

**Social Work in a Multilingual World:  
Interpreter-Mediated Encounters**

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## **Abbreviations**

CLB: child language brokering

LEP: limited English language proficiency

## **Social Work in a Multilingual World: Interpreter-Mediated Encounters**

### **Abstract**

In the diverse linguistic landscape of England, it is not uncommon for social workers to work with families who possess varying degrees of English language proficiency. Within such families children may speak multiple languages, and have greater English language proficiency than their parents. The study involved two areas of inquiry. The first part of the inquiry included semi-structured interviews with child and family social workers (n=9), to explore their experiences of interpreter-mediated encounters, including the use of children as interpreters. The second part focused on child language brokering (CLB), this refers to young people who translate and interpret for adults who do not share a mutual language. This part of the research took place at a youth centre and involved semi-structured interviews with young people (n=9) to explore their experiences of language brokering for various adults in multiple settings. The research draws on social constructionist theorising to describe and analyse the participants' experiences of interpreting. Child interpreters were found to be used by social workers as an informal interpreting resource, to compensate for inadequate linguistic provision. The research presents four challenges in social work practice: i) providing adequate interpreting provision for service users with limited English language proficiency; ii) working effectively with interpreters; iii) working with families in which children speak more English than their parents; and iv) protecting children from the perceived harm of interpreting. The findings from the young people illuminate CLB as one activity that enables persons with limited English language proficiency to access services in the community. CLB therefore presents a diverse conceptualisation of interpreting, childhood and intergenerational relations between children and adults. The findings from both datasets illuminate different aspects of interpreting encounters; social workers as recipients of interpreting provision and young people as providers of interpreting. These dual perspectives illuminate a taken-for-granted area of social work practice and social life.

## Introduction

### The Research Topic

Interaction between people who speak different languages is not a new phenomenon, since England has been a country of linguistic differences for centuries (Crystal, 2003). Linguistic diversity is associated with continued migration patterns and the existing ethnically diverse landscape of England (ONS, 2012; 2013a).<sup>1</sup> Within this multilingual landscape, social workers may work with service users with varying degrees of English language proficiency, in which there is need for an interpreter. An under-explored feature of migration is the phenomenon of child language brokering (CLB). This refers to children who provide linguistic support for family members with limited English language proficiency (LEP).

This study is concerned with interpreter-mediated encounters. This is explored from two positions. First, an exploration of the ways in which child and family social workers use formal and informal linguistic provision to support service users LEP in an English social work context.<sup>2</sup> Second, it explores young people's experiences of providing linguistic support for adults who do not share a mutual language. There are no data to indicate the prevalence of social work with services users LEP and interpreter-mediated encounters in a social work context. However, given the linguistic diversity of England it can be assumed that this is a likely feature of social work practice. Despite this likelihood, there is a dearth of legislation pertaining to interpreting provision for persons LEP. There is no legal duty for social welfare providers to provide translation and interpreting for persons LEP and there are no national guidelines to ensure the quality and use of interpreting provision in a social work context. There is however, guidance across English local authorities that advises that service users

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<sup>1</sup> The Office for National Statistics (ONS) data suggests an increase in immigration to the UK. However, ethnic diversity does not correlate with linguistic diversity ipso facto. In 2012, 1 in 8 (12.4%) of the usual resident population of the UK were born abroad (ONS, 2013a). The censuses of 2001 and 2010 suggest that the 'Any Other White' category had the largest increase across the ethnic groups (1.1 million) (ONS, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The UK is made up of four nations: England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, all of which have distinct national identities and varying degrees of political autonomy and devolution. 'British' is used to refer to the peoples of the UK, English refers to the peoples of England. This geographical distinction is important as there are distinct social work agendas, legislation and policies across the United Kingdom. Wales also has distinct Welsh language legislation and policy (The Welsh Language Act 1993; National Assembly for Wales (Official Languages) Act 2012).

(children and adults) should be supported to communicate in their 'preferred language' with the use of interpreting provision (Local Safeguarding Children Boards).

