, and the experience of (second order) languages as recognisable bounded entities (Canagarajah, 2018; Thibault, 2011).

Translanguaging has been received with some ambiguity in the field of education of deaf students. On the one hand, it allows recognising how deaf individuals make fluid use of different sign systems on an everyday basis, including simultaneous or alternated use of signs, vocalisations, writing, enhanced gestures and mimic, highly iconic signs, or mouthing, among others (Kusters, 2017; Kusters et al., 2017). Translanguaging, therefore, represents an opportunity for avoiding conceptualisations of deaf individuals' skills through a deficit-oriented lens and provide potentially useful insights (Hoffman, Wolsey, Andrews & Clark, 2017). Recruiting deaf students' full repertoires could enhance their communicative interactions and therefore their involvement in learning activities (Swanwick, 2017); dichotomies between auditory and visual languages are thus considered spurious (Hoffman et al., 2017).

On the other hand, the call for more hybrid communication practices happens in the context of huge disparities in communication between hearing and deaf interlocutors, with the usual privilege of spoken language over other options. Promoting translanguaging practices, De Meulder et al. (2019) argue, could serve to re-inscribe the tacit dominance of speech by forcing deaf students to adapt to their interlocutors without asking for more balanced sign language skills on behalf of hearing students. Putting sign languages on an equal footing with other spoken and written languages could also threaten sign languages' protected languages status.

Also, the flexible use of multiple resources may echo the Total Communication programme, and its associated pitfalls, but it should not be equated with it. Neither is translanguaging a recasting of Simultaneous Communication or similar communication methods. Translanguaging aims at exploring the spontaneously occurring communicative interactions of deaf individuals and extrapolating its characteristics in a way that reflects their preferences and identities while promoting

dialogue conducive to learning (Swanwick, 2017). Focus on features of classroom dialogue from sociocultural approaches (e.g., Mercer & Littleton, 2007) indicate this turn to matters of interaction rather than language instruction (Swanwick, 2017).

Translanguaging is a relatively recent concept and still needs more exploration in the context of educating deaf students (Hoffman et al., 2017). One of the main tenets of a pedagogy of translanguaging is that the study of individuals' naturally occurring communication will produce insights on how teachers can promote the use of semiotic resources on classroom environments. This is a translation from translanguaging in its descriptive sense to its prescriptive applications (De Meulder et al., 2019). More in-depth studies of translanguaging are required if its value is to be judged for prescriptive applications in teaching and learning situations for deaf students.

2.5 Summary

This chapter outlines the context of deaf students' education, including wider discourses deafness and legal, communicational, and educational frameworks in operation.

This chapter began by stating the existence of multiple discourses for defining deaf individuals and their needs coexisting and potentially competing with one another. Medical discourses set deaf individuals against a hearing acoustic norm, emphasising constructions of deaf individuals as biologically deficient and requiring hearing normalisation. Disability discourses underpinned by the social model of disability placed emphasis on societies' social barriers for participation in mainstream spaces. Deaf culture discourses draw upon notions of ethnicity to uphold that Deaf communities should be considered cultural and linguistic minorities in need of legal

protection, including the protection of sign language and the promotion of deaf-only congregated education.

Aforementioned discourses inform approaches for educating deaf students that still have great weight as frames for classifying novel interventions. Oralist approaches in education are based on the removal of sign languages, the exploitation of residual hearing and the use of majority languages in their spoken and written modalities to access the curriculum. Total communication approaches, in turn, promoted deaf individuals' full spectrum of ways of communication to enter classrooms, including mixtures of spoken and signed languages among other resources. Bilingual bicultural approaches aim at giving equal status to signed and majority languages in their spoken and written modalities, but also differentiating them. The curriculum aims at promoting skills transfer between languages and analysing one language in terms of the other.

The context of deaf students' education is informed by existing knowledge of deaf students' classroom experiences, statutory frameworks, and existing technologies. Studies of deaf college students' classroom experiences show students facing challenges associated with using support services, like interpreters, and technologies, as well as attainment gaps in relation to hearing peers. Despite this, studies also show how deaf college students can benefit from developing multilingual and multimodal tools for communication and learning. After school, deaf students' communicative flexibility predicts academic success more than single language abilities.

Deaf individuals' intersectional identities produce legal gaps by having different legal instruments defining and protecting their rights. International agreements feed into national legislation with varied results. In the UK, although England does present

some measure of protection through sign language recognition (DWP, 2003) and the Equality Act (2010), Scotland presents stronger legislation for protecting sign language. Besides, while the UK has received suggestions for strengthening deaf students' mainstreaming, an individual case approach is still protected in the country.

Hearing technologies, including but not limited to neonatal hearing screening, hearing aids, and cochlear implants have created unprecedented opportunities for deaf individuals' multilingual and multimodal development. This may be threatened by bias in services to parents and legal guardians of deaf children, reflecting deficit conceptions of deafness and limiting deaf students' potential. Parental choice is privileged, producing an array of communication approaches to be enacted for deaf children.

Most deaf students in England go to FE colleges as a postsecondary educational route. FE colleges represent a turn in deaf students' lives given the possibility of being educated along with other deaf students after trajectories of mainstreaming and the opportunity for accessing more flexible communication approaches. In this context, deaf students report overall positive experiences but also perceive some inflexibility in communication arrangements and under attain when compared with hearing peers in ways that cannot be explained by special educational needs alone. This calls for inquiries on the role of colleges as sociocultural contexts that promote (or fail to) deaf students' learning and development.

Finally, translanguaging is discussed as providing a lens for analysing deaf students' multilingual and multimodal communication resources in ways that are not restricted to a conception of languages as bounded entities. Translanguaging provides a way of combating deficit notions of deafness and linguistic insecurity by critiquing myths of

balanced bilingualism, but also may unintentionally reproduce the dominance of speech over sign languages. The relatively recent emergence of translanguaging demands more descriptive studies of deaf students' communication to inform pedagogies of translanguaging.

This study aims at expanding the existing knowledge on deaf students' translanguaging and its consequences for learning, focusing on college-level students. With a special concern about differences in status and sensory orientation of people in deaf students' communication experiences, the main question guiding this study is: what is the role and status of different semiotic resources and people in deaf students' communicative practices and subjectivities?

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Chapter 3: Theoretical articulations

This chapter will be devoted to exploring theoretical articulations that may bring novel epistemic frameworks to the matters discussed. This will include a theoretical articulation based on concepts brought from perspectives that have only partially been explored in issues of deaf education.

The explanation of relevant theoretical approaches will focus on bringing together concepts from different approaches. Concepts, of course, are not isolated features of theory but bring with them logics for thinking about social constructs (Larraín & Haye, 2014). Thus, they will provide opportunities for developing general ways of reasoning while remaining focused on a few ideas from each approach. Possible contradictions produced by these overlaps will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

3.1 Phonocentrism: a poststructuralist perspective

Derrida (1967) critiques Western metaphysics' longing for presence in being by locating a phonocentric logic operating within it. The voice, and particularly the experience of *hearing-oneself-speak* – the hyphenation designating the immediacy of the reflexive movement –, is considered as a movement of auto-affection that grounds self-presence, bringing certainty and founding rationality. Consequently, any other mode of semiosis is degraded as derivative, a displacement that interrupts self-presence.

Derrida (1967) focuses particularly on the ideal of small communities, whose mutual presence to each other is secured by the ability to speak to one another, representing an ideal of immediate signification not contaminated by mediation. Writing particularly represents this intrusion of difference that suspends presence. Writing, however, also allows communication in situations of temporal and spatial

displacement, bringing some degree of presence. For Derrida, then, writing has the logic of the supplement. The supplement in Derrida (1967) is a *replacement*, taking the place of something else and marking its absence, and is also a *surplus*, it adds something that was not there, accumulating presence.

To elevate this matter to an ontological concern, Derrida (1967) works out the notion of *Arche-writing*, signifying the inscription of difference that produces a loss in presence, a self-presence that according to him has never taken place. To explain that last point we need to refer to *différance*, one of Derrida's (1967) most important and slippery concepts. *Différance* implies the constitution of being through the expulsion of difference. The reliance of being on that movement of expulsion means that difference remains both a threat to, and necessary for, being. The constitution of an identity requires expelling what is different, but since it is not sustained by an original presence, it has no guarantee other than that very expulsion. Therefore, for Derrida (1967), models of pure auto-affection are a chimera for there is no original perception, no immediate presence, only intermediaries.

Despite Derrida's (1967) focus was on writing, his critique of phonocentrism was extended by other scholars to critique the supposedly putative or derivative nature of signed languages in relation to spoken languages. For example, Bauman (2004) is particularly interested in the dethroning of speech and the expansion of 'writing' to include other forms of symbolically inscribing ideas (Bauman, 2004).

According to Derrida (1967), phonocentrism is a metaphysical grounding for ethnocentrism. This has important implications for a theory of audism, understood as the assumed superiority due to the ability to hear (Bauman, 2004). Derrida's (1997) description of communities of presence serves to clarify the extent of a critique to

phonocentrism as vital for Deaf studies: ‘the ideal profoundly underlying this [phonocentric] philosophy of writing is therefore the image of a community immediately present to itself, without difference, a community of speech where all the members are within earshot’ (p. 136). Phonocentrism has guided institutions such as medicine, education, and psychology in the construction of speech and phonetic writing as a norm and can be traced in some of the efforts for institutionalising oralism or mainstreaming (Bauman, 2004).

Myers and Fernandes (2010) have criticised Bauman’s (2004) adoption of phonocentrism in Deaf studies. Among their arguments, two are of major concern for this discussion. First, they reject an uncritical acceptance of Derrida’s (1967) characterisation of the whole Western metaphysics as phonocentric, considering that there are ways in which vision and text have been privileged (Myers & Fernandes, 2010). I cannot but agree with Myers and Fernandes (2010) in considering that Derrida (1967) might be overreaching. Yet, there are still traces of phonocentric thinking that can be found in ways people hierarchise languages or modes of communication, for example. This is the project proposed by García, Flores and Spotti (2017) in considering phonocentrism an ideology (amongst others) that can be traced in linguistic discourse and practices – and not necessarily being the only foundation of Western metaphysics (Derrida, 1967).

The second argument points at Bauman’s (2004) debatable substitution of signing for writing in Derrida’s (1967) critique of the privilege of speech (Myers & Fernandes, 2010). When Derrida (1967) subverts the hierarchy of semiotic systems, he proposes an alternative notion of writing, as was discussed earlier. This expanded notion of writing is not opposed to speech anymore, for it includes all the myriad ways of symbolic inscription. This ‘writing’ is opposed to signification as springing from a

fullness of presence mythically attributed to speech, rendering all other systems derivative (Derrida, 1967). Against Bauman (2004), this way of thinking does not necessarily render speech irrelevant but places it on equal terms with other systems of signification (Myers & Fernandes, 2010). I agree with this last point. However, unlike Myers & Fernandes (2010), I do not consider that this makes irrelevant the critique of phonocentrism that can be found in audism. Such plural notion of systems of signification can only be enacted via a thorough questioning of the hierarchies in languages and modalities as they are found in varied contexts. In other words, audism and the phonocentric critique do not need to produce an outright rejection of speech like in Bauman (2004), but they can still serve to critique the excessive dominance of speech over other forms of communication in d/Deaf peoples' lives.

3.2 Identity and ideology: Post-Marxist proposals

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) developed a theory for the discursive constitution of social identities as the core mechanism through which social demands are articulated and (counter)hegemonic blocs are sustained. Their proposal aims at destabilising modernist assumptions in Marxism, including notions of an epistemological access to truth and an ontological commitment with identities as expression of social positions (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

3.2.1 Identity (I)

Following Derrida's (1967) logic of *différance*, terms like 'the political' (Mouffe, 2013) or dislocation (Laclau, 2005) refer to an ever-present possibility of destabilisation that forecloses the final establishment of a social order and impedes the closure of social identities. Therefore, in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) proposal, identities are produced by the articulation of several elements, or signifiers, whose

identity becomes modified as they become articulated with one another. Crucially, identities obtain a precarious sense of unity by also being differentiated from other identities, which are then considered exterior to that identity (Laclau, 2005). These social borders are then discursively performed, reproduced, and safeguarded in interactions (Foyn, Solomon & Braathe, 2018).

A crucial point of their theorising is the role of empty signifiers, the ‘quilting points’ of the social (Laclau, 2005). Certain signifiers become partially devoid of meaning – their particularity – which allows them to represent and gather the meaning of other signifiers – obtaining a degree of universality (Laclau, 2005). They are what allows weaving together different social demands by struggling over the meaning of them and producing (counter)hegemonic social movements (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

While Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) project is usually associated with notions of populism that may be foreign to issues of education of deaf students, they offer an ontological mechanism for social identities that works independently of particular ontic contents attributed to it (Laclau, 2005), making it available for other social identities. Their conception of subjectivity resonates with issues of intersectional identities and their resulting overlapping or conflicting social demands. In other words, their conceptualisation brings a language for comprehending d/Deaf individuals’ simultaneous and intersecting belongings and the tension this produces (Corker, 1998).

A similar statement was explored by Padden and Humphries (1988) when explaining that the meanings for the signs DEAF and HEARING in Deaf communities in USA do not reflect their counterparts in English. Instead of being used to designate hearing statuses, they refer to conducts and behaviours in relation to social and cultural groups.

For example, the meanings of HARD-OF-HEARING are inversed: being VERY HARD-OF-HEARING means being closer to HEARING attitudes and behaviour, whereas being A-LITTLE HARD-OF-HEARING implies being closer to DEAF ones. In short, HEARING signifies a ‘not-us’, the major possible distance from a DEAF symbolic centre for understanding experience. The enactment of a Deaf identity after repeated experiences in which cultural affiliations are performed, and therefore social borders re-established, forms the base for multiple narratives of Deaf identity exploration processes (Young, Ferguson-Coleman & Keady, 2020). Despite this, some scholars reject the d/Deaf distinction in favour of more fluid and situational Deaf identities (e.g., De Clerck, 2010; Napier & Leeson, 2016).

3.2.2 Ideology

Laclau (2014) revisits the notion of ideology to propose a reinvention of it. The original discourse of ideological critique was based on modernist assumptions when proposing metaphors of ‘distortions’ or ‘false consciousness’ that aimed at unveiling an undistorted and true reality. Therefore, it presumed the existence of objectivist epistemologies and realist ontologies. This is because the identification of a set of beliefs as an ideology requires finding a point external to it from which the ideological critique may proceed. For Laclau (2014), however, the existence of a non-ideological standpoint in an extra-discursive reality is taken as the ideological phenomenon par excellence.

This reconsideration of ideology has two consequences. First, ideological critique is allowed again; it just needs to be resituated rather than discarded as a whole. Critique cannot be done from outside ideology itself but from an alternative ideological standpoint. Second, metaphors of ‘distortion’ do not need to be abandoned but

relocated. The distorted representation is one of an extra-discursive closure, of a totality sutured in itself without mediation. In that sense, for Laclau (2014) distortion is constitutive of social objectivity, giving the illusion of fullness in something that is essentially dislocated (Laclau, 2005): social units cannot be seen without the lenses of ideology. This discursive re-reading of ideology expands on previous logics of textualism found in Derrida (1967): texts always efface themselves in favour of what is being signified, conforming a blind spot, ‘the not-seen that opens and limits visibility’ (p. 163).

An invigorated and valid notion of ideology (Laclau, 2014) is relevant for sustaining research on language ideologies. Language ideologies trace the multiple and potentially contradictory ways in which people value languages in social settings, historically and politically situating the analysis of common sense-notions of languages. The idea of semiotic ideologies has also been proposed to broaden the scope of entities that can carry ideologies with them (Rosa & Burdick, 2017).

Language ideologies interrupt the idea of languages as objective and self-represented phenomena: there is no objective standpoint to analyse languages. Instead, language ideologies mediate processes of communication and identity formation (Rosa & Burdick, 2017). This concept opens many avenues for analysis, including: (1) exploring how certain linguistic forms come to be seen as superior to others (Rosa & Burdick, 2017), revealing the discrimination of language-minoritized groups (García, Flores & Spotti, 2017); (2) showing how linguistic forms come to be seen as representative of certain groups (Rosa & Burdick, 2017), or how certain identities come to be embodied through linguistic practices (García, Flores & Spotti, 2017); (3) critiquing the idea of languages as singular and bounded entities (García, Flores & Spotti, 2017) and rendering visible how thinking in terms of ‘authenticity’ can have

empowering or disempowering consequences (Rosa & Burdick, 2017); (4) mapping how social borders are symbolically constructed through languages in practices, activities, and policies, classifying individuals according to normative categories (Valdés, 2017).

Mobilising the concept of language ideologies is relevant for this study because it offers useful critiques for understanding deaf students' communicative practices. First, it offers a critique of the psychologization produced by analyses of language attitudes by connecting situated practices with broader sets of beliefs (Rosa & Burdick, 2017). Second, it recognises that educational institutions can reproduce language ideologies as centres of 'metapragmatic commentary' (Rosa & Burdick, 2017, p. 111), enforcing the domination of some languages over others by reproducing the integration to certain language communities (Valdés, 2017). Third, it considers how students may be unconsciously complicit with the undervaluation of their own languages to obtain higher power positions (Rosa & Burdick, 2017; Valdés, 2017). Finally, and particularly relevant for deaf students, is the recognition of phonocentrism as an ideology that oppresses d/Deaf peoples (García, Flores & Spotti, 2017) and how sign languages can be perceived as a threat to the standardisation of languages and, therefore, to belonging in communities (Bauman & Murray, 2017).

There is a branch of research on language ideologies specifically aimed at inquiring communities of deaf sign language users. In a special issue of *Language & Communication*, Snoddon and De Meulder (2020) reflect on how, in the field of sign language, the notion of 'ideologies' has been mobilised to explore discourses of 'endangerment' and 'vitality' on signed languages, including inquiries on what are the notions of language behind them, and who mobilise such discourses and for what purposes. Among the many themes that emerge from the papers that conform the issue,

there are some that are relevant for the discussion so far. First, sign language deprivation has often been connected with loss of cultural identity but less so with issues of health and development, including the lifelong cognitive effects of lack to an accessible first language (Murray et al., 2019). Second, sign language revitalisation has often been hastily equated with language documentation, without questioning the descriptive and ‘segregational’ linguistic ideologies that consider languages as countable entities (Snoddon & De Meulder, 2020). Documentation efforts that are usually preferred for their sense of scientific objectivity but may not help revitalise language communities (Braithwaite, 2020) and may position descriptive linguists who are outsiders to the community of sign language users as experts (Perley, 2012). Third, there is a continued circulation of discourses that put into question the value of sign languages in education (Snoddon & De Meulder, 2020) despite evidence of signed languages not interfering with the development of spoken languages (e.g., Davidson, Lillo-Martin & Chen Pichler, 2014). So-called inclusive education policies that isolate deaf children from each other may endanger sign languages (Snoddon & De Meulder, 2020) considering that transmission is usually horizontal (i.e., via peers) rather than vertical (i.e., via parents) (Hoffmeister, 2007; Webster & Safar, 2020).

3.3 Learning and identity: sociocultural theories

‘Sociocultural theories’ is an umbrella term for several theories under the influence of a school of thought developed in the Soviet Union, including the works of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1984).

3.3.1 Learning

The work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978) will be reviewed here to offer a substantive view on learning. *Thinking and Speech* (Vygotsky, 1962) is still considered today the core

of sociocultural ideas. In there, Vygotsky (1962) proposed that psychological functions can become mediated by signs (i.e., semiotic material, wider than 'signs' as in sign language). That is, signs can be used to direct and organise psychological functions. Signs can be used as artefacts for guiding or mediating psychological functions, providing with more conscious and voluntary control over them and inaugurating a knot between biological and cultural development in the individual. Psychological development in this picture is not individualist or prior to the social, as cultural artefacts guide development from the beginning (Valsiner, 2014).

Individuals find signs present in their social circumstances, already assigned with meaning by other people before they can give a personal sense to them. This is exemplified in *Mind in Society* (Vygotsky, 1978), where a baby's failed attempt at grasping an object is understood by adults as a pointing gesture, reaching the object and delivering into the baby's hands. The continued repetition of this scene allows the baby to slowly realise that their movement can be used for communicating with others, so the grasping movement directed at an object becomes a sign directed at other people. This serves to illustrate the law of genetic (i.e., evolutionary, in the sense of emerging) development, in which a psychological function appears twice in development: first, at the social or interpsychological level, and just later at the individual or psychological level.

This awareness of the social circumstances that promote development led Vygotsky (1962) to propose the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This concept appears more than once in Vygotsky's work (1962, 1978) and is accompanied by different definitions, which has led authors to diverge on its interpretations and consequences. Some authors emphasise that the ZPD signals the difference in competency between an activity carried out individually and one carried out with the

assistance of a more competent person. This led them to highlight the benefits of judging individual's competency during assisted work rather than solely on what individuals can do by themselves (e.g., Wells, 1996). Other authors emphasise ZPD as the intersubjective space that is created by joint work between asymmetrically skilled persons. In this way, the focus is on the effort of mutual attunement and the conditions for this level of intersubjectivity to be reached, so that the more capable person is able to contingently adjust their intervention to the dynamic needs of the less able person (e.g., Baquero, 2014; Mercer & Howe, 2012). While both notions indicate important aspects of the concept, it is the latter which will be of greater value for the present study.

The work of Vygotsky (1978) is relevant as an intervention to avoid the psychologization of learning, also referred to as methodological individualism (Wertsch, 1998). Paying attention at the social origin of psychological functions helps in dismantling dualisms in understandings of human development that reproduce disadvantaging assumptions (Burman, 2017; Valsiner, 2014). When studying the education of deaf students, this means challenging associated deficit notions. Also, Vygotsky's (1978) ideas like the ZPD demand a research agenda that re-contextualises deaf students' attainment gap in their social and communicative relationships in educational settings and to what extent they meet the intersubjective conditions for deaf students to fully appropriate different semiotic tools.

There have been previous attempts at connecting the field of education of deaf students with Vygotskian ideas. Zaitseva, Pursglove and Gregory (1999) explained that Vygotsky (1983) initially had a limited view on signed languages and did not considered it a proper tool for human development. At the same time, he grudgingly accepted oral education because it placed too much emphasis on developing spoken

language instead of developing other areas of education. During his late career, Vygotsky (1996) came to consider sign language a rich and complex language, considering deaf individuals' bilingualism a fact that needs to be mobilised in deaf education. Overall, Vygotskian rejection of deficit labels and his conception of how higher psychological functions arise in cooperation with other individuals could be used to promote a bilingual approach for deaf students (Zaitseva, Pursglove & Gregory, 1999).

Developing these ideas further, Skyer (2020) in a special issue of Vygotsky and deaf education in *American Annals of the Deaf*, interweaves Vygotsky's ideas on deafness and education with contemporary theory and knowledge. This allows Skyer (2020) to propose three Vygotskian principles for an optimistic framework of deaf pedagogy and five propositions about deaf development. Briefly, the three principles are: (1) positive differentiation – important changes occur within the first weeks and months of life and deaf children need their early natural expressions of learning promoted and expanded, including the development of signed languages; (2) creative adaptation – sociocultural contexts need to innovate adaptations to activate the abilities of deaf children via purposeful action and the creation of special cultural tools; (3) dynamic development – divergences in development demand changes to physical settings and modes of language and communication.

Moreover, Skyer's (2020) five propositions about development are: (1) biosocial proposition – the biological individual and the social environment form a 'single unified entity' (Skyer, 2020, p. 13) making deafness an interlocking biological and social condition; (2) sensory delimitation and consciousness proposition – meaningful interactions must be attuned with the sensory limits of deaf individuals to develop consciousness and cognition, making the problem of speech perception secondary to

the issue of language and consciousness development; (3) adapted tool proposition – parents and teachers must develop other cultural tools that can enlist other functions from the biological line of development to ensure the development of higher psychological functions; (4) multimodal proposition – modes of discourse must be accessible, plural and configured to sensibilities, making multimodality a ground for deaf pedagogy, including oral, written and signed modes. This idea includes an explicit connection with translanguaging (Kusters, Spotti, Swanwick & Tapio, 2017) that is not further elaborated; (5) conflict proposition – contrasting ways of being and knowing found in deaf ontogenesis means that deaf children will be at the crossroads of different valuations of deafness and therefore of ethical pathways, producing axiological conflict.

In this way, Skyer (2020) points out that Vygotsky-inspired ideas can support a positive and creative perspective on deaf individuals' capabilities, with an emphasis in an integrated multilingual and multimodal approach for learning. At the same time, Skyer (2020) stressed that Vygotsky's (1993) initial ideas in his *Defectology* must be placed in the ideological context of his era, in which speech was equated with language and visual modes of communication seemed to condemn individuals to concrete thinking.

3.3.2 *Identity (II)*

Bakhtin (1984 a) made human dialogue his main concern, focused on how true dialogue revolves around an encounter of different ideological viewpoints. The utterance, his unit of analysis, is a position-taking effort in discourse, and must be distinguished from the utterance as a linguistic or grammatical unit of analysis (Bakhtin, 1981). This led Marková (2003) to propose a crucial distinction between

dialogue and dialogicality. There are situations that could involve dialogue between persons without dialogicality, as in a conversation in which parts are in mutual agreement from the beginning. Dialogicality, in turn, is the point of encounter between different ideological positions. There could be dialogicality without actual dialogue, as in a person critically reading a book or an individual's cognitive tribulations at constructing an argument considering all the possible contrary points of view (Larraín & Moretti, 2011).

The utterance, then, involves a variety of points of view converging in a single unit. Bakhtin develops this idea through the concept of voice, which indicates the specific accents, valuations or inclinations that are contained in signs. When people produce discourse about something, including themselves, that object has already been evaluated from multiple perspectives or positions. This is referred to as the heteroglossic background operating in the construction of every utterance (Bakhtin, 1981). Every act of semiosis cannot but rely on discourse, borrowing other's words with their voices, making every word half someone else's. Individuals' discourse, including self-definitions of any kind, is always already populated by others' voices. Blackledge and Cresse (2014) emphasise this indexicality in heteroglossia, as every sign or word has a particular tone or inclination that signals wider social groups and symbolic worlds.

The construction of every utterance, as a positioning effort in discourse, is therefore dialogical in a double sense. Oriented to the past, it produces answerability, for it stands as a reply to previous points of view that have evaluated an object of discourse. Oriented to the future, it is an effort of addressivity, for it is also directed at possible alternative points of views that might emerge for defining that object of discourse from their own perspective (Bakhtin, 1984 a). In a rather paradoxical sense, every utterance

as a positioning effort in discourse is a single movement, for it implies a particular event, but brings together multiple voices or perspectives, relying on them in different ways – in agreement, in partial dispute, in complete disagreement, in mutual ignorance, among others (Haye & Larraín, 2011).

The inclusion of Bakhtin's work in fields beyond literature is contentious given how the core of his analyses were developed for studying a literary work (Bakhtin, 1984 a). The inclusion of these ideas in the present study relies on a reading hypothesis: literature was the privileged means through which Bakhtin (1984 a) could express his ideas but by no means is restricted to this field and can be read in the context of wider philosophical issues (Renfrew, 2015). For example, one of his late essays, *The Problem of the Text in Humanities* (Bakhtin, 1987) attest to how his notion of voice serves to argue why the object of analysis in humanities must not be conceived as the voiceless object of natural sciences.

Heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) is particularly relevant for understanding the multiple background of discourses operating in the (self)construction of deaf individuals and their needs. When deaf individuals produce utterances – that is, when they take positions in discourse – they address wider discursive fields, adding tension to their constructions. Deaf individuals' work of crafting their own identities in such fields means that their discourse is full of multiple and sometimes contradictory voices.

There have been incursions onto Bakhtinian ideas in the field of sign language studies previously. Kincheloe (2015) analyses ASL poetry to go beyond the linguistics of BSL poetry. Despite the challenge of using an author that holds print-based assumptions of what constitutes a text, Kincheloe (2015) appreciates Bakhtin's (1993) ethics of embodied subjectivity for understanding an embodied language like ASL. Her

theorisation emphasises the ‘imageword’, a visual and linguistic unit of meaning. Also, in a dialogical conception, words do not appear out of thin air but are placed in wider contexts of interlocution, ‘a larger, if stratified, cultural conversation’ (Kincheloe, 2015, p. 119). This makes signed utterances part of a chain of others’ expressions, establishing textual, verbal, and visual quotations.

A recent special issue of *Bakhtiniana: Revista de Estudos do Discurso* was focussed on dialogism and translation in signed languages. The editorial (Nascimento, 2018a) draws on Bakhtin’s (1984 b) book on Rabelais to focus on the idea of the Great Time – that is, how translation allows dialogue throughout cultures and time by allowing utterances to transcend their languages and socio-historical contexts and contrast with other points of view. In this sense, translated utterances outgrow their original meaning since new dialogical relationships imbue them with new meaning.

The articles in the issue iterate a series of connected main ideas, which include: (1) interpretation and translation do not merely transport meaning from one language system to another but also imply contact between people, cultures, and ideological points of view. Thus, interpreters perform several kinds of mediation simultaneously (Albres & Rodrigues, 2018; Fomin, 2018; Nascimento, 2018b; Santos & Lacerda, 2018); (2) subjectivity and utterances are constructed in relation to otherness, and they cannot be completed but in relation to an Other. This gives utterances a directionality that shapes in advance how they are constructed. Metaphors of “excess of perspective” are mobilised to explain how what the other can see in me that I cannot see myself is what allows to complete me. This completion, then, is always performed differently (Nascimento, 2018b); (3) a critique to separation of studies of verbal and visual communication and a search for the verbal-visual character of sole utterances (Fomin, 2018); (4) the interconnection of spheres of interlocution, making utterances in

concrete discursive situations mobilise discourses from other spheres of language use and therefore produce wider reverberations (Fomin, 2018; Nascimento, 2018b). This is especially relevant in a context in which signed languages have not been recognised as proper languages, confining Deaf communities to small cultural spheres instead of participating in the Great Time of human culture (Nascimento, 2018a).

3.3.3 Learning and identity

Holland et al. (1998) proposed a creative appropriation of Vygotsky and Bakhtin's ideas, in articulation with other authors such as Foucault and Bourdieu, for their Figured Worlds theory in the field of anthropology. They view social and cultural worlds in which people inhabit as Figured Worlds, that is, as relatively shared social imaginaries that give meaning to individuals' actions and cultural products. An often-cited definition of Figured Worlds is 'socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others' (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). This includes both the narratives that circulate, and that people find for crafting their narrative identities, and the power relationships that differentially distributes scales of status in positional identities (Holland et al., 1998).

The most innovative contribution of Holland et al. (1998) lies in understanding identity as a sign, which allows them to bring Vygotsky's (1962) and Bakhtin's (1984) ideas together. People craft their identities from experiences, cultural artefacts, socially available narratives or genres, and a myriad of other resources. All these resources bring voices with them, ideological positions with their distinct social accents, making people to conceive themselves from socially available viewpoints. The sign-like function of identity implies that people use that identity to guide their

own behaviour, favouring certain courses of action and dismissing others, providing them with a modicum of agency. In other words, identity allows higher psychological functions (Vygotsky, 1978) to operate, for they rely on socially obtained signs that are progressively internalised and produce a more conscious and voluntary control over actions. This last point is crucial for understanding why Figured Worlds (Holland et al., 1998) provides a theory that is useful for exploring the impact of social and cultural worlds in subjectivity, the production of identities, and how they are mobilised for learning: whether they produce learners that are eager, reluctant, in favour, resistant, or unmoved, among others. Also, it helps explain why the mobilisation of resources and languages for communication is not merely a matter of instrumentality, because it performs a 'theory of the person' (Holland et al., 1998), positioning the individual in social and cultural worlds.

Sociocultural theories have been mobilised to inaugurate a powerful programme of research and intervention in education. This has had two major focuses. On the one hand, there has been a focus on the communicative conditions that are conducive to learning, springing from the recognition that individuals learn to think by being called out to explain themselves and, in doing so, encounter other points of view (Wegerif, 2011). Promoting exploratory talk, a dialogue to explore and contrast different points of view on the same matter, allows for the emergence and resolution of socio-cognitive conflicts (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). This involves learning to think from others' perspectives and even from culturally existing but absent voices (Wegerif, 2011). At the same time, it is crucial to establish a sense of intersubjectivity and a shared conception of the task at hand, so communicative partners are not only interacting but also interthinking. In this way, social or intermental activity grounds the development of intramental higher functions and capabilities (Mercer & Howe, 2012; Wells, 1996).

On the other hand, Wertsch (1998) has made a call for analysing learning by taking mediated action as the unit of analysis. This includes a compound of agent, cultural tool and action, situated in cultural, institutional, and historical contexts (Wertsch, 1998). Also, for Wells (1996), cultural tools and artefacts embody the knowledge of others involved in their production. Therefore, mediated action has multiple and often conflicting simultaneous goals since the goals of agents do not necessarily reflect the goals of mediational means.

The sociocultural programme has been barely considered for analysing deaf students' education and learning (e.g., Bagga-Gupta, 2010; Skyer, 2020). Swanwick (2017) has explicitly drawn on sociocultural ideas for re-invigorating bilingual education programmes for deaf students through a translanguaging lens. This produces a new focus for deaf education: instead of extending the concern for individuals' dominion of named languages, it aims at producing classroom dialogue conducive to learning (Swanwick, 2017). To understand the potentialities brought by this conjuncture, the next section will explain what translanguaging means, how it has been applied for understanding the education of deaf students, and what are the promises as well as dangers that the term carries for research and practice with d/Deaf peoples.

3.4 Theoretical polemics

True dialogue – a dialogue that not merely reinstates consensus with different accents but one that assumes adding voices, unsettling the possibility of a final consensus – requires exploring the points of contention as well as coincidence between the different perspectives brought into discussion (Bakhtin, 1984). To honour this principle, the following presentation of theoretical perspectives will deal with such controversies by bringing them to the fore.

3.4.1 Polemic 1: Semiosis beyond languages

Translanguaging opens an important critique to theoretical frameworks that consider languages the sole model for understanding human meaning-making. This could be a relevant constraint in sociocultural frameworks. Vygotsky (1978) was more focused on speech and verbal thinking, although his concept of cultural tool is flexible enough to allow for other elements to become signs for human meaning-makers. Bakhtin (1984) also narrows down his analysis to language in his project of ‘metalinguistics’, although he concedes the possibility of dialogical relations being established by other semiotic materials, such as images – they just exceed metalinguistics.

Here, the work of Linell (2009, 2014) might be illuminating given their effort for expanding the notion of meaning. An uneasy appropriation of Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) phenomenological ideas allows Linell (2014) to refer to ‘sense’ as a form of semiosis that encompasses more than language to include bodily semiosis, reserving ‘meaning’ for analyses focused on language only. However, this distinction still cannot capture the way signed languages mobilise embodied resources for verbal communication, collapsing the distinction between sense and meaning thus proposed. Haye and Larraín (2011) may offer a better notion when considering that utterances are events or single acts of positioning in discourse. What matters is not so much the semiotic composition of the utterance, which can include myriad semiotic resources encompassing multiple perspectives, but the production of a discursive positioning effort.

3.4.2 Polemic 2: Locating the semiotic repertoire

Translanguaging makes use of the notion of ‘repertoire’ to refer to an individual’s total set of semiotic resources that can be used in communication. Thus, repertoires might be tacitly assumed to reside within the individual. This has been explicitly discussed

in translanguaging theory by Li (2011), who stresses that ‘language varieties and language choices are subjective and exist in the mind of individuals’ (p. 1224).

This assumption is problematic for a project committed to post-dualist developmental accounts (Burman, 2017) and sociocultural theories (Vygotsky, 1978) since it creates rigid distinctions between the individual and social levels of analysis. A key assumption in dialogical approaches is that signs are not subjective but social through and through (Linell, 2009). For Voloshinov (1973), signs emerge only in social interaction and

every sign, as we know, is a construct between socially organized persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore, the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction. (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 21)

This resonates with Goodwin’s (2011) notion of ‘cooperative semiosis’: languaging and meaningful action are constructed “on top” of others’ contributions to a pool of publicly available signs. Repertoires are thus a dynamic, ever-changing property of human interaction. Although individuals come to exert dominion over certain repertoires, they do so after encountering them in interaction with others. Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck’s (2005) notion of space as both pre-situational and situationally produced is also relevant. Environments organise regimes of language that impact on individuals’ capacities. Language use is affected by discursive genres, participation frames, material and symbolic resources available, among others. These contexts of interlocution are what give directionality to utterances, shaping them in advance (Bakhtin, 1984; Nascimento, 2018).

This spatial orientation also echoes Canagarajah (2018) notion of translingual practice. When practices stop being abstract and individualised and become situated, they are open to uncertainty and creativity. In particular, the idea of spatial repertoires (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) links repertoires developed in individual trajectories to the places in which they are deployed. While this thesis does not necessarily share Canagarajah's (2018) assumptions of space or resources as agentic in themselves from a vitalist perspective (e.g., Barad, 2007), Canagarajah (2018) offers a frame for understanding space as shaping, and being shaped by, human interaction and social life.

Canagarajah (2018), however, stresses the distributed practice of translanguaging, favouring in situ repertoires over individual ones. Avoiding such individual/social dualisms (Burman, 2017), this thesis stresses that individual repertoires must be considered the developmental accomplishment of a trajectory of participation in communication experiences, in which spatial repertoires have been repeatedly co-established, allowing for the internalisation (Vygotsky, 1978) of such meaning-making practices. Individual repertoires are a sedimented practice that have dynamic, situated, and shared repertoires as their antecedent.

A few consequences of this notion are that repertoires are not an issue of the speaker but for the speaker – they must find creative ways of semiosis within social and environmental opportunities and constraints. Also, linguistic competence cannot be judged abstracted from communicative situations and ethnographies can be helpful in describing spaces and assessing what they can afford (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005). This is why a more explicit conceptualisation of the repertoire was required for this project, showing the need to map the contexts of interlocution

that shape deaf students' semiotic repertoires during social and communicative interaction.

3.5 Summary

This chapter was focused on performing a conceptual review that may illuminate alternative ways of constructing knowledge about issues of education of deaf students and of translanguaging, avoiding the reproduction of deficit notions of deaf students' skills.

The concept of phonocentrism provided a critical view on hierarchical views of semiosis that put sign and written communication as derivative of, and therefore inferior to, the spoken word – the supposedly ultimate warranty of metaphysical presence. Instead, *différance* is proposed as the principle that simultaneously enables and destabilises semiosis via the perpetual diffusion of meaning through signifiers. This concept therefore provides a language for considering the role and status of semiotic resources, as stated in the main research question.

This epistemological critique is continued in the notion of identity from a post-Marxist perspective: identities obtain a spurious sense of stability by constructing social and discursive borders; differentiating themselves from other identities and occluding the precarity of such borders. This is the point of view of ideology, a founding distortion that enables social objectivity, giving the illusion of fullness to essentially dislocated identities. These concepts will be particularly relevant for analysing the dynamics of subjectivity stated in the main research question.

Sociocultural theories provide resources for considering the origin of individual psychological functions in social interaction, dismantling dualisms and methodological individualism. This has critical consequences for education, as

reflected in the multiple meanings associated with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which turns the focus from the abilities of isolated individuals to the communicative conditions that promote mutual understanding and progressive appropriation of cultural tools as the basis for learning. Therefore, these conceptual tools are particularly relevant for understanding observed interactions, which is one of the key concerns of this study.

Dialogism gives a second layer to notions of identity, by emphasising individuals' emergence from shared social and symbolic worlds, from which they craft original positions in a paradoxical way: people create a personal position by using someone else's words. Identities, then, can be understood as particular movements of self-objectification in discourse that recruit socially available points of view, allowing people to take a stance and acquiring a modicum sense of agency. These concepts point at the background of multiple voices (i.e., social valuations) that pervade individual's positioning in discourse, making their creation a matter of social dynamics

The final section of this chapter dealt with possible contradictions between the conceptual traditions that were brought together in this study. These discussions allowed for conceptual finesse by clarifying, for example, the status of languages in discussions over semiotic repertoires in translanguaging, or the (often implicit) nature of the semiotic repertoire. A renewed focus on ideological tensions and social interaction was allowed by exploring these polemics.

After reframing research questions through exploring relevant theoretical issues, the next chapter will outline the methodological decisions and procedures that were mobilised to produce knowledge and answer the research questions.

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Chapter 4: Methodological procedures

This chapter will outline the methodological procedures of this study. By following an ethnographic approach, analytical work was extended over different stages, including prior to contact with college and posterior to the final interviews with participants. Exposition will begin with the process of obtaining access to college and initial contact with gatekeepers.

4.1. Analyses prior to contact with participants

Ethnographic projects include a series of writing genres researchers are expected to comply with to be recognised as ethnographers (Atkinson, 1990). This includes a register of the first contacts with gatekeepers, potential participants, and other relevant actors. This way, ethnographic analyses begin prior to what is considered ‘data production’ from other approaches, making analytical stages fuzzier and more layered (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This counters the agricultural metaphors usually brought into research practices (Burman and MacLure, 2011) – going ‘out’ to the ‘field’, to ‘collect’ ‘data’ as it were already present –, showing how they serve to obstruct the active role of the researcher and their conceptual apparatus, feeding fantasies of objectivity.

My reflective journal entries included relatively cohesive narratives of initial encounters, representing crucial moments for reflecting on acceptance into physical and symbolic spaces and how social borders were enacted. The passport metaphor provided by one of my supervisors was useful to ponder the different instances in which my presence was being acknowledged and assessed in its pertinence, and in how I needed to receive different “stamps” to continue my contact process. Indeed, the process of accessing Mill Town College [pseudonym] included relying on the informal consent of many people beyond the formal consent of my participants: direct

contact with security guards, receptionists, office staff, communication support workers (CSWs), tutors, and indirect contact with managers at different levels.

The process of accessing the first few Deaf key informants in Northern England is detailed later in paper 1 (Chapter 5). While that paper reflects deeply on the symbolic structuring of Deaf cultural worlds as I encountered them prior to contacting Mill Town College, it omits the process of accessing college itself. This is what will be narrated now in detail.

One of the first efforts at contacting college staff was through an e-mail address provided to me by my then BSL Level 1⁴ Deaf teacher. After a few weeks without reply, I managed to visit college during an open day aimed at prospective students. The visit allowed me to have a face-to-face encounter with staff members at the Deaf Support office with the opportunity of explaining in my own words the project instead of solely relying on a document. Deaf Support oversaw the needs assessment of deaf learners within college, arranging support with other staff, applying for public funding, and providing one-to-one tutorials when deemed necessary. The heads of the Deaf Support office were qualified Teachers of the Deaf with BSL knowledge. Staff members Rose and Diane [pseudonyms] were my main gatekeepers in the institution. Their reply after a few days was positive and allowed engagement in the first round of mutual negotiations of what I would be doing in college, with whom, and in which spaces. Rose and Diane helped me to find suitable candidates that later were invited to participate, providing students with an early explanation of who I was that was

⁴ BSL learners are awarded certification from Levels 1 to 6, with 1 being equivalent to introductory level and 6 certifying complex language use.

followed by my own signed and spoken description of the study and why I wanted them to become participants.

Therefore, access was a continuous process throughout my study. For safeguarding reasons, I was not allowed to be on my own inside college, which made me dependant on other members of staff to circulate around the building. College staff was aware, however, that I had undergone police checks through the University ethics application. The usual process involved arriving at the Deaf Support office a few minutes before classes began and waiting there for Diane and/or Rose to pair me with the Communication Support Worker (CSW) that was going to support the deaf student that I would observe during that class. CSWs would therefore need to approve my presence, and during the brief talk we could afford as they guided me through halls and stairs to the classroom, I would explain why I was there. I always perceived a sense of relief from them after I explained that my task was observing deaf students, not assessing their work as CSWs. Arriving at the classroom, the CSWs usually would take the initiative of quickly explaining to the 'tutor' – a title received by teachers and mentors in that college – that I was there on behalf of Deaf Support to observe the deaf student's work. Generally, that was enough, and they quickly would appear to forget my presence in classroom, but when tutors felt they needed more information, they would briefly approach me so I could explain a bit more. This adds another process of access that involved the tutor's repeated acquiescence to my presence in the class. Deaf students would also somehow assess my presence when we could engage in a brief chat prior to classes.

The process of this continuous informal consent⁵ unfolded slightly differently when I was going to observe classes for deaf-only groups. The classroom was usually next to or in front of the Deaf Support office, so I did not need to rely on a CSW to get there. This also required that I had the time to get to the classroom a few minutes before classes started and students arrived, so I had a few minutes to talk with the deaf tutor and explain in my terms why I was there and what were my objectives.

As access was continuously confirmed during the research process, my analytical attention could be more focused on the phenomenon of interest. Initially regarded as ‘literacy’, it went through a series of transformations that will be detailed in the next section.