Interpreting provision in a social work context has included in-person interpreters and the use of telephone and video technologies (Alexander et al., 2004). Despite these measures, concerns have been raised about the availability and quality of linguistic provision. Research has highlighted that there are a number of barriers that prevent or deter minority language speakers' access to services in the public sphere (Ahmed, 1991; Chand, 2005; Thoburn, Chand and Procter, 2005; Pugh and Williams, 2006; Aspinall, 2007; Sawrikar, 2013a). It is suggested that social welfare services often fail to meet the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of the multi-ethnic population (Barn, Sinclair and Ferdinand, 1997; Brophy, 2000; O'Neale, 2000). Correspondingly, the theme of poor communication and neglect of the linguistic needs of children and family members are recurrent findings from Serious Case Reviews in the advent of children's deaths (Brandon et al., 2009). Concerns about linguistic provision can be related to wider political and socio-economic debates about the hegemony of the English language. First, predicated by assimilationist arguments, namely the view that a single language creates national unity and is a condition for social and political integration (Blackledge and Creese, 2010; Subtirelu, 2013). Second, the issue of interpreting provision across public services is couched in debates about the economic burden of said provision. This is particularly pressing, in the context of reduced social welfare spending.

Within social work guidance, the concept of child interpreters is identified as an activity that should not substitute formal interpreting provision; this is found in Local Safeguarding Children Boards guidance (Children Act 2004). However, academic literature suggests that child interpreting occurs in a variety of spheres (Crafter et al., 2009; Orellana, 2009). The existence of child interpreting is therefore an under acknowledged area of social work practice. This may render child interpreting as an invisible part of contemporary social work practice and may explain this prohibitive guidance. The purpose of this study is therefore to enrich knowledge about social work with service users LEP and interpreters; both formal interpreters and informal child interpreting.

### **Beginning the Research**

My interest in communication across linguistic difference derives from my experience of identifying my own language proficiency via two broad experiences. The first of these was

my experience of travelling overseas and teaching English. During this experience I recognised that English was the lingua-franca in the majority of countries I visited; both amongst international travellers and many of the local people I met. I was fascinated not only by people's ability to speak multiple languages but the way in which people switched to English to accommodate me as an English language monoglot. While this enabled me to communicate with numerous people without much effort and to find employment fairly easily since I was considered a 'native speaker', it illuminated the dominance of the English language and the privilege attached to native speakers. At times this positioning was unsettling; for example it wasn't uncommon for non-native speakers to apologise for their lack of English and applaud me for my attempts to speak basic phrases of the particular language. I also know that I was offered a job as an English language teacher on the virtue of being a native speaker, despite having no teaching qualifications. I know that I was favoured over a qualified teacher, who was considered inferior because he spoke English as a second language. These experiences highlighted the dominance of the English language. A second reason for my interest in this topic relates to the former experience and relates to my experience and self-reflection as a monolingual child and family social worker. I experienced communication difficulties when working with families' LEP. Again this raised my awareness of the omnipresence of the English language and the importance of interpreting provision. These broad experiences provided fertile ground to pursue research about communication across linguistic difference.

I initially approached this study as a way to improve service delivery for linguistic minority service users and to determine whether CLB in a social work context was right or wrong. While the former commitment continued to undergird the research, the latter aim was modified in the development of the research methodology and my epistemological and ontological positioning. I came to consider that while tropes of 'right', 'wrong' and 'beneficence' may be useful in social work practice, they could also be antithetical to social work's avowed values of diversity and multivocality (Park and Bhuyan, 2011). Given the inductive nature of the study, and in recognition that there was no guarantee that the research would generate suggestions to promote services for linguistic minority users, I designed the research to include different experiences of interpreter-mediated encounters; social workers who use interpreters and young people who interpret.

## **Organisation of the Thesis**

The thesis contains ten chapters. The literature review is in chapters one and two. The first chapter provides an overview of the social work profession, and introduces the topic of communication and social work in a multilingual world. I provide an overview of migration patterns, legislation and policy pertaining to social work with linguistic minority groups. The second chapter builds on the contextual information put forward in the preceding chapter. In chapter two, I focus on the process of interpreter-mediated encounters. I review literature concerning interpreter-mediated encounters and social work with linguistic minorities, including child language brokering. Chapters three and four contain the research methodology. In chapter three I outline the research objectives, I then present the theoretical perspective, epistemological framework and methodological and analytical strategies. In chapter four I discuss aspects of the research process and the research methods employed. I provide an overview of the research sites and I discuss ethical considerations, including how I gained access to the research site and how I located the participants. I then introduce the research participants. In chapter five I provide a self-reflective account. I consider my role in the research and discuss the process of locating participants. I include diary entries from the research with the young people and observations from the field work with social workers. I reflect upon matters of verbal and non-verbal communication, and my role in the research.

There are three research findings chapters. Chapter six presents findings about young people's experiences of language brokering, in which I draw upon interview data, drawings by the young people and field notes. Chapters seven and eight present findings from interviews with social workers about their experiences of working with service users LEP and interpreters. Chapter seven focuses on social workers' experiences and viewpoints about children who interpret. Chapter eight focuses on social workers' experience of using formal interpreting provision; it also includes social workers' experiences of providing informal interpreting provision in the workplace. The findings chapters have been arranged in this way to first introduce the perspectives of young people who language broker before focusing on social workers' experiences of using different forms of interpreting provision, including child interpreting. The perspectives of social workers and young people provide complementary and distinctive perspectives to interpreter-mediated encounters in two different contexts; social workers who use interpreting provision, and young people who provide interpreting. In chapter nine I discuss how the data from the young people and social worker correspond, I



contextualise the findings from both participant groups with wider theory, research, legislation and policy. The conclusion is found in chapter ten. In this chapter I outline the substantive contributions to knowledge and consider weaknesses of the study, to conclude I consider implications for social work practice and highlight areas for further academic inquiry.

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review: Social Work in a Multilingual World**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter is comprised of three sections. The first section outlines the strategies taken to locate the literature, the terminology central to this study and the research objectives. The second section explores social work as a profession with consideration of the child's position in social work and spoken communication in social work. This includes an overview of migration patterns and minority languages used in England, and a brief discussion about the status and prevalence of the English language. The third section considers policy, guidance and legislation in relation to interpreting provision and language more broadly.

#### **1.1 Terminology**

The term 'interpreter-mediated encounter' is used throughout the thesis, this is to signify that the study pays attention to the interaction involved between the interpreter and interlocutor; meaning i) the social worker and interpreter and ii) the child interpreter and people they interpret for. The term 'encounter' is used to refer to the activity of interpreting. I do not examine the actual interpreting interaction, instead I pay attention to the participants' viewpoints about their experiences of these encounters. There are a number of key terms central to the thesis. These terms are: i) limited English language proficiency (LEP); ii) formal and informal interpreter; iii) child language brokering iv) majority and minority language; v) discourse and Discourse. Guidance to additional terminology used in this thesis can be found in the glossary.

First, the term limited English language proficiency (LEP) refers to persons with limited spoken English language proficiency; those who do not communicate in English in their everyday life. Language proficiency is generally related to four modalities: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. There are debates about the assessment of language proficiency, in consideration that people may have varying proficiencies in each of the modalities and that proficiencies may change over time. The term LEP therefore refers to a broad range of abilities, namely because there is limited consensus about the meaning of proficiency which is generally self-rated, meaning that people may under or overestimate their proficiency. In light of this, it is problematic to refer to linguistic minority families or families LEP, since proficiency may vary amongst individuals in the families. For example, children from minority ethnic groups often have greater language faculty in the host language, than their