4.2. Adjusting the analytical lens

This project began as a study of deaf students’ literacies. Based on previous research experiences (Lissi et al., 2017), the project began with the assumption that deaf individuals are not necessarily aware of the breadth and scope of their literacy practices and tend to view their own practices in a restricted way, considering themselves as ‘not-readers’ and evading literacy activities.

These assumptions proved to be fruitful for the initial framing of the study but were further developed to consider other aspects of the phenomenon. The following section will describe the steps by which the re-focusing of the main phenomenon was developed.

4.2.1 Three steps in re-focusing the main phenomenon

⁵ This study already had undergone a formal process of ethical approval by the University’s

Proportionate UREC committee, reference number 2018-4625-7510.

Supervision meetings prior to contact with college were the first source of challenge. My supervisors invited me to challenge the idea of ‘literacy’ as comprising a single set of skills usually associated with competence in written language. This could, and has in effect, occluded other literacies that represent relevant competences in deaf sign language users’ education (Czubek, 2006). The idea of ‘Signed literacies’ or ‘Sign Language literacy’ started the first displacement from literacy to literacies, in the plural. This created a new sense of purpose for my project, as it would not only be about the place of written language in deaf students’ practices but, drawing on notions of multiple literacies and social practice (Barton et al., 2007), it would explore how those multiple literacies were to be enacted, promoted, silenced, talked about, and conceptualised in college settings, and whether they were related to one another in mutually supportive, partially conflictive, or mutually exclusive ways.

The act of situating accounts of deaf students’ learning processes in their college context (including people, their actions, norms, and knowledges) can be interpreted as part of a broader strategy of situating developmental accounts. This entails a spatial localisation in the social and cultural context of development, such as the ones proposed by Vygotsky (1962) and subsequently carried out by followers of the sociocultural perspectives (e.g., Valsiner, 2014). Such project establishes critiques of methodological individualism (Wertsch, 1998) and allows an extension of the deconstruction of atomistic and Cartesian notions of the subject (Burman, 2017). This sociocultural situating includes highlighting power relationships and their crucial influence in learning and development, accepting the moral-political aspect of research agendas and doing away with isolated units of development. This refusal to isolate is driven by the objective of undoing the ways in which learning and developmental achievements are usually narrated (Burman, 2020).

This second step in refocusing the main phenomenon in this study happened during the first series of contacts with Mill Town College staff and the process of recruiting participants, framing the explanation of the project to them. The emphasis on how deaf students mix an array of resources was very attractive for Deaf Support staff at college, as they mentioned they were trying to promote an approach to communication that emphasised not the predominance of one language or the other, but the adaptability to different communicative situations. In that sense, this framing of the research topic acted as a pass that allowed me not only to enter college, but also to count on staff support in arranging the process – it provided, as it were, one of the many stamps in my passport.

Subsequent conversations with my supervisors would spark a third step as well in the focussing of the phenomenon. One of them mentioned the concept of ‘translanguaging’ and why it is emerging in the field of education of deaf students (Swanwick, 2017). As I was still pondering whether to take it as a leading concept, I was producing the first ethnographic notes as I was observing deaf students’ communication and learning strategies. In a timely fashion, thinking in terms of translanguaging helped me to produce finer (i.e., more discriminating) accounts of what was going on, describing not only whether one or the other language was being used, but which resources. The flexible and multiple ways in which deaf students communicated on an everyday basis lent themselves easily to being described according to a translanguaging framework.

Throughout all this process of transition between concepts, research questions were modified but maintained this division between practices and subjectivities. This assumption found echo in the theoretical distinction performed by Figured Worlds (Holland et al., 1998), between identities and practice as two sides of the same coin

and in the ideological processes of alienation in which oppressed people cannot recognise themselves in their creations (Marx, 1844). In that sense, this distinction also aims at producing a point of triangulation that is expected to produce a fruitful tension in analysis.

4.2.2 Learning BSL as apprenticeship

The narration of the process of adjustment would not be complete without reference to my status as a learner of British Sign Language (BSL). At the time of beginning my visits to Mill Town College I was finishing my BSL Level 2 course. That means that I was expanding my signed vocabulary but was not necessarily able to grasp BSL at the level of its linguistic structure – I could sign and understand signing in a way that would follow English order rather than proper BSL order. While this enabled some level of signed communication, my capacity for grasping the nuances in how deaf students modified their signing according to situations and interlocutor was limited. At the time of writing this fragment I have finished my Level 3 course and I am better prepared for observing that phenomenon in the transcriptions and interview videos. For example, I can appreciate how Matt, during his interview, would vocalise an English word for every sign, something that was not observed during other circumstances and probably points at my presence as a hearing person who would supposedly benefit from spoken language added to signs. This act of translanguaging, in adding a semiotic resource to another, leaves the overall linguistic structure of BSL untouched in terms of sign order but somehow ‘flattens’ Matt’s discourse, rendering it less spatial and more linear.

This also means that my access to BSL conversations between deaf students in classrooms, particularly when involved fast paced and rather informal signing, was

also capped and therefore was less represented in ethnographic notes than practices associated with Signed Supported English (SSE) that are closer to Level 2 signing. This throws light on another recursive aspect of my project – the development and deployment of my own semiotic resources for understanding deaf students' semiotic resources. Furthermore, linguistic knowledge of BSL was not merely instrumental in communication with deaf students. It was a crucial way of understanding how a sign language works as an instrument for meaning making and how it relates to (or diverges from) spoken and written languages. This perspective would not have been possible if I had relied on an interpreter during the process.

After this description of the process of access and analytical refinement, the next section will describe who were the deaf students that accepted to join the study.

4.3. Participants

Five deaf college students accepted to participate in this study. Their names were replaced by pseudonyms chosen by them, except for Matt who did not seem interested in choosing a pseudonym and left the task to me. All five of them agreed to partake in observations but only four of them agreed to be interviewed. Derick, the only deaf student that was reluctant to being interviewed, asked for an explanation on why he would benefit from participating in interviews. A special visit was arranged, which was used to explore what kind of questions I would ask during the interview. After answering a few questions and receiving a brief feedback on why I thought his answers were interesting, he remained reluctant and decided not to join the interview aspect of the study. This was a stark contrast with Matt, who volunteered to join as soon as college staff explained that this study was aimed at benefiting other deaf people in the future.

The participants comprise a rather varied group of deaf students within a single college, which is coherent with the diversity found within d/Deaf populations (Young & Temple, 2014). They have different backgrounds, have had different experiences with languages and even different countries of precedence. Matt differs particularly in terms of age. While other participants are 18 and 19 years old, he is 29. He explained during the interview his past failed experiences in previous colleges, and therefore partially shares with other participants a feeling of starting (again) college life. Therefore, what unites participants in a stronger sense, are two main characteristics: they are deaf students at college level and are English and BSL users – to different extents. To see a summary of participants’ information, please refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' information

	Katniss	Derick	Adam	Sam	Matt
Deafness	Profound	Profound	Profound	Profound	Profound
Age	19	19	18	18	29
Hearing technology	Bilateral hearing aids	Unilateral cochlear implant	Bilateral cochlear implant	Unilateral cochlear implant	Unilateral cochlear implant
Country of origin	Afghanistan	England	England	England	England
Family	Multilingual hearing	No info.	Multilingual hearing	English-speaking hearing	English-speaking hearing

The adequate number of participants for a qualitative study is a matter of discussion since the criteria is usually not defined in statistical terms but rather in terms of

opportunities for exploring variations of a phenomenon of study, favouring a purposeful sampling procedure rather than a randomised one (Charmaz, 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Krause, 1995). Therefore, what mattered the most for conducting research was the definition of an experience of interest (Young & Temple, 2014). This opens a contentious aspect of research with d/Deaf peoples since, as was developed in Chapter 2, there is no single way of being ‘deaf’ (Young & Temple, 2014), as there are many different discourses that provide standpoints for self-definition (Ladd, 2003).

The criteria of inclusion for the sample were: (1) having severe or profound bilateral deafness, (2) being a student at Key Stage 5 level in the North of England, (3) being at least 16 years old, (4) being a BSL user in college context. As a consequence of the previously stated inclusion criteria, the exclusion criteria were: (1) having moderate, mild, or no hearing loss, (2) having unilateral hearing loss, (3) not being a student at Key Stage 5 level, (4) not using BSL in the college context. It is important to note that the group is defined by language *use* and not language *preference*, not assuming homogeneity in language experiences (Yildiz, 2012; Young & Temple, 2014), making possible the expression of different degrees of preference for different languages in varying situations.

4.4 Analyses during contact with participants

Registering contact with participants comprised a second layer of analysis after initial contact and related reflections. After framing the general epistemological approach of the study, each research strategy will be defined, ordered in three different stages.

4.4.1 Discursive ethnography

The overall methodological approach could be described as interpretive ethnography or discourse-oriented ethnography (Denzin, 1997; Smart, 2012). Such a perspective involves the recognition of the social nature of human cognition and a semiotic notion of culture in which patterns of meanings are perpetuated and challenged through symbolic means. It allows:

a methodology for exploring the discourse practices of a particular group of people – as their discourse is instantiated in writing, speaking, or other symbol systems – with the goal of learning how members of the group perceive, function and learn within their collectively created and maintained ‘conceptual world’ (Smart, 2012, p. 148).

Geertz (1973) proposed the term ‘thick description’ for defining the type of analytical lens that should be used in an ethnographic project focused in interpreting the symbolic aspect of cultures. This notion frames the ethnographic enterprise in a way such that the ethnographer aims not only at describing scenes neutrally but is recognised as an active participant, as a situated perspective, in the ethnographic accounts to be produced (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

This study, therefore, mobilised research frameworks that come from different traditions and have their own potentially diverging underlining assumptions: ethnography and discourse analysis. Ethnographic work is usually concerned with ‘native’ perspective and participants’ subjective points of view for comprehending local practices, so the researcher is expected to constantly check their understanding with participants as to clarify cultural meanings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

However, conceiving the main phenomenon as ‘discourse’ demands a series of epistemological shifts. The discursive mediation of all experience means that

subjective perspectives are fundamentally opaque – there is no immediate access to experience but rather only discursive construction of one’s own immediate experience from discursive positions made available (Burman & MacLure, 2011; Davis, 1997; Haye & Larraín, 2003). While checking the researcher’s developing theories with participants is a good way of avoiding ‘ventriloquation’, or the researcher dominating participants’ voices, the point of interest is always being displaced: each new consultation with participants about their perspective is a new discursive event of self-authoring (Holland et al., 1998). There is a ‘double voicing’ of participants with their own past voices; they are speaking on behalf of themselves but also appropriating their own past voices in novel ways and for new purposes (Bakhtin, 1984).

In recognising the fundamentally discursive nature of the social sciences – and in particular of ethnography in which researchers are constantly producing texts through specific genres (e.g., memo writing or field notes) about their phenomenon of interest (Atkinson, 1990; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) – evidences the textualization of a phenomenon of study that is already discursive; ethnographic projects do not deal with transparent systems of communication but with other people’s voices through discursive means already occupied by power and valuative positions (Bakhtin, 1984; Burman, 2017; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Voloshinov, 1973).

Recovering dialogical concepts also opens ethical and political issues regarding how ethnographic studies can adequately represent participants’ voices in the accounts generated and open them to increased dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1984; Coffey, 1999). Triangulation, rather than being a means of providing confirmation of a social fact, becomes a way of providing more opportunities for students’ self-authoring from different sources or perspectives (Holland et al., 1998; Mertens, 2015), thus partially limiting possibility of restricting participants’ voices to unidimensional accounts.

When dealing with the relationship between voice and author, Bakhtin (1984) emphasised that polyphonic texts (i.e., texts in which the author is not a totalising presence that subsumes other voices) are achieved by inserting perspectives into the definitions of characters. No person is defined from nowhere, denying the possibility of a last word on them and rendering them contestable accounts. By including the researcher's explicit perspective on accounts but also by multiplying the media through which self-definitions are enacted, there is an augmented dialogicality in this ethnographic account, thus showing how there is no last word about the participants.

4.4.2 Stages in registering contact with participants

The first round of data production consisted in observing deaf students' communicative interaction during classes. With the assistance of college's Deaf Support staff, a visit schedule was created to make sure students were observed in a variety of classes and situations: in regular classes with CSWs, in deaf-only classes, and in one-to-one sessions with Deaf Support staff for those who had that modality. During these observations, field notes and photos were produced to register activities and reflect upon them (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Ethnographic accounts were centred on a variation of what Barton and Hamilton (1998) named as *literacy events*, understood as observable episodes that were centred on text – here widened to semiotic resources – including thus spoken, written, signed, and other gestural and non-gestural “texts” being deployed for communication and understanding. These observable literacy events worked as samples of the wider everyday translanguaging practices of those deaf students at college. The annotation of episodes did not register all instances equally, the way a video recording would. Rather, annotation of events considered detailed attention to moments in which

translanguaging was being enacted with significant consequences for the comprehension of the dynamics of translanguaging as a whole. Condensed ethnographic notes were written in situ, mixing English and Spanish (the author's first language), later expanded into full ethnographic accounts in English only. Thus, ethnographic notes, in their monolingual (English) and monomodal (written) nature may hide the multilingual and multimodal nature of the whole process. The reporting of such notes, as can be seen in paper 2 (Chapter 6) and paper 3 (Chapter 7), highlighted attention to fragments that were deemed exemplary of the dynamics of interaction highlighted in each of the developing themes of qualitative analyses. In the case of paper 2, this considered the dynamics of expansion of restriction of semiotic resources. In the case of paper 3, this was focused on the visibility of asymmetries during the reported interaction.

All five participants were observed in different classes, varying according to their schedules. The resulting time allocated to each student varied greatly according to different circumstances, mainly the students' attendance to college. In that sense, while most times students' absence could be replaced by reprogramming the observation, there were limitations to this strategy as observations were done almost at the end of the academic year in England. Therefore, observation time with Katniss was restricted in comparison with time dedicated to observing other participants. To see a detail of which classes were observed for each student and during how long, please refer to Table 2.

Table 2. Observed classes and allocated time for each participant

Participant	Course	Time
Adam	Language tutorial	1 hr

	Sports	1 hr
	Sports theory	1 hr
	Sports tutorial	30 min
	English GCSE	1 hr 10 min
	Mathematics GCSE	1 hr 20 min
Derick	Language tutorial	50 min
	Biology GCSE	5 hrs
	Biology independent study	1 hr 40 min
	Biology tutorial	40 min
Katniss	Mathematics GCSE	1 hr
	Mathematics independent study	2 hrs 20 min
	Mathematics tutorial	45 min
Matt	Literacy support	3 hrs
	Technical workshop	6 hrs
	Drop-in session	45 min
Sam	Sports	1 hr
	Sports theory	1 hr
	Literacy support	3 hrs
	Numeracy support	2 hrs 50 min
	Employability	2 hrs

The second round of data production involved interviewing students, with a focus on their past and present educational experiences, use and knowledge of language and other ways of expression, and other hobbies or activities that might illuminate different aspects of translanguaging in their everyday lives. This meant that attention to situated

translanguaging practices in college was contrasted with a more general attention to semiotic repertoires in their lives, both inside and outside of college.

Almost at the end of the interview, students were also asked to produce a language portrait: visual depictions of their communicative and expressive repertoires. This way, language portraits allow exploring individuals' translanguaging space (Busch, 2012), understood as the mobilisation of personal experience and social practice to constellate semiotic resources, create identities, and perform values and ideologies (Wei, 2011). Language portraits are especially useful in studies with multimodal, translanguaging and biographical aspects (Busch, 2012) and allow producing a metalinguistic commentary to contrast information obtained through observations (Wei, 2011).

The language portrait prompt was modified for incorporating not only mention to languages they know, but also other ways of expression. The instruction in BSL included EXPRESS being signed from the chest upwards and then outside in signing space, emphasising somehow the personal and affective character of the act. In this way, deaf students could produce accounts of their practices within and beyond bounded languages. This explanation of instructions was accompanied by the researcher's own language portrait as an example. However, the researcher's language portrait possibly had influence on the participants' portraits by establishing a particular context of interlocution – the participants' positioning efforts (Haye & Larrain, 2011) or self-authoring (Holland et al., 1998) were partially replies to that portrait. Four of the five participants agreed to take part in this stage.

The third round of data production involved a second process of interviewing participants. After all the scheduled observations and first round of interviews were

done, I prepared a summary of my understanding so far of their individual profiles in terms of languages and other semiotic resources, as evidenced in observations and interviews. This preliminary understanding was represented in a poster to emphasise a visual way of explanation (see Appendix 1). The meeting allowed the main researcher to explain his ideas and gave space for the participants to react and further comment. It is relevant to note the recursive nature of this exercise: participants were commenting on my commentaries about their own practices (observations) and their commentaries about their own lives (interviews).

4.5 Analyses after contact with participants

After contact with participants finished, registers made through ethnographic notes, videos and language portraits were used to conduct further analyses. This section will detail these processes of analyses according to each product.

4.5.1 Analysis of ethnographic notes

Beginning from the fact that writing ethnographic notes is in itself an analytical exercise (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), analyses of notes continued by using NVivo qualitative analysis software. A general Grounded Theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) was used, consisting in reading ethnographic notes for initial labelling of phenomena, with an emphasis in identifying semiotic resources and people involved in every communicative act. Analyses advanced by creating more abstract descriptions of communicative situations in analytic memos, which then led to developing an initial set of codes that would allow grouping labels into wider codes. After three days of observations were fully coded to refine the initial set of codes, further analysis continued by selecting observations that would allow achieving two objectives. On the one hand, developing rich accounts of aspects of interest. On the other, filling gaps in

areas that may seem weaker or less developed. Sampling within cases is an accepted practice in qualitative analyses given the density of knowledge production (Flick, 2007) and also the expectation that analyses will be guided by the researcher's growing understanding and conceptualisation – what is often called theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

After the coding system was more firmly developed and went through fewer modifications, a final set of observations were selected to continue developing the analysis. While one of the observations added substantive codes related to communication breakdowns – an emergent phenomenon that was not explored so far – most of the observations did not change the conceptualisation of phenomena in a substantial way, achieving therefore an acceptable level of theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

It is relevant to consider in this project that Grounded Theory procedures were mobilised to frame qualitative analyses strategies within recognised frameworks, making them transparent. However, this meant that fully standardised procedures of Grounded Theory were not followed, e.g., transitioning from axial to selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Rather, initial analytical stages were used to obtain a preliminary conceptual comprehension of ethnographic notes, and subsequent analyses were continued through use of analytical memos and focused re-engagement with fragments of ethnographic notes. This analytical approach can mostly be seen in papers 2 (Chapter 6) and 3 (Chapter 7).

4.5.2 Analysis of language portraits

There is no single standard method for analysing language portraits, but the present proposal tries to respect the specific visual modality of portraits. The following

categories were used to organise the interpretation of language portraits: colours, distribution, and placement. Finally, a general comment was made for each portrait, considering the contributions made by each analytical category. This analytical approach is evidenced in Appendix 2.

4.5.3 Analysis of interview videos

Videos were also analysed via NVivo qualitative software. A first layer of analysis followed Grounded Theory principles (Corbin & Strauss, 2014), focusing on labelling phenomena that would later develop into codes grouped into categories. Analysis combined an exercise of emergent coding with a set of already established categories, including: contents, positions, feelings, semiotic resources and people. These initial set of pre-established categories were aimed at describing participants' responses relying not merely on what they say, but also paying attention at how they express what they say, especially affective expression that could have been left out of analyses. Other categories that were added during the process were: emphasises, contrasts, inconsistencies and missing (i.e. things that could have been said and seem absent). This second set of categories were created for reflecting an analytical focus on epistemic shudders – phenomena that somehow breaks the expected or seemingly established understanding of phenomena (Giugni, 2005). In this way, analysis was particularly open at how participants' responses could subvert my interpretations. The first layer of analysis was accompanied by the creation of analytical memos for each participant.

Once all videos of the first round of interviews were analysed in this way, existing categories helped to conduct further sampling for subsequent analyses. The categories 'communication experiences', 'educational experiences', 'languages knowledge' and

‘semiotic resources’ were used as guides to identify fragments of interest. Just like analyses of observations, Grounded Theory procedures in this case did not follow standardised Grounded Theory procedures. Instead, this analytical stage was used to provide an emergent conceptual comprehension of videos and subsequent analysis was guided by the researcher’s comprehension.

A total of 46 fragments of around 1 minute each were used for producing in-depth discourse analyses. These fragments were selected due to their thematic focus on issues of language use, communication, and the role and status of semiotic resources in interaction with different people. Therefore, they represented valuable additions to the comprehension of issues stated in the research questions developed for this project. The reporting of these fragments in paper 4 (Chapter 8), therefore, partially eluded the presence of the interviewer as an interlocutor. This was only partial due to participants’ responses already structured as being addressed to a hearing, non-British, BSL learner. This could be seen, for example, in the lessened use of signed space to convey grammatical information in signed discourse.

Given the complexity of the proposed procedures for the second layer of analysis of videos, they will be detailed next in a separate section. Both layers of analyses were used for paper 4 (Chapter 8).

4.6 Proposal for dialogical discourse analysis

A proposal for dialogical discourse analysis (Larraín & Medina, 2007; Larraín & Moretti, 2011) was mobilised and re-worked for considering the multimodal and multilingual nature of deaf students’ discourse. Dialogical discourse analysis aims at studying subjectivity as it emerges in discursive communication. It frames language as living and belonging to particular speakers and contexts. Analysis is centred on

utterances, everything in text that points towards the speaker's attitude on what is being uttered. It conceives discourse as an action and, at the same time, a moment in which the speaker's subjectivity is constructed (Haye & Larraín, 2011; Larraín & Medina, 2007).

Dialogical discourse analysis assumes that discourse is always subjectively marked – it includes an accent or an ideological position that can be connected with a particular discursive persona or group. And, as discourse occurs, subjectivity emerges. Discourse is the material moment in which subjectivity is constituted. Therefore, dialogical discourse analysis is interested in the stream of discourse as well as its content, studying subjectivity in terms of degrees of adherence or rejection towards themes. The variety of possible ideas or postures constitutes a polyphonic assumption underlying this analysis (Bakhtin, 1981; Larraín & Moretti, 2011).

What makes this specific proposal different from the original ones is the assumption of translanguaging practices occurring during participants' discourse. The original proposals, albeit not explicitly, were developed for Spanish in its spoken and written modalities, thus considering analytical categories that, initially, were monolingual and bimodal (Larraín & Medina, 2007; Larraín & Moretti, 2011). In contrast, during interviews to deaf students, semiotic resources linked with different languages and modalities were mixed in creative and unexpected ways. There was uncertainty on how resources were going to convey meaning. As happens in other analyses that emphasise the creative aspects of multimodality (Goodwin, 2000; Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011), analysis must remain flexible and necessarily retrospective – it departs from meaning and traces back how different semiotic resources were layered in creating that meaning. As a result, discursive analytical categories were considered as broad directives for reading deaf students' discourse rather than providing strict

textual markers. Engagement with other proposals for qualitative analyses mobilising Bakhtinian ideas facilitated this process (Aveling et al., 2015).

4.6.1 Dimensions of dialogical discourse analysis

Analysis is performed conceiving the discursive subject as an activity that is achieved through the work of different dimensions or operations of the utterance. Those different dimensions are the analytical focus of dialogical discourse analysis, and they indicate how the discursive subject is not unitary but the product of a series of functions overlapping in discourse (Larraín & Medina, 2007):

4.6.1.1 Utterance subject. This function, also called I-positions (Aveling et al., 2015) marks the protagonist of the narrative, the centre from which the utterance is being developed. It marks the subject as it is found as part of the utterance. It takes the reader outside of the act of uttering and into the developing narrative. This function is said to adhere or not to determinate ideological positions, through its relationship with other subjects that represent those ideological positions. Many utterance subjects can be identified in one utterance, e.g., by using grammatical rules in spoken or signed languages that mark ‘I’ in the present, ‘we’ in the present, ‘I’ in the past, ‘we’ in the future. This function can also be identified by evaluative marks that position the subject, like ‘disgusting’ or ‘lovely’, facial expressions, pace of discourse, among others. It establishes relations with other voices, with whom it dialogues and thus defines itself. Markers of this function include:

- *Marks that localise the ‘I’.* These marks indicate how the subject is situated in terms of being individual or collective (first person pronouns or group names), in terms of space (location), and in time (whether past, present or future).

- *Marks of evaluation.* These marks situate the subject in an evaluative matrix. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1993) defines ‘subjectivemes’ as divided between affective evaluations (like or dislike), axiological evaluations (right or wrong) and modalizations (true or false).

4.6.1.2 Uttering subject. This function marks the agent that produces the utterance as action. It marks the subject as it is found in the act of uttering; it is different from the protagonist of the utterance. It informs about the context of the utterance, breaking the narrative being told in the utterance to give information about the act of uttering itself. The uttering subject can be identified in such moments, as in ‘But let me tell you now’ or ‘Like’ or ‘At this point, I must add’. Other marks of the uttering subject can be reactions to the interviewer’s questions or contributions like face expressions of concern or nervousness, laughter, or changes in body posture, among others. Markers of the uttering subject thus are:

- *Breaks and commentaries.* These are moments in which the story as being unfolded is interrupted. As an action, these breaks can be used for different purposes, like adding more information about the context of uttering or inserting another story in between to give a different understanding of what is being said.

4.6.1.3 Traces of others. This function, also called inner-Other (Aveling et al., 2015), traces different others – material speakers found in the utterance. They represent a fundamental pillar for the discursive subject, for they are the material responsible for expressing ideological points of view that the utterance subject uses to position itself. This function can be identified in the mobilisation of apparently impersonal perspectives, as in ‘as they say’ or ‘they think’, but can also be referred to identifiable

particulars (such as, ‘the prime minister said’) or collectives (‘the labour party claims’). Wider and more vague others can also be considered, as in the case of ‘echoes’, representing resemblances with social groups or social accents, or in cases in which discourse seems to address social groups beyond the interviewer. Sign languages also includes the possibility of merely placing subjects as ‘others’ in discourse without making direct reference to them via the movement of actions in signing space. Others can therefore be identified through the following discursive markers:

- *Named others.* Names and third person pronouns help to identify who is being referred to in discourse.
- *Indirect voices.* Other voices populate the utterance by entering as paraphrased voices. Attribution of a discursive position to others is done but is not so well delimited from the utterance subject and the limit between both becomes blurry. In the case of signed discourse, this is done by quoting another person without ‘acting out’ their discourse – there is no rotation of signing space.
- *Direct voices.* Other voices can also populate the utterance by entering as quoted phrases. This means that attribution to others is clear and discourse is delimited from the utterance subject; it clearly belongs to another speaker. In the case of signed discourse, this quote includes ‘acting’ another’s discourse – there is rotation of signing space.
- *Echoes.* The influence of other voices can be felt in discourse even if no apparent other is being referred to. Echoes can be enacted through any device that produces resemblances to others’ discourse, including thematic and stylistic similarities, as well as particular dialects or regional variations.

- *Addressed others.* Other voices appear not necessarily speaking in discourse but as addressed others. That is, discourse seems to be directed at recognisable others, different from actual interlocutors in context (e.g., interviewer), and shaping the way discourse is constructed.
- *Placed others.* Others are merely placed in signing space, indirectly referred via actions, but with no other reference or label that allows identifying them further through agreement verbs – actions in which there is a direction, establishing a relationship with an undefined and unnamed other (Kyle & Woll, 1985).

4.6.1.4 Ideological positions. Also called enunciators (Larraín & Medina, 2007), they are points of view expressed in the utterance, or ideological units. They can be explicitly present or implicitly suggested. Ideological positions, as found in the utterance, represent the different perspectives in relation to one theme; the utterance protagonist is said to adhere to perspectives through the utterance's ideological positioning effort. This function can be found in uttered perspectives ('global warming is an opportunity') or can be implicit. Negatives always contain an ideological position while rejecting an implicit one, as acceptance of 'Brexit won't crash the economy' is already an answer to and rejection of the implicit 'Brexit will crash the economy'. Modal affirmations contain two simultaneous but opposite positions, as in how 'sometimes I like reading' includes 'I like reading' and 'I do not like reading' in different degrees. Ideological positions can thus be found in three modalities:

- *Contained in utterance and being adhered to.* In this case, the point of view is being presented and the utterance subject agrees (likes, considers true or right) with it or even presents it as their own.

- *Contained in utterance and not being adhered to.* In this case, the point of view is being presented but the utterance subject is taking distance from it (dislikes, considers false or wrong).
- *Not contained in utterance but implicitly assumed.* In this case, there is point of view that is not present in the utterance but is assumed. This ideological position can be adhered or not.

4.6.2 *Analysing the dynamics of dialogue*

Utterance analysis does not stop after identifying categories, but it aims at exploring discourse as a dynamic and situated phenomenon. Utterance analysis allows identifying the movement that happens between the different subjective functions in the activity of producing the discursive subject. The focus of analysis is defined by the discursive genre and the specific research objectives of each project (Larraín & Medina, 2007). Indeed, the interview fragments reported in paper 4 (Chapter 8) are not divided into the analytical categories but follow participants' discourse. Analyses in that paper are made transparent during the report of findings, allowing the reader to follow the researcher's comprehension.

An important task is examining the interaction between different voices, which may include (1) relations between different utterance subjects and traces of others, (2) relations between different utterance subjects and (3) relations between different traces of others. Aveling et al. (2015) offer a series of reflective questions to explore different kinds of dialogue between voices.

- How close is the relationship between those voices?
- How does one voice respond to the other?
- What are the 'evaluative overtones' in each of the voices?

- Is there a power dynamic between the voices?
- Are there any ‘dialogical knots’ (points of conflict or tension) and how can these be explained?

The discursive subject that emerges from the interaction of all functions can be better understood as a ‘failed totality’ (Laclau, 2007); not an underlying principle but as the activity that brings together all the functions of the utterance, and the direction towards all the functions aim. Even if all functions aim at establishing this discursive subject, they never really constitute it once and for all (Larraín & Medina, 2007).

Notwithstanding the novelty of the analytical approach developed here, the procedures remain similar to other traditions of previously existent discourse analyses. In Parker’s (2005) proposal, similar principles can be found, such as (i) multivoicedness or attention to contradictoriness in experiences, (ii) focus on semiotics or how we put language together and how it shapes subjectivity in turn, (iii) resistance or how language keeps or challenges power relationships, (iv) organisation of discourse in social bonds that includes certain people and excludes others. Also, analyses on subjective positioning (Harré et al., 2009) are resonant, involving the construction of epistemic and moral perspectives in spoken interaction. Matthijs (2018) used positioning theory to emphasise the multiple and possibly contradictory positions that mothers of a deaf child could enact, each with associated rights and duties. Besides, Allbutt, Gray and Schodfield (1999) had stated some principles of discourse analysis for signed languages, although their proposal was restricted to one of the elements of signed languages – the placement of objects of discourse in signed space and the spatial relationship among them.

4.7 Translation processes: writing for different audiences

By considering language not a neutral medium but one of the places where power asymmetries are reproduced (Denzin, 1997), translation will be made explicit in this thesis. The failure to completely fit languages opens the admission that there is another perspective in play (Temple & Young, 2004). Mentioning the word ‘audience’ in the subtitle as the interlocutors of this project shows how the academic field, even in Deaf Studies, is dominated by hearing people (Sutton-Spence & West, 2011) from the global North, configuring a context of reception that privileges spoken and written English. In resisting this urge to translate everything from the beginning, this project tries to accompany the efforts carried out by scholars in the field of Deaf Studies to give a legitimate place to sign languages in research (Young & Temple, 2014).

This project considered different stages of translation with the main concern of keeping products like interview videos in BSL in their original language throughout the process. This last point is relevant since it indicates that analyses considered working with products in a way that pushed translation up to the last stages of work. This aimed at favouring participants’ choice for ways of expression and communication (Young & Temple, 2014) over the needs of a (presumably) hearing majority of academics that would work as an audience (Sutton-Spence & West, 2011).

4.7.1 Translation in ethnographic notes

The production of ethnographic notes required an immediate translation of BSL into written English, reducing the multiple languages and modalities in which communication was carried out to a single language and modality. This also includes my use of Spanish mixed with English in condensed and translanguaged ethnographic notes before being expanded into more coherent accounts. Spanish sometimes felt

more immediately available for describing the multiple events that were happening at once, so it was freely used to inscribe observations. However, in their final version all notes were reduced to written English.

This also made all subsequent analyses being carried out in English – be it written English through qualitative software use, which included coding and memo writing, or Spoken English in the case of conversations with supervisors around fragments of ethnographic notes. In that sense, the preference for English at this stage and for this specific set of analyses indicates a tension produced by the different interlocutors at whom these analyses will be addressed at different moments – supervisors, internal and external reviewers, journal editors and (possibly) readers who understand English.

4.7.2 Translation in interview videos

All deaf students were given the option to communicate as they wished and change their preferred way of communication during the interviews. Therefore, instead of asking them what language they would like to use, a member of Deaf Support staff was available to facilitate communication. I prepared the interview questions in my Level 2 BSL and just asked the participants if they would prefer me to use my voice along with signing. As could be seen during interview analyses, participants also made efforts to adapt their signing to my presence. For example, Matt would vocalise in spoken English along with each sign he did in BSL order. Adam would also emphasise his spoken English while signing in SSE order and Sam would increase the iconicity of some signs. In the cases of Matt and Sam, Deaf Support staff provided a simultaneous – and abridged – interpretation for the researcher, therefore representing an immediately available translation during the initial stages of the process.

The analysis of videos was carried without a written translation or transcript. This analytical route was preferred due to the possibility that focusing on the transcript would reduce attention to the visual-spatial qualities of signed discourse that better reflect participants' enacted identities (Young & Temple, 2014). Also, the focus on translanguaging (García, 2009) means that gestures, face expression, pointing, bodily leaning among others were considered in their contribution to students' utterances as multilingual and multimodal wholes (Haye & Larraín, 2011).

College staff made a live, free interpretation for some of the deaf students' discourse. Notwithstanding the interpretation's relevance – given how I, as interviewer, interacted with *those* translations during the interviewing process rather with the participants' own responses – videos analyses represented an instance in which attention was on the students' discourse, muting sound and focusing on signing, for example. Discourse interpreted by college staff represented but a first layer of contact with meaning that, as a scaffold, was done away with as analyses progressed. In fact, attention to students' discourse allowed the emergence of myriad situations in which the analyst's understanding diverged from the college staff's interpretation. From my perspective, it gradually became evident how college staff's interpretation sometimes diverged from students' discourse, abridged it, and occasionally miscomprehended it. Analytical products presented in paper 4, therefore, pay attention to my understanding of deaf students' discourse, sometimes diverging from college staff's live free interpretation.

The report of video fragments presented in this thesis is also layered to make explicit the processes of interpretation and the researcher's perspective in them. There is a level of translation in fragments representing BSL in a linear order, making them sequential rather than simultaneous and visual-spatial. At this level, the linguistic

structure of BSL is respected over the structure of English. A second level of translation privileges the structure of written English and focuses on the meaning of what is expressed in BSL – as interpreted by the researcher.

4.8 Ethical reflections

Working with d/Deaf populations opens a series of ‘raging debates’ (Young & Temple, 2014) given how the multiplicity of discursive and ideological angles for defining d/Deaf populations and their needs (Ladd, 2003) serves to critique from one perspective actions that seem appropriate from another (Young & Temple, 2014). Ethical reflections must therefore begin by clarifying the status of the ground for such discussions.

4.8.1 Dialogical ethical thinking

Ethical thinking is usually grounded on abstract norms that aim at being universal: they are always valid and must be applied in the same way in all circumstances (Canella & Lincoln, 2018; Marková, 2016). While this way of thinking has allowed the protection of minorities from abuse (Temple & Young, 2014), ethical principles can also give rise to violence when universal claims are used to reject individual’s particular living conditions and the appropriation of norms in liveable ways (Butler, 2005). Impersonal logics go against ethical thinking for they allow subjects to escape the responsibility for their unique place in existence (Bakhtin, 1993; Renfrew, 2015).

The Self-Other relationship is the ontological unit of dialogism, grounding its ethical thinking as well. Self-Other relationships include a variety of others, including the co-present others and, through them, institutions, traditions, or moral customs (Marková, 2016). Recognition, then, is not a unilateral endeavour, for it requires mutuality and a system of norms of reciprocity that is external to the dyad (Butler, 2005). Mutuality,

or common understanding, is as important as its opposite: alterity, the recognition of the other as an Other, as an autonomous being who thinks and acts according to their own norms, including the possibility of experiencing conflict and tension (Marková, 2003, 2016).

For Bakhtin (1993), ethical responsibility involves the notion of participative thinking, an involvement in the world. This includes two sequential movements: empathy, or the ability of seeing an individuality from within; and objectification, placing the individuality outside oneself once more to return transformed to oneself (Renfrew, 2015). The subject, then, is transformed in the very act of recognition (Butler, 2005). Ethical thinking requires the subject's openness to become another for themselves (Renfrew, 2015).

4.8.2 Principles of ethical inquiry

Ethical inquiry requires a sustained moral dialogue during all the research process (Cannella & Lincoln, 2018). Rather than a checklist approach focused on fulfilling procedures, this section will include a reflection on ethical principles. Some of them are derived from dialogical perspectives (Marková, 2016) while others are more generally recognisable ethical principles (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In all instances, this requires recognising that ethical codes are culturally mediated (Young & Temple, 2014). That is, they are not infallible standards but reflect specific times and places' notions of appropriateness (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

4.8.2.1 Epistemic trust. Common understanding is grounded in this belief of a temporarily shared social world. This includes a readiness and capacity to learn and accept knowledge from the other (Marková, 2016). Marková (2016) states that epistemic trust is usually taken for granted in interactions unless communication

difficulties arise. Not sharing a common background with participants, all the measures followed in this project for ensuring common comprehension on participants' terms – respecting their communicative preferences – can be considered as encouraging epistemic trust between researcher and participants. This includes learning and using BSL as one of the languages of research, adapting protocols when necessary, and a more general process of socialisation in Deaf environments that helped in understanding visually centred communication.

4.8.2.2 Epistemic responsibility. Measures for ensuring participants could express their experiences with the researcher in a way that respects their preferences and identifications also promotes the sharing of epistemic responsibility – understood as sharing the language through which the state of affairs is brought into being and shared with others (Marková, 2016). This could be seen mainly through informed consent and interview protocols being prepared in BSL and college staff's assistance in communication.

4.8.2.3 Informed consent. This principle is generally defined as unconstrained consent to join the study as a participant, based on accurate information (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). d/Deaf populations usually have less familiarity with concepts and less general world knowledge they can recruit when trying to make sense of the often-complex information included in research protocols. Therefore, this must go beyond issues of translation and consider participants' previous knowledge (Young & Temple, 2014). The researcher's presence during an informed consent session, the provision of information in written English and BSL videos, and the possibility of taking information home for differed consent all aimed at protecting this principle. Also, consent includes the possibility to decline observations and interviewing (Hammersley

& Atkinson, 2007). This was also respected, especially when participants showed signs of stress or seemed emotionally overwhelmed by other circumstances.

4.8.2.4 Privacy. Ways of protecting participants' privacy are not always obvious, as public/private distinctions are not always clear or shared among researcher and participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In fact, Deaf communities have rather flexible notions of privacy, since it is common to openly discuss private matters with others (Young & Temple, 2014). One of the participants in this study could not make sense of all safeguards and required some extra persuasion for being convinced of the importance of such matters and so to comply with privacy rules.

A common issue in ethnographic work entails how it usually makes public what is done in private (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). For example, quotations of signed communication in a mainstream classroom context implies that there is a restricted audience to deaf students' discourse. In everyday circumstances, only the CSWs can understand that. My presence and my recording of that discourse could produce a double breach of that tacitly assumed privacy. For managing this, those conversations deemed "private" (see paper 2) were generally considered for analyses, but their specific content was not revealed and most of the fragments were not translated nor reported anywhere.

4.8.2.5 Anonymity. Different from privacy, this includes safeguards from unintended harm due to the identifiability of participants (Young & Temple, 2014). Respecting this principle is challenging in research using sign languages due to their visual nature. For example, face expressions are fundamental aspect of the grammar of signed languages (Sutton-Spence & West, 2011). Transcripts are not a solution since removing images also removes the language and the contextual roots of

communication, affecting issues of identity and representation (Young & Temple, 2014). Participants' anonymity was therefore protected by safe storing of interview videos along with analysing the material with the computer screen pointing at walls, not door nor hallways, so other people could not overlook and recognise participants. Also, stored photos were modified to have blurred faces and other identifying features (tattoos, clothing brands) and originals were deleted.

Another way of protecting anonymity is checking how participants' descriptors might allow identifying them, which is particularly challenging in small communities such as Deaf communities (Young & Temple, 2014). Zone, college, and participants' descriptors aimed at being general yet informative enough of particularities that were relevant for the study. This included the use of pseudonyms (Young & Temple, 2014) chosen by participants themselves. Some participants were eager to acquire a new identity while one participant could not make sense of choosing a pseudonym since they were proud of who they were and what they had endured and achieved throughout their life.

4.8.2.6 Confidentiality. This principle includes safeguards for protecting participants against misuse of data while building trust between participant and researcher (Young & Temple, 2014). Threats to confidentiality include situations in which someone else who knows the participants might have had access to data (Young & Temple, 2014). In this study, Deaf Support staff were present during interviews and therefore accessed all their content. Relationships with college staff, however, always made clear the importance of protecting the study's information and students' identity, and this was a common agreement sustained during all the process. A second issue is that of participants' heightened visibility due to the researcher's presence (Young, & Temple 2014). In the college context, my presence as an external person was obvious and

continually highlighted (following protocols for external persons, introduction to whole class and class tutor, identifying badge) although my connection with deaf students as a researcher was not always clear to everyone (explanations of my presence mentioned that I was ‘observing’ rather than doing a study).

4.8.2.7 Harm. Research situations can produce anxiety, which can be unethical when participants’ circumstances are already stressing (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). While this study aimed at being descriptive rather than evaluative, there could be some degree of stress due to college staff continually remembering students how commitment to this project mirrors the commitment required for other responsibilities as an adult. Also, the study coincided with some students sitting GCSEs, which could be a stressor by itself. Therefore, harm reduction included declining to produce data when students expressed stress or anxiety. Building rapport is also assumed to help in lessening anxiety (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), although there were limited opportunities for doing so since participants were usually busy at college times.

4.8.2.8 Exploitation. Studies with critical agendas do not see research agendas as value-free as reflected in a commitment to social justice (Cannella & Lincoln, 2018). Studies that focus on disadvantaged groups do not necessarily benefit them and might requires researchers giving something back to participants – which sometimes creates further ethical dilemmas (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This also includes issues of ownership, recognising that ‘those who are not Deaf and/or those not within the community have controlled the construction of knowledge about Deaf people and therefore the terms on which Deaf people are known’ (Young & Temple, 2014, p. 65). One of the ways this study avoided exploitation was via the second rounds of interviewing. This included a moment in which deaf students could answer to my understanding, openly discussing it with a possibility of challenging it. It was also

aimed at providing participants with an alternative perspective of their own literacies and communicative experiences to counter possible restricted views of themselves. Also, a BSL summary of main findings specially aimed at participants is under development.

4.9 Quality criteria in qualitative research

The emergence of quality criteria for qualitative research has been and continues to be a contentious issue. Qualitative research was initially subordinated to criteria designed for quantitative research and therefore belittled for not being able to adequately represent those standards (Flick, 2018; Morse, 2018). Guba and Lincoln's (1985) text on quality criteria specifically designed for qualitative research represented a breakthrough. Guba and Lincoln (1985) proposed that constructivist and naturalistic paradigms are different from positivist ones, and therefore deserve to be valued against their own set of criteria. This allowed recognising that validity – understood in quantitative research as aiming at the effect of the objective variables, requiring control for variables others than those in a hypothesis – promoted a standardisation that is incompatible with the flexibility of qualitative methods (Flick, 2018). Rather than validity, trustworthiness became the aim of qualitative research. Later, the recognition of a transformative paradigm allowed to add criteria such as fairness and democratic sharing of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Other authors (e.g., Flick, 2018) prefer to talk about validation rather than validity, emphasising the process of evaluating the trustworthiness of observations (their factual accuracy), interpretations (clear accounts on how meaning is developed from data, grounded in participants' language) and generalisations (the extent to which accounts can be used to analyse other portions of the material or other fields) (Flick, 2018).

Over time, quality criteria have been defined in a relatively consensual way, as seen in the elaboration of ten big tent criteria, encompassing whole projects and not focused on specific steps of research processes (Tracy, 2010). This, however, should not stop the recognition of quality criteria as evolving and open-ended traits that spring from societies and respond to the interest of communities of interpreters (Berry et al., 2002; Flick, 2018). The full trajectory of quality criteria will not be referred here (see Morse, 2018) but it is important to recognise that this development is not linear and always involves a tension with foundational thinking, relinquishing becoming a fixed set of traits that mirror those of empiricist research (Berry et al., 2002; Flick, 2018; Morse, 2018). This entails the danger that those criteria are used in a decontextualised way (Morse, 2018). This is problematic in qualitative research because criteria need to be grounded in the specific goals and context of research as well as in the particular relationship that researcher establishes with their participants (Berry et al., 2002) and the time required for the researcher to learn about their own data, e.g., coding being a fluid process in which the analyst's understanding progresses from more superficial to more substantive coding (Morse, 2018).