parents (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995). While LEP is the chosen terminology, I recognise that this term is not free of problems, particularly as it denotes an implicit comparison between limited and ‘full’ language proficiency. It is purposeful to note that in this study, LEP does not refer to people who are Deaf or disabled; this is an entirely different phenomenon with its own distinct historical, socio-political context and specific legislative framework. Second, the distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ interpreters is in terms of job roles, i.e. those who work for ‘professional’ interpreting organisations and those who offer informal interpreting provision, this may be family members or employees. It is assumed that formal interpreters will be trained interpreters, however this may not necessarily be the case. ‘Translation’ refers to written translation and ‘interpreting’ refers to a form of oral translation. I use these terms interchangeably throughout the thesis. Third, child language brokering (CLB) refers to a form of informal interpreting by persons, up to the age of 18 who interpret in either written or spoken format, for adults who do not share a mutual language. I use the term CLB when presenting data concerning the young people, in recognition of the breadth of activities that they undertake when providing linguistic support. In a social work context I refer to ‘child interpreters’ to mirror the terminology used by the social workers. Fourth, majority language refers to the English language and minority language refers to all other spoken languages. It is important to note that minority language speakers may speak additional languages and may not have limited English language proficiency. Fifth, the word discourse has multiple meanings. Following Gee (2010) I use discourse with a lower case ‘d’ to refer to language-in-use, with focus on semantic content, namely the particular words and descriptions employed in the interviews. I use Discourse with a capital ‘D’ to refer to prevailing views and political and social influences about social reality.

## **1.2 Literature Review Search Strategy and Research Objectives**

The research objectives that underpinned this study are listed below. These will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

1. To gain an understanding of the interpreting resources used by social workers to support service users LEP.
2. To explore aspects of interpreting from different viewpoints.
3. To illuminate social workers’ experience of using children as informal interpreters.

4. To illuminate the experience of young people who language broker.

I began the literature review by searching for broad materials concerning social work with linguistic minority speakers and child interpreting. I quickly discovered that there was limited literature pertaining to child interpreters in social work; however there was a body of literature in other disciplines, namely from Education and Social Psychology.

A thorough and comprehensive search strategy was developed to identify and locate the widest range of material (Aveyard, 2010). This was an iterative process and literature searches were undertaken throughout the study. Electronic searching was the main component of the search strategy. I used specific search terms in relevant databases, these included: Google Scholar, Social Care Online, ERIC, Web of Knowledge. Mimas Zetoc, a search service for global research publications was used to keep up to date with new publications. This was supplemented by a snowball approach (O'Leary, 2004). This involved hand-searching key journals, and identifying key authors by reading through the reference lists of books and journal articles. I also searched the publications of selected authors, in order to find relevant literature that was not shown in the electronic search, including work in progress. The inclusion criteria were liberal and included journal articles, unpublished manuscripts, online reports, single-authored books, edited books, and dissertations, mainly from the period of 1980 to 2014. The literature collected included theoretical, empirical research and various literature, policy and guidance from public and third sector agencies. The literature came from a variety of disciplines that included: Social Work, Sociology, Social Psychology, Sociolinguistics, Cultural Studies and Education. I sourced literature from the UK and overseas from mainly Anglophone countries such as Australia, Canada and the US but not restricted to these countries. Since the literature concerning interpreter-mediated communication in social work was relatively small, it was possible to review the bulk of this material and to identify the key arguments.

The broad topic of communication across linguistic difference literature was broken down into three areas: i) interpreting in a social work context, ii) communication difficulties in social welfare services and iii) child language brokering. The range of search terms used can be found in appendix 1. The literature search excluded materials relating to adult social work services and signed language forms of interpreting. I used Bronfenbrenners' Ecological

model (1979) to structure the search. First, the 'micro system', included the various social actors, central to the study, namely: children, children who language broker, persons LEP, linguistic minority groups and social workers. Second, in consideration of the 'meso system', I located literature relating to the processes of interaction, this included: the process of communication, social work practice and interpreter-mediated encounters, including child language brokering. The third part of the search concerned the 'exo system', this included consideration of structures and Discourses, including social work legislation and guidance pertaining to minority language speakers. Once an initial search was undertaken, inclusion and exclusion criteria were refined in accordance with the number of hits retrieved. This process allowed me to identify key themes, patterns, areas of convergence, divergence and gaps in the literature. I then refined the research objectives. Electronic literature was stored in a folder on a PC, I kept a list of searches undertaken to avoid duplication. I updated a document with a list of literature to read or to locate when published. References were managed with reference manager Endnote version X4. In the following sections I review literature and provide an overview of developments in Social Work.

### **1.3 Social Work**

There are multiple practical and theoretical understandings about the nature of social work (Parton, 1996; Parton and O'Byrne, 2000; Blewett, Lewis and Tunstill, 2007). The duties and tasks conducted by social workers may vary between service user group, organisational context and country. The particular area of social work practice of interest for this study is child and family based social work. Nonetheless, within this user group, social work practice may differ. Social work may also vary between child and family teams. Some social workers will work on a short-term basis with families assessing initial need, whereas others will work with families or individual children on a longer-term basis. Social work tasks may involve therapeutic work, various forms of support and guidance and court work. Social workers may also be responsible for care-planning; with responsibilities for the co-ordination of individuals and groups. Statutory child and family social workers will follow specific guidance, such as the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) and legislation, Children Act 1989 and 2004, to support children with acute needs and children in need of protection. I do not offer too much detail here because it is not the social workers' duties that is the sole foci of this study, instead the primary foci is social workers' experience of using interpreting provision.

Social work takes place in a complex, uncertain and changing environment and the work of social workers is shaped by political, economic, and demographic changes (Fook, 2002; 2004). Changes to social work have included changes and cuts to welfare provision for example, fiscal crises in the markets have disempowered social workers by restricting access to resources (Dominelli, 1996; 2008; Ferguson and Lavalette, 2013). There has also been a move from direct work with service users to work dominated by bureaucracy, whereby social workers are required to meet targets and outcomes measured in a managerialised, proceduralised fashion (Howe, 1998; Fook, 2004; Ferguson and Woodward, 2009; Munro, 2011). Demographic changes have also shaped social work, as social workers attempt to meet the varied and changing needs of individuals and families (Blewett et al., 2007). A demographic trend of interest to this study is the continuing patterns of linguistic diversity, and local governments' duties to provide linguistic support to facilitate public welfare services for persons LEP. The process of globalization<sup>3</sup> has shaped the nature of social work and has presented unique challenges and opportunities for social work (Dominelli, 1996; 2004; 2010; Hirst, Thompson and Bromley, 2009). This can be related to the internationalisation of social problems and demographic changes through the migratory movements of service users and practitioners.

### **1.3.1 The Position of Children in Social Work**

Since part of the focus of this study is child and family social work and children as interpreters it is important to provide a brief historical overview of childhood and the way children are positioned in social work. To do this, I discuss some of the key developments and legislation that underpins the way in which children are understood as a social category.

In the early twentieth century, children were sent to work from an early age in many western countries, and were recognised as useful and important producers in the household and economy (Giddens and Sutton, 2013). One of the key developments that radically changed children's position in English society was the implementation of the Education Act 1870 and the introduction of compulsory education (Milne, 2013). This Act, combined with legislation that limited children's labour, evoked the emergence of a 'universal' childhood. This involved a distinction and segregation of children and adult worlds and the awareness of the

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<sup>3</sup> Globalization is an all-encompassing phrase that refers to relationships which extend beyond national borders and activities (Dominelli, 2010).

possibilities for child exploitation through labour (Zeilzer, 1994). In 1889 the first children's charter was introduced, with the aim of preventing cruelty towards children. The charter was one of the first shifts in thinking about the responsibility of the state towards children, which until then had been a private matter of the family. Legislation was developed, most notably with the implementation of the Children Act 1989. This attempted to provide clear lines of responsibility for parents, children and professionals in public and private law. The legislation set out to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of vulnerable children (Wyness, 2006; Ayre and Preston-Shoot, 2010; Morris, 2010).