This study will group emergent criteria for defining good practice in qualitative research, defining them, mentioning neighbouring concepts, and explaining to what extent the study's procedures achieve their standards or fail to do so. Criteria will be relevant or applicable at different stages of the research process or some of them will act as bridges for others (Berry et al., 2002).

4.9.1 Classification of quality criteria for qualitative research

Credibility assesses the fit between the respondents' experiences of views and the researcher's representation of them. There are a series of criteria that can be used to improve the degree of credibility of a study (Mertens, 2015; Sisto, 2008):

4.9.1.1 Prolonged engagement (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). This involves a persistent observation and engagement in the field. This deep involvement must be combined with a measure of analytical distance, also making visible the procedures of interpretation (Mertens, 2015).

This study aimed at a prolonged engagement in fieldwork that had to be restricted due to the participants' calendar – at the start of fieldwork there were 2 and a half months of classes until summer break. While this affected the prolonged aspect of engagement, it did not affect the persistence of it. The sharp focus of the phenomenon and its continued emergence during observations – participants communicated with others using their translanguaged repertoires very often in classroom observations – were helpful in sustaining a brief ethnographic work (Pink & Morgan, 2013).

4.9.1.2 Peer debriefing (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Also called peer review (Morse, 2018). Discussion with other researchers discloses one's blind spots and allows discussing working hypothesis (Flick, 2018), polishing the emergent theory, and linking it to others' research (Morse, 2018).

The supervisory meeting played an important role during the research process. Monthly meetings had at least one supervisor and usually the three of them. They were useful for developing insights at every step of the process and were particularly useful for discussing the emergent theories and linking them to the existing literature.

4.9.1.3 Members check (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Morse, 2018). Implies discussion portions of data or analyses with participants themselves. Using participants' consent

can be problematic when research aims at going beyond the subject's viewpoint (Flick, 2018). Indeed, member checking is better portrayed as a consent for continuing analysis at higher levels of abstraction (Morse, 2018).

This study used a second round of interviews with each participant to present a summary of the main researcher's understanding about the participants' communication experiences. This process was done during earlier analytical stages, before processing data with NVivo software, and therefore represented an initial step in comprehension. Nonetheless, it was a relevant experience for continuing analyses later, given how the 4 participants commented on, rather than corrected, the presented posters. One of them found interesting seeing those aspects of himself as a whole and commented how the visual array of the poster mirrored his visual way of thinking.

4.9.1.4 Negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Involves paying attention to cases within or across data sets that seem to contradict the emergent theory. Specific attention to those cases has the value of correcting the theory, signalling instances in which data seems thin requiring further analyses, or delimiting the extent to which the theory can be applicable (Mertens, 2015; Morse, 2018).

Initial coding was done focused on the first 3 days of observation, all of which included classes with hearing peers and hearing tutors. Therefore, initial construction of a theory reflected those experiences. Analyses of negative cases was performed later with a focus on classes with deaf peers and a deaf tutor to check whether the researcher's understanding changed after them. This allowed making crucial precisions to the comprehension of translanguaging, delimiting moments that later would be called 'ceiling effect' of translanguaging (see paper 2).

4.9.1.5 Progressive subjectivity (Mertens, 2015). Also called critical subjectivity (Berry et al., 2002). This entails a form of reflexivity, engaging in the work of monitoring and documenting one's own comprehension (Mertens, 2015). This enables discerning the subtle differences in one's own and others' experiences (Berry et al., 2002), avoiding submerging the other's responses on one's own (Sisto, 2008).

Reflexivity was maintained during the research process through three tools: a reflective journal, field notes writing, and memo writing. The reflective journal was used mainly during initial stages of research to reflect on initial assumptions, track the process of contact and engagement with gatekeepers and initial contact with participants. As research progressed, field notes took the leading role in providing situated reflections linked with specific episodes. During field notes writing, special precaution was placed in delimiting the researcher's observations from the researcher's reflections. At later stages, memo writing was the main source of reflections, which include theoretical memos, methodological memos, memos linked to specific codes or categories and reflexive memos in which the researcher's presence in the field or in interviews was noted and reflected upon.

4.9.1.6 Triangulation (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). This is actually an umbrella term for a series of strategies focused on exploring a phenomenon from a variety of perspectives. It can include triangulation of methods of data production, triangulation of researchers' perspectives on the same data sets, triangulation of theories used for reading data and triangulations of data from different participants and at different points in time (Banister et al., 2004). It is linked with the notion of saturation (Morse, 2018), in which collection of many similar examples and increasing sample size augment the certainty of interpretations. Saturation is not necessarily about replication (e.g., obtaining similar quotations) but aims at stronger linkages at the conceptual

level, developing concordance across conceptualisations, experiences, contexts, and events (Morse, 2018). Triangulation stands in tension between being a way of achieving consistency across sources, potentially contradicting a commitment with the existence of multiple realities (Mertens, 2015) or being a way of exploring the contrast of different points of view in a way that reflects the commitment to multiple realities (Banister et al., 2004). This thesis adhered to the last notion.

This study aimed at producing different kinds of triangulations. First, there was a triangulation of data given the variety of participants. Even when they all were deaf college students and BSL and spoken English users, all had different trajectories and used their resources with different degrees of comfortability. Triangulation of data also was promoted by continued engagement in time and observations across different classes. Methods triangulation was promoted by using observations and interviews to obtain two points of view on students' translanguaging: enacted translanguaging with different people and subjective positioning towards semiotic resources, languages, and people. Other researchers' perspective was limited to specific presentations or peer debriefing, therefore limiting the extent to which there was researcher triangulation. Given the study's theoretical commitments (see Chapter 3), triangulation was enacted as a way of exploring the multiple perspectives and voices that underlie our conception of reality.

A second set of criteria allow assessing a study's transferability; the degree of similarity between the studied context and the other ones (Mertens, 2015; Sisto, 2008):

4.9.1.7 Detailed description, wrongly labelled as thick description (e.g., Mertens, 2015). This involves a rich description of the context under study and participants.

This way, the reader can judge to what extent the context is similar to others and whether findings might be applicable to them as well (Mertens, 2015).

Context description is done in this chapter, including the general context of the setting and the participants. Transferability could be judged as a tension. On the one hand, the experience of being educated along with hearing peers and with hearing tutors is expected for most deaf college students in England. The use of a CSW also seems to be extended. Hence, considering these circumstances, this college might depict the typical arrangement of services for deaf colleges students in England. On the other hand, the college in which research was carried out is particularly attractive in the region due to the perceived flexibility in communication arrangement, which indicates that other colleges might not be so. Also, this college asks CSWs to have at least a BSL level 3 certificate, which might be considered high given how some people can work as CSWs from BSL level 1. Therefore, communication arrangements might not be so flexible or adequate to deaf signer's skills in other colleges. This study, then, could be positioned as depicting one of the best possible cases within the typical offer to deaf students in colleges in England.

4.9.1.8 Multiple cases. This allows adding variation to the phenomenon under study, potentially facilitating the transference to other cases (Mertens, 2015).

Even when participants experienced a similar situation as deaf college students who are BSL and spoken English users and who are just joining college – with one of them (Matt) joining again college after a few interrupted experiences, giving him a sense of starting again – they have varied trajectories in terms of educational placement in mainstream schools or schools for the deaf, different degrees of comfortability using BSL, written English and spoken English for communication – with some cases

(Katniss, Adam) including other spoken languages at home – and expressed different degrees of alignment with deaf and hearing people during the course of the study – with a few extreme cases (Sam more deaf-aligned and less hearing-aligned, and Derick the opposite).

The study's dependability, tracking change all along the process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and its confirmability, or the guarantee that interpretations do not come solely from the researcher's imagination but are grounded in data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), are served by audits.

4.9.1.9 Audits. Audits are considered useful for assessing the study's appropriateness, making researchers remind what they were thinking at each step of the process. This can include reviewing the study's protocols or tracking changes in the focal phenomenon of study during the process (Mertens, 2015; Morse, 2018) and tracking the chain of evidence that led to interpretations while making explicit the logic used to interpret data (Mertens, 2015). For both cases, the tracking of decisions, the protocols for data production, the chain of evidence, and criteria mobilised for interpretations made via this thesis can be considered an audit. The production of protocols prior to research and the writing of methodological and analytical memos along with a reflective journal during the process also were helpful for tracking the process and reflecting on it over time.

Finally, standards designed for the transformative paradigm can also be mobilised to assess a study's quality. These criteria are specially concerned with issues of social justice and human rights and therefore eschew notions of detached objectivity (Mertens, 2015). The applicability of these criteria for the present study rests on the importance of critical concepts mobilised for the framework (see Chapter 3) that imply

a context of power inequalities and relationships of oppression between groups that are veiled under consent and uncritical acceptance of normative positions. These criteria include:

4.9.1.10 Fairness; or the extent to which different constructions and therefore value structures were solicited and honoured during the research process, presenting conflicts and differences in values when deemed relevant (Mertens, 2015).

This is a particularly difficult criterion, as it potentially increases tension with issues of positionality and the idea of a politically engaged researcher. In other words, my alignment with Deaf cultures as a hearing researcher (see paper 1 for more on this) led me to value more rapidly those participants who were more self-consciously Deaf in the way they expressed interest in other deaf students and preferred BSL. The presence of a participant who simultaneously felt comfortable using BSL and refused contact or identification with other deaf students therefore was initially perceived as an oxymoron and a challenge. This, however, led to increased curiosity. Although that participant refused to be interviewed, diverse means of recording were tried for him (e.g., video recording in case he preferred to sign or audio recording in case he did not want to show his face and preferred to use his speech). His inclusion in the study was a means for ensuring a spectrum of values and orientations were included.

4.9.1.11 Ontological authenticity; or the degree to which participants' consciousness was raised or became more sophisticated because of participation in the research process. Member checks or including procedures for documenting change in the research can be helpful (Mertens, 2015).

This criterion is also challenging given the limited focus given to it during the research process. The idea of doing a second interview with each participant at the end of the

process had a double intentionality. On the one hand, it would provide some sort of participant triangulation. On the other hand, it would be a means of offering something back to deaf students. This is directly connected with my previous experience as a research assistant in a study with deaf school students in Chile (Lissi et al., 2017). During that experience, deaf students showed a dichotomy between varied literacies in their lives, explored through observations and self-report, and a restricted view of themselves as low achievers and struggling readers. That study lacked an opportunity for sharing results with participants and contrasting their rather restricted view of themselves with the richer ones the research team had developed. While the present study had to be shortened, decreasing the complexity of the product presented to deaf students during the second interview, some of them expressed interest in seeing their own abilities as a visual whole in posters. Therefore, there is limited evidence of deaf students acquiring a more complex notion of their own multilingual and multimodal capacities.

4.9.1.12 Community (Mertens, 2015), also called reciprocity (Berry et al., 2002). By recognising that qualitative research is embedded in the relationship established between researcher and participants, and therefore how the phenomenon under study is constituted by this mutuality, this criterion asks whether the research was person-centred; to what extent both researcher and participants were able to open their lives to examination, creating a sense of trust (Berry et al., 2002; Mertens, 2015).

The planning of the study and the creation of research protocols were directed by this interest from the beginning. The creation of bilingual and multimodal material was aimed at benefiting deaf participants' preferred means of comprehension and self-expression, e.g., participant information given through written English sheets and BSL videos and flexible arrangement of communication during interviews. This way, a

sense of trust of mutuality was promoted not without tensions. Possible threats to mutuality were my status as a non-British hearing person and late learner of BSL, and the presence of a Deaf Support staff member interpreting during interviews, which might have affected the extent to which they felt adequately perceived by me; a phenomenon explored in the Translating the Deaf Self project (Young, Napier & Oram, 2019).

4.9.1.13 Attention to voice (Berry et al., 2002; Mertens, 2015; Sisto, 2008). This springs from the recognition of a multivoiced and plural rather than single social reality (e.g., Bakhtin, 1984). Therefore, this criterion pays attention at who speaks, for whom and for what purposes. Research from this perspective recognises that certain groups do not have access to academic circles and aims at reflecting who can speak for those communities, how and with what consequences. It can also include explicitly seeking out silenced and therefore counter-hegemonic perspectives as well as an openness to multiple voices (Berry et al., 2002; Mertens, 2015).

Beyond theoretical commitments to notions of voice and dialogicality (Chapter 3), this study purposefully aimed at reaching the often-silenced group of deaf signers. This silence in research is theorised as a product of several layers of oppression, which are grounded in a deep ontological commitment to *phoné* as presence as seen in phonocentrism (Bauman, 2004; Derrida, 1967). This impacts on the assumptions guiding traditional qualitative research strategies, including: favouring speech and competence in spoken and/or written majority languages (e.g., audio recording in interviewing), data production strategies preferably conducted in single languages (e.g., conventions of transcription-cum-translation as a required analytical step) or the general ignorance of sign languages and Deaf cultures in ethical research committees that might lead to reject methodological innovation. This study therefore had to

navigate multiple barriers while aiming at producing deaf-oriented and particularly Deaf-oriented research. In that sense, the fact that this project was embedded in a group of Deaf researchers with experience dealing with such barriers proved to be a great strength and allowed pairing innovation with rigour.

4.9.1.14 Positionality (Berry et al., 2002), also called positioning (Sisto, 2008), and critical reflexivity (Mertens, 2015). Grounded on Haraway's (1989) situated epistemologies, it refers to how texts and accounts are always partial and hence incomplete. Interpretations in qualitative research must include an account of their own contextual grounds and how this situated character impacts on the production of interpretations (Berry et al., 2002), clearly situating the text as failing to represent what is supposed to represent, aiming at it but never reaching it (Flick, 2018).

An account of the situatedness of this study was given during the present chapter as well as in all research products (see papers 1, 2, 3 and 4), opening to future alternative accounts of deaf college students' translanguaging practices.

4.9.1.15 Sharing privilege (Berry et al., 2002), also called reciprocity (Mertens, 2015). Recognising the power differential that might exist between the academic background of the researcher and the members of communities with whom they interact for research purposes, this criterion aims at sharing the benefits associated with research to recognise and respect participants (Berry et al., 2002). This might include developing research skills, knowledge of how to apply to funds or royalty from published books (Mertens, 2015).

This criterion is the most challenging, given how it was not considered during the proposal and development of the study. Participants received a limited benefit from participating in research, framed by college Deaf Support staff members as simulating

formal engagement with organisations – in other words, college staff emphasised that situations such as interviewing are expected in their academic and labour future, in which they will be assessed by the capability of giving a coherent account of themselves. This also includes collaboration with other people and respect for other people's time and committed effort in tasks as part of adult life. Deaf Support staff, as members of the community, had the opportunity of choosing a method of feedback and participated in an online presentation especially designed for them to converse about this study's results. In both cases, the study hopefully had impact on community members' skills.

4.9.1.16 Catalytic authenticity (Mertens, 2015), also called praxis (Mertens, 2015) or community (Berry et al., 2002). Abandoning notions of a strict objectivity, and consequential detachment from the object of study, this specific criterion asks how members of communities that are being studied benefit from the way research was carried out, including instances of critical reflection and action. Participants' testimonies or follow-up studies can help to discern this kind of impact (Mertens, 2015).

Closely aligned with the previous point, this study had a limited impact on community members under this criterion. Both deaf participants and college staff members had opportunities for feedback – at different stages- and therefore for some degree of reflection. There is no evidence whether this was used to critically engage in action or transform some aspect of their lives.

4.10 Summary

This methodological chapter began by stating the process of analysis prior to contact with participants, in the recognition of ethnographic accounts making fuzzier stages

of data production, or even questioning the very objectivist notion that may underlie the concept of 'data', given the pervasive influence of the researcher's analytical perspective. During this stage, access was considered a continuous process of formal and informal consent.

This was followed by an account of how theoretical discussions and the unfolding of research on site were catalysts for a reconsideration of the leading concepts of this study. The main phenomenon went through a reconfiguration from 'literacy' to 'literacies' to 'translanguaging', in recognition of the multiple resources for communication and understanding that deaf students may possess but that are not always properly acknowledged in research, interaction and teaching practice. A brief account of my trajectory as a BSL learner was included to reflect on the impact of my own position and semiotic resources on the production of this study.

Next, the 5 participants who accepted to participate in this study were described, giving foot to a discussion on matters of diversity and the contentious issue of constructing samples and criteria of inclusion and exclusion in social research involving d/Deaf populations.

The account of analyses is continued in the next section, defining the epistemological approach framing this study as discursive ethnography; in itself an intersection of different methodological approaches from ethnographic and discourse analytical approaches. The implications of this discursive notion of social sciences and the impact on ethnographic practices as mobilising discursive genres were discussed in terms of the fundamentally positioned and non-transparent nature of ethnographic accounts.

The (already analytical) stages of data production were described, including the production of field notes during observations of participants' classes, semi-structured interviews on their everyday communication and life trajectories that included participants' production of their own language portraits, and a second round of interviews that focused on contrasting my understanding of them with their own opinions. This enabled a pluralisation of perspectives that underpinned a dialogical notion of triangulation.

Analyses, after contact with participants, continued by using a grounded theorising approach with field notes, an ad-hoc analysis of language portraits and by proposing a dialogical discourse analysis for interviews. This last proposal represented a theoretical innovation by re-contextualising dialogical notions of enunciation within a plural semiotic array that includes the use of a sign language, in accordance with a notion of translanguaging.

By asserting the non-transparent nature of languages as media for producing social accounts, the chapter continues by outlining the different stages of translation involved during the project. This promotes the consideration of this study as, overall, a multilingual and multimodal project.

Finally, the study is assessed according to pertinent notions of ethics and quality criteria that emerge from interrelated qualitative, discursive, dialogical, and critical frameworks. This allowed for a preliminary discussion (to be continued in the final chapter) of the extent to which this study is coherent with its own theoretical framework and what the contributions are for theory development and for participants from a perspective that looks to empower disadvantaged groups.

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Chapter 5: Paper 1

Knowing at the fringes: reflections on access to Deaf cultural worlds in North England

Abstract

This paper reflects on the process of accessing Deaf cultural worlds in North England by a hearing, non-British researcher. Following an ethnographic approach, a reflective journal was used for recording social encounters during fieldwork access. The paper is divided into three sections. Firstly, I highlight the importance of British Sign Language skills for social relationships and the unification and stratification produced by them in Deaf cultural worlds. Secondly, I reflect on how narratives circulating in Deaf communities offer places of ontological security and promote orientation towards mutual understanding. Finally, I highlight the possibility of variation within the subjective positions afforded by Deaf cultures. In all cases, my own perspective as a researcher is acknowledged, reflecting on the legitimacy of knowledge claims from my position. This paper ends with further reflections on understanding Deaf cultures as cultural niches of development that promote specific ways of understanding and ways of being.

Introduction

This paper aims at unfolding my reflections as a hearing researcher accessing my PhD fieldwork in North England in a way that is responsive to the local cultures of Deaf⁶

⁶ I will follow the distinction proposed by Ladd (2003) between ‘deaf’ as referred to a hearing status, and ‘Deaf’ as referring to identification with a cultural-linguistic minority. Where ‘d/Deaf’ is being used, it means that it could be referring to either category.

people and communities. According to the situated nature of ethnographic practice, not only must social phenomena be understood in their contexts, but I also require acknowledging my own perspective in crafting interpretations (Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Reflexivity thus represents both a problem and its solution: accepting the partiality of knowledge threatens the legitimisation of claims but opens up a reflection on the situated nature of knowledge claims (Brewer, 2000; Denzin, 1997).

This decision is also shaped by the ideological assumptions guiding me as a researcher, highlighting d/Deaf peoples as oppressed groups in our societies (Corker, 1998), with language and identity rights acknowledged but whose recognition as cultural communities has not been completely established⁷. Therefore, the epistemological decision of becoming a researcher who aims at understanding Deaf communities as cultural and linguistic minorities, instead of just framing them as people with hearing loss, is also a political decision (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Ladd, 2003).

Ethnographic practice is tied to a history of surveillance and control (Parker, 2005) but could also allow for the challenging of hegemonic views on societies as long as established norms are treated as a problem rather than as a fact (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). Emancipatory research, however, faces the conundrum of mixing academic agendas with participants' intersecting cultures (Ferndale, 2018; Mertens, 2009). As a consequence, this type of research should always be conceived of as requiring some

⁷ Following Ikäheimo and Laitinen (2007), this terminological distinction implies that any normative content can be *acknowledged* or considered valid. However, this is not equated with proper *recognition* as long as the claim has not been materialised in an institutional arrangement that makes people feel respected.

degree of inter-cultural contact (Jones & Pullen, 1992) while also acknowledging asymmetric relationships between groups (Young & Ackerman, 2001). This is one of the paradoxes of Deaf studies: it is focused in Deaf communities but is populated by hearing researchers who, at least initially, are encultured as a majority group and can be considered to be among the oppressors (Kusters, De Meulder & O'Brien, 2017; Sutton-Spence & West, 2011).

This meeting of cultures is only augmented by my trajectory as a Chilean hearing researcher who has done previous work with d/Deaf peoples in Chile, with an initial level of Chilean Sign Language (LSCh). As a hearing non-British individual with previous but limited contact with Deaf communities elsewhere, I am writing from the very fringes of multiple cultural worlds. Hence, this is an exercise in opening up a particular zone where new knowledge can be produced amidst the fuzziness of cultures, languages and experiences (Giesen, 2012). It is in these spaces of “not knowing” where alternative and potentially constructive ways of knowing and being can be enacted (DeClerck, 2016). Among other theories, I draw on Figured Worlds (Holland et al., 1998), sociocultural (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978) and poststructuralist perspectives (Butler, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) to construct alternative understandings of Deaf communities and myself.

I also offer this account as an illustration of what is at stake in deaf individuals' learning processes when increasingly identified with Deaf communities. Against perspectives that understand learning as a merely cognitive and individual process, I defend a conception of learning that takes into account the learner's progressive appropriation of cultural tools, their changing sense of identity and their participation and membership in social worlds (Packer and Goicoechea, 2000; Valsiner, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978).

The development of this paper is based on extracts from my reflective journal, written during fieldwork access, to develop theoretical issues that are organised into three sections. In the first section I will reflect on how signing skills become a way of ranking newcomers to Deaf social worlds and how my previous knowledge of LSCh put me in a relatively good position in early communicative interactions. In the second section I focus on one story that is important in the local Deaf community and how it reflects the cultural valuing of understanding. Along with it, I reflect on how it became a cultural resource to guide my own behaviour in assuming shared responsibility for ensuring understanding happens in communication. In the third section, I focus this reflection on how membership in Deaf communities requires the creation of a stance that can be complex and go against binary thinking. This opens up spaces for exploration that could potentially support the credibility of my task of theorising the experience of d/Deaf populations from outside that experience.

Showing my credentials: sign fluency for beginners

I had an interesting conversation a couple of months before beginning fieldwork, when I was just starting my second year as a PhD student. I attended an exhibition curated by Deaf artists:

I met Megan [pseudonym], a Deaf woman who was beginning to learn British Sign Language (BSL), or so it seemed, because that was our conversation topic.

I remember that there were some signs that she struggled to remember, as happens to me very often. When we were having this signed conversation, she praised me for my good signing skills. Megan liked my signing, even though I still lack a lot of vocabulary (Reflective Journal, entry 2).

This was the first time a Deaf person praised my signing skills. Perhaps it is a continuous gesture of support to my effort of learning BSL, but it may also imply recognition of how I was successfully applying my knowledge of LSCh to BSL. Sign Languages, albeit different at the lexical level, recruit similar embodied resources for communication given their common visual-gestural modality. The use of space, facial expression, direction and pace of signing are but a few examples of these features (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1998).

The following event describes a visit to a youth group of a Deaf club in North England, where I had informal conversations with many young deaf people. Among them, I met this young boy:

He arrived in the UK in 2017, the same year that I did. Of course his signing is way better than mine because he has met other deaf young people here. However, he seems to share a beginner's attitude towards learning BSL and I guess that is why he approached me so eagerly. He asked me again if I grew up signing because he finds my signing is good (Reflective Journal, entry 4).

This journal entry records the second time he complemented my signing. Above all, what really caught my attention as I met more deaf individuals is how important it seems for them to assess my BSL skills and give me feedback on them.

I read these multiple experiences of feedback on my signing through the lens of positional identities in Figured Worlds theory (Holland et al., 1998). When we enter cultural worlds, we also enter a field of differentiated social positions that involve an uneven distribution of status and privilege. Both of the previously presented events from my reflective journal seem to point to a very specific situation: that of newcomers to local Deaf communities and learners of BSL. We share the same predicament as

learners of BSL at different stages trying to be part of a social world where good signing skills are rewarded. And it becomes visible that more than linguistic knowledge is being assessed. Roos (2013, 2014) describes how deaf children who are just learning to sign arduously practice their fingerspelling on their own in order to obtain a clear but fast paced fingerspelling and show adult-like signing. That practiced fingerspelling, later, is used by deaf children in play situations to rank one another.

Holland et al. (1998) could understand this in terms of markers of privilege. Practices that are associated with privilege become salient and make timing of learning relevant. Earlier learners can show an organic performance, such as the quick fingerspelling and the smooth, natural transition between signs that deaf children in the examples of Roos (2013, 2014) are looking for. Both children and newcomer adults are neophytes of this social world and therefore are being positioned by others in it, in part through how they sign and what that signing distinguishes about them. My performance, as well of that of people I have been encountering and who are BSL learners as well, is inevitably mechanical, more conscious, and less prone to be considered fluent. Conversations with both deaf and hearing people in BSL learning contexts usually have as a starting point the history of one's language learning and of how BSL has a role in it. It could as well be a moment in which experiences with Deaf communities, including having Deaf parents or relatives, are revealed. Thus it provides an opportunity for ascribing membership in different degrees (Ladd, 2003).

However, there is a crucial difference between my possibilities as a hearing person and that of deaf newcomers to Deaf communities. In the first place, having Deaf parents is one of the main ways in which membership to Deaf communities is obtained, even if only a minority will be able to make this claim as most deaf children are born to hearing parents (Ladd, 2003; Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004). Also, sharing Deaf

experiences and obtaining access to a DEAF^WORLD⁸ seem to be even more important for achieving full membership. Participation in a DEAF^WORLD is connected with attitudes towards Deaf people, willingness to use a Sign Language, and communication with a larger network of Deaf people that share Deaf stories and other cultural artefacts such as shared historical events and jokes (Young, Ferguson-Coleman & Keady, 2020). Deaf experiences, in turn, refer to experienced frustration and coping with rules of a world built around hearing people. In that sense, the place of hearing persons in Deaf communities never stops being contested (Bahan, 1994).

Holland et al. (1998) highlight that positional identities remain incomplete as explanation until we bring in the figurative aspects of identities. In the next section, fragments will be related to this aspect to highlight another dimension of the cultural worlds of Deaf people I have come to know at its fringes.

Stories of miscommunication and who I don't want to be

The following fragment occurs in the situation of asking one of my BSL teachers for help with my BSL for a video. In the process, she becomes curious about my project and starts asking who else is involved. This fragment describes what happened just after I fingerspelled the name of my supervisors:

⁸ Since Sign Languages do not have any conventional writing system, I'm following the convention of writing words in English in capitals when they refer to an utterance being signed rather than spoken. The utterance, in consequence, is strictly a translation since it cannot convey the visual-gestural nature of BSL. The (^) sign is a mark of a compound sign in BSL, that is, a sign being created out of two originally separate signs.

My teacher knew one of my supervisors, but she told me that it was under a sign name. She showed me her sign name. After that we talked about her past experiences with my supervisor, I told her that, just as my supervisor did with her, she helps me with my English as well. My teacher signed to me GOOD-LUCK⁹ YOU NOT-ALONE¹⁰ (Reflective Journal, entry 1).

This episode throws light on how I am being narrated so far. The conversation with my BSL teacher dealt with how we both have problems with English and how we look for other people to ask for help. Her signing GOOD-LUCK YOU NOT-ALONE was layered with meaning after that. It was also a statement of how we share the same problem in our everyday life, being more similar than we might think we are. We are constantly being narrated in cultural worlds and therefore different significances are continually being re-assigned to us. The sense of who we are in those worlds cannot be grasped at first but becomes more tangible to us just after long periods of exposure. With this familiarity, comes the possibility of making oneself available to others by authoring oneself (Holland et al., 1998).

Narratives also define us in other ways. I have met Deaf people in North England in events such as formal meetings or other less formal events including Christmas dinners; and with those come the stories that Deaf people tell each other. One story

⁹ The hyphen (-) is a mark of one sign in BSL being used for something that would be translated to English as two words.

¹⁰ Readers of English may be surprised by the lack of the word 'are'. This translation does not follow English grammar but BSL grammar. Sign to sign translation is being used to emphasise and celebrate the non-coincidence between spoken and signed languages (Young & Temple, 2014).

that seems to be important and widely shared, usually entitled ‘dinner table syndrome’, is about Christmas experiences during family meetings where most people are hearing. A famous national blog run by Deaf people in the UK, *Limping Chicken* (<https://limpingchicken.com/>) offers a few posts on the matter that are descriptively rich. The accounts describe in detail meetings in which hearing people talk loudly in groups or do not face Deaf people to facilitate lip reading. Dim lights, noise and people not facing each other while talking make communication difficult for Deaf persons, who end up feeling isolated even amidst usually Deaf-aware people.

This Christmas story seems to depict an experience shared by many Deaf people, and works as a script, to mobilise Holland et al’s (1998) term, that reminds Deaf people that communication should not be taken for granted. If the proper conditions are not met, mutual understanding is lost. Holland et al. (1998) explain the notion of scripts by telling how figured worlds offer distillations of past experiences that then work to tell in advance how events usually unfold. This Christmas story seems to offer one of those scripts and incite Deaf people to promote mutual understanding instead of taking it for granted as communication can always fail.

In that very sense, this Christmas story is also a great example of the language ideologies of Deaf communities and could be considered part of a socialisation process. Friedner (2016) describes how valuing understanding has as its correlate that not-understanding is used to compare and critique situations, and even for ascribing membership to Deaf communities. Those who cannot be understood and are not identified as aligned with mutual obligations to ensure understanding, are posited as outsiders to the community. To some extent, until a hearing person tries to approach and communicate with Deaf people, they remain unknown. It is not the same to be known through a Sign Language than by hearing and speech. In the last instance, Deaf

people seem to care more about hearing people trying to communicate with them through Sign Language than the actual accuracy of signing for they feel valued and respected (Young, Ackerman & Kyle, 2000).

By delimiting those desirable situations against those that are rejected, storylines also offer an invaluable resource for people to conduct themselves. We humans create cultural ways of guiding ourselves and hence guide our development. This story could be such a resource for what Vygotsky (1978) calls semiotic mediation, a way in which our behaviour is dictated not by whatever situation we find ourselves in, but by what we consider to be important through the use of semiotic means to guide our own behaviour. Stories are just one of the many semiotic resources we can use to mediate ourselves, because they allow us to objectify ourselves in them. They become a way of answering to ourselves who do we want to be and what do we need to do or avoid in order to become that person, and therefore provides us with a modicum sense of agency (Holland et al., 1998). I have constantly returned to this story to remember what my place as a hearing person usually is and how important it is for me to disrupt the usual plot and take my part in ensuring communication happens.

In the next fragment, I found myself explicitly directing my own behaviour when approaching an important member of the local Deaf community:

I met Paul, the executive director of one of the local Deaf clubs to ask for help with contacts for my project. While I was contacting him, I remember I wrote in the e-mail that having interpreters available could be important if we meet so I don't miss any important information. Now that I think about it, that must not be the usual way things happen. The fact that I made sure to frame things differently talks about my orientation towards communication in interaction with d/Deaf

people and how I wish to make sure I'm not framed as just another not-Deaf-aware hearing person. While we were having our conversation, the interpreter translated what Paul signed to English but I tried to sign by myself when I wanted to say something (Reflective Journal, entry 5).

The local Deaf Centre has an experienced in-house interpreter for those kinds of situations and given my status as a BSL learner, I could have relied on his interpretation which by all means would have provided a smoother communication. But I wanted to sign by myself which, I consider now, reflects my newfound alignment towards communication which includes awareness on how power relationships are established in communicative situations.

While the previous fragment represents a moment in which I deliberately tried to frame things in a different way, what strikes me most is when this happens without my complete awareness. Another fragment describes a moment that only later became a matter of reflection. It describes a moment of eating lunch involving Elias, a hearing person that is working with Deaf peers for the first time in his life, Rachel who is an experienced Deaf researcher and Tina, a deeply committed BSL interpreter:

At some point, Elias started talking while Rachel was not looking and Tina was eating. As I felt that communication was not going on and that Tina was feeling too much pressure to translate everything in her lunchtime, I started translating myself, with my limited BSL knowledge. To some extent, I don't know exactly why I did it; it just felt right. Later that day, Rachel mentioned that I did it, emphasising that she could understand clearly what I was saying. That moment was surprising because I guess I didn't reflect on this until that point (Reflective Journal, entry 5).

Relying on the interpreter would have been the easy option on all matters so I could just have waited until she goes back to interpreting, or I could have dismissed that broken communication as something that does not concern me. Instead, I tried to repair communication with my limited resources, in accordance with a moral orientation of mutual understanding (Green, 2014). This shared sense of responsibility could be understood as part of the collectivist values associated with Deaf cultures (Ladd, 2003). This collective watching for understanding is deployed in signing environments as constant checking for who is in conversation, or who needs to move or stand up to become visible and join the conversation, and is one of the reasons why hearing people contacting Deaf communities for the first time feel heavily demanded and exhausted (e.g., Harris, 1995).

The fact that I acted according to this moral orientation without full awareness of it means that a developmental sequence has been unfolding. In using again and again the semiotic tools at hand to mediate our behaviour, such as the Christmas storyline I previously shared, we humans produce a reconstruction of our psyche that Vygotsky (1978) calls internalisation. Eventually, we become able to act as if we were using our semiotic tools even if we do not actually make conscious use of them. The way I jumped into action to support communication evidenced how socialisation in Deaf communities implies contact with resources for guiding development in accordance with norms.

Indeed, stories and storytelling have great importance for Deaf communities, not only in terms of allowing expression of a culture but also by being an active means through which cultural identities are formed and promoted (Young, Ferguson-Coleman & Keady, 2020). Storytelling about everyday experiences provides a way of combating ontological insecurities by providing a space where deaf individuals can identify with

other people's experiences and therefore explore their Deaf identities (De Clerck, 2016; Young, Ferguson-Coleman & Keady, 2020). While not exploring a Deaf identity for myself, stories have allowed me to put everyday practices that are indicative of Deaf socialisation processes in the spotlight. The fact that I have been able to access such stories in the first place becomes evidence of how Deaf people around me are willing to make me part, at least partially, of that Deaf World Knowledge transmitted through their stories. This, in turn, has given me some basic level of cultural competence (Bahan, 1994).

This cultural world I am exploring, while revolving around common values and shared experiences, hardly ever can be described as uniform. In the next section, I will explore situations that tore down my initial binary definitions, showing the possibility of carving out a space for oneself.

Uneasy borders or the importance of fissures

In the next fragment I go back to a night of informal conversations with deaf young boys in a local Deaf club. I was surprised how one of them just shared with me his life story in a couple of sentences:

During the course of the night, I had the opportunity to talk with another boy. He didn't sign much with me, rather relying on English with some signs added. He seemed fluent nonetheless when signing to other deaf boys. He told me of how he became deaf at age 5 and how his parents encouraged him to sign. But later in school he just stopped signing because English was mostly used in his lessons. He managed to keep signing, however. At some point in his schooling, another deaf student who had never signed joined his class and he taught BSL to the new boy. Now he does not sign with anyone else outside of the local Deaf Centre. He

does not seem to dedicate a lot of time in his life to signing, as he said he abandoned it, but he joins the Deaf Club activities anyway (Reflective Journal, entry 4).

I used to believe that if you consider yourself Deaf you would work towards being a strong signer. And I believed the opposite also to be true: if you do not want to identify yourself primarily as Deaf, you would try to rely exclusively on English and leave aside BSL. But his position is much more nuanced and undoes binary thinking or mechanistic associations between language preference and social affiliations.

Binary thinking leads to dichotomies in the comparison of experiences, denying that there might be different ways of experiencing being d/Deaf and therefore reducing self-definitions to simpler terms. Reproduction of restricted accounts of human variation produces group fragmentation and alienation, that is, internal self-division that restricts capacity for self-definition (Corker, 1998). Compelled to perform under binary ways of thinking, there might be people who are unable to find a position to understand their own experiences. Strong discourses of empowerment that can unify a group also have as a consequence the dichotomisation of the social space (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), which could lead to such binary thinking.

Cultural norms, however, are not uniform, nor are socialisation processes a necessary reproduction of dichotomies that might already exist. Instead of reading enculturation as merely absorbing a set of values, it should be understood as taking a stance towards one's own community (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). The perspectives we find enacted in a community are potentially contradictory, which means that entering a culture is learning to occupy a series of positions in which affiliations are arranged in a complex and dynamic manner (Holland et al., 1998). What I could understand from

the conversation with the deaf boy is that he was managing to craft a place for himself in the context of conflicting cultural norms, being able to look for contact with other deaf young persons, even if he did not consider BSL to be so important in his life. This is a testament to the possibility of different degrees of participation in and identification with Deaf communities (Bahan, 1994; Corker, 1998).

In the next fragment, an informal conversation took me back to previous similar situations and raised many more questions. This one involves Judith, an experienced BSL interpreter, and Rachel, a Deaf academic:

Judith was very active in explaining things to me about BSL and trying to make my signing a bit more “correct” in the face of other Deaf members of the team adapting their signs for me. We had an interesting discussion on how to sign that I liked my tea with the bag left in it. While Rachel was using a sign for STAY, Judith insisted that I had better options, such as embodying the teabag myself. Was she enacting a significant role in the cultural world of Deaf people? She seemed to posit herself as a guardian of proper BSL even against a Deaf person. In which ways was she entitled to do so in this context? I would think that she, being hearing, would be under the authority of a Deaf person. But also, why is it so important to socialise newcomers into proper signing even in the face of Deaf people being so flexible in its use? (Reflective Journal, entry 5).

At first, it seemed strange to me that Judith, as a hearing person, could dispute the proper use of signs with Rachel, Deaf and long-time BSL user. However, Judith is also an experienced interpreter and seems to know about how people learn BSL in the local Deaf Club. There seems to be at this point a mixture of teaching and cultural brokering,

where different purposes such as proper communication in BSL, enabling understanding and fostering affiliation all meet.

That conversation over a cup of tea not only took me back to my BSL classes but also to previous experiences and conversations with LSCh interpreters in Chile. Hearing staff in a special school were creating signs since the existing ones were considered to inadequately portray the meaning of certain concepts. The interpreter was a defender of handing over authority to deaf people when it comes to Sign Languages decisions. Indeed, when Deaf communities meet terminology that seems obscure at first, a usual cultural practice is using an already existing sign to make sure that term can be referred through it, albeit temporarily. This is what is called a *placeholder sign*. This initial ambiguity, however, is problematic for a visual language because properties such as handshape, spatial localisation or movement reveal underlying assumptions that might be incongruent with the specific meaning that is being conveyed (Young et al., 2016). In this way, initial ambiguity is allowed as long as a conversation can be developed around that term. This allows everyone involved to throw light on its meaning and, maybe later, choose a different sign more suitable to its newfound meaning. What remains crucial in these situations is, firstly, who participates in these conversations and therefore who gets to define what signs mean and, secondly, the importance of waiting for an idea to be known by Deaf sign language users for a proper sign to emerge.

What becomes visible to me in both discussions over proper Sign Languages use and the modification of signs is my understanding of how entitlement is managed in Deaf cultural worlds. Holland et al. (1998) propose that the positioning of people in social worlds and the differential attribution of power in them gives place to notions of entitlement. I understand that is important that Deaf people become empowered, and

that includes exercising language rights. I can also see, however, that experienced BSL users who are trusted members of Deaf communities, be they deaf or hearing, can actively dispute normative accounts over meaning and that is a culturally appropriate practice. This seems to point to a meta-level of every conversation in which participants are constantly assessing whether something is being properly expressed through Sign Languages.

For Padden (1998), Deaf communities are not only composed of deaf people – those Deaf signing people – but also of hearing relatives and signing friends and co-workers. Local boundaries between hearing and culturally Deaf people have become porous, even with communication difficulties still present. Deaf people no longer participate in traditional Deaf socialising spaces such as residential schools and Deaf clubs as much as they did in the past. These changes in the arrangement of institutions problematizes the stability of notions such as “authenticity” to categorise Deaf people since fewer deaf persons follow the path of what is expected of an “authentic” culturally Deaf person: to be a strong signer, have Deaf parents and friends, go to a residential school, marry a Deaf person, and the list goes on. Any checklist for classifying deaf people as culturally Deaf carries with it the danger of reifying cultures as if they were monolithic and static (Corker, 1998; Ladd, 1994; Padden, 1998; Turner, 1994).

In this way, a transition from the cultural to the bicultural definition of Deaf people deserves our attention. Bicultural here refers not only to an additive sense of membership to Deaf and other local hearing cultures but, more fundamentally, to the capacity of negotiating the frictions between potentially competing or contradictory ways of living, thinking and doing (Padden, 1998). Baker & Padden (1978) offer the concept of attitudinal deafness, understood as different degrees of identification with

characteristics deemed desirable by Deaf communities. That is, d/Deaf peoples have different ways of relating to deafness and hearingness (Corker, 1998). At this point, we must remember that the definition of a Deaf culture has been mostly a scholarly concern. What started as an effort to describe a particular social group became a prescriptive way of categorising people within that group, further stratifying it (Bahan, 1994).

Hence, cultures must not be conceived as being comprised of fixed categories of people. Holland et al. (1998) refer to the heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981) background of cultural worlds, the presence of multiple and potentially conflictual voices and stances. When people try to understand themselves and their place in social worlds, they make use of these multifarious elements provided by cultures, populating themselves with tensions but also enlarging the space of creativity in authoring oneself. We reply to other perspectives and therefore draw a limit between those elements and what we take to be our own. Wilkinson & Kitzinger (1996) refer to this as an altero-referential mechanism, one in which identity construction requires of a process of delimitation with an *Other* in order to “discover” oneself in return. The varying responses that d/Deaf peoples have towards the many stories shared within Deaf communities permit identification to different degrees of affiliation with Deaf cultural values and identities (Bahan, 2006). A deaf person can unexpectedly find themselves reflected in those stories and therefore begin an exploration of their identity as a Deaf person that takes distance from hearing practices in ways that cannot be defined beforehand (Young, Ferguson-Coleman & Keady, 2020).

The construction of Otherness may entail the risk of presenting rigid delimitations and therefore fixed representations or spurious homogeneity (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). However, what these fragments make evident to me is the shifting ways in

which people are positioned and position themselves in different situations. The deaf boy seems to fluctuate in his identifications according to different situations and carves out a space for using languages in ways that are not yet evident to me. The interpreters and the Deaf academic seem to negotiate entitlement for establishing the limits and conditions of sign use and modification in a way that effectively makes a language a matter of a community with various dissenting members and not of a privileged few.

Against fixed notions of Otherness and of homogenised cultures, fissures can emerge by acknowledging multiple sites of tensions. These fissures open sites of discussion and exploration (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). The uneasiness I appreciate in how borders are being constantly re-drawn means that I have at least a modicum possibility of occupying a space that would not exist under fixed notions of identities and communities. My place can be better described following the oxymoron of an internal periphery (Arditi, 2007). If identities rest on the construction of boundaries, then grasping those boundaries in Deaf communities in the UK reveals knowledge about what they hold relevant to understand themselves. A reflection on how full membership is not conceded is an opportunity to make available for reflection those very terms of membership.

If the experiences I am trying to understand are full of frictions and messiness anyway, those experiences could be theorised from spaces where inside and outside become difficult to differentiate (Corker, 1998; Giesen, 2012). While I am not claiming membership of the local Deaf community, I do expect to be recognised as more than just a passing visitor. This, however, goes beyond my reach as recognition can only be conceded by others. A paradoxical aspect of recognition is that it always entails losing oneself to some extent because it involves admitting that we are subjected to frames of recognition that are not completely of our making (Butler, 2005).

Further reflections and conclusions

This paper aims at developing a reflection of my process of access to the cultural worlds of Deaf people in the North of England. It has the double objective of providing knowledge of such cultural worlds from their fringes and of reflecting on my own sense of agency as I explore the social boundaries of Deaf communities.

In the first section, the lens of positional identities (Holland et al., 1998) allowed me to explore how the value attributed to communication and the use of Sign Languages as one of the main communication tools produce unification of the collective but also offer a way of performing stratification; placing members of the collective differentially according to their competence. Newcomers to Deaf cultures are constantly being checked and assessed in their communicative competence and, most importantly, in their willingness to learn and use a Sign Language. My own process of learning both BSL and cultural norms became a way in which Deaf values became visible to me as they allowed me access to Deaf socialisation spaces.

In the second section, the presence of storylines in Deaf people's communities showed figurative identities at work (Holland et al., 1998). Miscommunication experiences and the contrast between a hearing world organised around speech and audition and a Deaf world organised around visual means feed the stories and jokes that work as enculturation tools. By providing scripts for placing oneself and others, they offer sites for exploring identities and offer ontological security amidst competing claims for defining deaf people's subjectivity (Holland et al., 1998; Young, Ferguson-Coleman & Keady, 2020). Storylines have provided d/Deaf peoples with a chance of exploring their own identities and also gave me a significant tool for evaluating my own behaviour regarding how much I share efforts for making understanding happen in communicative situations with d/Deaf peoples.

In the third section, narratives of cultural homogeneity were problematized by bringing the complexity of available positions in Deaf communities into the spotlight. The competing social demands for guiding d/Deaf peoples' development and producing specific types of persons can be traced not only in the opposition between Deaf and hearing worlds, but also within Deaf communities. There is a plethora of positions towards promoted values and degrees of attitudinal deafness available (Baker & Padden, 1978; Corker, 1998; Ladd, 1994; Valsiner, 2000). Such heterogeneity not only provides Deaf people with a space for creativity in authoring their own identities (Holland et al., 1998) but also opened an opportunity for me to find a space of knowledge making that could not exist if rigid social boundaries were in operation. Deaf and hearing people who meet in Deaf communities flexibly negotiate how language norms are going to be deployed, respected or disregarded. However, a question remains on who holds entitlement for being able to propose changes and modifications, next with more general questions about power imbalances among d/Deaf and hearing people within the community (Young & Temple, 2014). While it is difficult to grant ownership of a language to just one people (Turner, 1994), Deaf communities have an historical claim over different Sign Languages mostly because of being their preferred – and sometimes most accessible – means of communication and socialisation (Ladd, 1994).

This reflection framed Deaf people as offering culturally specific social spaces to highlight cultures' particular consequences for development, countering a liberal trend in academia that focuses on individuals, in contrast with the collectivist values held in Deaf communities (O'Brien & Emery, 2013). Different cultural groups and settings offer different kinds of semiotic tools to guide our feeling, thinking, and acting in ways that are considered to be legitimate for that culture. The notion of cultural-ecological

niches of development (Valsiner, 2000) becomes relevant at this point. Conceptualising contexts of development as cultural-ecological niches implies paying attention to how activities, meaning systems and physical ecologies set up the environment in a way that narrow down development possibilities and direct them in certain ways. Valsiner (2000) provides examples of how cultural settings construct socially desired images, reproducing a unipolar order in which alternatives are reduced. Dialogical reflections can be turned into monological dictums. Thus, the cultural propagation of ontological identities (the definition of *what* something 'is') promotes a spurious sense of psychological certainty by eliminating the tension between alternatives.

People use semiotic tools and appropriate them by participating in cultural settings, giving place to personal-cultures that they carry with them to new settings that are arranged differently in cultural terms (Valsiner, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). In each culture, however, different, or even oppositional meaning making systems or discourses struggle to define the goals and orientations of human development. Also, the multiple contexts for human development give place to the possibility of taking distance from socially suggested ways of feeling, thinking, and acting from one context to another. In that sense, cultural groups are not uniform but present tensions between homogeneity and heterogeneity in defining the legitimate way of guiding human development (Holland et al., 1998; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Valsiner, 2000). Consequently, what is at play in these socialisation processes is not merely the promotion of certain ways of knowing, but also ways of being (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000) that are aligned with the creation of envisioned communities.

While the variety of Deaf communities in different regions of the world is not questioned given how each dialogues with local cultures, the fact that there seem to be

a coherent set of common Deaf experiences, as well as the visual-gestural organisation of different Sign Languages grounds the claim of Deaf cultures as particular spheres of human activity (Bahan, 1994; Stokoe, 1994) that deserve to be studied as such. Participation in them provide a series of developmental resources that are relevant for understanding d/Deaf people's learning processes and developmental trajectories. The outcome of life transitions cannot be easily predicted due to the complex arrangement of trajectories of d/Deaf peoples, and also because of the particular interactions of d/Deaf peoples' personal-cultures developed in other contexts and the ones promoted by Deaf communities (Ladd, 1994; Valsiner, 2000). But the specific influence of the semiotic means provided by Deaf cultures as niches for development can be observed *in situ*, during social activity, or traced back as they distil into attitudes towards understanding, deafness, communication and languages. The way attitudinal deafness is used to draw social boundaries, making it possible to consider a hearing person DEAF with certain communicative attitudes instead of making strict reference to an audiological status (Baker & Padden, 1978; Corker, 1998), shows but one example of how certain attributes are expected and promoted in Deaf cultures. Deaf students' trajectories are worth exploring for understanding how they privilege certain languages or learning tools over others or how they, perhaps ambiguously, engage in learning processes.

My claim for producing knowledge about Deaf cultures remains contested yet possible. Researcher positionality has consequences for epistemological and validity issues. On top of questions about who holds valued knowledge and who is prepared for producing interpretation in representation of others, there is an awareness of how the place of the researcher changes what kind of experiences are mobilised for producing interpretations (Young & Ackerman, 2001). My position as a hearing

researcher and Sign Language user in Deaf studies provides me with knowledge that, at least initially, only other people in that position can understand (Sutton-Spence & West, 2011). While my account never ceases to be that of an outsider, there is a possibility of legitimate knowledge at reach, as has been shown by the multiple instances in which I have already participated and the generosity I have found in Deaf people willingly sharing their lives with me and the stories they hold so dear as part of their cultures. Yes, there is a distance between my position and the experiences I am trying to understand, but a mostly productive one if it can be reflected upon and understood in its complexity and limitations as well (Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Ferndale, 2018; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996).

Nonetheless, some caution must always be exercised: attempts to empower Deaf communities are not always perceived as such. Hearing researchers, as non-Deaf and highly educated persons can be seen as agents of colonisation (Ferndale, 2018; Kusters, De Meulder & O'Brien, 2017). There are always limits in crossing cultures, as hearing researchers do not live in Deaf cultures, they just work in them (Jones & Pullen, 1992). Also, even when there are constant efforts by hearing researchers to stand on equal terms with d/Deaf peoples, other aspects of research such as funding and dissemination of research inevitably (if not exclusively) tend to occur in hearing-oriented settings and cultures and in English. This further replicate oppressive relations. Inequalities are not to be found only at the interpersonal level; they also reflect issues of power in broader social contexts that may undermine researchers' methodological decisions (Jones & Pullen, 1992; Young & Ackerman, 2001).

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Chapter 6: Paper 2

Deaf students' translanguaging practices in a further education college: situating the semiotic repertoire in social interactions

Cristián Iturriaga & Alys Young

Abstract

Further Education (FE) colleges are the most usual post-secondary education destination for deaf young people in England. The role of college contexts in promoting deaf students' learning warrants further exploration given the gaps in educational attainment common to deaf students and the potential for FE context to provide new and/or enhanced linguistic resources in comparison with school. The main research question is: How do deaf students' translanguaging practices change according to the different contexts of interlocution in college? Translanguaging entails the flexible use of semiotic resources not bounded by named languages. This ethnographic study reports on 5 deaf college students' translanguaging practices. Findings are presented under three moments of translanguaging: (1) translanguaging expanded, or deaf students widening their repertoires to engage in communication; (2) translanguaging restricted, or deaf students accommodating to their communicative partners' needs; (3) translanguaging channelled, or the dominance of English countering the flexibility of translanguaging. It is argued that translanguaging should be promoted in whole classrooms. Otherwise, it will reinforce the dominance of hearing communication practices and hinder deaf students' multilingual/multimodal repertoires.

Introduction

Most deaf students in England are currently educated in mainstream settings rather than attending special schools (NDCS, 2019). After finishing mandatory school education at 16 years old, research demonstrates that Further Education (FE) disproportionately accounts for their next destination in comparison with non-deaf young people (NDCS, 2018; Young, Oram, Squires & Sutherland, 2015). FE in England can be defined as post-secondary education delivered in colleges and sometimes in conjunction with work-based settings. FE is not delivered in schools, sixth form colleges or higher education institutions. FE courses can be part-time or full-time, in some cases with practical skills apprenticeships incorporated. In England it is legally required that young people stay in a programme of study, training, or employment until 18 years old (DfE, 2014). FE is similar to the term ‘continuing education’ used in the USA and Canada and TAFE (Technical and Further Education) used in Australia.

The disproportionately high number of deaf students attending FE rather than any other post-16 destination, is attributed in part to an accumulated educational under-attainment that would prevent access to other educational and occupational options (Young et al., 2015). However, FE also constitutes a significant moment of change in many deaf young people’s lives, including the possibility of being educated along with other deaf peers for the first time in an educational environment that is other than an oral/spoken language environment (Fordyce, Riddell, O’Neill & Weedon, 2013; Young, Oram, Squires & Sutherland, 2015; Young, Squires, Oram, Sutherland & Hartley, 2015).

In this paper we present results from a study that has sought to understand the context and use of translanguaging– including the role of people, languages, and sensory

orientations – of 5 diverse deaf FE college students as new and emerging linguistic communicative resources are available to them in this new educational setting. The intention was to explore how these practices may illuminate how deaf students make use of the communication resources at hand in a novel context, what challenges they face in doing so, and why deaf students may not learn to an equal level as their hearing peers even after accommodations have been made. We do so through the lens of translanguaging.

Translanguaging refers to hybrid language practices in which individuals do not just blend or interchangeably use a range of languages and language modalities, but also recruit a diverse repertoire of communicative strategies and resources in a ‘process of knowledge construction that goes beyond language(s)’ (Li, 2018, p. 15). Translanguaging is understood as a contextualised practice, in part shaped by environment, context of communication and interlocutor whilst remaining fluid and reflective of the identities of self and others (Li & Zhu, 2013). Recent research with respect to deaf children and young people has given recognition to and allows for a wider use of deaf students’ linguistic repertoires from a translanguaging perspective (Bagga-Gupta, 2002; Kelman & Branco, 2009; Krause, 2019; Kusters, Spotti, Swanwick & Tapio, 2017; Swanwick, 2017).

The framework of translanguaging foregrounds the crucial developmental role of sociocultural contexts in guiding learning processes. In this respect, Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is instructive. It offers a dynamic view in which cognitive development relies on sustained social interaction with more experienced others and gradual appropriation of cultural tools. The ZPD is sustained by individuals creating shared communicative spaces and promoting reciprocity by continually adjusting to each other’s knowledge and skills. By bringing different

perspectives, intermental discussion becomes the base for intramental reasoning. The concept thus offers a perspective for analysing how educators manage to sustain this sense of mutuality with students and to what degree classroom talk promotes encountering others' points of view in order to transform individuals' thinking (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Wegerif, 2011).

However, Vygotsky's (1962) focus on thinking as inner speech can privilege interpretations limited to spoken languages. This is restrictive considering how some deaf students also use signed languages as mediation tools, making their multilingual and multimodal profiles an asset for learning (Kusters, 2017a; Swanwick, 2017). The concept of translanguaging allows instead to focus on meaning-making as a unitary activity with agents flexibly employing semiotic resources for both expression and understanding (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Li, 2018; Williams, 1994). In translanguaging, there is a distinction between the normativity of abstracted languages and the heterogeneous semiotic resources involved in situated languaging, with an ever-present tension between the abstracted and the situated (Thibault, 2011). This is highly pertinent to deaf students multimodal, multilingual practices.

Through translanguaging, individuals recruit linguistic and gestural signifiers along with objects and other publicly available semiotic resources that elaborate each other and build meaning over time. Mutual attention to those resources allows for communication and meaningful action (Goodwin, 2000; Swanwick, 2017). By bringing different resources, individuals also gain different perspectives and become able to communicate with diverse potential audiences, thus augmenting dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1981; Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Linell, 2009; Ruthrof, 2000; Wegerif, 2011).

Indeed, studies of predictors of academic success among college deaf students point towards not so much audiological or single language abilities (e.g., spoken English or American Sign Language) but to the benefits of communication flexibility (Convertino, Marschark, Sapere, Sarchet & Zupan, 2009; Garberoglio, Cawthon & Bond, 2014; Stinson, Liu, Saur & Long, 1996) and communicative competence – which is broader than language ability. It includes communication repair abilities, being able to match the mode and register of audience, and learning how to use interpreters (Antia, Jones, Reed & Kreimeyer, 2009).

The FE classroom communication environment is a complex one. In the UK, rarely are deaf students taught in deaf-only groups but rather in mixed ability deaf/hearing classes. Tutors are not necessarily well prepared for specialist teaching and learning requirements of deaf students. The provision of Communication Support Workers (CSWs) is quite common. These are not qualified sign language interpreters but rather CSWs fulfil a hybrid role in facilitating communication between deaf student and tutor, modifying learning resources for the student, and advising in some cases the tutor on best practices to facilitate deaf student learning.

The provision of interpreters as accommodation in post-secondary settings is more common in the USA and Australia than in the UK (Marschark et al., 2005; Powell, Hyde & Punch, 2014). Classroom interpreting for deaf students is challenging given how there are different parties that need communication to be mediated, as well as the need for including contextual information and others' surrounding indirect communication. Additionally, lag times between source and target languages often lead interpreters to abbreviate (Cawthon, 2001; Foster, Long & Snell, 1999; Napier, 2004; Schick, Williams & Kupermintz, 2006). There are also challenges for deaf students since paying attention to the interpreters instead of to the instructor, for

example, pointing at the board or handling objects, leads to divided attention (Foster, Long & Snell, 1999; Powell, Hyde & Punch, 2014). Nonetheless, interpreters are mentioned by deaf students as being crucial for mediating communication and the comprehension of lecturers' concepts (Foster, Long & Snell, 1999).

Translanguaging, which is the lens through which we will examine the learning environment of FE, is not exempt from internal debate. There are theoretical debates on whether translanguaging involves primarily individuals' manipulation of their own linguistic repertoires (Wei, 2011) or if translanguaging is a situated practice that involves engagement with others and objects in space (Canagarajah, 2018). In the field of Deaf Studies, there are growing concerns among Deaf¹¹ scholars regarding translanguaging. Despite it illuminating deaf signers' fluid language practices (Kusters, 2017b; Kusters et al., 2017; Snoddon, 2017), thus countering deficit views on individuals' skills (Hoffman, Wolsey, Andrews & Clark, 2017), it is argued that translanguaging might also serve to ignore deaf individuals' sensory orientations and their unequal access to different semiotic resources, re-instating the dominance of spoken languages and endangering sign languages (De Meulder, Kusters, Moriarty, & Murray, 2019; Murray, 2018; Snoddon, 2017).

To summarise, a translanguaging frame offers the possibility of re-contextualising the academic success and learning challenges of deaf students in their social and communicative experiences, interrogating whether they are afforded situations in which they can flexibly use and appropriate semiotic resources to talk with others and transform their understanding. This must take into consideration the many

¹¹ Here we follow the convention of using 'deaf' to refer to an audiological status, whereas 'Deaf' is reserved for a cultural-linguistic identification.

communicative challenges that deaf students may experience and how they are circumvented. It requires an exploration of deaf students' actual communicative practices in ways that can be sensitive to deaf students' changing communicative contexts, document their multilingual and multimodal practices, and consider the role of social and communicative experiences provided by educational settings in deaf students' learning. Thus, the research question guiding this study is: How do deaf students' translanguaging practices shape and are shaped by the different contexts of interlocution performed in college?

Methods

In order to answer the research question, the general objective of this study is to explore and interpret the relationship between deaf students' translanguaging practices and the contexts of interlocution enacted in a FE college environment. The use of 'interpret' is a way of acknowledging the hermeneutic and recursive nature of this task: the main researcher recruited their own semiotic repertoire to understand participants' semiotic repertoires in use.

Specific objectives:

- To describe the translanguaging practices of a range of deaf students
- To interpret the role and status of different semiotic resources in deaf students' translanguaging practices
- To interpret the role and status of different sensory orientations in deaf students' translanguaging practices
- To interpret the role and status of different interlocutors in deaf students' translanguaging practices

Ethnographic approach. An ethnographic approach is adopted because it is particularly well suited for studying translanguaging since the dynamic way in which semiotic resources are combined in human interaction cannot be known before observing them (Goodwin, 2000; Swanwick, 2017). This study was thus designed according to an ethnographic approach (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) informed by a critical poststructuralist stance in which ethnographic ‘texts’ assume their contested character as positioned accounts of social worlds (Behar & Gordon, 1996; Denzin, 1997; Kondo, 1990).

The main researcher who carried out the fieldwork is a hearing person who is a late (i.e., adult) learner of British Sign Language (BSL) but who has worked immersed in professional deaf signing environments for over 4 years. At the time of conducting the research, he was finishing his BSL Level 2 course. This is equivalent to a moderate level of sign language competency; it is considerably more than conversational ability but less than confident fluency. It is acknowledged that this could have impacted his ability to understand discourse signed in full BSL structure, especially when signed quickly or in an informal or colloquial register. However, it is also the case that some of the participants in the study were also later learners of BSL having little or not access to BSL until entry into FE. Some used signed discourse following the linguistic structure of English which was more accessible to the researcher. Some students had English as a second language and BSL as a third which also mirrored the first author’s biography. The first author’s own linguistic uncertainties are transparently discussed in the analyses of the data and acknowledged as potential limitations.

Deaf students’ translanguaging practices were documented *in situ* through contemporaneous field note writing and subsequently reflected upon in a reflexive diary. Field notes described observations of contexts and other features of settings

along with interactions. They also recorded vocal language in English, transcribed sign supported English utterances as well as non-formally linguistic communications whether pointing, gesture, use of paper and reference to material objects as part of conversation. The intention was not to note everything in the way in which a video recording might have recorded the entirety of conversation, but rather to note in depth specific dynamic instances that exemplified translanguaging processes in action. Field notes included a process of translation from observed BSL to written English, relying on the researcher's knowledge of BSL. In this sense, field notes are, of course, not perfect translations and are limited in their ability to depict the visual-gestural nature of BSL discourse. Translation was made more explicit through the capitalisation of words in sign-by-sign translation. This way, disjunctions between both languages comes to the fore and open discussions of interpretation, in accordance with the admission that languages are not neutral mediums of representation. (Denzin, 1997; Temple & Young, 2014).

Setting. The study was carried out in Northern England. The researcher contacted local deaf people to gather information about relevant local colleges attended by deaf students. Mill Town College [pseudonym] usually was the first mentioned. This FE college attracts many deaf students in the area, some of whom travel from surrounding towns and cities looking for the specific supports it provides. The college serves both hearing and deaf students, providing deaf-only classroom and mixed hearing and deaf classroom situations.

Informed consent. Deaf Support Office staff inside the college acted as gatekeepers, helping in identifying potential participants. The researcher prepared participant information sheets in written English and in BSL (available online). Both were used to inform deaf students about the nature of the study and their rights as participants.

Consent was presented in written English with the researcher available for clarification of the consent form as required or could be accessed in full BSL translation. The study received ethical approval from The University of Manchester research committee (Ref: 2018-4625-7510).

Data production. All data were produced in a period prior to Covid-19 restrictions, between May and July of 2019. Data production consisted of observations, ethnographic field notes, and occasional direct interactions with students during the observations. Open and flexible observation protocols were prepared, guiding the observation processes towards semiotic resources, people, physical space, and objects used in interaction. Deaf Support staff who were based in the college provided additional communication support for the researcher and the students when required.

Each visit to college consisted in several hours of observation, sometimes focused on a single class and student or observing different students and classes at other times. There were 2 to 3 days of observation per week during the period of data production. Classes with hearing peers and tutors included the presence of a CSW. In classes with deaf peers and tutors, only some deaf students had CSWs with them to support with written English tasks.

Participants. 8 potential participants were approached and 5 agreed to take part. Participants chose their own pseudonyms (by which they are referred to below). All the participants were profoundly deaf and used spoken English and BSL to varied extents. A summary of their background information can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' information

Katniss	Derick	Adam	Sam	Matt
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Deafness	Profound	Profound	Profound	Profound	Profound
Age	19	19	18	18	29
Hearing amplification technology	Bilateral hearing aids	Unilateral cochlear implant	Bilateral cochlear implant	Unilateral cochlear implant	Unilateral cochlear implant
Born	Afghanistan	England	England	England	England
Family	Multilingual hearing	No info.	Multilingual hearing	English-speaking hearing	English-speaking hearing

Participants were observed during their regular activities in college for a total of 37.8 hours, accessing a varied range of classes. See table 2 for a distribution of time according to participants and classes.

Table 2. Time of observation according to participant and courses.

Participant	Course	Time
Adam	Language tutorial	1 hr
	Sports	1 hr
	Sports theory	1 hr
	Sports tutorial	30 min
	English GCSE	1 hr 10 min
	Mathematics GCSE	1 hr 20 min
Derick	Language tutorial	50 min
	Biology GCSE	5 hrs
	Biology independent study	1 hr 40 min

	Biology tutorial	40 min
Katniss	Mathematics GCSE	1 hr
	Mathematics independent study	2 hrs 20 min
	Mathematics tutorial	45 min
Matt	Literacy support	3 hrs
	Technical workshop	6 hrs
	Drop-in session	45 min
Sam	Sports	1 hr
	Sports theory	1 hr
	Literacy support	3 hrs
	Numeracy support	2 hrs 50 min
	Employability	2 hrs
Total		37.8 hrs

Analysis. The field notes produced were analysed following an approach influenced by Grounded Theory, which means that the general analytical procedures of open and axial coding were borrowed without necessarily following all the tenets of more structured Grounded Theory (e.g., using a pre-determined coding paradigm or frame for axial coding) (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Grounded Theory procedures were selected because of their flexibility (Corbin & Strauss, 2014), making them ideal to explore the creative aspects of language in context included in translanguaging practices during communication with others at college.

Initial codes were flexibly used in a sub-sample of observations to label phenomena of interest while being grouped into larger categories. Categories were refined by expanding analyses to further observations, guided by theoretical sampling within cases (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Flick, 2007) through a constant comparative method to explore contradictions as well (Brewer, 2000). The final notes that were analysed added new information without substantially changing the conceptualisation of phenomena, reaching an acceptable level of theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

Initial analyses were focused mainly on coding semiotic resources, interlocutors in communication and physical space. Subsequent analysis grouped these codes into categories that reflected distinct contexts of communication with other people and the kinds of resources used in them. These categories were then refined through further analysis and re-described as ‘moments’ to indicate variations in asymmetries in communication and how they shaped translanguaging practices into three situations: moments in which the semiotic repertoire was expanded, moments in which it was restricted, and a third more abstract flow of semiotic resources between languages. These conform the base from which findings are presented in the later section.

NVivo 12 software for qualitative analysis was used to help in managing, coding and retrieving field notes and writing reflexive memos. Fragments shown in the findings section were selected as exemplary types (Brewer, 2000) of the general deployment of translanguaging on each category.

Findings

In the following section, findings are presented according to the three main emergent analytical moments noted previously which show variations in deaf students’ contexts

of interlocution that impacted on translanguaging practices. The direct quotations used are taken from the main researcher's transcribed field notes. Capitalization is used to indicate the translated signed utterance.

1. Translanguaging expanded. This section will indicate how deaf college students used different semiotic resources for creatively and flexibly communicating with others and promoting common understanding.

1.1. Communication with hearing tutors mediated by CSWs. Communication with hearing tutors, when mediated by Communication Support Workers (CSWs), allows deaf students to rely on a mixture of semiotic resources for ensuring communication between parties. Observations registered how deaf students very often construct multilingual and multimodal utterances to circumvent two difficulties in communication: the lack of a common strong language with the hearing tutors and the possibility that CSWs do not have a strong enough level of BSL to support them in all instances. In this fragment, Matt corroborates something with his tutor:

Matt calls the tutor. He signs ANY MORE NEED THINK? Pointing at his computer screen and the CSW translates 'do I need to put any more?' The tutor reads the document briefly and asks 'at work have you painted any bumper?' The CSW translates CAR BUMPER, PAINT? BUMPER. Matt nods (Observation 9, Paragraph 78).¹²

¹² Quotations of ethnographic notes will use the following format: (Observation number, Paragraph number). Quotes after the first one will be abridged to (O number, P number).

The document in written English open on the computer screen helps Matt to frame what his question is about and helps the tutor to survey the task. Also, Matt replies to him with a head nod in a way that makes a basic gestural level of common understanding evident for both. The translation provided by the CSW is still indispensable, but the increase in resources through a widening of modalities allows Matt to involve a wider audience. That day Matt kept inscribing objects and written English, making them ostensibly available for everyone through pointing gestures.

By having both the hearing tutor and the CSW paying attention to them, deaf students construct complex multi-party communicative situations: their utterances are directed towards more than one person who have varying degrees of knowledge of different semiotic resources.

1.2. Direct communication with deaf support staff. Encounters with hearing staff working in the Deaf Support Office were opportunities for widening the repertoire of semiotic resources in communication. In the following fragment, a Deaf Support staff member has prepared a series of laminated cards with images of mathematical and geometric concepts for Katniss to organise:

Katniss takes yet another card with a circumference on it and angles with numbers. The Deaf Support staff member asks her in BSL: CIRCLE, NAME WHAT? Katniss fingerspells C-I-N and then becomes hesitant. The staff member fingerspells C-I-R-C-U-M-F-E-R-E-N-C-E. She then shapes her hand like a quarter turn angle, and starts manipulating it, closing and expanding it so to become more open. When it is in a quarter turn, she signs 90; when in a half turn she signs 180. She then forms a full circle, says 'full circle' and signs WHOLE. Katniss signs WHOLE and 360. The staff member nods in approval (O8, P64).

The mixture of semiotic resources in this example is complex. Discussion is prompted by an image and conducted mainly in sign language. The visual properties of the concept are explored by manipulating a handshape with fingers extended together in contact with the thumb (as in the handshape for DUCK [the animal's beak]). That enabled the presentation of angles in three-dimensional space, and the concept was labelled by reference both to spoken English and fingerspelling. In this way, semiotic resources operate in a manner that is not merely additive by bringing different perspectives to a conversation. In the linkages and contrasts of resources, concepts are explored and made true for deaf students.

1.3. Direct communication with Communication Support Workers (CSWs). CSWs also represent opportunities for widening semiotic resources. In the following fragment, Adam mixes signs with written English by pointing to it in text so the CSW can write down his answers for an English GCSE mock assessment:

The CSW now asks Adam EXPLAIN WHY YOU THINK EMOTIVE, WHY? while pointing to the piece of text they were talking about. READY? She signs after Adam has been thinking for a while. LIST? She signs downwards and he signs OK and points to pieces of text. After that, the CSW reads the question again in English and simultaneous BSL. Adam makes an 'ah' sound, nods, underlines a sentence and signs an answer (O3, P143).

The CSW asked Adam to produce an explanation that was linked with a text. The signing of LIST by the CSW reinforced that the clarification of the next step in the process was to be transcribed onto the paper, by projecting a paper in front of her body and using her thumb to sign LIST downwards. Adam constructed his answers by underlining written English and developing ideas through signs.

In becoming conversation partners CSWs also become thinking partners for deaf students in tasks that would otherwise be eminently individual and monolingual or unimodal. CSWs not only translate for deaf students but also interrogate them, make them clarify, or ask them to expand their answers across languages and modalities. In doing this, they make deaf students look at things from the other perspectives and through the affordances of other semiotic resources.

1.4. Direct communication with a deaf tutor. On some occasions, students would be in smaller deaf-only settings with a deaf tutor, presenting opportunities for sharing knowledge through signing. While this setting reverses the status of languages and therefore of resources, making BSL a shared tool for communication and common understanding, this did not prevent translanguaging from happening. Activities were intended for deaf students to move across languages and modalities. In the next fragment, Sam mobilises her signs to produce and check the production of a text about Barack Obama before the deaf tutor arrives to read it:

Sam signs MAN OPEN-MINDS... She then writes down something and continues: WHEN FINISH PEOPLE THINK WORK GREAT. She seems to be “visibly reading” (translating to BSL in a way that is closer to English structure) what she wrote. A few minutes later I see the tutor approaching her, reading what she has written and signing WOW FANTASTIC (O4, P37).

The fact that Sam is mobilising her signs for writing in English implies not only that she is using her full repertoire, but also that she is doing adequate modifications. Her signing changes follow the structure of English, showing that she is aware of the difference between languages while bridging them.

The deaf tutor constantly asks deaf students to use signs to connect them with words and sentences in written English for comprehensive and expressive purposes. This highlights a different curriculum than regular classes, one in which the visual aspects of English are deployed in a way that allows for sensory asymmetries to diminish. Semiotic resources are accessible to all involved and thus communication does not need constant corroboration between participants.

2. Translanguaging restricted. This second section shows how sensory asymmetries make some semiotic resources become more accessible than others for deaf students, and how do they try to ameliorate or even make strategic use of such asymmetries.

2.1. Direct communication with hearing tutors. Spoken English is the main resource for showing understanding and communicating needs to hearing tutors, with great variations among deaf students. In the next fragment, Derick is using his spoken English to answer his tutor in his biology GCSE class:

The tutor then asks back to Derick ‘which factor are you...’ but is interrupted by Derick with a ‘say again’. The tutor repeats and completes her question. Then Derick starts explaining that he will focus on temperature and will use two different temperatures on his bacteria. While he is explaining this, he gestures a number 2 with his fingers and places each temperature figure on a finger (O3, P73).

The way the gesture is performed while making the explanation in spoken English indicates that the placing of things on fingers, as a feature of BSL, is being recruited. It enables more than one referent to be simultaneously present in an utterance.

When tutors were visually attuned to the movement of deaf students, gestures and signs became important ways of sharing meaning. They can involve some basic gestures like nodding or pointing gestures to indicate words in written English or to inscribe physical objects in communication. Written English is also usually used to visually highlight important information or by writing down answers to be read by the tutor. Finally, auditory concessions like ‘aaah’ or short utterances in spoken English were used to show understanding and to sustain communicative attunement with hearing tutors.

2.2. *Direct communication with deaf peers.* Communication with deaf peers involves a great deal of informal conversations that privileged the use of signs. In contrast, planned activities that prescribed interaction with deaf peers in deaf-only settings involved expanding semiotic resources. Signs are used in tasks like jointly placing a series of phrases in written English in the right order, so they correctly depict steps in a process:

The tutor then assembles pairs of students to work together. To each of them he gives one instruction he has cut out into different fragments that they must re-assemble. Each pair of students then must discuss the right order of instructions. I can see that Sam and her classmate are looking for images in Google to get what certain words mean. In the case of Matt, he discusses in BSL with his classmate to compare what they did with the other group. They rearrange the instructions and seem to have done it easily. They sit back a bit more relaxed and stop working. The tutor then asks them READY? (O4, P54).

The difficulty of the task seems to be experienced differently by the pair that included Matt and the one including Sam. Sam was resorting to images and signs to construct

meaning from written English, relying more on visual ways of understanding. Matt, in contrast, was discussing the overall arrangement of phrases through BSL, approaching the task as a work of translation. They show how translanguaging can include different strategies and styles for building sense.

2.3. *Direct communication with hearing peers.* Communicative interactions with hearing peers were mostly limited to informal conversations and privileged spoken English. Deaf students found creative ways to circumvent this and sustain intersubjective encounters, such as combining spoken English with gestures and images from their mobile phones.

The single observed activity that required interaction with hearing peers shows Derick's translanguaging in a task of explaining why isolation leads to new species:

Derick is drawing, explaining his ideas on the matter through spoken English and use of gestures. At some point, for example, he says 'they split up' and makes a gesture of separation similar to a sign for SEPARATE.

Derick has drawn an island with a river crossing it. He points to space in each half and says 'dogs, intercourse, split' (O5, PP75-76).

Interaction here, although led by single word in spoken English, was accompanied by a proliferation of semiotic resources: drawings, gestures, and written English. Both the planning of the activity and the opportunistic way in which Derick used resources at hand to create his explanation helped to sustain communication with a hearing classmate.

2.4. *Exploring content with CSWs.* Signs, being understood only by a limited amount of people in the classroom, seem to offer fewer spectators and allowed deaf students

to strategically explore knowledge with the CSW as the only interlocutor. In the next fragment, Sam made a calculation mistake in signed mathematics:

The CSW now explains a problem to Sam. The CSW signs PAY, EXCHANGE. YOUR MONEY. EXAMPLE: MAN PAY 7 POUNDS, HAVE 10 POUNDS, GIVES. BACK HOW-MUCH? At first, Sam doesn't seem to understand so the CSW explains once more. Then Sam gets it, and answers by signing 7. But she immediately realises she had it wrong, so she looks at me quickly and signs 3 (O10, P18).

The sudden awareness of spectators suggested that conversations would be better carried out without more people understanding and potentially judging her performance.

3. Translanguaging channelled. This third section will show how the space for creative use of semiotic resources in college was constrained by the privilege of written and Spoken English for publicly sharing knowledge.

3.1. Using visual semiotic resources to improve understanding of knowledge presented in English. As a general tendency, deaf students used semiotic resources that were more accessible (signs, fingerspelling, images) to corroborate the meaning of less accessible ones (spoken and written English). This effort was partly shared by their CSWs. For example, Sam would ask to her CSW for written words being translated to signs to develop a written answer:

Sam asks something to the CSW, who fingerspells a word. Sam, however, keeps asking for clarification and the CSW signs HEALTH. Just then Sam goes back to writing, while nodding. Sam then signs again to the CSW,

who points to something and signs: PHYSICAL HEALTH, MENTAL WELLBEING (O2, P26).

This task involved making a distinction in English between 'health' and 'wellbeing'. Since fingerspelling would only provide a label bracketing the term from everyday discourse, another layer of meaning was necessary. The sign for HEALTH added this but the distinction was not clear until different sites of signing were added: physical HEALTH was signed on the torso and mental WELLBEING from the head.

Signs also provided self-mediation, with deaf students signing to themselves while reading texts in English. Students would also pay attention to images accompanying text, or search unknown words in Google Images, thus reflecting their sensory orientations and visual epistemologies.

3.2. *Connecting knowledge understood in signs with English.* After being able to construct understanding, deaf students made the inverse route from meaningful resources to resources accepted for publicly demonstrating knowledge. For example, Derick and his CSW talk about different concepts in biology:

The CSW explains about breeding to Derick, signing NEW, NEW, NEW (displacing signs forward in space, like the emergence of something new in a linear way forward in time) HAPPENS THEM, WHAT? Derick answers in spoken English 'natural selection'. The CSW checks with the tutor what is the right term for obtaining a mark in the GCSE exam (O5, P83).

The way Derick answered seems no surprise given how important was for him being able to answer in English. He was preparing his GCSE in biology. The inclusion of the tutor to corroborate the correct use of terms signals the importance of labelling

according to assessment criteria. Given the difficulty in accessing spoken English for deaf students, fingerspelling with the CSW also was relevant when there were finer distinctions on how words must be written or pronounced after being understood.

Discussion

Most deaf students in England enter Further Education (FE) as a postsecondary educational route (NDCS, 2018; Young et al, 2015), reporting overall good experiences but still underperforming hearing peers for reasons not explained by additional special educational needs alone (Young et al, 2015). This highlights the need for analysing the communication experiences provided by FE educational contexts in a way that does not reproduce individualist and deficit perspectives on deaf students' learning (Bagga-Gupta, 2010; Swanwick, 2017).

The present ethnographic study, supported by sociocultural and dialogical conceptions of language and learning (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Li, 2018 Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Swanwick, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978), set out to explore how deaf students' translanguaging practices shape and are shaped by the different contexts of interlocution performed in one FE college. Close observation and analysis of in situ interlocutions highlighted three principal moments.

'Translanguaging expanded', showed how deaf students made flexible use of different semiotic resources to explore knowledge presented to them and engage with different interlocutors. In this way, translanguaging allows deaf students to question teachers, produce common understanding or debate points of views with others, reflecting the benefits of linguistic flexibility (Antia et al., 2009; Convertino et al., 2009; Stinson et al., 1996) and partially fulfilling the dialogic requirements for developing cognitive flexibility and complex reasoning (Mercer & Littleton, 2007).

The second moment, ‘translanguaging restricted’, addressed those occasions in which the deaf students limited their semiotic repertoire. Communication with deaf peers was restricted to BSL perhaps because it provided smoother common understanding. Direct communication with hearing staff or peers who were not sign language users also restricted semiotic resources as sensory asymmetries became more evident (De Meulder et al., 2019). On many occasions, deaf students were documented as performing auditory concessions by simultaneous use of speech and signs or by uttering single words, even in the presence of a CSW. This points towards a communicative and cultural sensitivity on the part of deaf students as they modify their resources to engage other people and navigate asymmetries in communication (Blackledge & Cresse, 2014; Swanwick, 2017).

The third and final moment presented was ‘translanguaging channelled’. The privileging of English reveals the pressures of standardised testing (e.g., GCSEs) shaping in advance how knowledge must be presented, and re-inscribing power imbalances on how semiotic resources are used in classrooms. Work in college, even if locally encouraging a pluralisation of semiotic resources for promoting deaf students’ learning, navigates an irresolvable tension between the flexibility of languaging and the normativity of languages (Thibault, 2011). If education involves learning to engage with varied (scientific) communities of discourse that make up the heteroglossic background of dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981; Blackledge & Cresse, 2014; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Wegerif, 2011), this pressure restricts the possibilities that are brought by deaf students’ multilingualism. Dialogue, however rich, is ultimately directed at an English-speaking other.

By having only partial access to the multiple semiotic resources used by deaf students, tutors were disadvantaged at fully appraising the level of understanding or

misunderstanding of students. This represents a limitation for the establishment of shared communicative spaces required for the continued mutual adjustment and contingent intervention that are fundamental for ZPDs (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). This also emphasises how translation services or other communication supports are not enough in themselves as accommodation (Powell, Hyde & Punch, 2014). Other required measures might include modifying teaching practices in awareness of deaf students' sensory orientations, recognising the impact of visual resources in cognition and lifelong visual epistemologies (De Clerck, 2016), and promoting classrooms in which deaf students' peers and tutors can act as thinking partners by sharing a pool of semiotic resources. Indeed, the establishment of interthinking (i.e., shared thinking) (Mercer & Littleton, 2007) via the sharing of semiotic resources and awareness of each other's sensory orientations and needs stood out as an emergent core component of analyses for understanding the phenomenon of deaf students' translanguaging. This interpretation favours the comprehension of translanguaging as a culturally and spatially situated practice (Canagarajah, 2018).

Despite limited access to interlocutors in classroom talk, deaf students had a Communication Support Worker (CSW) as a constant interlocutor, allowing for the accompanied exploration of knowledge through dialogue across languages and modalities. CSWs were relevant actors even in deaf-led spaces where BSL was privileged thus making communication smoother, for they provided an interlocutor with whom some students could explore written English. In this way, CSWs not only provided access to instructional content (Foster, Long & Snell, 1999) but took the role of partners in translanguaged interthinking (Mercer & Littleton, 2007), creating the possibility of multi-perspectival knowledge by allowing deaf students to bring together different semiotic resources in non-equivalent and non-additive manners for

dialoguing and making sense of phenomena. Therefore, engagement with CSWs permit deaf students to partially reap the benefits of expanded semiotic repertoires as bimodal bilingual individuals (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Swanwick, 2017). Interthinking with CSWs thus could provide ZPDs that promote learning and nurture cognitive development (Vygostky, 1978).

The analyses open up further questions concerning the pedagogies and politics of translanguaging. First, deaf students' translanguaging with each other and deaf teachers reflected a sensory restriction. The combination of signs, fingerspelling, gestures, images, and written English, while still reflecting the translanguaging practices of signers (Snoddon, 2017), was different from translanguaging enacted with other non-signing interlocutors, which included body movements, enhanced facial expressions, and a variable degree of speech. This points to a 'ceiling effect' of translanguaging, which is less required once other people can fully adapt to deaf students' communicative preferences and orientations. Second, translanguaging was also sensorily restricted with hearing peers and tutors who were not sign language users, making more oral/aural concessions and using fewer visual resources (e.g., signs or fingerspelling). In other words, translanguaging operates with interlocutors who can share the burden of maintaining intersubjectivity and common understanding, which requires not only linguistic knowledge but addressing wider attitudinal aspects of classroom communication to consider learners of differing sensory orientations. Overall, this points to the general benefit of bilingual education for deaf college students to promote and capitalise on plural semiotic repertoires, and to how deaf-led spaces that privileged BSL represented a context of lessened sensory barriers that could enhance mutual understanding and therefore learning.

Therefore, fulfilling the goal of mobilising deaf students' full semiotic repertoire (Swanwick, 2017) requires establishing intersubjective spaces in which those resources can be genuinely used to make sense, promoting hybrid communicative skills in all possible interlocutors. This entails re-working the 'ground rules' for communication in a way that promotes: (1) the equal involvement of all students in openly exploring and contrasting knowledge; (2) sharing the task of sustaining communication (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Green, 2014). Likewise, the introduction of BSL in college classrooms must not be restricted to deaf students and their CSWs and must also be promoted for hearing teachers and classmates, however basic their learning. As could be seen in deaf students' translanguaging practices, this is a basic and necessary condition for promoting translanguaging in a way that is beneficial for them. If educational spaces are not able to meet these requirements, deaf students could be overburdened with the responsibility of accommodating to other's communicative needs. In such instances, the promotion of translanguaging will serve to reproduce injustices (De Meulder et al., 2019), forcing deaf students' adaptation to a hearing norm and reproducing educational inequalities.

Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to explore deaf college students' use of translanguaging in context, including the influence of languages, other people, and sensory orientations on semiotic repertoires. Overall, Grounded Theory procedures allowed identifying the importance of a dynamic of intersubjectivity, in which culturally and physically situated interlocutors recruit semiotic resources to achieve mutual understanding and negotiate mutual estrangement or alterity.

Deaf students observed in the college benefited from the mobilisation of their multilingual and multimodal repertoires by engaging in communication with different

interlocutors and exploring knowledge via different semiotic resources. This included movements of expansion and contraction of their total semiotic repertoires. Furthermore, translanguaging practices reflected a tension between the flexibility achieved in plural repertoires and the normativity produced by the overall dominance of English language in college activities.

These findings are relevant for re-thinking the pedagogies associated with the promotion of translanguaging. On the one hand, there was a ‘ceiling effect’ given the overall restriction in semiotic repertoires when deaf interlocutors accommodated to others’ linguistic preferences and sensory orientations. Translanguaging was richer when semiotic resources and sensory orientations were partially shared. On the other hand, hearing tutors’ partial access to deaf students’ resources was a limitation for the constitution of shared comprehension and continual mutual adjustment in ZPDs. This was partially tackled by the presence of a CSW.

Findings are also relevant for considering the politics associated with promoting translanguaging. All interlocutors need to be able to partially share semiotic resources for translanguaging to be richer and therefore beneficial in the development of plural semiotic repertoires and in promoting dialogical, multi-perspectival knowledge. Otherwise, the promotion of translanguaging could reproduce deaf students’ forced assimilation to hearing normative ways of communicating. Continued participation in educational contexts that structure contexts of interlocution in inaccessible ways risks reproducing inequalities, such as the knowledge gaps between deaf and hearing students.

Future research could explore deaf students in other colleges, including Sixth Form colleges, inquiring how translanguaging changes according to the activities and

objectives that privilege academic or vocational routes. These colleges could also attract deaf students with different trajectories and communication profiles. Future research could also explore variations in translanguaging according to the type of support provided to deaf students in FE colleges, comparing CSWs with different BSL levels and experience, or the provision of qualified BSL interpreters if available. Finally, further research is needed about why deaf college students modify their semiotic repertoires for others from their own subjective perspectives.

Limitations

The method did not include member checking (triangulation) of detailed interpretations of the data with participants, although the study did include an instance at the end in which students could comment on the main researcher's general comprehension of semiotic resources in deaf students' lives. Other researchers were not involved in analyses until the final stages. From dialogical epistemologies (Bakhtin, 1984), triangulation serves the purpose of exploring the multiple ideological positionings and perspectives of phenomena (Banister et al., 2004; Mertens, 2015). Thus, less triangulation implies a diminished presence of others' perspectives in analyses, and a potentially less complex conceptualisation during the analysis process.

Also, as previously noted the main researcher's understanding of BSL to some extent limited the interpretation of episodes in which fluent BSL conversations were observed. However, many conversations also utilised English-based signed structures and, in some cases, students were not fluent themselves in BSL or came to English as a second language. Nonetheless perceived restrictions in the researcher's linguistic repertoire will have had an effect on the trustworthiness of interpretations and inferences drawn from data.

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Chapter 7: Paper 3

Pedagogies of miscommunication: communication asymmetries faced by deaf students and their communicative partners in a further education college

Abstract

International commitment towards educational inclusion of deaf students is rooted in many different legal instruments, creating a discursive network of potentially contradictory definitions. In such instruments, debates on deaf individuals' language rights are separated from issues of educational placement, creating unintended pressure for assimilation to hearing norms. In this context, the presence of communicative disparities in educational settings is a threat to deaf individuals' intersectional potential and the development of multilingual and multimodal repertoires. This ethnographic study explores episodes of communication breakdown in communicative interactions of 5 deaf college students in a further education college in Northern England. Grounded theory procedures were mobilised to code what was the source of breakdown, who noticed it, who repaired communication and what strategy was used. Analyses were organised into three themes, reflecting the underlying asymmetries faced by deaf students and their interlocutors: sensory asymmetries, language knowledge asymmetries and subject matter knowledge asymmetries. Overall, deaf students were noted to deal with miscommunication through translanguaging, deploying their multilingual and multimodal repertoires to engage with multiple audiences. Analyses reflect how deaf students are overburdened with responsibility for ensuring communication is sustained, which opens further questions regarding the pressure to assimilate to hearing normative ways of communicating, restricting deaf students' language and identity development.

Keywords: deaf education, inclusion, communication, ethnographic approach

Introduction

International commitment towards educational inclusion of deaf individuals is rooted in varied legal instruments, creating a discursive network of potentially contradictory definitions. The use of the term ‘d/Deaf’ reflects the simultaneous belonging to categories associated with hearing loss (deaf) and cultural-linguistic minorities (Deaf) (Ladd, 2003). This creates a legislative intersectional gap as d/Deaf peoples’ rights are dealt with in different legal instruments (Murray et al., 2018; Rayman, 2009). General and vague agreements over the meaning of inclusion often hide these controversies (Powers, 2002).

The simultaneous belonging of deaf individuals to different categories (Corker, 1998; Parks, 2015; WFD, 2019) blurs the definition of inclusion. Under the rubrics of access and inclusion, language and identity rights have been threatened by privileging the idea of deaf persons as people with disabilities and therefore promoting mainstreaming as default position (Murray et al., 2018; Rayman, 2009; WFD, 2019). Essentialist notions of identity prevent reflections on how people can perform simultaneous form of belonging (Young, 1990). When legal categories protecting rights assume differences as properties of individuals, dilemmas of difference like this arise (Minow, 1990). If legal constructs informing practices of inclusion preclude the recognition of intersectionality, d/Deaf peoples’ rights are under threat (Murray et al., 2018; WFD, 2019).

For example, the Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disability (CRPD) (UN General Assembly, 2007) demands full inclusion into mainstream settings. While the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) pushed for a ‘sensory exception’ in the Article 24 on education for considering deaf students’ linguistic needs (BDA, 2014; WFD, 2019), the CRPD nonetheless isolates concerns for language from issues of placement,

promoting educational practices of content transmission and translation thus transferring responsibility for learning in mainstream settings to deaf students and their interpreters (Murray et al., 2018; Snoddon & Murray, 2019).

Inclusive efforts need to trouble the ideal of assimilation into normative spaces (Graham & Slee, 2008; Murray et al., 2018; Powers, 2002). Inclusive communication requires that interaction does not privilege specific styles of expression or participation for certain social groups will be dismissed. This is what Young (2000) calls *internal exclusion* in communication and is what forms the basis for epistemic injustices (Fricker, 2007) (more on this later). This becomes crucial in the light of how socially structured environments and interactions guide development, sometimes in unintended ways, producing microsocialisations from which individuals obtain a sense of who they are in what is their place in society (Valsiner, 2014).

Even with current access to hearing and speech through technological interventions, deaf students are still excluded from incidental learning and informal socialisation in mainstream settings (Rayman, 2009; WFD, 2018) and deaf students and their interpreters are being burdened with responsibility for communication (Snoddon & Murray, 2019). The possibility of mainstream environments not providing equal conditions for deaf learners who are sign language users requires interrogation of how communication is being carried out in educational settings that serve deaf students in the name of inclusion.

Theoretical and empirical review

This section will outline theoretical perspectives related to ontologies of communication and related notions of (in)justice. Later, a review of studies on deaf

students' pragmatic skills will allow to explore how communication breakdowns have been understood in the literature.

Alterity in communication

Judging the outcomes of communication requires positioning among the multiple ontologies of intersubjectivity from which these normative ideals stem (Marková, 2003). Unlike other approaches, dialogical perspectives consider that communion or fusion with the other as a goal springs from a one-sided notion of communication. Intersubjectivity should also account for asymmetries and tensions between interlocutors (Bakhtin, 1984; Marková, 2003; Linell, 2009).

Interlocutors co-author communication by judging each other's utterances from different evaluative standpoints (Linell, 2009; Marková, 2003). Responsibility, from a dialogical perspective, stems from this Alter-Ego conflicted interdependence (Marková, 2016). Rommetveit (1991) coined the term epistemic responsibility, defined as 'responsibility for making sense of the spoken about state of affairs and bringing it into language' (p 98). The critical focus is on how some people are denied the opportunity for sharing this responsibility (Marková, 2016). A similar idea can be found in the notion of division of communicative labour, which interrogates how power relationships are exercised in parties dominating interaction and steering others' responses. When most contributions are controlled by the same actor or from the same perspective, there is a monologisation of dialogue that produces discursive hegemony (Bakhtin, 1984; Linell, 2009). Therefore, tensions and asymmetries, while essential for dialogue (Marková, 2003), should not prevent a critical analysis to hold parties accountable for how they respect each other's contributions (Linell, 2009).

Education settings involve unsurmountable asymmetries in communication since the student is not considered as having the same knowledge or experience as the teacher. Therefore, epistemic responsibility in these situations is profoundly asymmetrical (Marková, 2016). Sensory asymmetries in relation to hearing people add another layer of complexity to deaf students' experiences (De Meulder, 2019). These matters are addressed by the hermeneutic aspect of epistemic injustices. The term was developed by Fracker (2007) and addresses how a social group is disadvantaged in understanding an experience due to lack of an interpretive resource or because their particular expressive style is considered a hindrance to communication. In educational settings, this includes how understanding and self-expression of social groups is made difficult because of participation in an educational system that is structured by and for dominant social groups (Kotzee, 2017).

Translanguaging aims at countering such disadvantaging assumptions by incorporating and valuing deaf students' full repertoires for meaning making and their flexible use of resources beyond named languages (Swanwick, 2017) and how this allows the expression of multiple identifications (Blackledge & Creese, 2014). Translanguaging involves the flexible and blended use of multiple semiotic resources, not bounded by named languages. In deaf students this includes, among others, signs from signed languages, facial expressions, fingerspelling, and spoken and written words (Swanwick, 2017).

Pragmatic skills of deaf students using spoken language

If moments of miscommunication cannot be avoided in situations of asymmetry, the way they are managed becomes crucial. An emergent branch of research on the pragmatic skills of deaf individuals deals with these matters, stressing the analysis of

communication breakdown episodes and how they are handled. An important number of studies are centred on mainstreamed deaf students communicating with hearing peers or adults via a spoken language, based on the assumption that they face communication breakdowns quite often in these situations (Most, 2002; Most, Shina-August & Meilijson, 2010).

Both Lloyd, Lieven and Arnold (2001) and Paatsch and Toe (2014) found similar results when assessing the pragmatic skills of mainstreamed deaf children communicating through spoken language: In conversation with hearing peers, deaf children tended to take more control of conversations, making more personal comments, initiating more topics, and taking longer turns. Deaf children thus seem to develop more controlling styles as a way of actively reducing the risk of communication breakdown with hearing peers. Speech intelligibility has unexpected impact in these circumstances, as Most (2002) found that deaf students with lower speech intelligibility showed less frustration during breakdowns, being more used to requests for clarification than those with better speech intelligibility.

Repair strategies vary. Less flexible ones include repeating utterances (Most, 2002) but more effective ones like revision – changing the articulation of the message without changing the content – can be improved through training. Intervention studies show that deaf students can improve their repair behaviour by learning more sophisticated strategies (Blaylock, Scudder & Wynee, 1995; Caissie & Wilson, 1995).

Greater access to hearing aids and cochlear implants has sparked interest in studying their impact. Deaf children with hearing aids and cochlear implants underperformed in comparison with hearing children by using repair abilities considered to be less appropriate. Also, they could not show appropriate contingency, that is, the ability to

continue and share the same topic in the previous utterance while adding new information (Most, Shina-August & Meilijson, 2010). Deaf teenagers wearing cochlear implants in Ibertsson et al.'s (2009) study were collaborative and responsible communication partners, yet they preferred strategies that expressed avoidance of communicative breakdowns, including less requests for confirmation.

The impact of educational approaches has also been compared. In both Tye-Murray's (2003) and Toe, Beattie and Barr's (2007) studies, deaf children with cochlear implants in programmes with oral approaches reported fewer communication breakdowns and less time in breakdown with hearing peers than those in simultaneous communication approaches.

Pragmatic skills of deaf students using a sign language

A smaller set of studies assesses the pragmatic skills of deaf children who do not necessarily rely in spoken language only. Deaf children in Total Communication programmes in Hughes and James's (1985) and Ciocci and Baran's (1998) studies showed flexibility when communicating with interlocutors, mixing linguistic and non-linguistic content, and slowing the pace of signing and speech. Revision was the most used repair strategy in both cases. Thus, they reflected everyday experiences in which interlocutors fail to understand their messages.

Jeanes, Nienhuys and Rickards (2000) compared deaf children from mainstream settings using oral communication and deaf children for special schools using Australian Sign Language in their communication with hearing children. Deaf students in oral dyads used more requests for clarification and were able to recognise more communication breakdowns than those in signing dyads. This could reflect less meaningful everyday communication since most deaf students in signing dyads come

from homes in which spoken English is the main language of communication. In contrast, Most (2003) studied repair strategies used by deaf bilingual children who were native signers. Language abilities significantly influenced the use of repair strategies. Deaf children showed greater frequency, variety and higher levels of strategies when using a signed language, being more sensitive to their interlocutors while signing than speaking.

The studies show that, unless explicitly trained, deaf students seem to develop a communicative style that privileges the avoidance of communicative breakdown over using more sophisticated strategies (e.g., Paatsch & Toe, 2014). Even after studies depicting pragmatic skills changing according to communication mode and interlocutors presented (e.g., Most, 2003), most studies tended to focus on one language at the time and therefore did not necessarily show the full extent of deaf students' semiotic repertoires. Also, these studies focused on deaf students' ability to repair communication by themselves, which may not be expected all the time in education settings that provide some kind of communication support. All this informs the question addressed in the study outlined below: How is epistemic responsibility being enacted among different interlocutors when deaf students have communication support available?

Methodology

The present study was conducted according to an ethnographic approach informed by critical poststructuralist perspectives. In emphasising the situated and contested character of ethnographic accounts of social worlds, the researcher's subjective stances are thematised and positioned among others voices in creating authoritative texts (Coffey, 1999; Denzin, 1997; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This study belongs to a larger project on translanguaging practices of deaf students in further

education colleges. Readers can find further details on methodological procedures in Iturriaga (2021) and Iturriaga and Young (2021).

Field notes were produced following a translation process that rendered all languages and modes into written English, therefore being limited in their capacity to depict the visual-gestural nature of BSL. Translation was made explicit through the capitalisation of words in sign order, making visible the impossibility of fitting languages to one another and opening discussions over interpretation (Denzin, 1997; Temple & Young, 2014).

The study followed 5 deaf students in Mill Town College (pseudonym), in Northern England. All 5 participants were profoundly deaf and chose pseudonyms for themselves, by which they will be referred to below.

Field notes were analysed following a Grounded Theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2014), first labelling the presence of communication breakdowns, and later creating codes to specify the reason for communication breakdowns, the person who expressed being affected, the person who acted to repair communication and the repair strategy deployed. Codes were built into larger categories to produce comprehensive accounts of the phenomenon and exploring contradiction across and within notes (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). NVivo 12 software for qualitative analysis was used to manage, code, and retrieve texts.

Communication breakdowns as expressions of asymmetries

This section will explore the different communication breakdowns that deaf students experienced in college, organised according to the type of asymmetry they were expressions of.

1. Sensory asymmetries

Breakdowns under this label express issues of sensory (in)accessibility to other's contributions in college classrooms. It includes situations in which spoken English was not clear for deaf students or when deaf students' speech was not clear to others.

1.1. Unclear spoken English for deaf students

Deaf students' comprehension was commonly affected because hearing tutors' and classmates' spoken English was not clear to them. When students had more sensory access to spoken English, they were documented as repairing this by interrupting their tutors and asking them to repeat what they said. This movement tended to invite hearing tutors to repair by merely repeating rather than necessarily by rephrasing. That is, repair movements are not single interventions but potentially build upon one another.

In one of Derick's GCSE biology classes, he asked the tutor to repeat what she said:

The tutor then moves to the next question in her list, about who nearly published a book on speciation before Darwin. The right answer is Alfred Russell Wallace, but she explains 'you get a mark just for writing Wallace'. Derick asks the tutor 'get mark for what' and she repeats while just underlining 'Wallace' in the written name (Observation 5, Paragraph 72).¹³

By underlining the keyword on a whiteboard, the tutor is adding a visual component to her utterance in spoken English. This tutor would often add variations to her repair strategy by writing words and concepts, drawing, and underlining written English.

¹³ Fragments from ethnographic notes will be presented according to the following format: (Observation number, Paragraph number). Subsequent fragments will be contracted to: (O number, P number).

Another way in which deaf students were recorded to repair this was by asking the CSW to translate what another person has said in BSL. This, in turn, makes the CSW participate in this repair movement. Adam and Derick would ask their CSWs to translate what other hearing classmates were talking about around them.

On other occasions, it would be the hearing tutor who would make the initial movement of repair. By pointing out that what the deaf student has understood is wrong, they delegated the task of properly explaining it to the CSW.

1.2. Unclear spoken English for others

Something less commonly documented during observations was how deaf students' spoken English is unclear for other people. Some deaf students would make the concession of using spoken English for communicating directly with hearing tutors and classmates, even in the presence of a CSW. Adam used his spoken English when working in a one-to-one session with a support tutor outside the classroom. When his English was not understood, he would fingerspell words or at least fingerspell the initial letter of that word:

They are reviewing the body's muscles, one by one. (...) After some minutes, Jerry cannot understand a word that Adam is saying, which is 'quadriceps'. Adam tries again by saying 'quadriceps' and by fingerspelling the Q with his hands. While I cannot guarantee that Jerry was looking at Adam's fingerspelling, he seemed to understand and they just carried on (O1, P124).

While this strategy could be deemed ineffective if the hearing tutor as an interlocutor does not know fingerspelling, it opens the possibility for the CSW as a third party in communication (present and watching but not intervening) to contribute to repair.

This, however, would not be necessary most of the time as the tutor would benefit from the deaf student repeating what they just said.

It is noteworthy how mostly deaf students were taking the burden of responsibility for ensuring communication when dealing with sensory asymmetries. They initiated interventions allowing other people to intervene and further repair communication. Deaf students would keep everyone on track by managing to repair not only their own miscomprehension but that of others as well. Finally, most repair strategies would rely on visual semiotic resources, such as BSL, written English, drawings, or fingerspelling.

2. Language comprehension asymmetries

Now the discussion moves on to situations in which communication breakdowns were interpreted as expressions of differences in language knowledge, including both BSL and English knowledge.

2.1 Disparities in BSL knowledge

Deaf students and CSWs were noted to have varying knowledge of discursive genres and layers of meaning in English and BSL, becoming a source of communication breakdowns. In contrast with the previous asymmetries, in BSL knowledge asymmetries it was typically more difficult to pinpoint who was affected. In fact, on most occasions I observed it simultaneously affected the deaf student, the CSW and the hearing tutor in their efforts to sustain communication due to their differential knowledge of languages. What differentiated them was the way in which those breakdowns were handled by each person.

When the CSW was the most affected person by the communication breakdown, deaf students would repair by fingerspelling a word. In the following example this, in turn, provoked a second repair movement by the CSW:

The tutor solves an exercise and both Katniss and the CSW comment on the result. Katniss points at it and signs BEEN. The CSW asks WHAT? Katniss fingerspells B-E-E-N and the CSW signs, as in correcting her, BEEN, GOT-IT. So, it seems Katniss knew the result and expressed this by signing BEEN, while the CSW offered a sign that she deemed better or more adequate for what she meant (O5, P20).

What this fragment makes clear is that the misunderstanding is due to a lack of comprehension of culturally appropriate ways of signing. Katniss' intervention would seem odd for a person who has BSL as a second language, but the sign BEEN is one of the standard ways in which verbs are inflected into past time and therefore represents acceptable signing. The CSW offers a sign that would transform what Katniss is trying to express into something closer to how it would be expressed in English. An alternative interpretation is that the CSW is using another sign to match her understanding with that of Katniss'. Both situations show an imbalance in BSL knowledge between interlocutors.

This language asymmetry became especially evident in one of Matt's technical workshop classes. A CSW with whom he had never worked with before was assigned to him. This created great difficulties for multiparty communication when the hearing tutor was involved. These breakdowns were creatively circumvented by Matt:

Matt stands up and goes to the room where they have more tools and products. He brings a pot with a product and points to its name (...). Matt is using the product pot to look for something in his computer document. He is pointing to the product name and searching for that name in the document. The CSW then helps him by pointing specifically where the name is located. The tutor leaves. Matt, after spending some minutes

looking for something in his documents, stands up and goes for another product pot. I can hear the CSW saying that is the same product but from a different company. The tutor comes back and asks him what the product he brought does. The CSW translates THOSE DO WHAT? Matt replies DO SAME BOTH. The CSW translates to English. Then the tutor asks, 'which did you use?' and the CSW translates USE YOU WHICH? Matt points at one of the pots. 'Let's try that one, then', says the tutor (O9, PP40-43).

Matt knows the signs for classifying the different products but does not know the words in English. In turn, the CSW lacks the technical BSL vocabulary that Matt has been developing through his course and therefore is unable to understand the specific meaning of technical signs and translate them for the tutor. Therefore, Matt repeatedly inscribed objects in communication, making them ostensibly available for everyone involved through pointing gestures. When written English was available, Matt would also point to it. Later, the hearing tutor would show a great communicative attunement by also bringing products and other objects for them to discuss and by paying visual attention to Matt's signed explanations.

Another way in which this asymmetry was resolved by Matt was resorting to other CSWs present in the workshop due to other deaf students attending the lesson:

The CSW asks him WANT I WRITE? and he says 'yes'. The CSW then brings pen and paper and notes down vertically the numbers 1, 2, 3, as in preparing a list. Matt starts signing instructions to the CSW but he suddenly stops to think. He flickers his fingers and closes his eyes, looking very concentrated. There is another CSW close to them, so Matt turns to her and asks her something. He signs a sign I don't know and then

adds WORD WHAT? the other CSW says a word and the CSW writes it down in the list (O9, P14).

This example once more shows that Matt was able to identify and label the products correctly in BSL and only the CSW's lack of knowledge of specific signs was preventing the flow of communication.

The CSW also tried other repair strategies, different from the ones performed by the deaf student. She would improvise signs needed for communication and offer them to Matt, as can be seen in the following fragment:

While Matt is back working, I can see that she is drawing two pictures. In one of them the paint spray is thin and concentrated; in the other one, it is wide and dispersed. She shows Matt these drawings and connects some signs to each of them (O9, P53).

The CSW was not merely crafting signs but was relating them to drawings and written English to make sure those signs were meaningful enough for the task at hand. Matt would accept them temporarily.

A special case in this kind of asymmetries is that of signed mathematics discourse. Translating mathematics to signed discourse is not an obvious matter. There is a specific genre of signed mathematics that is not commonly known to people outside of Deaf communities and is different from how mathematics might be explained through other kind of semiotic resources. In one of Katniss' classes, the CSW would repeatedly express difficulties in translating mathematics:

The tutor explains how a division can also be expressed as a fraction and as a decimal. While explaining this to Katniss, the CSW signs the division sign by “drawing it in the air”, signs the fraction by placing one number

on top of another in space and the decimal as NUMBER POINT NUMBER. Katniss shows a confused face after this (O5, P16).

Later, the CSW was noted to repair by asking the tutor to explain himself how to solve exercises for Katniss by writing down step by step how to solve an equation. The CSW later added 'I find it easier' (O5, P32). Therefore, repair was initiated by the CSW but partially delegated to the tutor.

2.2. Disparities in English language knowledge

In this asymmetry, the persons most affected were the deaf students. This, however, cannot be interpreted as a matter of sensory access to English due to the request for a meaningful explanation, as opposed to asking the tutor to repeat or merely asking the CSW for a translation. For example, in the following fragment Katniss seems to be unsure of what the word 'fair' means in the context of a mathematics GCSE mock assessment:

Katniss goes back to reading her exam booklet. She points at the word 'fair' in a problem about throwing a fair dice and says she does not understand. She signs EQUAL and the CSW explains this misunderstanding to the tutor. The tutor explains and the CSW translates to BSL, adding more explanations than can be found in the tutor response: FAIR BECAUSE DICE THROW, WHAT THERE WHAT, ANY NUMBER (O5, P41).

By pointing at written English and signing her misunderstanding, Katniss initiates a repair strategy that allows the CSW to intervene to add to the hearing tutor's explanation. Thus, repair is layered since the three of them act and the tutor's explanation is not merely translated but complemented with further explanation.

In contrast with sensory asymmetries, disparities in language comprehension create dialogically shared communication breakdowns: they are shared concerns. However, while more complex repair strategies seem to be performed in a way that involve more people in them, most of these sequences of repair seem to begin with the deaf students' interventions.

3. Subject matter knowledge asymmetries

CSWs have a very challenging task at hand by translating content from many subject matters: they need to understand what the tutors are explaining to properly translate and facilitate communication between the deaf student and other people. In the classroom context, dialogue happens around subject matters defined by a curriculum in which the tutors (are supposed to) perform with greater mastery. This causes inconveniences for the CSWs if they are not able to meaningfully follow the tutor's discourse.

In one of Katniss' mathematics classes, it became evident that the CSW was struggling to provide a proper translation. On top of the already mentioned problem of signed mathematics as a genre, the CSW needed to understand better what the conversation was about, as can be seen in the following fragment:

The CSW is now interpreting again what the tutor says. She signs CONFUSE THAT, to which Katniss asks CONFUSE? and the CSW signs WAIT THEIR CONVERSATION pointing to the rest of the class. It seems that, since the tutor is mentioning a lot of numbers and letters while he is talking about equations, the CSW is not having an easy time translating in a coherent way. Waiting for the rest of the class to discuss the matter seems to be a useful way of making sense of what happened (O5, P6).

Since the CSW is primarily affected, she is the one trying to perform a repair strategy. However, there is no evidence later in that class that the repair strategy was successful. By waiting for the conversation to unfold to have a clearer sense of it, dialogue moved to another point and repair became indefinitely delayed.

Discussion

Legislative frameworks regulating deaf students' educational inclusion are contradictory and artificially separate issues of language and placement (BDA, 2014; Snoddon & Murray, 2019). Evidence of deaf students' pragmatic skills shows variation according to interlocutor and available resources (e.g., Most, 2003) but still focuses on individuals' skills for sustaining and repairing communication. Deaf students' education along with hearing peers includes communication support that could affect the way communication disparities are dealt with. This article presented an ethnographic study on communication breakdown episodes and repair strategies deployed by deaf college students and their communicative partners in one further education college in Northern England.

Deaf students' active handling of communication breakdowns could be observed in their plural yet imbalanced repertoires for repair strategies, including spoken and signed languages and non-linguistic resources (Ciocci & Baran, 1998; Hughes & James, 1985; Jeanes, Nienhuys & Rickards, 2000). Translanguaging was deployed during communication breakdowns, opting for different semiotic resources to communicate the presence of such breakdowns and repair understanding.

Analyses made evident that episodes of communication breakdown were few and communication was repaired during almost all these events. The controlling style of deaf students (Ibertsoon et al, 2009; Lloyd, Lieven & Arnold, 2001; Paatsch & Toe,

2014) was not observed since most situations were controlled by teacher's discourse, emphasising content-deliverance approaches of teaching. Deaf students showed some flexibility in terms of the variety of their deployed strategies for repairing communication – yet it is assumed that they could still benefit from explicit training in more sophisticated strategies (Blaylock, Scudder & Wynne, 1995; Caissie & Wilson, 1995; Most, 2002).

The presence of a CSW provided deaf students with a choice in terms of which semiotic resources to mobilise to repair communication, somehow levelling the expected imbalance in linguistic competencies related to spoken English and BSL (Jeanes, Nienhuys & Rickards, 2000; Most, 2003). However, the different language learning trajectories of both deaf students and CSWs, as well as the socialisation in different sensory orientations (predominantly oral/aural or visual) of all involved parties, inscribed other kinds of asymmetries in the complex communicative situations observed (De Meulder et al, 2019).

On the one hand, CSWs' presence allowed deaf students to relatively share epistemic responsibility (Marková, 2016) by accessing content through their preferred semiotic resources. On the other, the distribution of communicative labour was not necessarily shared with other hearing people in the classroom beyond the CSW; reflecting concerns stipulated by Murray et al (2018) and Snoddon and Murray (2019) regarding deaf students and interpreters being burdened with responsibility for learning. This repeated experience could produce a microsocialisation (Valsiner, 2014) in the dominance of hearing norms, transforming the richness of alterity and heteroglossia in epistemic injustices over time (Kotzee, 2017), threatening deaf individuals' multilingualism, and restricting their intersectional potential (WFD, 2019).

These issues also have wider implications for the promotion of translanguaging in environments that mix hearing students with deaf sign language users. Semiotic repertoires cannot be fully enacted as meaning-making tools when sensory access to resources is unequal (De Meulder et al, 2019; Most, 2003). In this way, the importance of named languages is re-inscribed by the social and communicative divisions that mastery of them produces. This reveals how discussions over language rights of d/Deaf peoples cannot be divorced from matters of how contexts of communication are structured and transformed; communicative interactions produce situations that impact the exercise of languaging and the distribution of communicative labour (Linell, 2009).

Conclusions

This study showed how deaf college students and their Communication Support Workers (CSWs) manage communication breakdowns that are the result of asymmetries in language knowledge, sensory orientations, and subject matter knowledge. The fact that communication breakdowns could not be observed in deaf-only classrooms that included a deaf teacher shows the impact that the specific social situation of mainstream classrooms produced for deaf college students. Results are relevant for researchers and practitioners interested in translanguaging by stressing how translanguaging is enacted in particular contexts, in which tensions between interlocutors shape if and how semiotic repertoires are enacted in interaction.

Deaf students in this study showed competency in dealing with communication breakdowns. The persistence of asymmetries in this FE setting could be an unintended source of learning: deaf students are socialised in a linguistic hierarchy that might not reflect colleges' best interest for deaf students. Practitioners could benefit from this study in recognising and tackling these asymmetries when they emerge, and

researchers could further investigate how these asymmetries are experienced, managed and dealt with from the differing perspectives of deaf students and their CSWs.

The study also showed how the inclusion of CSWs not only allowed more room for deaf students' communicative competencies but also inscribed new asymmetries, adding complexity to the communicative situation: different people with different sensory orientations and varying subject matter and language knowledge meet. Practitioners could be interested in providing further BSL training to CSWs to avoid language asymmetries. Future research could explore if these asymmetries also appear with qualified BSL interpreters and/or in other college settings.

Finally, the study raises questions regarding the provision of education for deaf college students in mainstream classrooms. The burden of checking communication and dealing with breakdowns was placed on deaf students and their CSWs, which could be considered a source of inequality. This also emphasises how concerns with language rights cannot be separated from an examination of the properties in contexts of communication. People's knowledges and sensory orientations shapes communicative interaction, guiding the development of languages in differential ways.

Limitations

Lack of triangulation with other researchers during analyses might have limited the development of a multi-perspectival account. Also, there was not participant triangulation on how asymmetries were experienced by people in the situation.

The researcher's limited and evolving knowledge of BSL could have prevented identification of nuanced asymmetries in signed communication in deaf-only classrooms.

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Chapter 8: Paper 4

Translanguaging as a space of subjectivation in deaf college students' discourses

Abstract

Deaf peoples' identities are complex given the myriad and often intersecting sources of identification they have available. Deaf individuals who use both signed and spoken languages thus can perform flexible identities according to context and sensory access to semiotic resources. This ethnographic study included interviews with 4 deaf students in a further education college to explore relationships between communication experiences, translanguaging and identification. Dialogical discourse analyses of participants' translanguaged discourse shows how they simultaneously report multilingual and multimodal repertoires while expressing in nuanced ways preference or distance from semiotic resources and social groups. Participants are shown to enact varying positioning towards the dominance of spoken English, reflecting a longing for alternative ways of arranging communication in their lives. Findings are discussed in terms of the importance of sensory orientations and language ideologies in deaf students' experiences, and how identifications might impact on levels of (dis)engagement in learning activities at college.

Introduction

The definition of what it means to 'be deaf' is a matter of heated debate. Authors such as Lane, (2002) or Ladd (2003) proposed that Deaf peoples should be understood as cultural-linguistic minorities. This openly competes with other definitions of deaf individuals from medical and audiological perspectives, emphasising the experience of hearing loss. Activists from the social model of disability dispute the account of disability proposed by medical perspectives and would prefer individuals to consider

themselves disabled by society, thus requiring collective action in unison with other people with disability (Oliver, 1990). This certainly does not cover all options as deaf individuals' heterogeneous backgrounds (Young and Temple, 2014) add tension in many different directions.

There are multiple, intersecting, and potentially conflicting discourses that deaf individuals can draw on to define who they are. Far from being solely a scholarly concern, the matter has been discussed recently by the World Federation of the Deaf (2019). They stated that there are intersectional potentials in d/Deaf peoples' identities: the opportunity of exploring varied identifications, with associated benefits such as a strong signed linguistic development and cultural identity; or strategic alliances with other disabled peoples against measures that would deprive them of publicly funded support. A similar issue was proposed by Corker (1998) when explaining the need for more complex and tension-filled processes of identification in the face of dichotomies that could limit deaf individuals' capacity for understanding and expressing their own lived experiences. Therefore, d/Deaf peoples' identities need to be studied in ways that reflect these discursive crossroads in their identification processes.

Tracing conceptualisations of deaf individuals' identities

Before exploring participants' identities as emerging from my analysis, this section reviews previous studies on deaf individuals' identities to situate this study in relation to these. This will be followed by explaining this study's theoretical standpoint and, crucially, the connection between identities and translanguaging.

Studying identity in deaf individuals

An initial focus in the literature on studying identity sprang from recognising deaf individuals' multiple sources of identification. Instruments relied on rather static notions of identity while providing useful snapshots. For example, Cole and Edelman (1991) used a Deaf Identity Scale presented in BSL to explore deaf adolescents' self-perceptions of cultural identity. Results grouped subjects into deaf, hearing, and dual identity groups.

The Deaf Identity Developmental Scale (DIDS) (Glickman & Carey, 1993) became a popular instrument for exploring deaf individual's identity. It classifies respondents in one of four categories: hearing, immersion (meaning affiliation with Deaf culture), bicultural, and marginal (unsure of affiliations). Bat-Chava (2010) and Kobosko (2010) used the DIDS in their studies. In both cases, reported preferences for languages were as expected: hearing-identifying individuals preferred speech whereas deaf-identifying privileged sign language. Bicultural identifications gave similar weight to both and marginal identities to none. Addressing the DIDS limitations, other authors adapted other instruments. Carter (2015) reworded the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) to create a Deaf Identity Centrality Scale (DICS) to study deaf identity centrality – the relative importance individuals allocate to their identities. Regression analyses showed that preference for sign language, earlier age when became deaf and higher degree of hearing loss all predicted Deaf identity centrality. Also, Marschark, Zettler and Dammeyer (2017) used a Deaf acculturation scale (DAS) (Maxwell-McCaw & Zea, 2011) and a social dominance orientation (SDO) questionnaire (Ho et al., 2015) with hearing and deaf people to study their orientation towards hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating ideologies. Overall, egalitarianism was strongly associated with sign language orientation. Also, Deaf

participants were more egalitarian than hearing ones, and deaf participants with stronger hearing identities were associated with greater anti-egalitarianism.

These initial explorations of identity also sought to establish clear but linear developmental stages. Holcomb (1997) proposed stages for bicultural awareness: conformity to hearing values; dissonance or questioning the idea of being different to other deaf people; immersion or expanding knowledge of Deaf community and sign language; introspection or re-appreciation of past relationships with hearing people; awareness or comfortability in hearing and Deaf cultures. Similarly, Kunnen (2014) studied identity development in 7 deaf adolescents, aged 14-18 years, for 5 years using an adaptation of the Groningen Identity Development Scale (GIDS) (Marcia, 1966), inspired by Erikson's (1968) ideas. 6 of them showed commitment in exploration of their identities, especially in the domain Being Deaf. When compared to a hearing population, they experienced identity conflicts earlier in life.

Eventually, developments in technology like digital hearing aids and cochlear implants became a matter of concern for researchers of identity. Goldblat and Most (2018) used a revised version of the identity scale (DIDS-R) (Colangelo-Fisher & McWhirter, 2001) with 141 deaf young individuals. Cluster analysis was used to group participants in dominant bicultural-hearing, dominant bicultural-deaf and no formed cultural identity. Most documented the development of some form of bicultural identity, supporting the idea that cochlear implants favour this. The notion of flexible bicultural identities was also found in other studies using a Deaf Identity Scale (Weinberg & Sterritt, 1986; Spencer, Tomblin and Gantz, 2012) and interview-based studies (Rich et al., 2013; Watson, Verschuur, and Lathlean, 2016; Wheeler et al., 2007).

More fluid and contextual conceptions of identity have been explored, coinciding with postmodern and poststructuralist theorising and associated methodological approaches (Davis, 2002; Lyotard, 1984), but also with recent turns in Deaf Studies, in which ontological concerns with *becoming* are explored (Kusters, De Meulder & O'Brien, 2017). These studies were qualitative in nature, favouring interviewing as the method, and emphasised how identities are enacted according to the communication needs of every situation. Some studies highlighted the subjective relevance of experiences of contact with hearing and deaf peers and communication through spoken or signed languages to perform identifications (Nikolarazi and Hadjkakou, 2006; Nikolarazi, 2007). Other studies emphasised how deaf individuals managed deaf identities in the face of taking hearing ones as the norm. This includes strategies of “passing” given the stigma (Goffman, 1963) associated with deafness (Beckner and Helme, 2018) or simultaneously professing a positive deaf identity while accepting hearing identity as the standard for normalcy (Ferndale, Munro and Watson, 2016; Kemmerly and Compton, 2014).

Narrative accounts of identity disrupt linear notions of development, with deaf individuals reflecting on turning points in their sense of identity. This usually involved contact with sign languages after finishing school and, through sign languages, other Deaf people. Once more, notions of traumatic events signalling exclusion from interaction with hearing others and dealing with stigma through “passing” strategies were eventually replaced by ongoing reflection on deaf identities – which includes refining collective labels into personal ‘Deaf in my own way’ styles (Ohna, 2004; Hole, 2007; McIlroy and Storbeck, 2011).

Another emergent issue in contextual identities are studies focusing on how deaf individual’s intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989) experiences are negotiated in their

identity construction, including the recognition of managing competing identity claims (Humphries & Humphries, 2011). Once more, qualitative designs and in-depth interviews have been favoured. A repeated trope has involved deafness being more salient for identification than ethnic backgrounds after contact with Deaf communities and sign languages (Bedoin, 2019; Page, 1993; Pregel and Kamenopoulou, 2018; Stapleton, 2015). In some cases, this includes accounts of how the stigma of deafness had to be reversed and a proud deaf identity was enacted in publicly using a language that is visual in nature and therefore visible to others (Mauldin and Fannon, 2020; Skelton and Valentine, 2003; Stapleton, 2015). However, participants in other studies emphasised the difficulties of managing multiple identifications when facing discrimination in Deaf communities for not being white Christians (Ahmad, Atkin & Jones, 2002; Atkin, Ahmad & Jones, 2002) or heterosexual (Sinecka, 2008).

A re-conceptualisation of identities as contextual has also produced reflections on the impact of power relationships considering what Ladd (2003), after Spivak (1988), refers to as the subaltern status of Deaf people in hearing societies. Participants interviewed have reflected on social divides in their lives, including the challenge of adapting their signing to either BSL or Sign Supported English (SSE) to mirror others' language use. Similarly, deaf individuals who are used to being interpreted in work contexts are aware of how their professional identities could be affected by translation, leading them to monitor their interpreters' skills and intervene when necessary – becoming deaf contextual speakers (Napier et al., 2019; Young, Napier and Oram, 2019). These studies highlight the use of flexible translanguaging strategies for constructing identities in the space of the other – languages and modes position people in mutual interaction. In Heap's (2006) study, the salience of sign languages was different according to interlocutors – in purely deaf signing situations, sign languages

were less of a marker of identity than in situations including hearing signers, because of less contrast between interlocutors.

Identity and translanguaging

Previous research has developed a clear notion of how languages are experienced and therefore how they impact on d/Deaf peoples' identities. Translanguaging, however, unsettles the boundaries between languages and hence requires a new analytical lens.

Translanguaging implies the use of semiotic resources not bounded by named languages. It involves attention to how identities are performed through hybrid repertoires in interaction via indexicality – the way languaging reflects multiple perspectives, values, or social interests. Such ideas were developed by Bakhtin (1981) through the notion of heteroglossia, which reinforces the polycentric and socially-bounded context of translanguaging while adding the idea of multivoicedness – individuals perform multiple positionings in every single instance. Consequently, translanguaging is filled with tension (Blackledge & Cresse, 2014; Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005; Haye & Larraín, 2011; Wei, 2011). Different semiotic resources refer to different social types or groups and add particular 'intonations' to individuals' discourse (Blackledge & Cresse, 2014). Translanguaging provides opportunities for deaf individuals to define who they are for others and, in consequence, for themselves (Holland et al., 1998).

As a consequence, individuals' identity crafting in translanguaging can hardly be considered the result of isolated individuals calculating how to better represent themselves, and instead reflects the tensions and conflicts experienced in learning trajectories and frameworks of participation in cultural and linguistic communities (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005; Holland et al., 1998). The social imprints

the individual in a double way: social interactions are the source of psychological functions and knowledge repertoires (Vygotsky, 1978) and identities are performed in frames of recognition in which people know themselves as they narrate themselves to others (Butler, 2005; Holland et al., 1998).

If identities are not the expression of some innate property, they require a delimitation of some kind. The work of setting boundaries with others through interaction and in narration is crucial in identity crafting in cultural worlds (Foyn, Solomon & Braathe, 2018; Holland et al., 1998; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). A post-Marxist agenda has revived the interest in ideology, reconceiving it as the work of hiding this dependence of identities on the boundaries that are required to sustain them, presenting them as if they were self-sustained entities (Laclau, 2014). This becomes relevant for the programme of researching language ideologies (Rosa & Brudick, 2017) for two reasons. First, it allows explaining how languages can still be considered bounded entities in social imaginaries in the face of much evidence of linguistic hybridity (Yildiz, 2011). Second, it provides a rationale for understanding the importance of mobilising languages, in articulation with other signifiers, for the construction of social identities.

Studying the identities of deaf college students could be relevant for contextualising their performance. In England (the context for the study presented here), students are expected to continue their studies after leaving school up to 18 years old (DfE, 2014). Most deaf students are advised to join further education (FE) colleges, which emphasise vocational over academic paths. Existing reports suggest that educational under-attainment when compared to hearing peers that cannot be explained by special educational needs alone (Young et al., 2015). Therefore, the experience of deaf college students needs to be researched. Identity impacts on learning trajectories by enabling

or restricting engagement in activities depending on learners' pursuit of identities. Learning potentially requires transformations in identity and protecting identities can lead to resisting learning and engagement in instruction (Bourgeois, 1998).

Given this panorama, the present study set out to explore deaf FE college students' complex identification processes in a way that recognises the social divisions experienced in translanguaging and their impact on communication and learning. The study was constructed to address the following key questions: How do deaf college students enact subjective identifications across their semiotic repertoires? How are semiotic resources, languages and people differently valued as deaf students perform their subjectivities?

Prompting and analysing participants' discourse

This study is embedded in a larger project on deaf college students' translanguaging. The next section will briefly outline this study's methodological procedures, but more details can be found in Iturriaga (2021) and Iturriaga and Young (2021).

Participants

Four out of the five deaf students who consented to participate in an ethnographic study on translanguaging also accepted to be interviewed. These participants had varied backgrounds in terms of contact with languages. Also, one of the students was older than the rest and had gone through other colleges. What united these students, nonetheless, were the experiences of being deaf students, using BSL to varied degrees and starting (again) college. It is important to note that the group is defined by language use and not language preference, not assuming homogeneity in language experiences (Young & Temple, 2014).

Interviewing

Interviews were conducted at the college, in a Deaf Support Office. The main researcher prepared the interview script using his BSL Level 2 skills. Participants were given the choice of answering as they deemed fit, mixing BSL with spoken English and other resources in varied ways. Interviews included a Deaf Support staff member for facilitating communication. They provided full interpretation of Sam and Matt's answers and only intervened occasionally with Katniss and Adam.

Semi-structured interviews were thematically focused on past and present educational experiences, languages and other ways of expression, and other everyday activities that might illuminate different aspects of translanguaging. Interviews were video recorded to document deaf participants' signed discourse.

Analysis

Two layers of analysis were conducted on the video recordings using NVivo qualitative software. The first analysis followed grounded theory principles (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). An initial set of pre-established categories for coding included: contents, positions, feelings, semiotic resources, and people. Other emergent categories were included to represent the analyst's emergent understanding of the phenomena and subsequent epistemic shudders – phenomena that break expectations or previously relatively established understandings (Giugni, 2005). Categories were used for subsequent sampling within data. A total of 46 fragments of around 1 minute each were used for producing in-depth discourse analyses.

The second layer of analysis mobilised a model for dialogical discourse analysis (Larraín & Medina, 2007; Larraín & Moretti, 2011). Dialogical discourse analysis aims at studying subjectivity as it emerges in communication and is centred on utterances –not grammatical units but rather everything in discourse that points

towards the speaker's attitude towards what is being uttered (Haye & Larraín, 2011). The simultaneous co-existence of varied ideas, positions and voices in discourse constitute a polyphonic assumption underlying this analysis (Bakhtin, 1981; Larraín & Moretti, 2011).

Dialogical discourse analysis was re-worked to include translanguaging in participants' signed discourse. This meant an openness to uncertainty in how deaf students would mix semiotic resources to convey meaning. As with other analyses that emphasise the creative aspects of multimodality (Goodwin, 2000), analytical categories were kept flexible and necessarily retrospective – they started from meaning and then traced back how different semiotic resources were layered in creating it.

In this model, the discursive subject is conceived as an activity that is partially achieved by the work of different dimensions operating in discourse. For a description of the dimensions that guided analysis at this point see Appendix¹⁴ and Iturriaga (2021). After dimensions are identified, analytical focus is given to the varied possible relationships between them, and the resulting ideological positioning (Aveling, Gillespie & Cornish, 2015; Larraín & Medina, 2007). This was a novel application of dialogical discourse analysis to accommodate analysis of this complex material.

Analysis relied on the researcher's evolving comprehension of BSL and Deaf culture. Being a hearing, non-British, not native BSL user, different interpretations could have been produced if analysis were carried out with triangulation of a BSL interpreter or an experienced Deaf BSL user. Triangulation (Banister et al., 2004) with other researchers – some of whom were experienced BSL users – was mostly carried out

¹⁴ This Appendix will be a referenced reproduction of the dimensions of analysis described in Chapter 4.

with fragments of translations/transcriptions and not with the full extent of available data.

Deaf college students' positioning efforts in discourse

Analysis of the interviews with the deaf students suggests that discourse on semiotic resources is not neutral. Mentioning semiotic resources populates the discourse with markers of preference or rejection in varying degrees. Indeed, described situations often show the communicational and social consequences of semiotic resources.

Analysis focused on classifying fragments according to their effects in three moments:

(1) moments in which tension dichotomised the discursive field and deaf students showed preference for one option over the other; (2) moments in which tension was dialled down or in which deaf students enacted positions beyond dichotomic options; (3) moments in which deaf students distanced themselves from tension, whether attributing the dilemmatic posture to someone else or by enacting ironic resources that undermine the position they present. I will now discuss each of these in turn.

Dichotomic tension and division

Moments of dichotomy in deaf students' discourse were related to relatively similar themes among participants. One of the main reasons why discursive fields emerged as dichotomised was when students mentioned preference for signed communication with deaf interlocutors. Communicative situations that were presented as preferred or ideal included congregated deaf-only classrooms – with a shared specific reference to the physical location of classrooms in Deaf Support area – and informal talk with deaf

friends. In the following fragment, Sam (Video 12, 07:06-07:35)¹⁵ described communication at one of her previous schools:

Sam: SIGNING. DIFFERENT ME CLASS. SIGNING TEACHER CLASS. THERE SPEECH THERE. DIFFERENT, APART. YEAR 6, YEAR 7 SPEECH [prolonged].

Sam: [Teachers] signed. I was on a different class. That class had a signing teacher. Outside people spoke. They were different, apart. During year 6 and 7 they spoke all the time.

(...)

Sam: ME CLASS DIFFERENT. YEAR 4, YEAR 5, YEAR 6 SMALL-GROUP. DEAF, STAFF SIGNING. THERE STAFF SPEECH, DIFFERENT [emphasised], APART [emphasised].

Sam: I was on a different class. Year 4, 5 and 6, it was a small group. All deaf, with staff that signed. Outside staff would speak. It was really different, apart.

Sam's placement of the sign for CLASS is done closely to her body in the signing space and is presented in the first person singular to emphasise the possession of the class being close to her¹⁶. Both SIGNING and TEACHER are associated with it,

¹⁵ Transcribed and translated video fragments will be referred to by using the following format: (Video number, time-time). Subsequent fragments will contract the format to: (V number, time-time).

¹⁶ Signing space is the space in front of the signer, and its uses in sign languages include: (1) the topographic recreation of places in the real world, with placing in space mirroring the actual location of people, things, and areas; (2) the syntactic

making associations between people and semiotic resources. In contrast, SPEECH is associated with a vague placement in signing space that is away from the body and shown in the third person (not associated with 'me'). This spatial distancing within her articulation acquires a new layer of meaning after she adds DIFFERENT and APART. This places the utterance subject, the specific point of view from which she signs, in symbolic terms; she enacts a gap between inside and outside herself that is related to people and their ways of communication.

This position is further refined when the sign for CLASS becomes GROUP, signed even closer to her body with her shoulders forward, somehow emphasising the small size and possession of it. It now becomes more clearly associated with DEAF and again with STAFF SIGNING. The differences with the 'outside' is redoubled by repetition and greater emphasis in signing, which strongly positions the utterance subject in axiological terms, closer to deaf and signing staff and separated from speaking staff.

The resulting ideological positioning of this fragment includes both explicit and implicit levels. Sam explicitly enacts a symbolic division in social space due to communication with a focus on sensory aspects (speech and signing rather than English and BSL). This inaugurates a point of tension in the discursive field that is resolved by her implicit positioning. Her placement of herself within the signing space implicitly advances the idea that she is more closely aligned with that class where staff signed and there were other deaf students. That is, she not only enacts the division but

location of people in space to convey the signer's meanings, e.g., placing two social groups in opposite sides of signing space to signify the signer's simultaneous belonging and outsider status with both groups (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999).

places herself closer to one side of that division and distances herself from the other in how this articulated.

The reverse of this could be found in moments in which deaf students described situations of giving up on communication with hearing interlocutors. Matt (V02, 03:24-03:34) talked about communication at work, describing how he handles communication with hearing workmates:

Matt: TRY TEXTING THEY. REALLY. THEY SOME TALK [Modified for speaking-each-other] BUT MORE FOCUSED [Emphasis] WORK, LOVE CARRY-ON, WHY HAPPY [Disgusted face expression] LEAVE-THEM [Downwards] CARRY-ON, LEAVE-THEM [Looking away].

Matt: I try texting them. They... really, they talk each other a bit but I am much more focused on work, I love that. I carry on with my work because I am quite happy to let them go on, I just let them.

After Matt described how he managed to text on his phone and communicate through gestures with colleagues to obtain objects, he made a more general evaluation of communication at work. Work colleagues are described merely as a general and collective THEM. The sign he used for TALK is odd because it emphasised the act of speaking as in two *mouths* talking in front of one another, i.e. the organs of spoken language articulation are used to describe talk, rather than a more discursive sign that might imply 'chatting'. It could have been that Matt was increasing the iconicity of his signs for me, making them resemble their referents so a person with basic BSL knowledge could understand them as well. Or it might have been a more conscious differentiation about what talk was meaning to him – mouths moving, rather than comprehension through speaking. Later, when signing LEAVE-THEM, he places

work colleagues in a lower signing spatial location, in a way that implicitly signals their relative inferiority in contrast with his relative superiority – placing himself above them when describing them. Perhaps this arose from a perception of himself as being able to continue to work regardless. The way he looks away while signing the second iteration of LEAVE-THEM emphasises this disconnection. This positioning effort has the ideological effect of allowing Matt to dismiss the importance of establishing informal communication on equal terms with hearing people based on being focused on more relevant matters. This stands in contrast with how he states elsewhere enjoying signed communication with deaf friends at home.

Interview questions included asking deaf students to describe how they would handle communication with an unknown person. Sam reported deciding to hand over the situation to her parents (assuming the person is hearing, and she is accompanied by her hearing parents), enacting positions of deaf person and daughter. Furthermore, she either expects the person to give up communication after stating she is deaf or directly tells them to go away. This discursive hearing persona is unwilling to persist in communication after speech cannot be used. The overall ideological effect is the enactment of a communicational and social barrier between hearing and deaf people, with students clearly positioning themselves closer to deaf signers and away from hearing speakers.

Other situations of dichotomy, however, do not necessarily reflect this barrier. Matt, for example, was emphatic in rejecting past schools and colleges that did not allow him to exercise greater autonomy in communication and learning decisions. Rather paradoxically, he mentioned that these places were associated with the promotion of BSL and congregated deaf environments. They seemed to be too rigid in their approaches and did not respond well to Matt's requests for communication flexibility.

Matt's enacted relationship with English was complex. On the one hand, he rejected past educational institutions that emphasised too much English, stating that English does not allow him to focus on tasks, in contrast with more practical and visual skills. On the other hand, he distanced himself from his past struggling self that rejected English all along, claiming that English became important recently: he must be an autonomous adult and worker, as well as a supportive father whose hearing children will require higher levels of English on his behalf in the future. In these occasions, he implicitly focused on *written* English, given his description of tasks like being able to read letters or write a speech for his wedding ceremony.

Eased tension and fuzziness

The second type of discursive movements included moments in which apparently dichotomous tensions were resolved. This involves moments in which deaf students enacted positions of flexibility and multilingualism. Matt described the complex situation of communication at home, which include his wife – a deaf woman with BSL knowledge who grew up relying more on her speech – and his children who are hearing although are growing up as bimodal bilinguals. Both his wife and her children prefer to speak. This compels him to use a mixture of multilingual and multimodal semiotic resources to communicate with family members in a way that matches their needs and preferences.

Katniss also expressed competency in multiple languages, including communication with her parents from Afghanistan and family and friends in Pakistan. Even more, Katniss' love for Korean dramas allowed her to explore that language. Katniss' social life includes both hearing and deaf friends, as was explored in the following fragment (V06, 05:54-06:20):

Katniss: HERE. HERE FRIEND TWO GIRL. THEY SIGN [Relaxed] [nod]. TALK MORE ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION [eye roll]. THEY OTHER FRIEND, SPEAK VOICE SPEAK. ‘can’t’ HEAR MISS ‘what say? oh’ [understand face expression] AGAIN.

Katniss: Here in college, here my friends are two girls. They can sign. We talk more, we converse loads. Another friend, they speak with their voice. When I cannot hear and miss something I say ‘what say?’ and they express ‘oh’ and repeat what they said.

(...)

Katniss: ‘what say?’ AGAIN [understand face expression] ‘what?’ AGAIN. USUALLY WRITE [bothered face expression] SHOW ‘oh’ [surprised face expression].

Katniss: I say ‘what say?’ They repeat, I understand. I say ‘what?’, they repeat. I usually write and show it to them. They say ‘oh’.

On one side of her signing space, Katniss places her friends who sign, with various markers that indicate that SIGN, TALK and CONVERSATION are relaxed activities. The other friend who speaks is placed at the other side of her signing space, in a differentiated but symmetric manner – giving them equal worth. Katniss shows effort in communicating with her second friend, however, and her discourse becomes translanguaged mixing face expressions and signs with spoken English. Her bothered expression during WRITE adds a mild tone of dislike for having to do this. Later these friends are labelled as deaf and hearing correspondingly.

What emerges from that fragment is not only a sense of multilingual competency but also how Katniss makes concessions to hearing interlocutors in order to be able to maintain social bonds across language preferences and sensory orientations. In fact,

even when dichotomies are somehow alleviated in these fragments, that does not erase social and communicative frictions. The students' positioning efforts in discourse show that communication in some situations continues to be more effortful than in others, leaning for some resources over others in nuanced ways. For example, the following fragment (V09, 08:20-08:55) shows Adam's flexible yet marked preferences:

Adam: PREFER, PREFER DEAF SIGNING THERE.

Adam: I prefer... prefer deaf people... who sign... there [classroom].

(...)

Interviewer: BUT WHEN YOU JOIN COURSE WITH HEARING PEOPLE, COMMUNICATION HOW?

Interviewer: But when you join courses with hearing people, how do you communicate?

Adam: PREFER SPEAK [reluctant face expression].

Adam: I prefer... to speak.

Adam's first answer regarding communication in college is an overall preference for deaf interlocutors who sign. Deaf friends are located **THERE**, in a specific classroom in the Deaf Support area across the hallway, marking that as an ideal communicative situation. It is only after I ask about joining mixed classes that he states preference for **SPEAK**, signing it in a reluctant tone. Once more, signing emphasises sensory aspect of languages – signing and speech over named languages. Another possibility would be a difference in the way hearing and deaf individuals refer to 'signing' and 'speech'. Whereas for hearing persons those designate modalities of languages, for deaf persons they are coterminous with the languages themselves.

Adam enacted shifting positions towards semiotic resources overall. On top of that situational use of communication resources, he also mentioned elsewhere his preference for Signed Spoken English as a way of developing his English knowledge (by that he meant spoken language that is enhanced by some signed elements to clarify the English, rather than a mixture of BSL and English). His family is also multilingual, and he mentioned a partial understanding of spoken Urdu and Gujarati at home – the latter with some tones of mild dislike for his father using it all the time.

The overall effect of these movements is the enactment of discursive positions that traverse across languages and social situations, carrying tensions with them. The social and linguistic barriers that seemed so unsurpassable in the previous section here become milder and their limits fuzzier. And yet the participants showed how many times they must be the ones to accommodate to others, differing from their stated communicative preferences elsewhere. The only participant that could not be found enacting these discursive movements was Sam but, as we will see in the next section, this is not for lack of wanting.

Ironic tension and subversion

The last set of discursive movements was one of the most complex to figure out given the finesse with which they were constructed in deaf students' accounts. They involved moments in which social and communicative boundaries were enacted, but positioning efforts included resources for taking distance – it is others who postulate those barriers, not the self. Or perhaps it is the hearing other who should cross those boundaries.

Sam mostly described communication with deaf friends in her interview, but there was at least one moment (V12, 09:34-10:51) in which she mentioned interactions with other hearing students at college:

Sam: UPSTAIRS, HEARING. DIFFERENT. FOUR-PEOPLE DEAF. IN-FRONT-FOUR-OR-FIVE-PEOPLE HEARING. BEFORE UPSTAIRS RECENTLY. HEARING SPEAK UNDERSTAND. DIFFERENT, FOUR-PEOPLE-IN-FRONT-OF-FIVE-PEOPLE. THERE FRIEND MINE FRIEND WANT LEARN SIGNS [face expression of observing and understanding]. HI NICE MEET-YOU.

Sam: Upstairs with the hearing people. It is different. We are four deaf people next to one another, in front of four or five hearing people. I was upstairs, recently. Hearing people understand speech. It is different, four people in front of five people. In that group of hearing people there is a friend of mine and I want him to continue learning signs so I can understand him. Things like 'Hi, nice to meet you'.

(...)

Sam: THEY WANT [emphasis] SIGNS LEARN [repeated] WHY ME DEAF KNOW DEAF ME SIGN CANNOT [emphasis] SPEAK, BIT TRY.

Sam: I really want them to continue learning signs because I am deaf, they know I am deaf. I sign and really cannot speak, just try a bit.

The mixed classroom upstairs is immediately labelled as different. Hearing people are described as persons who understand SPEAK and positioned away from her in the singing space, adding once more symbolic distance to the spatial contrast between hearing and deaf individuals facing each other. From the group of hearing people, one person is individualised and described as a friend. The emphasis in WANT shows the strength with which Sam wishes them to keep learning signs. Later, she repeats that statement, positioning the utterance subject as deaf, linking it with a preference for

signs and adding that she CANNOT (with a strong emphasis) speak, even if trying just a bit.

This episode matches other past moments narrated by Sam in which she expressed a strong wish for having a newcomer hearing teacher to learn more signs instead of having to rely on an interpreter. Similarly, she hopes her father to continue with his BSL Level 2 course and wishes to show more BSL videos to her mother, so she learns more signs. These movements show a more general positioning effort, in which social and communicative barriers are not unsurmountable, but it is hearing people who should make the effort for reaching out deaf signers – subverting the usual genre in which deaf people are expected to concede to a hearing majority.

Similarly, Katniss mobilised ironic tones with a subversive purpose. She described what seemed to be a recurring episode in her past, where she stayed conversing and playing until late at a friends' house (V06, 09:40-10:06):

Katniss: DAD HERE, MOM HOME PAKISTAN. ME DO 'What are you doing?' OFF [relaxed face expression] FRIEND TALK [repetition]. DARK TIME [surprised face expression] RUN ARRIVE. AUNT DO WHAT 'What are you doing?' [angry face expression]. NOTHING [looking away]. HEAR [negative nod] 'can't hear, can't hear' NOTHING HEAR. AUNT 'oh ok' AWAY [laughs].

Katniss: My dad was here and my mum at home in Pakistan. They asked me 'what are you doing?'. I said I'm off. We talked and talked with my friends. When it was dark, I realised it was late. Went running back home. My auntie would angrily say 'What are you doing?'. I said nothing, looking

away. ‘Can’t hear, can’t hear’. My auntie would go ‘oh ok’ and leave me go away [laughs].

The utterance subject is located at home in the past, along with the voices of authoritative adults. There is a sensory contrast established by the easiness with which TALK with friends is enacted repeatedly to emphasise its extension in time, versus the quoted reprimand of her auntie in spoken English, meeting “deaf ears”. Here, deficit discourses on deafness and sensory asymmetries were “quoted” in Katniss’ silence – NOTHING HEAR – to escape younger people’s expected subjection to adults. Her auntie’s reluctance to continue communication after speech failed placed deficit discourses on her voice, and this enacted distance is redoubled by the laugh at the end, adding another layer of irony.

This episode resonated with other Katniss’ responses. She explained her parents’ decision to learn some Pakistani Sign Language based on *their claim* that deaf people cannot speak nor hear well – making sure to roll her eyes while signing it. Deficit discourses on deafness are thus somehow presented as a cliché genre voiced by other people.

A third type of situation in which these movements were enacted included Adam’s, Sam’s and Katniss’ explanations on why they are taking English courses at college. In all their cases, they frame their decision in a way that shows that is half someone else’s – the decision was primarily attributed to college staff’s voices and participants’ resources showed that they accepted rather reluctantly or assumed the responsibility just later. Once again, deaf students produced positions in which they act as if they accept a claim while secretly undermining it.

These various discursive movements result in a layered and highly dialogical positioning effort. Deaf students position themselves as if boundaries existed or norms (like reproducing the dominance of English) were important for them, while at the same time showing how they disagree with them. Sam's position is an exception, in the sense of openly wishing hearing people to learn BSL. With varying degrees of explicitness, deaf students' positioning efforts produce a particular effect: while describing their actual social and communicative interactions, they simultaneously throw a sideways glance at alternative ways of valuing communicative resources and therefore of configuring communicative situations, enacting the social places of hearing and deaf people otherwise.

Multilingualism and its discontents: tensions in deaf students' identifications

Deaf people live among different and sometimes competing discourses for defining who they are. Starting from this fact, studies on deaf individuals' identities have transitioned from rather static snapshots (e.g., Cole & Edelmann, 1991; Glickman & Carey, 1993) to recognising their multiple and contextually changing identifications (e.g., Leigh, 2009; Leigh & O'Brien, 2020; McIlroy and Storbeck, 2011). While the WFD (2019) has emphasised the benefits of intersectional potentials for deaf individuals – including a positive Deaf identity and a tie with disability movements, among others – social and sensory differences reinstate divisions that shape and limit the extent to which deaf individuals can flexibly enact multiple identities. Identifications are performed in heteroglossic backgrounds that bring tension, conflict, and difference (Bakhtin, 1981).

The present study is part of a larger project studying deaf college students' translanguaging and focused on deaf college students' discourses to explore how the tension between the flexibility of languaging and the normativity of languages

(Thibault, 2011) is expressed in identifications. It mobilises a form of dialogical discourse analysis (Aveling et al., 2015; Larraín & Medina, 2007), that enabled highlighting the relational and situational features of the deaf students' language uses.

Analyses from this study showed how deaf college students performed multiple identifications. Their accounts reflect their statuses as flexible communicators, mirroring similar findings in previous research (Beckner and Helme, 2018; McIlroy and Storbeck, 2011). Thus, participants performed bicultural identifications in a way that unsettles the idea of assigning single identity and linguistic labels to each individual. These intersecting identifications can be understood as the result of participation in overlapping cultural worlds (Holland et al., 1998), including the worlds of being a deaf, Deaf, a college student, a worker, and a parent, among others.

However, the exploration of contradictions in different levels of enunciation showed nuanced ways of expressing preferences for people, languages, and sensory modalities. In this way, unbalanced bicultural identifications can be seen to reinstate social divisions and language ideologies (Heap, 2006; Napier et al., 2019) and make evident the limits in flexible identifications through translanguaging practices. Asymmetries limit deaf students' intersectional potential (WFD, 2019), and navigating asymmetries mirrors the management of intersecting and competing identity claims (Humphries & Humphries, 2011) associated with using a sign language (Mauldin and Fannon, 2020; Skelton and Valentine, 2003; Stapleton, 2015) and having contact with hearing and deaf individuals in their lives (Nikolarazi and Hadjakakou, 2006; Nikolarazi, 2007).

Finally, deaf college students' management of the dominance of English and resistance strategies echoed the subaltern status of Deaf people (Ladd, 2003) by having

to deal with the normativity of hearing ways of being and communicating (Ferndale, Munro and Watson, 2016; Kemmery and Compton, 2014). Participants made subtle or direct references to alternative ways of organising communication via visual orientation and use of sign language, emphasising the sensory asymmetries experienced in their everyday contexts while translanguaging (De Meulder et al., 2019).

Overall, deaf students' multiple positions in discourse had varied ideological effects, sometimes reinforcing the boundaries of languages in accordance with social and sensory divisions, making ways of languaging to be representative of social groups; other times, blurring the linguistic and social distinctions in the enactment of multilingual identities; and yet other times, strategically mobilising norms that dictate the superiority of spoken languages to undermine them. Linguistic boundaries, therefore, continue to be relevant for understanding deaf students' positioning efforts in discourse, and while sometimes they emerge to reinforce social and communicative barriers, other times they are enacted to produce distinctions that are relevant and positive in deaf students' identifications.

Conclusions

Deaf college students in this study reflected on their past and present communication experiences, enacting affiliation with languages and people while expressing partial access to different semiotic resources. Their performed identities could be classified as mirroring unbalanced multilingual profiles. In other words, the expression of multilingual repertoires in deaf students' flexible translanguaging practices cannot be equated with equivalent comfort with all resources and interlocutors – with identification as balanced bilinguals or multilinguals.

Therefore, this paper restates the importance of studying language ideologies (Rosa & Burdick, 2017) as a relevant component for conceiving translanguaging practices, especially in the case of deaf sign language users since their repertoires include different modalities and sensory orientations (De Meulder et al., 2019). Deaf college students' repertoires did not seem to follow strict boundaries between languages, and yet students used those boundaries to take positions in discourse. While reflecting on their communication, deaf students perform positioning movements that enact social and sensory boundaries, reinscribing languages into their translanguaging practices.

On a methodological level, adapting a form of dialogical discourse analysis (Larraín & Medina, 2007) with translanguaged discourse that includes a sign language represents a significant innovation. On the one hand, this opens multilingual and multimodal discourses for analyses in a way that, while remaining flexible, also requires considering the specific features of signed languages – e.g., carrying out analyses in videos and not in written translations/transcriptions. On the other hand, analyses also showed the importance of working with concepts that allow exploring contradiction, assuming a background of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) that shapes and limits translanguaging practices (Blackledge & Cresse, 2014). Positioning movements in discourse regarding communication were filled with tension as participants reflected on social experiences of communicative inclusion and exclusion in their lives.

In terms of applications, practitioners working with deaf college students who are sign language users could consider how curriculum and practices reflect the dominance of English, and how this impacts on learning objectives not always making sense for students given their multiple linguistic trajectories. Their reluctant engagement in practices that reproduce these norms should not be considered an academic failure but

an enactment of identifications that might be personally and culturally relevant. Partial engagement should not be discouraged as it could change in the future given how semiotic resources can be seen in a different light due to changing life trajectories.

If deaf students mobilise translanguaging to enact multiple identifications that, in turn, involve concessions to multiple interlocutors, future research could delve into why this seems justified from deaf students' perspectives. This orientation has already been indicated in the research program of the Deaf Translated Self (Young, Napier & Oram, 2019) and dialogical discourse analysis could represent a contribution to exploring such matters considering the influence of language ideologies (Rosa & Burdick, 2017).

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Chapter 9: Discussion

The previous chapters of this thesis have dealt with analyses of specific portions of data to bring out the different issues recognised as the project unfolded. Notwithstanding their contribution as cases, they offer different partial views. A more encompassing narrative can still be offered, even if, as has been stressed before, the epistemological commitments enacted in Chapter 3 prevent total discursive closure.

9.1 Answering the research questions

As was described in Chapters 1 and 4, the research questions for this study began from an experience reported by Lissi et al. (2017) when trying to make sense of deaf school students' literacies. Such division between practices and subjectivities led to the construction of research questions. While these questions were refined, the analytical and rather artificial division between subjectivities and practices remained relevant for exploring the possible presence of contradictions once more. The presence of alienation, this impossibility for a subject to find themselves in the processes and products of their own creation (Marx, 1844), was extremely relevant during the enquiry. This duality, therefore, will be invoked once more to reflect on the findings of this study. However, it can be established from the outset that the detailed approach and analyses allowed for the exploring of a multiplicity of practices and subjectivities. Findings, therefore, do not reflect the rigid divisions through which contradictions were explored in Lissi et al (2017), making difficult to conceive the relationship between deaf students' practices of subjectivities as one of alienation.

9.1.1 Practices

This study was organised around two overarching research questions. The first of them asked about the role of translanguaging in deaf college students' practices. More

particularly, questions asked about the role and status of different semiotic resources, people, and languages in deaf students' practices in college. Papers 2 (Chapter 6) and 3 (Chapter 7) were particularly relevant for answering these questions. As could be seen in paper 2 (Chapter 6), deaf students enacted movements of expansion and contraction of semiotic resources according to their interlocutors. Direct communication with CSWs and Deaf tutors, and communication with hearing tutors mediated by a CSW, were moments in which adjustment to their interlocutors allowed deaf students to bring and mix signs, gestures, written words, objects, visual schemes, and speech to varying degrees. This was possible because interlocutors in these contexts partially shared a wide array of semiotic resources, making sensory asymmetries less relevant. In contrast, direct communication with hearing peers, deaf peers and hearing tutors represented moments in which sensory asymmetries were relevant, resulting in a contraction of the semiotic repertoire. Concessions to hearing interlocutors included less use of signs and fingerspelling, and enhanced use of gestures or speech in some cases. Visual means of communication were preferred with deaf peers, including signs, fingerspelling, images, gestures, and written words.

The issue of asymmetries was also visible in paper 3 (Chapter 7), thanks to an emergent attention to how people deal with mutual understanding, as explored in paper 1 (Chapter 5). Moments of communication breakdown, even if few, represented metaphorical windows to a more stable and ever-present phenomenon of asymmetries in communication. Exploration of episodes of communication breakdown allowed the circumscribing of them into three different kinds of asymmetries in communication: those related with sensory orientations, those referring to differences in language knowledge, and those reflecting differences in subject matter knowledge. Analyses showed deaf students dealing with complex multi-party communication, continuously

assessing everyone else's understanding. Deaf students and their CSWs are overburdened with responsibility for communication in classrooms that include other hearing interlocutors, producing a situation of epistemic injustice for deaf signers.

Taken together, these findings show that communication with hearing interlocutors who are not signers enact moments in which sensory asymmetries are heightened, and in which visual means of communication become less relevant for sustaining mutual understanding. Indeed, deaf students compensated by emphasising gestures, written words, and images, but resources such as signed language and fingerspelling were not deemed useful. Concessions to oral/aural semiotic resources and continued efforts to assess others' understanding and to repair communication through translanguaging strategies are a testament to these imbalanced power relationships between signers and non-signers.

While semiotic repertoires were also restricted with deaf interlocutors, this was enacted in a context of less sensory asymmetries, and therefore of more equal status – translanguaging strategies in these situations were not concessions to others. The absence of communication breakdowns during observations in these situations reinforces this idea. Interestingly enough, richer translanguaging was documented to be enacted only with Deaf Support staff and with CSWs. A widening of the semiotic repertoire in these situations reflects the wider possibilities of negotiating asymmetries in communication with interlocutors who share a vast array of semiotic resources.

9.1.2 Subjectivities

The second research question addresses translanguaging in deaf college students' subjectivities. Similar to the question on practices, the specific dimensions of this question on subjectivities considered the role and status of semiotic resources, people,

and languages. This issue was mainly explored in paper 4 (Chapter 8). As could be seen in the analyses of deaf students' subjectivities, the resulting discursive positions were varied, which renders problematic claims that equate individuals with single subjective positions. The first set of discursive positions reflected multilingual subjectivities, in which social and sensory divides are mirrored in linguistic divides, but with deaf students navigating such gaps thanks to the exploration of their plural semiotic repertoires. Signs and visual communication are brought to communication with deaf interlocutors, and speech is used with hearing interlocutors, even if producing discomfort. This multilingualism is balanced by discursive positions in which the divides seem unsurmountable. Signs and deaf signers are positioned in higher degrees of intimacy and belonging, while the opposite is true for speech and hearing non-signers.

Lastly, increased dialogicality was found in the simultaneous enactment of such divides (including deficit perspectives on deafness) and the distancing from such positions by being attributed to other people. This included the use of ironic resources to emphasise that they just partially agreed with the importance of (spoken) English in their lives, and the need for reaching out to hearing non-signers. At least one participant enacted an outright defiance of these terms, wishing for an alternative situation in which hearing people learn sign language and try to communicate with deaf signers.

These multiple positions rather reflect the different figured worlds that deaf college students inhabit, creating tensions in various directions. Favouring the use of different semiotic resources and communication with different people was the result of their intersecting subjectivities and belongings, including: the cultural worlds of being a good student and being able to publicly demonstrate knowledge in English, being a

proud member of a Deaf culture, and defending the importance of visual and signed communication, or being a good parent and needing written English to support their children's homework. The plurality of their semiotic repertoires allowed deaf students to navigate these different but intersecting evaluative positions contained in their multiple subjectivities, even if social, sensory, and linguistic borders were continuously redrawn.

9.1.3 General contributions

Taken together, these findings point to the usefulness of a plurality of semiotic resources for deaf college students, as seen in the translanguaging strategies enacted in classrooms and the varied valuations of semiotic resources in their multilingual selves. Translanguaging, in this aspect, allowed the navigation of communicative asymmetries and multiple cultural worlds. However, the findings as a whole also pointed to the limits of plurality. Sometimes these limits were due to college circumstances. The constant presence of asymmetries meant that plurality reinforced the dominance of oral/aural modes of communication associated with hearing interlocutors, making translanguaging strategies a concession to others. At other times, such limits to plurality were enacted in deaf college students' subjective positions, be it through delicate references to preference, or to strong sensory, social, and linguistic divisions that were subjectively relevant for constructing their sense of selfhood.

The pedagogies of translanguaging for deaf students (Swanwick, 2017), then, must consider the consequences of these findings. If the development of plural repertoires is seen as something positive and useful for students, it must trace the limits to the equal development of the whole set of resources and not only some over others. This means paying attention to how contexts of interlocution enacted in college may be

unequally favouring some resources over others, and therefore producing an unjust distribution for the responsibility of mutual understanding.

These limits to the plurality of semiotic resources, however, cannot always be avoided, for sometimes they reflect deaf students' own subjective positionings and are thus relevant for the formation of their identities. Recapitulating Holland et al. (1998), on the one hand, narrative identities – mostly explored in paper 4 (Chapter 8) – gave an account of the plurality of moments in which semiotic resources are valuable in their lives. On the other hand, positional identities – as seen in subjective positionings in paper 4 (Chapter 8) and classroom practices in papers 2 (Chapter 6) and 3 (Chapter 7) – brought back the divisions that cut across their multiple cultural belongings, valuing languages, resources and communicative partners differently.

9.2 Exploring a discursive knot – the semiotics of adjustment

The following narrative will explore the different ways 'adjust' is signified in BSL. This section is presented under the rationale of exploring a discursive knot, that is, a juxtaposition of discourses around a single element that is telling of the different social logics informing communicative practices in the studied college. The term is taken from Aveling et al. (2015)'s 'dialogical knots' as points of tension in voices or perspectives. Although the original term applies to auto-dialogue, here I expand the idea to explore how different perspectives are juxtaposed, effectively changing the form and content of the same sign. This will also help exemplify how this discursive ethnography (Smart, 2012) can elaborate a coherent yet plural account of its main phenomenon. To produce this more general account, I will present a line of inquiry that emerged at different stages of the production of this study, including moments during and after contact with people in college.

9.2.1 Adjustment 1

During one of the first few meetings with Deaf Support staff in college, one of the staff members asked me what was the communication approach that I was interested in exploring in this study. My mention of an interest in deaf students' plural literacies and how they made use of all resources available not only established a first moment of interest on their behalf, but also made the sign ADJUST emerge for the first time. The sign was presented back then as involving both hands making a movement like adjusting two dials, one on top of the other, on one's own chest. This was explained by staff as one of the intended learning goals for deaf students' during their passage through Mill Town college. The first appearance of this sign implied communicative adjustment as an individual endeavour, and its existence as a signed concept showed how it was mostly intended to deaf students and their ability to make adjustments.

The same sign for ADJUST had a second moment of appearance in a break during one observation. Just after the tutor announced a break during the biology GCSE class, Derick turned to me and asked me why exactly was I was doing all those observations. In my (at the time, limited) signing, I tried to explain that, according to my perspective, many hearing people think that deaf individuals use speech only or signs only, and that I wanted to see how deaf students blend them for communication. Derick nodded in assent, and with a faint smirk signed ADJUST on to the front of his body. This showed the specific meanings that coloured the sign circulating in college, and deaf students' reproduction of the logics that are imbued in the sign for ADJUST in this specific context. In doing so, a certain subjectivity was being promoted in deaf college students, ideologically positioning them in relation to communication resources and other deaf individuals. Two simultaneous goals are performed: the promotion of plural and flexible repertoires and adaption – subordination included – to their (hearing)

interlocutors' communicative needs. This shows both the role of semiotic mediation (Vygotsky, 1978) and the positional aspect of identities crafted through cultural tools (Holland et al., 1998).

Paper 2 (Chapter 6) showed translanguaging in deaf college students' practice. Deaf students' flexible practices, in which deaf individuals widened or restricted their repertoires according to the needs of their interlocutors, allowed them to navigate communication in different circumstances. This included communication with hearing tutors and peers, with CSWs, with hearing tutors via CSWs, and other deaf peers. This flexible use of repertoires with others also made use of the affordances of their bodies (tactile and kinaesthetic resources) and of the environment to inscribe resources into the interaction, recruiting objects (e.g., paint pots), other socially available visual semiotic resources (e.g., written English on whiteboards and computer screens, schedules on walls, photos on Google Images, drawings, and graphic representation of concepts), thus layering their interventions over time.

This flexible practice could be understood as an expression of flexible multilinguals' subjectivities, reflecting the plural yet imbalanced repertoires of deaf college students across languages and modalities. The presence of CSWs as constant communicative partners and their providing of support in communication could be interpreted as allowing deaf students' expression of multilingual selves, by increasing the extent of resources to communicate with others and therefore giving a modicum of choice on how to present themselves to others.

Yet many times the apparent choices that were being made were for deaf students to accommodate to others' needs instead of achieving reciprocity. The many times that deaf students used their voices (with the only exception of Sam who never used her

voice) was usually to make concessions to hearing people. This included, for example, Adam using his voice to answer a hearing tutor, bypassing the CSW to demonstrate knowledge on his own terms. In a similar way, when communicating with me during the interviews – perhaps after assessing our mutual communication previously during informal casual interaction – Adam mixed signs and spoken English in an SSE (Signed Spoken English) manner. He turned his head to the staff member present only when he could not understand what I meant.

Matt's interview, in some sense, could also be understood under this lens. His answers to me included a vocalisation of words in English that corresponded to each of his signs. He probably perceived that I needed such support, given my then status as a BSL level 2 learner. In these and many other ways, deaf students' translanguaging reflected their strategic navigation of communicative situations but also the reproduction of subjective stances that tended to accept a subordination to others' communicative needs, perhaps despite their own preferences.

Deaf students described communication with different interlocutors during the interviews. This seems to confirm the image of deaf students as relatively flexible communicators. They associated different scenarios of communicative interaction with different semiotic resources, sometimes emphasising named languages – like Katniss' contrasts between communication in England and Afghanistan – and at other times emphasising the sensory qualities of resources – as in Adam associating signs with deaf-only classrooms and speech with classrooms with more hearing peers. Overall, this showed how translanguaging allowed the expression of multilingual and multimodal interaction, strategically moving between resources, and multilingual selves. Of course, such flexibility is always subject to the possibilities and constraints

of the situation at hand. These matters will be discussed in more detail later in the contributions section when mentioning the notion of the context of interlocution.

9.2.2 Adjustment 2

Bringing the multiple mentions of ADJUST to a brief meeting with Deaf Support staff added another layer of meaning to the sign. At that point, a few months after our very first encounter, Deaf Support staff showed surprise at my use of the sign for ADJUST. Back then, I just framed it as coming from Derick's signing, not mentioning that I had picked up the sign from them in the past – something that they seemed to have completely forgotten. They assumed that deaf students could have been making use of ADJUST when picking it up from the CSWs' use of it. According to staff's explanation, some CSWs had a higher signing level in BSL than deaf students themselves. That is, CSWs' credentials positioned them as highly qualified signers and the deaf students who entered college were perhaps being educated for the first time with use of signs and therefore their level of, and fluency in, signing did not fully follow the linguistic structure of BSL; perhaps also reflecting a trajectory of low or no contact with deaf signers in the past.

Therefore, ADJUST was signed by the staff to imply the highly qualified CSW's effort to match the deaf students' lower signing level. This included a modification of ADJUST, amalgamating it with another sign: two downward facing folded palms face each other as in the sign for UNEQUAL; one palm with fingers pointing away from the signer's body and placed up in signing space, and the other one opposing it in second person singular ('you') being placed much lower in signing space. The upper palm is then lowered down until it matches the relative height of the lower palm. This symbolic movement, which would also be a grammatically correct expression,

represents the CSWs as adjusting themselves to a much more basic level of signing (of the students). According to college staff, this had pejorative connotations and could be a way in which deaf students could be replicating CSWs' ranking of each other and deaf students according to their signing skills. In other words, ADJUST was being used to rank signers in college according to a continuum in skills, stratifying the cultural worlds (Holland et al., 1998) of signers at college.

Language knowledge asymmetries were mostly explored in paper 3 (Chapter 7). They added another source of complexity beyond the social and communicative divide between hearing and deaf individuals regarding sensory orientations. Deaf students and their CSWs had different levels of linguistic knowledge of BSL, which proved especially difficult when they had to interact through specific genres, such as signed mathematics. The lack of knowledge of those signed genres and the difficulty in translating from spoken mathematics in English to those other ways of discursively organising mathematical concepts was a source of communicative difficulties. This amounts to the fact that interpretation and translation services for deaf students may not be enough as ways of promoting equality in college environments. CSWs not only relayed discourse between persons as well as modify concepts or pedagogical discourse to make them intelligible; their presence usually made communication a multi-party endeavour in which deaf students had to adjust for, and continually check levels of comprehension of, two or more persons at the same time.

Deaf students had to deploy a series of strategies for managing this complexity and the experienced uncertainty that comes with it. Indeed, the way deaf students managed communication breakdowns reflected a potential impasse in fulfilling their needs. On the one hand, deaf students showed a great level of communicative competence by mobilising translanguaging to sustain communication with different parties, reflecting

how they managed to track their interlocutors' level of understanding to repair communication when necessary. These competencies require a fine discernment of what are the most useful ways of engaging with different people. On the other hand, analyses reflected a pressure to conform to others' needs to sustain communication and therefore learning in college. This can also include a potential oversimplification of content to achieve good communication (Young, Szarkowski, Ferguson-Coleman, Freeman, Lindow-Davies, Davies, Hopkins, Noon, Rogers, Russell, Seaver & Vesey, 2020), making a success in translanguaging to carry negative consequences.

As was explored during the interviews in paper 4 (Chapter 8), strategies for negotiating hearing normative ways of communication varied. Matt, for example, leaned more towards occasionally surrendering communication with hearing workmates altogether, while also showing more eagerness to learn English. This produced an ideological movement in which social and linguistic boundaries are reinforced, accepting the situation as it is in the name of a higher workplace ethos (being unable to communicate with others being acceptable if he could keep up working). This stands in contrast with Sam, who outrightly rejected communication with people who could not sign. While in both cases communicative and symbolic borders were pronounced, they had opposite effects.

Adam and Katniss showed an intermediate and layered relationship towards those norms. On the one hand, they seemed to comply with them when needed to; they enacted concessions for their hearing communicative partners. On the other hand, they simultaneously hinted at their distance from those norms and suggested in a nuanced way that they did not give too much importance to them. Adam, for example, only weakly complied with college staff assertions that his English tutorial were his decision. Katniss' experiences at home strategically mobilised deaf persons' sensory

inaccessibility to adults' speech to evade sanctions, filling her discourse with a faint sense of irony. In other words, the narrative aspect of identities (Holland et al., 1998) was being used both to reproduce norms and carve novel and potentially transgressive positions.

9.2.3 Adjustment 3

A few weeks after I finished my visits to the college, an alternative way of signing ADJUST emerged during an informal conversation with a Deaf co-worker in the University office. She usually gave me new signs in informal social and linguistic mentorship in Deaf ways of communication. Her signing of ADJUST included the same dial-like hand movements but, instead of both being placed in one's own chest, only one did so and the other was facing the second person singular ('you') in signing space. This modification, then, showed the simultaneous and mutual work of communicative adjustment between the signer and their directly present interlocutor. This way of signing not only exemplified the generative nature of signed languages, in recruiting space, place, orientation and movement to augment and modify semantic content; it also reflected a different logic for arranging the effort of sustaining communication, emphasising the mutual work of adjusting to each other's resources and orientations, making it a shared concern. This sign for ADJUST ideologically positions individuals on a more equal footing and does not create the expectation for subordinating one's communicative needs to the interlocutor's needs. Rather, it aims at a continuous and joint negotiation of meaning in communication.

Communication with CSWs and with Deaf Support staff in college represented instances in which communication was more balanced. In both cases, having interlocutors with knowledge of, and varied degrees of fluency in BSL, even if partial,

proved useful for deaf students. They could mix resources more freely and this allowed a rather flexible exploration of knowledge in some cases. CSWs also shared the work of sustaining communication and repairing breakdowns with other in classrooms with hearing students. This shared effort, however, was not necessarily extended beyond the deaf students-CSW dyad except in a very particular case: the hearing tutor in Matt's technical workshop. His efforts at mimicking Matt's strategies (e.g., bringing objects to a table) and the way he paid visual attention to Matt's signed explanations allowed the circumventing of various communicative difficulties.

These precautions for sustaining communication were not required during deaf-only classes in college. The disposition of seats in a way that allowed deaf students to face each other while also looking at the tutor – a Deaf person himself who acted as a mentor in signed skills and how to capitalize on them to understand English – created an environment where communication flowed effortlessly. Translanguaging here was less recruited for facilitating interaction between students and more with respect to instructional content. This included, for example, how to use BSL to understand a text in written English. The 'Other' of communication, and therefore the source of asymmetries in communication, were present in a more abstract manner in those classes: deaf students were being prepared to deal with an English-speaking-other by using their signed and visual resources. All of this occurred in a relatively egalitarian environment in terms of language knowledge and sensory orientations.

Despite the multiple situations in which deaf students accepted hearing norms, during interviews they also hinted at desired communication contexts. Matt mentioned how much he liked signed conversations with deaf friends at home, while Katniss' signed chatter with deaf friends left her oblivious to her duties back home. Adam first expressed an overall preference for communication in one of the deaf-only classrooms

in the Deaf Support area through signed language. Similarly, Sam expressed a great desire for her father and other hearing peers to learn more BSL so she could communicate better with them.

Overall, these experiences point at moments in deaf students' lives in which communication can be easily accessed and responsibilities for sustaining communication are more equally shared. Sam's expressed desires recruited the linguistic, communicative, and symbolic borders that were mentioned in the last section to make them work in her favour: Sam rejects communication when there is no BSL in common but is always willing to communicate with hearing people – the door is open for them to make the effort. This subverts the usual ways of positioning deaf and hearing relationships by not expecting deaf individuals to be subordinated to hearing norms. Deaf alternative, counter-hegemonic (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) norms are defended, instead. The subjectivities that emerge from these positions are more critical of the subordination that was enacted on in previous sections.

The circulation of different signs for ADJUST, with their modulations representing different conceptual and cultural baggage, allows for marking a division between different epistemological, ontological, and ethical projects found in the college and in alternative Deaf spaces. The individualised sign for ADJUST ideologically places the signer as solely responsible for adjusting to the other's (normative) ways of communication, whereas the mutually modified sign for ADJUST hints at the collective effort that is needed for communicating with others. In this way, the sign for ADJUST was a discursive and ideological knot, a point of intersection of different ways of conceiving the way communication should be structured between deaf and hearing people. This shows how cultural-semiotic tools have an ideological weight that can reproduce the hegemonic state of things or, if reflected upon, can be

considered inadequate tools in need of transformation by being imbued with new meaning, inaugurating transformative counter-hegemonic potentials (Holland et al., 1998; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985).

9.3 Framing the contributions made by this study

The next step in this discussion will concern the frames through which the contributions made by this study become visible. In this way, I will show that contributions are not defined in a binary way but rather consider a plethora of perspectives that enable the development of the desired outcomes of a study in a range of directions. This includes, for example, contributions that are more epistemologically oriented (e.g., producing new ways of understanding the phenomenon of study for participants or practitioners) or politically inspired (e.g., rendering visible power inequalities in a way that would allow them to be challenged in the future), among others. Regardless of the specific criteria, they represent relevant lenses through which the contributions made by this study might be judged.

9.3.1 Framing contributions in ethnographic studies

Ethnographic studies aim at producing knowledge that is relevant for human concerns. The ethnographer's concern with small groups makes the knowledge relevant for local audiences but it is less clear how claims can be of interest for wider audiences (Hammersley, 1992). Considering this, Brewer (2000) lists different reasons why ethnographic studies can be considered relevant for wider audiences, which include: (1) the topic is an issue of public concern; (2) knowledge produced affects practitioners; (3) the study contributes to the literature and academics; (4) the study exemplifies a methodological approach. This study aims at making contributions in all these different directions.

There are two usual ways in which ethnographers ground the contributions made by their studies for audiences beyond the direct concern of those involved in the study. One of them is of theoretical nature. Hammersley (1992) considers the role of inference, or the claim that ethnographic work produces insights can be used to judge social theories directly. For Youdell (2006), drawing on poststructuralist notions, ethnography is a matter of theory generation and testing, understood as the interpretation of discourses and their effects.

9.3.1.1 Ethnographies as ways of judging social theory

This possibility of assessing social theory emerges from the fact that ethnographies are potentially rigorous ways of producing knowledge relevant for general questions of social life (Brewer, 2000). In some cases, ethnographers can have as one of their aims the production of social theory (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley, 1992). Hammersley (1992), however, remains sceptical of this way of directly judging theory as long as it is based on two assumptions: (1) the supposedly universal applicability of social theories, and (2) a direct link between particular cases and universal theory (e.g., the notion of “discovering” universal laws through deep analysis of specific cases). For Brewer (2000), analytic induction of this kind is a positivistic enterprise. The theoretical contributions of this study, therefore, must consider the always partial and potentially unsuccessful dialogue between the particular and the universal (Laclau, 1996).

In looking for alternative frameworks for performing ethnography, Youdell (2006) highlights the discursive mediation of scientific accounts, and therefore the boundaries for universal claims. In her frame, the ethnographer aims at untangling discourses in educational settings and their effects. These effects are rarely observable and most of

the time are opaque and require to be inferred. Therefore, the researcher is inevitably entangled with their accounts. Also, ethnography is never purely descriptive for it always rests on a series of theoretical assumptions. Hence, ethnographic projects are theory-driven, theory-testing and theory-generating. This testing and developing of theory should not be considered as following the rules of falsification but of interpretation.

The main phenomenon of interest, defined as translanguaging, is in its descriptive sense – i.e., translanguaging as a label for describing everyday practices in communication – (De Meulder et al., 2019) nothing more than human semiosis in social interaction through varied semiotic means. As Goodwin (2000) suggests, this is a regular, everyday aspect of human communication, and is established at all times and in different moments to, for example, coordinate human action and mediate learning in institutional frames. The applicability of findings from this study to other studies of translanguaging, and potentially to other studies of human semiosis, must consider, however, the unique status of the social unit of analysis selected for this study.

The unit of analysis in this study was not the isolated individual, but a phenomenon occurring in a social unit, a composite of deaf students communicating with others (sometimes via intermediation of a third party), through varied semiotic means, about college-level knowledge (that might be both formal learning and informal interaction). The focus is on the transaction, or the relation between the parts. This relationship was observed repeatedly within the same college and is constantly being reproduced in deaf college students' experiences. The interaction involves at least one interlocutor who is a sign language user (with a plethora of other resources varying between participants) and who enacts a visual sensory orientation – and sometimes another

interlocutor is intended as a mediator with a relatively good understanding of visual orientation and sign language knowledge – trying to communicate with another person (who more often than not is not a sign language user and relies on a relatively aural orientation).

Communication difficulties experienced between participants in social interaction do not necessarily undermine the explicative account of a study of everyday communication and interaction. Indeed, Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron (2011) present many cases of communication difficulties to explore human semiosis in interaction. It served them to inquire into how interlocutors circumvented these difficulties by expanding the array of semiotic resources that were mobilised for interaction. In this sense, these “atypical” cases are used rather as extreme or critical cases (Mertens, 2015), considered particularly illuminating of the extent to which humans can recruit a variety of semiotic resources for producing mutual understanding and overcoming difficulties. Therefore, the presence of difficulties in themselves are not necessarily a threat to theoretical inference: they are a source of creativity as a relevant explanatory factor operating in similar instances.

Theoretical contributions made by this study are discussed in detail in section 8.4, framed as contributions of relevance for researchers and academics, but they centre around the importance of considering semiotic repertoires as emergent and generative properties of interactions and situations.

9.3.1.2 Ethnographies as opportunities for shedding light upon social matters

The second way in which ethnographers claim wider relevance for their studies is empirical generalisation (Hammersley, 1992), also called transferability (Mertens, 2015). Transferability is a two-step process, requiring generalising from the few

selected cases in the setting to the whole setting, and then from the specific case to other possible aggregates of settings. Whatever is the extent of this transference, it can only occur with finite populations (Hammersley, 1992). Indeed, ethnographies' strength is their richness and depth, but their breadth relies on a generalisability that is always in dispute (Brewer, 2000).

A major warning to these processes of empirical generalisation came from Denzin (1997). In analysing the impacts of poststructural engagements for ethnographic practice, Denzin (1997) diagnosed a double crisis in qualitative research. A representational crisis meant that experience cannot be directly captured for it is always mediated by social texts, whereas the legitimisation crisis implies that the means for valuing social research are less clear than before. Denzin (1997) proposes to speak of verisimilitude, or the extent to which accounts are able to converge and produce an effects of reality on the readers. Verisimilitude is always a matter of degrees. These effects of 'reality' are mainly produced through the narrative conventions included in ethnographic accounts, especially the realist genre of writing (Atkinson, 1990).

Verisimilitude (Denzin, 1997) needs not be a full stop to the transferability of ethnographic accounts but requires a new focus. In following Youdell (2006), an ethnography of discourses and their effects is less interested in capturing 'reality' or unmediated experiences. Rather, this ethnography pays attention at the way 'reality' is diffracted through discursive means. As Denzin (1997) points out, good ethnographic texts from a poststructuralist stance are clearly located, multivocal, interpretive, messy, and yet grounded in the many worlds of experience with which the research has had contact.

One of the ways for grounding claims of transferability is establishing the presence of the same explanatory factor in the phenomenon of interest be it in different contexts and situational interactions (Hammersley, 1992). In the case of this study, explanatory factors in variations in translanguaging could be subsumed under the concept of asymmetries in communication. As seen in paper 3 (Chapter 7), these asymmetries included: sensory orientations, linguistic knowledge, and subject matter knowledge. It is the modulation of these asymmetries, sometimes emerging in different situations or sometimes overlapping, which helps to explain why deaf students modified their translanguaging practices according to different types of interlocutors, whether under their own volition or out of a forced necessity. Therefore, this study is potentially relevant for deaf students in other college settings who are sign language users – favouring stronger visual sensory orientations and who must communicate with hearing people on an everyday basis, most of whom are not sign language users and have an oral/aural orientation.

Another possible explanatory factor was identified in paper 2 (Chapter 6): the pressures to learn the dominant majority language. This emerged in different ways, including the pressures created by standardised testing (particularly GCSEs), the general impact of constant interlocutors who are only or mostly competent in that majority language (papers 2 to 4), and significant others' education (e.g., deaf parents having their hearing children being schooled, thus needing a parent competent in the dominant language, in paper 4). This pressure was found in many interactions, or included as the goal of different activities, making it possible to appear through many forms in other college settings.

Another explanatory factor was recognised in paper 2 (Chapter 6), regarding the type of interaction favoured by different classroom contexts in which deaf college students

participated. There were mainly four types of interaction settings that were observed: one-to-one tutorials with a member of staff competent in BSL, one-to-one tutorials with a tutor who did not know BSL supported by a CSW, deaf-only classrooms (occasionally with the support of a CSW when work was centred on written English) and hearing-majority classrooms with the support of a CSW. These situations were a proxy for the kinds of asymmetries already mentioned, as they foregrounded the type of interactions that could be encountered during such instances.

After claims of transferability have been made, the validity of such claims need to be assessed (Hammersley, 1992). This was accomplished regarding varied quality criteria in Chapter 4, rendering the issue to degrees of validity rather than absolute yes/no answers. A tension remains, however, in postulating idiographic studies, which explore the unique features of individual cases to discern participants' meanings (Brewer, 2000), and then claiming transferability without clearly delimiting its extent. Design limits are an important way for not abstracting knowledge claims from individual cases to much wider levels – e.g., whole society (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley, 1992). The description of the specific circumstances that were observed could help readers discern the degree of applicability of analyses presented here. After considering the limits to transferability after the crises of representation and legitimation in qualitative research (Denzin, 1997), the detail of ethnographic accounts and its organization in multiple perspectives could allow this study to claim a degree of verisimilitude, making these accounts plausible interpretations of the phenomenon.

9.3.2 Framing contributions in discourse analytic studies

The second portion of this section will deal with criteria emerging from discourse analytic studies which, as will be discussed, open up conversation on contributions to

diverging areas. This will begin by reviewing definitions of ‘discourse’ and how that shapes the kind of criteria that are relevant for judging contributions.

9.3.2.1 Contributions from a general and critical notion of discourse

There are many varieties of discourse analysis, each with their own definitions of discourse, scope, and levels of analysis (Parker, 2013), which makes it difficult to consider discourse analysis as a single approach (Burman, 1991). There are, however, definitions that allow talking about discourse as a coherent phenomenon even after the admission of varied frameworks for constructing what is discourse in detail. In the first place, discourse goes beyond language to include the many different symbolic material through which humans relay meaning through culture (Parker, 2002). By engaging with poststructuralist ideas, three characteristics of discourse can be developed (Parker, 2002): (1) variability, or how contradiction and variation undermines the supposedly unitary character of the psychological subject; (2) construction, or how meanings are not separated from culture but make use of socially available resources; (3) function, or how discursive descriptions also perform additional functions such as endorsing, legitimising, challenging, or taking an ironic distance from what it describes, creating a range of subject positions.

Referring to these matters, Parker (1990) offers a general and necessarily loose definition of discourse as a ‘system of statements which construct an object’ (p. 191) before explaining seven criteria for defining what is discourse, including: (1) being a coherent system of meanings; (2) being realised in texts, that is, ‘delimited tissues of meaning reproduced in a form that can be given an interpretive gloss’ (Parker, 1990, p. 193); (3) reflecting on its own ways of speaking; (4) referring to other discourses; (5) being about objects (in the epistemological sense of constructing objects of

knowledge); (6) containing subjects or defining subject positions; (7) being historically located.

As can be seen from the emphases provided by these notions of discourse, a way in which discourse analyses can make contributions to research is by challenging subject-centred or psychologising assumptions by revealing their normative status and disciplining effects (Burman & Parker, 2016). In other words, discursive approaches allow de-psychologising phenomena by revealing how they rely on discursive and social influences. Attending to discourse provides alternative accounts of subjectivities by interrogating how the experience of being and feeling is enabled by discursive contexts (Parker, 2002) and revealing the ways in which they are the product of social resources and interaction and how they reproduce (potentially oppressive) social orders (Burman, 1991).

Discourse analysis enables critical work in psychology by treating psychological entities as forms of discourse, that is, as entities that come to be understood and experienced as real because of discursive operations (Parker, 2002). Ultimately, discourse analysis allows challenging the function of social sciences as well as their claims of truth and methodological adequacy (Burman, 1991). Discourse analysis does not focus on mentalist or voluntarist notions of 'true' intentions underlying discourse. Rather, the focus is on the cultural frameworks that allow those meanings to emerge and operate and the effects they produce (Burman, 2004). So situated discourses should always be understood as arising from wider cultural-historical conditions and institutional practices (Burman, 2004).

These characteristics of discourse work to produce interventions in social research by unsettling the (individualistic, psychologising, deficit-inducing) frameworks that are

usually at work to inform social practice (Burman & Parker, 2016). This project was conceived to serve these purposes, as could be seen in the developing conceptualisation of the semiotic repertoire as social and emergent in interaction, as well as the unit of analysis focused on an imbrication of persons and mediated communication (both in the sense of sometimes requiring a third party and of utilising varied semiotic means). This conceptualisation was the result of the conceptual elaboration expected in and produced by ethnographic work (Brewer, 2000). It was during analytical work in the course of the project that such notions emerged and helped me to make sense of what was being inscribed in ethnographic notes and recorded in interview videos.

While there is a danger of under-analysis in discursive projects by ‘discovering’ what is already assumed in research (Antaki, Billig, Edwards & Potter, 2003), the conceptual development of translanguaging in social interaction was far from tautological. The framework produced for this project, and the theoretical articulations enabled by it, merely provided the conditions (e.g., focus on discourses as cultural frameworks of meaning and subjectivity, focus on social interaction in a way that externalises supposedly individual psychological phenomena) that guided conceptual thinking.

Burman (1991) offers other ways in which discourse analysis can serve progressive agendas, including: (1) championing particular discourses by elaborating on the consequences of alternative discourses; (2) promoting a subordinate discourse; (3) clarifying the consequences of discursive frameworks for people; (4) commenting on the discursive-political consequences and dilemmas brought about by the clashing/intersection of discourses.

This project aimed at being focused on point 4 of the above. This can be seen in the production of a general narrative at the beginning of this chapter but also in other products, including the intersection of discourses in students' narratives (paper 4 in Chapter 8). Point 1 has also been considered albeit perhaps not so strongly or explicitly during the whole process. Paper 1 (Chapter 5) could be considered one of the main contributions in that direction, reflecting on the consequences of framing socialisation and communicative interaction when they are guided by the imperatives found amongst some Deaf communities in Northern England. As the narrative offered earlier tried to make explicit, the alternative and subordinate discourse of ADJUST as a mutual effort was not found in the specific college studies but circulates in broader Deaf communities and has extremely different consequences for the distribution of responsibility and the production of subjectivities in communicative interaction.

Parker (1990) also refers to how discourse analysis can be used to produce critical accounts that engage with political agendas. First, discourse analysis can show how discourses support the material reproduction of institutions. Second, analysis can show how discourse reproduces power relations and how institutions police the boundaries of their discourses. Third, analysis can show the ideological effects of discourses in terms of how they may be supporting forms of oppression. Points two and three may be most relevant for this study. The way flexibility in communication is promoted amongst deaf students in this college may be functional in the reproduction of deaf and hearing students' subjectivities (in terms of expecting the former to accommodate to the needs of the latter). This ideologically positions deaf students in a paradoxical stance: they are able to express themselves more freely and flexibly, but in a way that subordinates them to dominant norms of communication and does not necessarily challenge those.

9.3.2.2 Contributions from a post-Marxist notion of discourse

Howarth (2000) has discussed the relevance of the specific programme of post-Marxist discourse approaches, also called Discourse Theory (Howarth, 2000). This notion of relevance stems from the epistemological commitments involved in this notion of discourse, which are in conflict with naturalism and hermeneutic approaches. The naturalist ambition of explaining social phenomena in objective and universal ways is critiqued, but also the hermeneutic notion of retrieving and reconstructing social actors' meanings (Howarth, 2000).

As was discussed in Chapter 3, this notion of discourse is not equivalent to a hermeneutic of suspicion in which ideological critiques aim at unveiling the true meanings that lie beyond distorted representations (Howarth, 2000). The focus lies, instead, in exploring how social actors construct meanings within incomplete and therefore undecidable social structures by the social practice of articulating diverse elements of social formations (Howarth, 2000). Ideology conceals this contingency, thus reducing the contestability of formations (Howarth, Glynos & Griggs, 2016).

Discourse theory therefore aims at being both explanatory and critical (Howarth, Glynos & Griggs, 2016). This ideological work of recognising the gaps and clefts in which social formations (society, social groups, subjectivities) are founded aims at locating them in wider social contexts in which they may acquire a different meaning and possibly be the basis for a critique and possible transformation of existing meanings and practices (Howarth, 2000). Therefore, Howarth (2000) declares that this discursive approach should not be judged according to its relationship with a supposed reality. Instead of aiming at empirical generalisations, it aims at understanding particular cases as instances of more general social logics of articulation, showing

how, in the process, certain practices are constructed and normalised, and how their coherence is always at odds with their intrinsic instability (Howarth, 2000).

Howarth, Glynos and Griggs (2016) mobilise Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) classification of social relationships to sustain the task of critique. This includes relations of (1) subordination, when relations are not experienced as involving domination, appearing as justified and not requiring some form of public contestation; (2) domination, when subjects are judged to be dominated but relations are not explicitly challenged; can include 'off the record' complaints and 'lateral voices' and subjects may or may not be ideologically complicit with domination; (3) oppression, when a practice, policy or regime is identified as reproducing domination and is publicly challenged by subjects. For Howarth, Glynos and Griggs (2016), these relations involve different relations towards dislocation: in subordination, dislocation is not recognised; in domination, dislocations are recognised but concealed; in oppression, dislocation is recognised and symbolised in a questioning of norms.

These aspects could have been visible throughout all the project, but they are more evident in paper 4 (Chapter 8). Analyses of deaf students' discourses through interviews showed how they intertwined others' (parents, friends, partners, children, etc.) and their own voices in the past and present to enact discursive and ideological positioning movements. The resulting discourses could be situated, using Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) taxonomy, somewhere in between relations of domination and subordination. At times, deaf students accepted the importance of normative ways of communication or gave up communication when it could be done successfully according to such norms. At other times, however, students distanced themselves from those norms, either by irony resources or from open contestation and a desire for other people to learn sign language. While never using the language of oppression, such

positions could be considered the basis for a sense of discomfort that could turn into critique if further developed.

9.3.3 Framing contributions from critical discourse-oriented ethnographies

As was described earlier, this project was developed at the juncture of discursive and ethnographic approaches. There are previous attempts at doing so, and criteria for judging the contribution of such studies has been developed. Critical ethnographies, when focused on language, foreground discursive assumptions. Language is not seen as a neutral medium of communication but as a situated performance that is marked by conflicts and inequalities in terms of access, availability, and opportunities (Blommaert & Jie, 2010).

One of the main tasks of a critical ethnography focused on language is the ‘mapping of resources onto functions’ (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 11), i.e., showing how language varieties are considered standard and/or a privileged medium of education, while other varieties are denied both (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). This study illustrated this by exploring the multiple positions towards the normativity of languages. On the one hand, translanguaging was an opportunity for deaf students to better express their sense of self, which is one of the liberating promises inherent in bringing translanguaging into classrooms (Swanwick, 2017). On the other hand, translanguaging made subjectivities still partially subordinate to the norm of spoken languages by leaving unquestioned who is the agent of translanguaging, who benefits from it, and how the work of adjustment in communication must be distributed across interlocutors in education settings. This dynamic precluded the challenging of dominant norms or the empowerment of those wishing for alternative arrangements in communication.

Critical ethnographies also aim at challenging hegemonic relationships on societies by highlighting the problematic nature of established views – they become problems rather than facts (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). Holland et al. (1998) formulate something similar in ‘making worlds’ as one of the contexts of identity. People are not only disciplined by, and therefore defined by the figured worlds they inhabit – they are also able to use their figurative capacities to temporarily suspend their notions of reality, revealing the human possibility of not being bounded by objectivity and opening up possibilities for acting otherwise (Holland et al., 1998). They connect this idea with Bakhtin’s (1984) idea of carnival, involving the suspension of habitual actions and social relationships, asserting the relativity of what seems eternal and established. It is implied in Holland et al.’s (1998) proposal that the study of figured worlds can encourage people to produce accounts of themselves that are later documented, becoming available to others to enact their own self-authoring in potentially empowering ways. There is a potential for this in sharing deaf students’ more critical stances towards the normativity of languages in paper 4 (Chapter 8), as well as using language portraits as artefacts to be shared in other instances in a way that enables a discussion of the multiple ways in which deaf students conceive their own capabilities.

Overall, this project may render visible the limits of a discourse of social and linguistic multiplicity. A pluralisation of resources was valuable for deaf students’ communication and expression of selfhood, but sometimes the dominance of signed and/or visual ways of communication was preferred. That is, translanguaging is not intrinsically liberating. Either way, a unilateral focus on deaf individuals’ repertoires hides the fact that repertoires must be shared and sustained in mutual interaction. Translanguaging must be part of a wider curriculum effort aiming at change, which

includes a reconfiguration of relationships in communication and not only of deaf students' communication practices.

Linguistic and communicative flexibility, as was discussed at the beginning of this chapter by tracing the multiple meanings of ADJUST, stands at the crossroads of multiple discourses. This discursive clash is what made the study of translanguaging so convoluted and ideologically complex. The ideological aspect of it strives to assert how translanguaging may serve to reproduce relationships of domination, resistance, liberation, submission, among other possibilities.

9.4 Further reflexivity

Post-structuralist contributions (e.g., Derrida, 1967), by paying attention to language and discourse, exerted great pressure to promote reflexive accounts in social sciences. The media through which accounts were produced in social sciences stopped being transparent and required further scrutiny. Discourse analysis continued this effort by urging a critical distance from language, including the many other resources used for meaning making, and reflexivity on behalf of the analyst (Parker, 1990). Of course, there is always a danger that the usefulness of reflexivity becomes eclipsed by an over-focus on it, distracting from what is being accounted for (Burman, 1991). The researcher status as a hearing person could position them as a member of the oppressors – as argued by Sutton-Spence & West (2011) – which would replicate the silencing of oppressed groups if the most powerful party reflects on their own positionality at the expense of producing knowledge of, and from, the subordinated group.

The models of subjectivity developed in this thesis involved the fundamental effects of semiotic resources on notions of selfhood. Reflexivity demands my inclusion within

the scope of applicability of these frameworks, positioning the narrator in the account instead of assuming an omniscient perspective. Tracing my place within this study is opening my trajectory of semiotic resources, including my relationship with languages and sensory orientations.

Prior to my PhD, since I hardly ever left Chile, and never South America, my education was mostly monolingual – a result of a history of colonialism that erased native varieties of languages and imposed a common language across the region. On the other hand, my relatively silent relationship with English (i.e., mostly written English) and my status as a late learner of sign languages have been repeatedly evidenced in communication in academic and everyday situations.

One of the major changes produced by my learning of BSL is a critical stance towards the models of semiosis espoused by my available frameworks, with particular attention to the formalist logics informing them. In a formalist model, meaning is the outcome of the difference between elements structured as a system (e.g., Saussure, 1916). One of the consequences of this model is that meaning is understood as homosemiotic, that is, the result of a system composed by a single set of semiotic resources (Ruthrof, 2000). In Saussure's (1916) conception, it is the material signifier found in speech.

Another consequence is that meaning is understood as disembodied, for the body holds a relation of exteriority with meaning – it is, at best, the producer of phonetic signifiers that acquire meaning in relation to each other. This is at odds with a comprehension of how meaning, including but not limited to linguistic meaning, recruits bodily experiences for constructing higher order metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) or how situated communicative interaction relies on a whole compound of resources that include bodily posture, gaze orientation, gestures, among others, that are crucial in

building a sense of mutual comprehension between interlocutors (Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011).

This is a structuralist inheritance that poststructuralists have only partially been able to shake off. For example, in Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) notion of discourse, the fixed nature of the system has been questioned by bringing the Lacanian-inspired notion of the 'nodal point' to signal the impossibility of total closure in a signifying system or discourse. Meaning requires the intervention of a signifier that partially and temporarily allows semiosis – thus opening discourse to historicity and social motivations. Their model, however, may still retain the implicit homosemiotic (Ruthrof, 2000) assumption that meaning is this gap between signifiers in a single system.

This is not strictly true, for there have been readings that open Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) conception to consider multiple semiotic materials and practices whose arrangement produces meaning (Stengel & Nabers, 2019). In that sense, notions of discourse are compatible with the ideas of meaning as intersemiotic (i.e., recruiting different semiotic resources that corroborate each other's meanings) and heterosemiotic (i.e., semiotic resources that do not always coincide and therefore may signify differently) (Ruthrof, 2000) but need to be explicitly connected with such ideas by challenging structuralist homosemiotic readings.

Yet I would not espouse a model in which meaning springs from the body, as if this is prior to social encounters and socialisation experiences. Even a voiceless language is already populated by many social voices (Bakhtin, 1984). The best way in which I could articulate this new-found relationship with my own embodied semiosis produced by learning BSL is by borrowing a 'looking-glass self' metaphor of

embodiment (Waskul & Vannini, 2006). The body, as is experienced by a self, is inextricably bound up with the other; the object-body is produced and sustained as a subject-body through the reflections provided by interactions with others. These reflections sometimes blur or magnify certain aspects, bringing the possibility of tension, juxtaposition, and creativity (Waskul & Vannini, 2006). What matters is that the experienced body is open to social influences as it receives and produces meaning and cannot be understood outside this other-mediated framework (Linell, 2009). Indeed, the body as ‘mere matter’ exterior to signification should be considered the result of specific discursive operations (Butler, 1993).

This socialisation produced by BSL, which is always also a ‘semiotisation’ of my body – including the particular visual orientation that is concomitant to contact with Deaf people – developed embodied potentialities that somehow were already there, e.g., the embodied experience of walking forward informing our metaphors of time (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) and structuring one of the many timelines found in BSL (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1998). This also created something new in social ways of embodied thinking and conceiving (as in the way I have adopted the incredibly helpful custom of placing objects and ideas on my fingers to ‘hold’ them, going back and forth between them) that were previously foreign to me.

This semiotisation of my body proved vital for understanding the semiotic operations that I was observing and that were relevant aspects of my participants’ semiotic repertoires in interaction. It was an opportunity for partially understanding in the first person the nuances of semiotic resources used by deaf sign language users that are usually not available to hearing people, making them more familiar and yet still foreign.

9.5 Contributions to different audiences

The following section will consider how this study might benefit others, as addressed to a range of possible relevant audiences.

9.5.1 Academics and researchers

Academics and researchers in the field of the education of deaf students will be able to see the utility of using translanguaging as a lens for comprehending what is usually termed ‘literacies’ in the field. As was discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, the change is not merely nominal but demands a reconfiguration of the phenomenon itself.

Translanguaging as a concept is still relatively novel, so it has no strict definition and is continuously being populated with the content of associated concepts like languages, multilingualism, metrolingualism, and so on (e.g., García, 2009; Kusters, 2017). It also stands at the crossroads of disciplines and, although it has had as its main focus the interactions of multilingual (hearing) students from the beginning (Williams, 1994), it has inevitably grown as it was applied to different areas. Studies of deaf individuals’ translanguaging are just beginning to make contributions to our comprehension by enlarging the variety of resources that we think humans are capable of mixing and blending for communicative and learning purposes.

One of the first contributions of this study, however, lies in the specific theoretical focus on social interaction and the social nature of the semiotic repertoire. As was discussed in Chapter 3, and what the publishable pieces of this thesis could have made evident, is that the nature of the semiotic repertoire needs more explicit theorisation. In the proposal developed here, the semiotic repertoire has a dual individual/social nature that cannot be reduced to one of its components. Individuals find semiotic resources, as it were, already semiotised – people find signs in interaction, already

assigned with meaning by others even if at first not aware of this fact (Vygotsky, 1978). It is in the interaction with other people that repertoires emerge as two or more parties are trying to comprehend one another. This communicative interaction, full of its asymmetries, conflicts and mutualities (Marková, 2003), is the basis for the possible individual appropriation of semiotic resources. Against Wei (2011), this thesis argues that semiosis is cooperative (Goodwin, 2000) so semiotic resources must be located in dialogical (Linell, 2009) and spatial (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005) circumstances: a context of interlocution. This way, social conditions, including the subordination of languages and semiotic resources or sensory orientations, impacts on the creative and liberatory possibilities offered by translanguaging.

The fact that individuals eventually learn to operate with semiotic resources that are social in origin arguably allows us to consider semiotic repertoires as properties of individuals – or conversely, that semiotic resources reside within people’s minds or brains. Metaphors of internalisation used in sociocultural theories are better understood through the ideas of internal reconstruction and partial appropriation (Baquero, 2009), which lead to the oxymorons of ‘personal cultures’ (Valsiner, 2000) – something that is individual and social at the same time, understood as contradictory only under the habits of thought that underpin dualist conceptions in social sciences (Burman, 2017). There is, nonetheless, something irreducibly social about semiotic repertoires that people use in interaction with one another: they are not always planned, or not entirely, and many times people are creative, improvising by finding material that can be semiotised during their interaction (Goodwin, 2000). We must always remember that the sign indicates, overall, not an entity but a relationship – the sign is always a sign for someone else if it is going to be successfully understood as carrying meaning (Voloshinov, 1973). The success or failure to communicate must

not be attributed to isolated individuals' skills but rather to communicative relationships, including the communicative materials found in the environment. Deaf students may not always control their access to environments or the construction of such environments, affecting their capacity for conveying meaning to others.

A second level of contributions that may be relevant for researchers and academics lie in the methodological aspects of this study. On the one hand, this thesis reinforces the idea that ethnographic practices are useful ways of exploring (deaf) students' translanguaging practices. This is especially important given the nature of the phenomenon. Translanguaging emphasises creativity in human interaction and in the unexpected ways in which human semiosis is created through the event (in the sense of being unique and non-repeatable) of arranging multiple resources. This novel and unanticipated nature makes flexible and open-ended methodological approaches such as ethnographies tremendously useful assets (Goodwin, 2000; Streeck, Goodwin & LeBaron, 2011; Swanwick, 2017). The proposal of considering semiotic resources in interaction also stresses the importance of observing the way people interact. Individualised and retrospective accounts (e.g., interviews or surveys), are useful methods that should complement, and never replace, observational accounts if a more complex picture of the semiotic repertoire is going to be obtained.

On the other hand, this study proposes a novel method for studying deaf students' subjectivities through the development of a proposal for dialogical discourse analysis. This aims at establishing a two-directional interchange. Analyses of deaf students' responses as discourse hopefully reinforces the effort carried out by other previous proposals (e.g., Allbutt, Gray & Schofield, 1999) of opening signed discourse to the models of sociality included in discourse analyses. This resonates with previous connections made between signed languages and dialogicality, that is, the chaining of

expressions in wider contexts of interlocution (Fomin, 2018; Kincheloe, 2015) and the other-oriented nature of utterances that makes them incomplete until replied to (Nascimento, 2018). In other words, signed discourse can be a vehicle for meaning in its ideological density. This also reinforces the proposition made by Skyer (2020) regarding heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) that states that deaf children develop amidst axiological conflict due to having contact with different valuations of deafness throughout their lives.

There is always a possibility that signed discourse is already translanguaged discourse by including, for example, bodily resources along with speech and fingerspelling. What this project tries to emphasise, however, is that other semiotic resources have had more exploration in their semiotic properties (i.e., they have already been characterised as discourse) rendering more visible their properties as carriers of meaning and ideological positioning. A consideration of the specific resources through which sign languages (in this case, BSL) realise the functions of discourse detailed in the dialogical discourse analysis along with other resources (in contrast, in unison, mutually contradicting or reinforcing each other, etc) is what differentiates this study. This also means that a new way of analysing deaf students' subjectivities, considering their discursive texturing, their semiotically and socially mediated character, and their ideological density, is enabled by this proposition.

9.5.2 Practitioners

The conceptualisation of semiotic repertoires in their dual nature also has consequences for practitioners in education who are trying to mobilise translanguaging for learning purposes. Translanguaging invites a focus not only on the particularities of the individual (i.e., exploring students' individual semiotic repertoires) but, perhaps

more importantly, on the nature of the dynamic shared spaces of communication that are offered to deaf students on an everyday basis (i.e., exploring semiotic repertoires in social interaction). In some ways, it is not only about promoting deaf students' learning through a focus on the resources they already know, but on how communicative interaction allows the promotion of semiotic repertoires that are conducive to future learning.

This includes an analysis of how naturally occurring communicative interactions in educational contexts may promote certain semiotic resources over others. In some sense, this could allow for visualizing contradictions – for example, programmes that under the rubric of translanguaging expect to develop plural semiotic repertoires, but, through their lack of attention towards social and communicative interaction, may be setting up contexts in which the dominance of certain semiotic resources over others is continuously reasserted. This is also relevant when social groups are differentially attached to semiotic resources: the dominance of means of communication is translated into the dominance of some social groups over others, threatening the establishment of inclusive environments and equal participation in education.

Besides, it is crucial to understand translanguaging in its social and interactive aspects for promoting learning in classrooms. Translanguaging relies on the establishment of spaces of mutual understanding and negotiation of meaning, opening further discussions over who controls establishment to those spaces and what is in them. As discussed, the sense of intersubjectivity or mutual understanding cannot be taken for granted, especially in the case of important communication asymmetries being present in classrooms – as in the case of students considering different languages as their first language, and in wider social contexts valuing those languages differently. The establishment of intersubjectivity is a relevant factor for promoting zones of proximal

development that are conducive to learning. This requires a shared responsibility for enacting that continuous mutual adjustment, as seen in the dynamic of widening and restricting semiotic repertoires in interaction in paper 2 in Chapter 6. Against methodological individualism, or a focus on isolated individuals (Wertsch, 1998), this study recapitulates Vygotsky's (1978) concerns with placing instruction ahead of development and Swanwick's (2017) emphasis on the dialogical conditions for learning over individual language instruction.

The concern over the promotion of shared communication spaces also extends to the role of interpreters or CSWs in classrooms. The matter has been previously treated as a matter of how interpreters allow to circumvent barriers in communication and how deaf students are challenged by the resulting divided attention (Foster, Long & Snell, 1999; Powell, Hyde & Punch, 2014). This thesis considered additional roles and challenges that become visible due to an exploration of deaf students' contexts of interlocution. On the one hand, this study has shown that the presence of CSWs in classrooms helps to partially tackle communication difficulties by providing a person with whom deaf students can exercise more communicative flexibility. The CSW was a person who provided unique opportunities in terms of exploring knowledge across languages and modalities. On the other hand, the inclusion of interpreters and CSWs as third parties in communication also augmented the complexity of communicative interaction in ways that were not always helpful for students. Translanguaging was a way with engaging with more than one interlocutor through multiple semiotic resources. This thesis argues, therefore, for the insufficiency of equating the provision of translation or language support services for deaf students with the promotion of equal learning opportunities.

Dialogical teaching practices require teachers to balance the potentially monological teacher-led discourse with the dialogical discourse of peers mutually exploring each other's comprehension of knowledge in zones of proximal development (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). To promote deaf students' complex reasoning and cognitive development, these communication spaces need to promote a sense of mutuality or shared understanding between interlocutors while also preserving a sense of alterity or contrasting points of view engaging with one another.

Therefore, it is crucial that the pedagogies of translanguaging are not solely focused on modifying deaf individuals' communicative resources, including the promotion of interpretation services for deaf students, for this could further re-inscribe their subordination to hearing norms and limit their capacity for equal participation in classroom discussion. Translanguaging needs to be promoted at whole-class and institutional levels, focusing rather on the nature and quality of communicative interactions. Only this way of pluralising semiotic resources can enhance the work of mutual adjustment between individuals in interaction that allows contingent intervention on behalf of teachers.

9.5.3 Decision-makers

This study also created contributions pertinent to decision-makers in the education of deaf students. There are three potential contributions in this matter. First, the study depicts how deaf students reap the communicative and cognitive benefits of plural and flexible semiotic repertoires. Against the old dichotomies in education of d/Deaf peoples that rendered languages and/or modalities as mutually exclusive, this thesis favours multilingual and multimodal approaches (Marschark & Spencer, 2006) and reinforces the benefits of communicative flexibility (Convertino et al., 2009; Stinson

et al., 1996). As Skyer (2020) stated in their multimodal proposition, multimodality should be considered the ground for deaf pedagogies.

Deaf college students that participated in this study, each with their own variable preferences for different resources (including, but not limited to, speech, signing and written language) seemed to benefit from the opportunity provided in this college of developing their semiotic repertoires in different manners, thus being able to explore knowledge from the perspectives brought by those resources. In some sense, each resource played a relevant and different role in deaf college students' instruction, although their real strength was when they were used in combination. Nonetheless, as will be detailed later, the value of such resources is clearer in analyses that consider the interlocutors' skills and orientations, as well as the resources available in space. All of this is condensed in the notion of the context of interlocution (Linell, 2009). A concern for the conditions in which communication is performed is vital for the planning and promotion of plural repertoires for deaf students so they become useful ways of enhancing their educational, social, and communicative experience in college.

Second, this study shows the advantages of providing CSWs for deaf students, especially when CSWs have strong signing skills. Research in education of deaf students has mainly considered interpreters' role in relaying content (e.g., Marschark et al., 2008). However, the pedagogical function of CSWs goes beyond that relay of content, extending the dialogicality in deaf students' learning experience and opening further questions for the establishment of optimal dialogical conditions for learning that considers CSWs' role. As suggested by the observation of communication breakdowns, deaf students seem to greatly benefit from being paired with specific CSWs, so they can adapt to each other's ways of signing and can develop a common pool of communication resources. The observed importance of shared technical signs

as part of a common repertoire between deaf students and their CSWs not only facilitated communication in situ but is potentially relevant for deaf students who aim at specialising their knowledge and skills. In other words, a shared technical vocabulary expressed through a plural semiotic repertoire allows the shared exploration of knowledge that is relevant for deaf students' trajectories, and given its specialised nature, it is unlikely that deaf students can explore that knowledge in spaces other than college. CSWs, therefore, can enable those conversations around specialised knowledge.

Third, this study illustrates deaf students' great efforts at sustaining communication when faced with multiple asymmetries, and how this responsibility is not being equally distributed with other individuals in the interaction all the time. Discussions in the area of deaf education have usually focused on placement at the school and classroom levels to consider deaf students' linguistic needs (BDA, 2014; Snoddon & Murray, 2019). However, the notion of contexts of interlocution (Linell, 2009) is more dynamic and circumscribed, opening the recognition of factors that are not always accounted for. This includes the presence of asymmetries in communication (Marková, 2003) and how they impact of deaf students' translanguaging (De Meulder et al., 2019). In other words, educational settings have the challenge of how to adjust for sensory asymmetries so the effort of mutual attunement is shared and asymmetries in subject matter knowledge are made to work in the benefit of learners (Wells, 1996).

Deaf students in this study did not use translanguaging in all circumstances, for it required a partial common understanding of languages (BSL and English) and sensory orientations (aural or visual). In interaction with hearing students with no knowledge of BSL, sustained partial interactions helped to develop a common repertoire of communicative strategies. Albeit limited in their depth and duration, these interactions

represented a brief opportunity for socialisation. In this case, deaf students had few resources meaningful enough to sustain that communicative effort. In contrast, interaction with other deaf students who were sign language users also implied a restriction in translanguaging because it was not necessary (i.e., students understood each other well through BSL alone) or because deaf students deemed speech unfair (e.g., using speech with peers who do not feel comfortable using their residual hearing).

In both cases, the impact of the communicative interactions that are offered by the different spaces within college can be seen. The placement of deaf students, be it partially or totally, in deaf-only congregated spaces or mixed classrooms with hearing peers, may not only consider deaf students' individual development of communication skills. Beyond individual factors, such decisions could also consider to what extent classrooms and other spaces can be modified to promote that teachers, assistants, classmates and other staff become able to adapt to different semiotic resources and sensory orientations, thus being able to share the demands of mutually adjusting to each other's preferences and needs. In that sense, this study replicates other proposals in terms of stopping the artificial division between issues of placement and issues of language when it comes to decisions over deaf students' education (Snoddon & Murray, 2019) while offering the more specific notion of contexts of interlocution. Different configurations of space do have an impact on the communication opportunities that are offered, and therefore in the intended or unintended promotion and privileging of some resources over others, control over such resources, in certain ways of communicating with others and, overall, in promoting ways of being.

9.6 Excluded material

Every narrative closure relies on an operation of exclusion in which everything that is not within the narration remains, at the same time, rendered invisible due to the narrative selection, and threatening to return to destabilise the precarious stability of narration (Derrida, 1967). From the perspective developed in Chapter 3, a successful narration of an ethnographic account may always include a narration of why it failed to cohere.

There were elements of this study that necessarily were left undeveloped to conform to a thesis. These elements may have had an impact on the account developed, greatly informing this study. This does not mean that these elements will not be developed into something more later.

The set of language portraits – the visual depiction of students’ resources (Busch, 2012) – elaborated by participants during the interviews were part of these elements. Such portraits included an account of their varied communication resources and opened an opportunity for exploring resources that have not come up until that moment. In that sense, they provided an opportunity for augmenting the variety of perspectives that deaf students enacted on themselves and provided me with a different notion of students’ translanguageing practices and subjectivities. Language portraits and their analyses can be found in Appendix 2. In the future, these language portraits will be used to develop different projects, including: (1) presentations for academic and non-academic audiences, with language portraits being an useful ways of sparking conversations about the different resources of deaf college students and whether or not they are being recognised and utilised; (2) brief videos with analyses of language portraits in BSL (probably contrasting two language portraits, e.g., Matt’s more varied portrait and Sam’s more restricted account on her own ways of communication) for

the *Acadeafic* webpage [<https://acadeafic.org/>], a portal dedicated to reaching d/Deaf academics interested in the study of sign languages and/or Deaf studies that privileges communication via videos in sign languages; (3) a scientific article in a journal that discusses language portraits, perhaps in contrast with a few more fragments of observations of classes, and with commentaries of students themselves about their own portraits during the interviews, to reflect on the varied perspectives about deaf students' semiotic resources that can be obtained through an ethnographic project.

Another of the elements that necessarily were left out were the summary posters that were used for the second round of interviews with deaf students (can be found in Appendix 1) and the associated interviews. The posters were a synopsis of my understanding during the process of fieldwork, with all their limitations as well – including the unfortunate separation of resources according to named languages and not necessarily reflecting their interaction in deaf students' lives and practices. Those posters could have been analysed as part of a reflexive effort, to see how my understanding of deaf students' communication practices and use of semiotic resources have changed as part of the process of increasing comprehension during the unfolding of this ethnographic project.

The second round of interviews, on the other hand, represented a moment of higher abstraction than the first round, albeit also being extremely short as well – perhaps a good sign of deaf students' assent to my understanding as fairly correct. During those interviews, students commented on my understanding of their practices and semiotic resources. Highlighting the reflective nature of such an exercise is crucial for understanding the complexity demanded by the task of performing discourse analysis on it. It is important to remember from theoretical (Chapter 3) and methodological (Chapter 4) discussions carried out so far that each new production of discourse is seen

as an event – a non-repeatable action emerging in irreversible time. During the interviews, deaf students were producing discursive positioning efforts (their commentaries) on my own positioning efforts (my understanding) of their practised and narrated positioning efforts (their practices and subjectivities) as made evident from my perspective as a researcher.

This means that such interviews must be analysed not assuming that students are delving ever deeper into a core subjectivity, but that instead they are creating new positioning efforts in discourse based on their previous ones and my own positioning efforts. The leading metaphor here is not that of profundity, advancing ever further into the same entity, but of re-surfacing, producing new constellations of meaning from previous ones, perhaps increasing the distance from the first material produced. From a dialogical notion of discourse, this would mean respecting deaf students' distance between, and layering of, positioning movements in the first interview and the second one.

This work, albeit requiring such theoretical considerations and methodological finesse, could spark an interesting new analysis of deaf students' subjectivities in relation to translanguaging. There were commentaries on their perspectives of themselves in higher abstraction that, perhaps, would have had deep effects in my understanding of their positioning efforts. It is also possible that they would reveal new and different discourses underlying such positioning efforts.

Alternatively, those fragments could be used in the future to accompany a fully developed article for a scientific journal focused on the methodological aspects of my study. A paper detailing the core assumptions and procedures of a dialogical discourse analysis that includes, but is not limited to, sign languages could involve such material.

In this case, the methodological requirements of differentiating the varied positioning efforts and discursive subjects that emerged in discourse (Larraín & Medina, 2007) could turn the challenge into a depiction of the finesse with which such analysis can be carried out. In other words, it could show the novelty of breaking with a seemingly unquestioned assumption in qualitative analyses: the unitary character of the psychological and discursive subject.

9.7 Future research

The insights produced by this thesis also invited many additional questions that, while beyond the scope of what was possible here, can be used for conducting future research.

First, there could be future studies that further explore the phenomenon of deaf students' translanguaging in college contexts in its variations. A relevant consequence of re-conceiving semiotic repertoires as properties of interaction rather than solely of individuals is that variations must be sought not only in deaf participants themselves, but in how colleges offer different kinds of communicative interactions that may impact translanguaging and the nature of the spaces and contexts in which these occur. This could include variations in subject matter (e.g., vocational versus academic educational routes), in the quality of signed interaction (e.g., communication with qualified interpreters versus communication support workers or with CSWs with different BSL levels), in asymmetries during interaction (e.g., communication with deaf peers versus deaf teachers), and in sensory orientations (e.g., communication with hearing peers with no experience with deaf people versus hearing peers who have had contact with deaf people or a Deaf community).

This way, inquiring into translanguaging in other college contexts in the future could be a way of expanding knowledge beyond the expected variations in deaf participants (different colleges may offer different services which, after all, can attract deaf students with different preferences and orientations) to consider the variation of interactions within. This, of course, can consider deaf students' individual trajectories and preferences and how these impact on interactions.

Future studies in the area could also delve deeper into one of the less explored aspects of this project: the senses of mutuality (i.e., reciprocal understanding and acknowledged co-presence and similar status) and alterity (i.e., sense of mutual estrangement, including varying levels of misunderstanding) in the relationship established between deaf students, their CSWs and their teachers from their own perspectives. The quality of the communicative interaction is what enables and shapes translanguaging and, as we have seen especially in papers 2 (Chapter 6) and 3 (Chapter 7), the mutual elaboration and negotiation of new meanings emerging from semiotic resources in classroom is facilitated by a sustained adjustment between deaf students and CSWs that becomes relatively established over time (as evidenced by the lack of understanding and communication breakdowns between Matt and a new CSW instead of the usual one). In other words, deaf students, their CSWs, and to some extent teachers, build landscapes of meaning that they come to inhabit over time and that are used for mutually exploring knowledge. For doing so, they must negotiate these senses of mutuality and alterity.

The construction of landscapes, and their impact in translanguaging, could be explored from a variety of dimensions. Longitudinal studies could observe dyads to analyse how they become adjusted to one another's resources and preferences over time. This could also include comparisons between new and relatively established dyads.

Besides, interviews could complement observations by inquiring into each other's view of their communication partner in the dyad, perhaps exploring how their senses of selfhood and otherness change over time.

This route of research could consider a connection with the neighbouring project of the Translated Deaf Self. As evidenced in previous research (Young, Napier & Oram, 2019), deaf individuals' sense of selfhood is a context-dependant feature that implies negotiation with other people in communicative interaction. Translanguaging strategies, including generally augmenting or suppressing semiotic resources, are ways in which individuals manage their self-image(s) in interaction with others and therefore are a way of enacting frames of recognition (Butler, 2010): translanguaging could be a necessity forced upon deaf persons, but also allows presenting oneself to others, enabling in this way the possibility of being recognised in certain ways, which in turn mirrors back certain images of the self. The frames in which this recognition is enacted are not of the individual's making and may not feel adequate to deaf individuals or mirror back an image of themselves that feels distorted (e.g., using speech, and being positioned as a speaking person, may be the price of being recognised as a good student or co-worker even when speech is not a resource through which a deaf individual finds a desired image of themselves). These changing senses of selfhood in connection with translanguaging could be an important feature of the senses of mutuality and alterity in the interaction between deaf students and their CSWs.

9.8 Conclusions

Performing this study on deaf college students' translanguaging has enabled documentation of deaf students' capabilities, highlighting flexibility, creativity, and hybridity. The study was organised around two questions, regarding deaf students'

practices and subjectivities, respectively. It is therefore appropriate that conclusions are drawn along these axes.

The focus on semiotic repertoires rather than bounded languages illuminated deaf students' practices in college. Through an ethnographic approximation, a different way of framing these practices was developed. Instead of focusing on isolated individuals or the generic ways in which location or place (e.g., classroom, school setting) have been defined in the literature (e.g., Snoddon & Murray, 2019), the notion of a context of interlocution emerged. This idea incorporates the semiotic potential found in the immediate physical environment (Goodwin, 2000) and the wider discursive field (Haye & Larraín, 2011; Holland et al., 1998; Linell, 2009) that ideologically reverberates with individuals' communicational interaction.

This lens provided with a more dynamic perspective for considering the contexts in which deaf students' semiosis is carried out with others, including the ways in which semiotic resources are encountered in spatial settings, the flexibility with which they are mixed or separated, and the impact of situation, genres, sensory orientations, and the presentation of selves for explaining the variations in translanguaging. These contexts were detailed in paper 2 (Chapter 6) and 3 (Chapter 7).

In some respects, this could be but the first of many other depictions of deaf college students' contexts of interlocution. More studies of this nature could throw light into why attainment gaps still exist with hearing peers in colleges (Young, Squires et al., 2015) in ways that are de-pathologizing, situated, and make justice to deaf students' abilities and creativity. The active improvisation found in deaf students' communication is a testament to their exercise of agency, a liberatory potential (Holland et al., 1998) that can become truncated if it unwittingly reproduces the status

quo. Deaf students' relative success in navigating communication barriers can mask the persistent subordination of languages and sensory orientations in colleges (De Meulder et al., 2019), therefore reducing the capacity of and necessity for certain semiotic resources linked with Deaf ways of communication to become meaningful in interaction with others.

Assuming the other-oriented nature of semiosis (Bakhtin, 1984; Linell, 2009) in interaction is also relevant for reconsidering the pedagogical imperatives that conduct communicative interactions in classroom settings. This study has shown how dialogue is sustained and how it is interrupted by asymmetric knowledges, sensory orientations, and the unequal distribution of the power for defining how communication settings are organised. This must be contrasted with the establishment of conditions for intersubjectivity and alterity that are vital for dialogue conducive to learning (Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Swanwick, 2017; Wells, 1996) and that would require such asymmetries to be addressed.

The second aspect of this study was focused on deaf college students' subjectivities. Using this concept rather than 'identity' was based, again, on an emphasis on fluidity. Such lens allowed ethnographic accounts to encounter mobile needs and competences instead of unchanging stances. Discourses were the nexus of enacted positions or subjectivities that would settle over time albeit remaining multiple. Semiotic resources allowed navigation through different social situations and everyday communication, but also addressing wider voices and cultural stances that are always present in deaf students' social lives.

What stands out in this study is a profile in which deaf young people have found numerous reasons for exploring semiotic resources to different extents. This

multilingualism is a solution when it allows circumventing barriers and a burden when it reproduces d/Deaf peoples' subordination to (hearing) others' ways of communication. Equally important, these subjective stances were highly multimodal, exploring visual, gestural, bodily, tactile, haptic, aural, oral, and written modes, although always in different degrees of comfort and preference. Such (uneasy) flexibility reflects the contrasting evaluative standpoints or the axiological conflict (Skyer, 2020) at which deaf students' translanguaging is enacted.

This conflict points at a layering of figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) that conduct and impact on deaf individuals' decisions. For example, the privileging of BSL and mutual understanding in being a Deaf individual (explored in paper 1 in Chapter 5) may be (experienced as being) at odds with the privileging of English required for being the supportive parent of a hearing child or for demonstrating knowledge as a good student in a hearing-predominant college (explored in paper 4 in Chapter 8). Far from being exceptions, these lived conflicts are an everyday condition of deaf college students' subjectivities and were drawn by them in varied ways to demarcate discursive and ideological limits and produce subjective stances (Holland et al., 1998; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). These wider axiological axes frame deaf individuals' translanguaging, producing the experience of trade-offs and potentially unwanted subjective positions being presented to others (Young, Napier & Oram, 2019).

However, the multiplicity of subjective stances found in this chapter also problematise the many taboos associated with being deaf – regarding, for example, the place of sound and visuality in d/Deaf peoples' lives (Kusters & De Meulder, 2013), as well as the normative binaries that have organised education for d/Deaf peoples (Bagga-Gupta, 2010). Deaf students' translanguaging practices and subjectivities explored and

combined a wide arrange of semiotic resources, showing their utility in multiple contexts.

The inclusion of translanguaging in deaf students' education requires an encouragement of flexibility, a challenge to the way resources and modalities have traditionally been separated (Bagga-Gupta, 2010; La Bue, 1995; Swanwick, 2017), and a recognition to the multiplicity observed in this study. One of the ways this recognition was enacted in the observed college was by the provision of CSWs, hence expanding the extent of semiotic resources that could be mobilised to communicate and explore knowledge with others. While their presence also brought the expected challenges of divided attention (Foster, Long & Snell, 1999; Powell, Hyde & Punch, 2014) and unexpected new asymmetries (paper 3 in Chapter 7), CSWs and deaf students co-created communication contexts in which the plurality of resources served to partially increase the dialogicality of knowledge exploration (paper 2 in Chapter 6), thus promoting greater learning. This reinforces the importance of communicative flexibility for supporting deaf college students' success (Convertino et al., 2009; Stinson et al., 1996).

Overall, this thesis argued that semiotic repertoires must be situated in interaction. This operation emphasised a tension at the heart of translanguaging. On the one hand, translanguaging reflected the benefits of multiplicity and flexibility. On the other, the uneasiness and differential preference with which such multiplicity was approached by deaf students mirrored the sensory, communicational, and social frictions in their experiences. This tension structured translanguaging practices and subjectivities in deaf college students.

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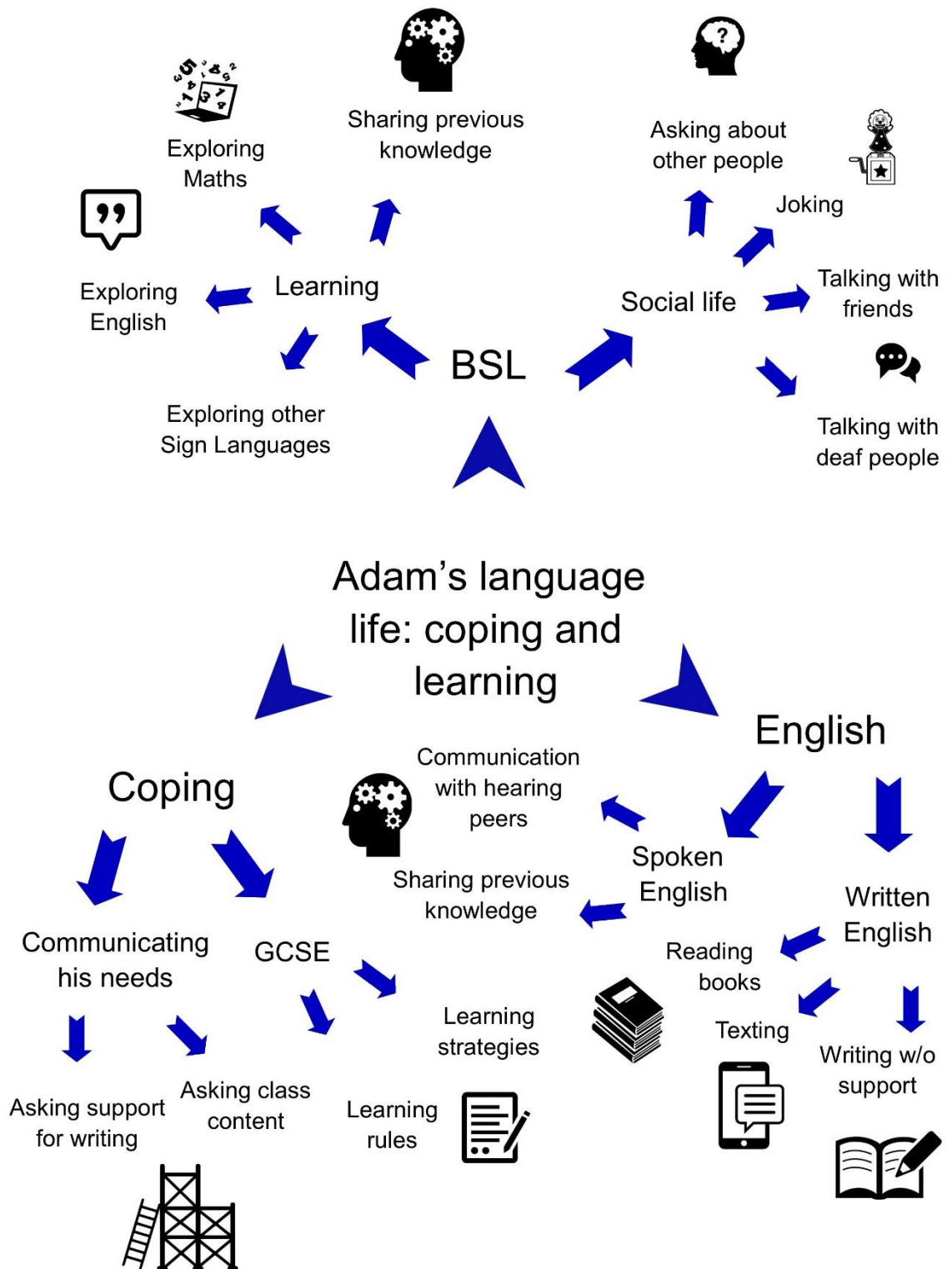
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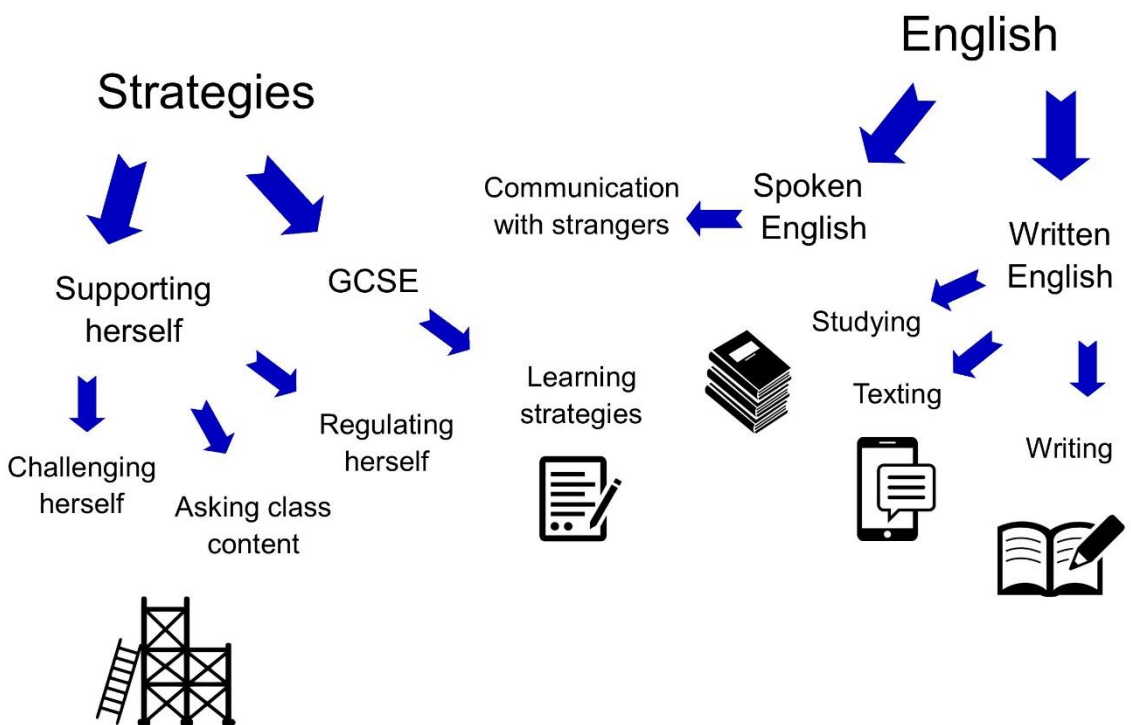
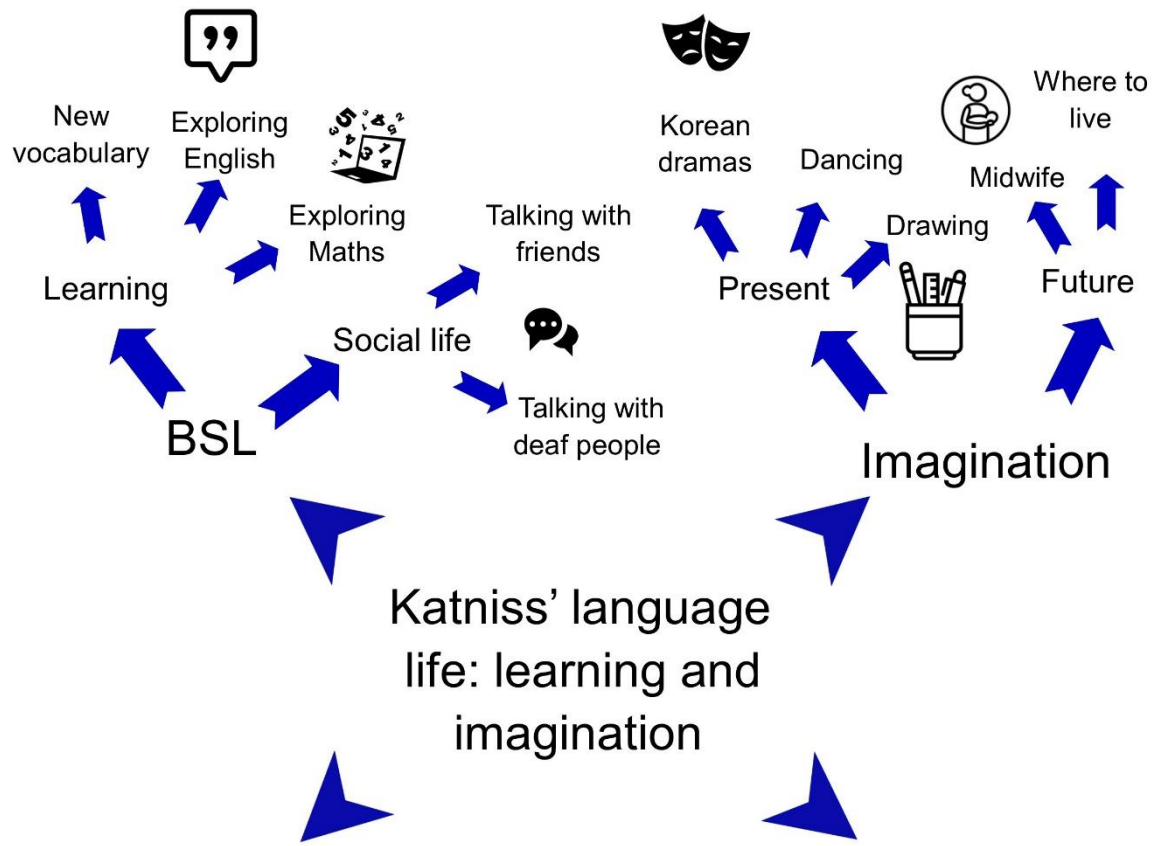
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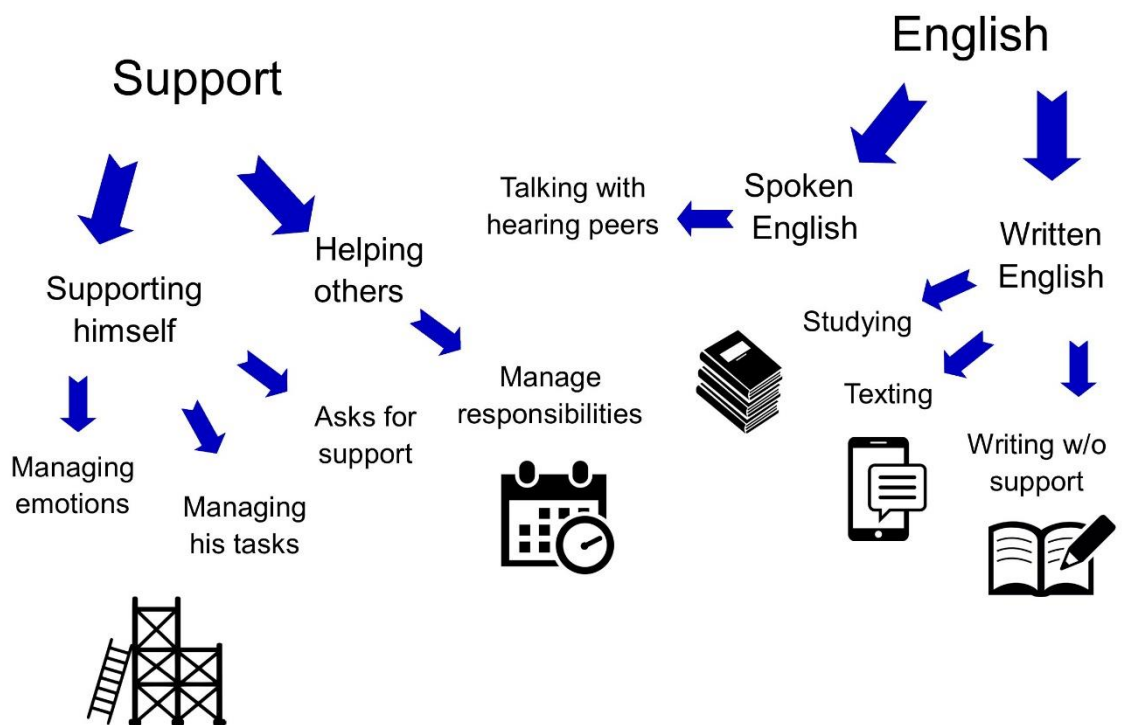
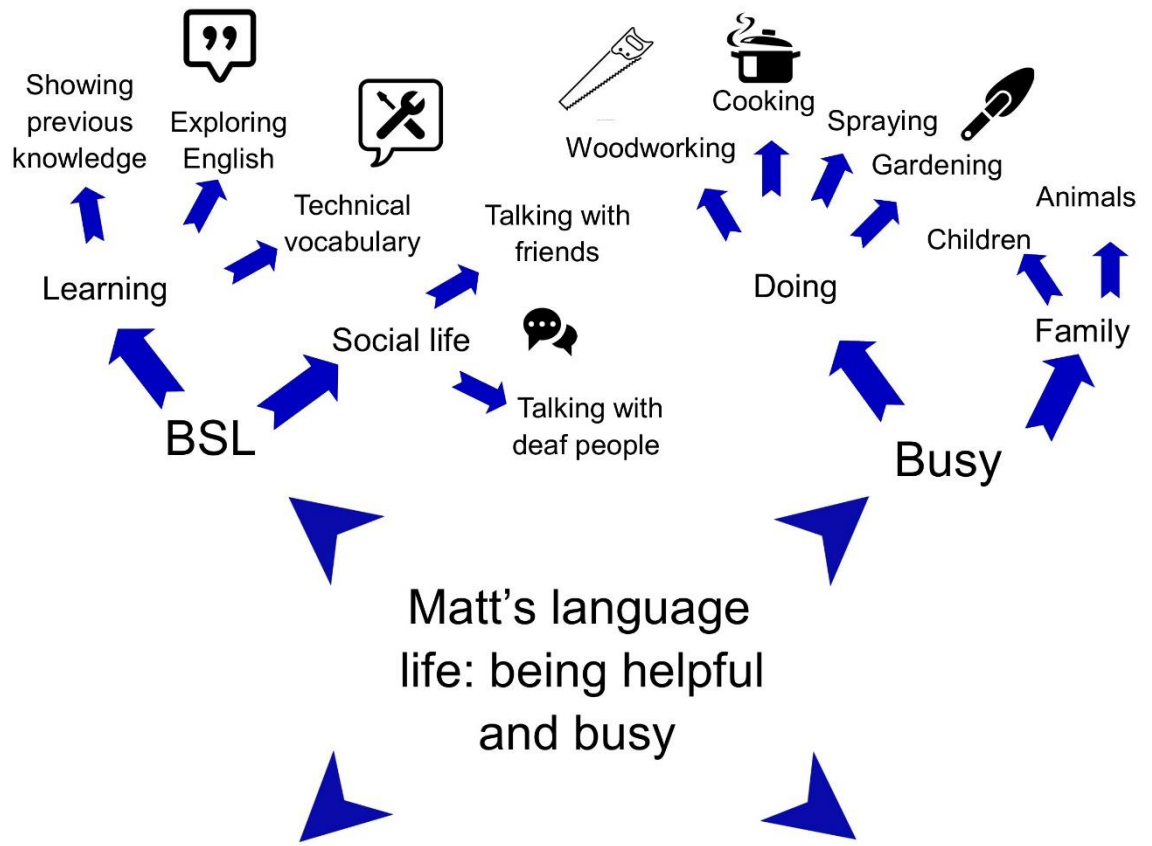
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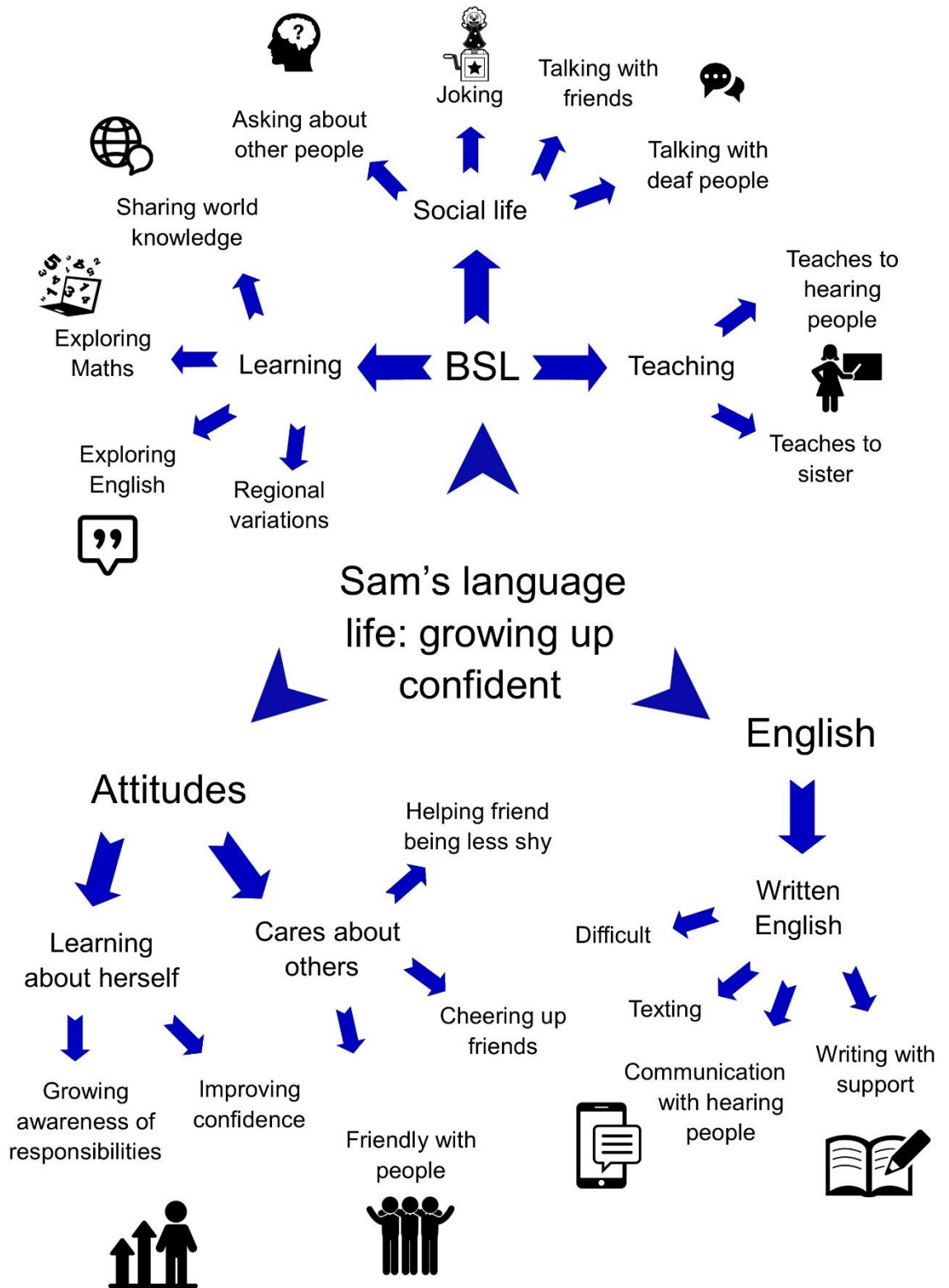
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Appendix 1 – Summary posters for interviews









Appendix 2 - Language portraits and analyses

Methodological comment

Initial contradiction – instruction was for ‘ways of expressing oneself’, being signed from the chest upwards and then outside in signing space, emphasising somehow the affective character of the sign for expression. The example provided, nonetheless, was only focused on named languages, so it may have produced a restriction in some cases.

The production of language portraits started from the idea of named languages, as they presented in my own language portrait as an example. If taken from the point of view of translanguaging as an effort for undoing language boundaries, this might be considered a methodological drawback. However, there is a pledge for scholars to consider named languages within translanguaging theory. In this way, there could be a place for how individuals’ language conceptualisations – which often consider named language as entities – have an impact in their languaging practices, their attitudes, choices and preferences. Taking that into account, the interpretation of these language portraits must be considered an exploration of participants’ conceptualisations of named languages in a way that does not goes against the separate analysis of their more fluid translanguaging practices. Later on, this could provide a point of contrast between the way they communicate and the way they conceptualise their communication experiences.

My language portrait presented as an example:



Portrait 1 – Sam 101

Appendix – Semiotic repertoire portrait



Colours

This portrait consists only of two colours representing two languages. The use of colours mirrors that of my own language portrait as it was presented to my participants as an example. Deaf Support staff present during the interview commented me that as well. Compared to other portraits, this one is rather poor when it comes to colours.

Distribution

There is a contrast in the distribution of colours. One of the colours is present locally, while the other one is widespread. It shows an unbalance in the weight of colours in favour of English over BSL. This seems strange for me as an observer of her language practices and as the interviewer. The general feeling I had is of Sam avoiding the use of spoken English and a reluctant yet successful use of written English.

Placement

The placement of BSL is uniquely on the hands. That seems an odd placement for BSL, given how it uses more than the hands for expression. I would expect that from a hearing person, not from a deaf person who expresses herself mostly through BSL. It somehow seems to match my observations of her style of signing, given how she does not accompany it with speech or word mouthing – she usually sticks her tongue out while signing so there is no visible mouthing. In contrast, English covers her persona almost completely.

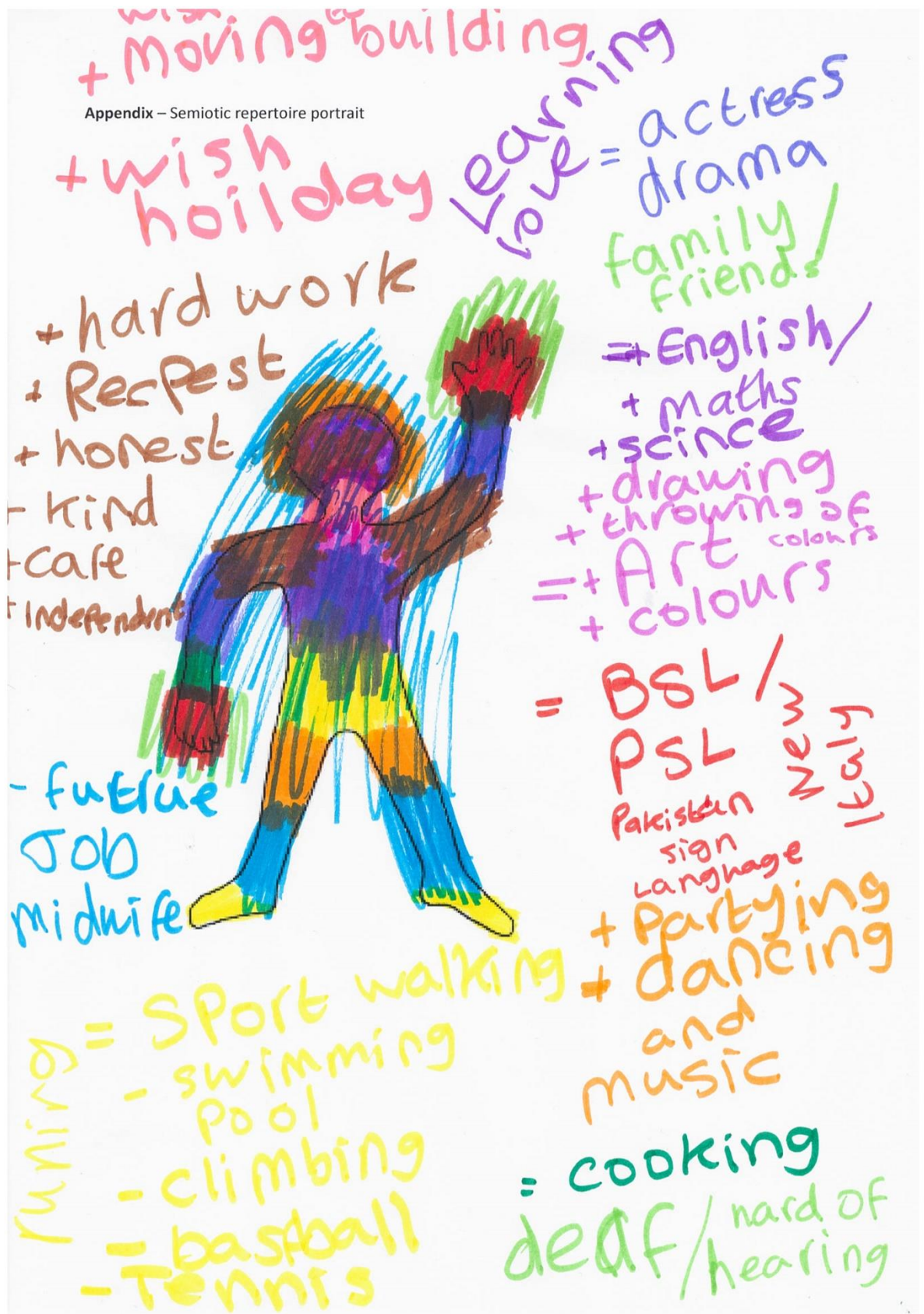
General comment

Sam's colour palette seems to mimic my own colour choices. It can be related with the idea of language portraits as utterances, that is, as unique positioning efforts in a discursive field through multiple semiotic resources. As I was showing who I was

through languages like Spanish speaker and Chilean Sign Language, Sam seemed to have responded by stressing her position as a British person. She used those same resources that I left publicly available (colours blue and purple) to construct meaning in her own way. It is an appropriation and subversion of the same semiotic resources. The fact that this portrait, according to my view, does not reflect her actual use of languages in other contexts, only stresses the possibility that it was an opportune reply to my own portrait as a whole, as a single utterance or discursive positioning movement.

This also could be read as showing a linear relationship between identity/belonging and languages in her conceptualisation, so being a British person therefore means that English language must be exalted above all other language and/or resources. In that sense, the interpreting of language portraits, as showing conceptualisations of named languages, must always have into account language ideologies and how they come to shape the positioning effort through portraits. Another consequence of this is that, as a discursive movement, portraits should not be read as the expression of an intimate subjectivity, but as the production of a reply in an interlocution field. As the context of interlocution changes, so does the production of a portrait as a reply.

Appendix – Semiotic repertoire portrait



Colours

This language portrait is extremely colourful, somehow matching my impression of Katniss as a curious and creative person. She seemed eager to express herself through this portrait and I had the impression that after the first few colours, she was just using any colour to create this portrait. In that sense, she seemed to have decided to use every colour available rather than selecting a few ones.

Distribution

The colour distribution in this portrait seems to follow two patterns. In one of them, there is a “patchwork” use of colours, in which each colour occupies a small segment, one next to the other, in concrete locations of the body. The second pattern is fuzzier and covers or surrounds more general areas of the body, as it can be seen in green, orange and, specially, light blue.

Placement

There are many elements to be commented in terms of placement. The first one that strikes me as I see this portrait is the placement of BSL, PSL and Italian Sign Languages, as a whole, in the hands. That depicts a concept of sign languages as recruiting mainly the hands. It seems a strategic placement – yes, the hands are the most visible in signing, but certainly they are not the only resource being used in signed meaning-making. Around the hands, green represents simultaneously being deaf or hard of hearing, but also friends and family. This matches Katniss’ account on communication with closer people through signs.

In contrast with signing, English is located in the chest and head along with maths and science. So English is something to be learned and goes hand in hand with other school

and college subjects. The simultaneous presence in the head and the chest might signal the intellectual and emotional aspect: something to be learnt but also enjoyed.

The portrait's legs have yellow, which encompasses different sports and physical activities, and orange, which involves the enjoyment of music by partying and dancing. This makes me remember that Katniss, even with limited access to music, enjoys it greatly, which was a revelation that year for college staff. One last portion of her legs include light blue, which has later spread all over the figure. This signals her future and her ambitions of becoming a midwife.

In the arms we have bits of green, which represents cooking – presumably an expression of cooking as a manual labour. Next, we have blue, which shows her love of dramas and her enjoyment of acting. The rest of her arms up to the shoulders represent different values that are relevant for her, including hard work and respect. The proximity with shoulders makes me think of the placement of the sign for 'responsibility' in BSL.

The section of the chest mentions different artistic expressive means, including drawing and the more spontaneous throwing of colours. The neck is in pink, depicting her wishes of moving to a building and having holidays in Dubai – again, a possible recruitment of BSL as the sign for 'wish' is signed in the neck. The head includes the already mentioned English and school/college subjects and, around them, orange again as showing music. Perhaps, it emphasises the auditory character of music, partying and dancing, along with the more active engagement through the legs.

General comment

This portrait shows a great pluralisation of colours in contrast with the other ones. The focus was not only in languages but also in the different ways that Katniss finds for

expressing herself and in what is important for her. It shows all the things that Katniss wants to show me (and perhaps more generally any time that someone asks her to present herself) – so it is a thorough work of constructing a self-presentation.

The fact that this portrait goes beyond languages shows how it can be a source of translanguaging. After all, the focus was on the different means of expression, so it shows Katniss' exercise of agency in different areas.

Katniss' many choices of placement seemed a bit random to me at first but after trying to make sense of them, I found some logic. There seems to be a recruitment (whether implicit or explicit I do not know) of the bodily awareness and/or the layers of meaning on the body created by being a sign language users. I say this because of my own (albeit limited) experience of being a BSL user, as the placement of colours seem to have some thematic connection with places of signing.

Portrait 3 – Matt 301

Appendix – Semiotic repertoire portrait



English

BSI

Asl

SSI

Visual Language

Body Language

Colours

This portrait presents a fair variation of colours, showing the different means or tools that Matt considers relevant when asked and that he can deploy in communication. While some of the colours refer to named languages, others refer to language variations (SSL for Scottish Sign Language, which does not exist as a different language) and even to different modes, as in the case of visual and bodily “languages”. The semiotic resources expressed in the different colours leave a fair depiction of Matt’s translanguaging possibilities.

Distribution

The portrait is mainly focused in the upper body, leaving the legs and feet excluded from the analysis of communication. The rest of the colours are unevenly distributed, showing an awareness of the imbalances of different semiotic resources. It is not only that some actually cover more areas of the body are recruiting more aspects of the body. When more than one resource is placed in one area, they are distributed differently.

Placement

This portrait shows a careful distinction of how different communication resources are placed across the body. In the head, green emphasises English as a language of understanding and thinking, perhaps in a more analytical/school-oriented fashion. It could also involve the more receptive aspect of English, as something that you understand but do not necessarily use to communicate/express something to someone else.

Black, representing visual communication skills, is also present in the head in two places. It shares the spot with English, emphasising the same qualities of

understanding, analytical mind-set and passive or receptive skill. The second place of black is in the eyes, showing the importance of the eyes as a privileged mean of understanding.

Pink, standing for BSL, is also in the head and then moves downwards to include the arms, hands and bits of the torso. It shows an awareness of all the bodily resources that BSL actually recruits for meaning-making, which could be reflecting Matt's skills as a sign language user and communicator. Included in the arms are blue, standing for American Sign Language, and some brown, for Scottish BSL variation. The fact that Matt names it as a sign language on its own, as a SSL, reflects his conceptualisations of languages, perhaps not being able to recognise Scottish signs as BSL, maybe indicating their alien (in the sense of otherness) character to him.

Coming from the neck down towards the torso, body language is represented in red. It is separate from BSL and other sign languages, perhaps indicating its presence as a more general but less structured resource than sign languages. Matt could also be indicating the use of bodily gestures for communication and his expertise in this. This would match my observations of Matt, who is an eloquent communicator through body movements, and well as the way he has been praised by his deaf tutor for setting a good example for the rest of his deaf classmates on how to use the whole body for communicating something through BSL (as opposed to only using the hands).

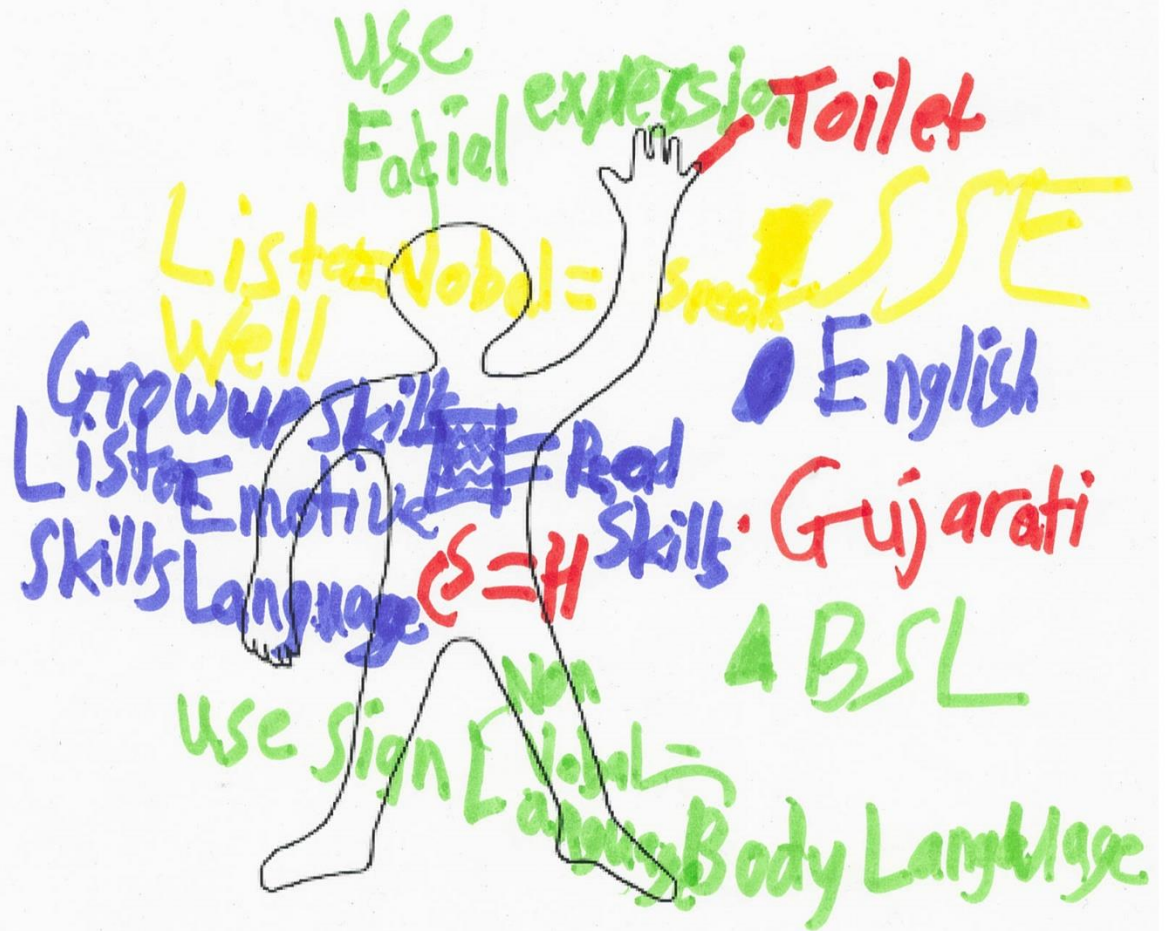
General comment

I have the feeling of observing the portrait of someone who is not only proficient in sign languages and bodily communication, but who is also actually very aware of this fact. The placing of each resource seems to depict a long-term sign language user who

understand how much of the body is recruited, and to what extent, by using sign language.

The portrait also shows the imbalance between English and other resources very eloquently. English is only in the head, perhaps in a more passive or receptive way, whereas the rest of the body is covered in other well-distributed semiotic resources, mainly BSL and body language. On the other hand, in a more sensory-oriented lens, the portrait depicts Matt as a visual learner and communicator, reflecting the impact of life-long visual epistemologies.

Appendix – Semiotic repertoire portrait



Colours

The colour palette used by Adam is rather limited but this does not necessarily reflect a limited repertoire. On the contrary, he seems to group semiotic resources in colours, along with associated themes, knowledge or skills.

Distribution

The colours are not evenly distributed along the body but rather bluntly placed on top of the body. Even following that logic, one can see that the general distribution of colours on top of the body is fairly similar, showing that no colour seems to be dominant over the other (except for red).

Placement

Even when placement was not carefully managed, at least from Adam's explanation, there is some visual-spatial logic behind placement. Green represents BSL, and is connected with facial expression in the head and the use of sign language, non-verbal and body language in legs and feet. Green rather surrounds the other colours and therefore does not seem to take the central stage.

Yellow in the head represents SSE, and also his capacity of listening well, verbal language and being able to speak. English is represented in blue, along with more general skills such as grow up skills, listening skills and his knowledge of emotive language (something he has learned this year for his GCSE). Blue is rather central, with a representation of a book placed in his chest, pointing to his reading skills (his love for reading was mentioned during the interview).

Finally, red is depicting Gujarati in his life (Gujarati is spoken in his family and therefore surrounds him in his everyday life). It is placed rather at the bottom of the

torso and in his little finger. An unknown sign is placed representing an 'h' and the little finger seems to be relevant for depicting a sign for toilet. This shows that Gujarati is present in a fragmented way in his life, with him only partially being able to access its meaning.

General comment

Placement in Adam's portrait is not always detailed but is informative and can be interpreted as providing meaningful knowledge about Adam's semiotic repertoires in his life anyway. It shows in the first place the multilingual and multimodal experience of his everyday life, reflected in a varied semiotic repertoire. Named languages include not only English and BSL as in other portraits, but also Gujarati. Interestingly enough, SSE is placed as something different from English and BSL. If I were looking for named languages, I would consider this a mistake. But from a translanguaging perspective, it could depict that he realises that SSE implies a different resource, and that it can/must be used in different situations and/or with different interlocutors.

Another point of interest to me is the amalgamation of semiotic resources with named languages. BSL seems to me united with all non-verbal and bodily resources, while English is associated with reading and speaking. English also seems to be recognised as a tool for accessing for general life skills, which could reflect the way languages are being asymmetrically used in college context, where BSL supports communication and interaction with other people whereas English is the main language for accessing knowledge and skills.

The placement of books and reading in his chest could be interpreted as a borrowing from BSL, where emotions are signed in the chest. Also, the careful placement of Gujarati in the finger shows that Adam's placement was not so random after all as he

said. There is a reflexive awareness of the body that borrows from his signed language learning and therefore is a depiction of his semiotic resources repertoire in itself. It must also be remembered that Adam's cerebral palsy might have added some extra difficulty in this task and therefore that is why placement was not so carefully managed in all cases.