It is argued that in contemporary society, children have enhanced rights, which are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNRCC) (1989). For example, article 12 of the UNRCC points to the rights of children to participate in decisions that affect them (Chambers, 2012). The Gillick case in 1986 drew attention to children's rights in decision-making (House of Lords ruling, *Gillick v West Norfolk & Wisbech Health Authority*, 1986, cited in Brayne and Carr, 2012). Since then additional legislation and developments at a national and global level (UNRCC) have promoted the protection of children as well as their right to be heard. The Labour government introduced the 'Every Child Matters' (2003) in response to a series of high-profile cases of child abuse. The Every Child Matters agenda brought a number of changes to the outlook and treatment of children and extended policies to embrace all children from birth to age 18, with the introduction of five outcomes which all children are expected to achieve: being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making a positive contribution and experiencing economic wellbeing. The role of the children's commissioner was created following the Children Act 2004. This role was conceptualised as a way to promote the views and rights of all children in England. These developments evidenced a shift beyond the proprietorial interest of parents and child professionals and recognised children as a population with distinct needs and rights (Wyness, 2006). The rights and protection orientation is relevant to the nature of child interpreters in a social work context. This raises two questions: are children exercising their or their parents' right to be heard through interpreting? And should children be protected from interpreting? These questions will be explored later in the thesis.

### **1.3.2 Social Work in a Multilingual World**

In this section I explore migration patterns. I then consider language practices, with reference to the status of the English language and communication in social work practice.

### 1.3.2.1 Migration

Migration is an ancient phenomenon and refers to the flow of people from one place to another; nationally and internationally. There may be various reasons for migration, including economic, political and social factors. For example, migrants may come to England for work, to study, to travel or to seek asylum (Popleton et al., 2013). High levels of migration occur throughout the globe. Vertovec (2006) refers to this movement as an ‘era of super diversity’ as migration includes not only groups from distinct countries of origin, but includes different ethnic identities, languages and religions.

Data show that the UK has sustained a high amount of migration since 1998, which peaked in 2010 and has decreased since then (ONS, 2013b). One of the major changes to migration patterns occurred following the enlargement of the EU. This resulted in movement across Europe and high number of migrants locating to England from across Member States. The 2011 census suggested that across the total UK population there were 566,000 migrants, of which 30.8% were citizens of other EU Member States and 55.4% were citizens of non-member countries (Eurostat). Poles constitute the highest proportion of all foreign nationals in the UK (ONS, 2012). Migration policies seek to attract migrants that have specific skills to benefit the labour market and seek to prevent unauthorised migration (Popleton et al., 2013). This can be related to Discourse about migration, with concern about ‘benefit tourism’ and concerns that migrants’ are a burden to limited resources. In 2011, an opinion poll of 1,004 adults indicated that 75% were of the opinion that immigration ‘is a problem’ (Ipsos MORI, 2011). An international survey across 19 countries found that Britain was most concerned about immigration control (Ipsos MORI, 2013). In a more recent survey, the category: ‘Race Relations/Immigration/Immigrants’ was found to be the second most important issue facing Britain at 17%, the first being the ‘Economic Situation’ 20%. (Ipsos MORI, 2014). Migration is closely associated with language practices in England and across the globe. In recent years government led initiatives have attempted to increase the number of English language speakers, with the implementation of English as Second or Other Language classes (ESOL). It has become increasingly difficult for non-EU migrants to enter the UK. In order to migrate to the UK, prospective non-EU migrants must demonstrate that they have a specific level of English language proficiency ([www.gov.uk/english-language](http://www.gov.uk/english-language)). EU migrants do not have to learn English to obtain permanent resident status which they gain automatically after five years. Moreover, English language proficiency has been linked to citizenship. Migrants



living in the UK must pass the ‘Life in Britain’ test, taken in English, to gain citizenship/permanent residence (Kofman et al., 2009).

### **1.3.2.2 Language Practices**

There are two broad trends in language practices across the globe. The first is the diversification of the linguistic landscape, as evidenced by the multiple languages used throughout the globe. This includes a revival of minority languages.<sup>4</sup> Second, there has been an increase in the number of people who speak English and a decline of spoken minority languages across the globe. This can be related to globalization, particularly the dominance of the English language and the process of ‘language deaths’ (Crystal, 2003). This refers to the ways in which languages develop, alter, and merge, and in some cases become extinct as a result of the domination of certain global languages such as English (Trudgill, 2000; Mohanty, 2010).

England has been a nation of linguistic diversity for centuries (Crystal, 2003). Contact between people who speak different languages has occurred throughout history; through historical expeditions, migration, and travel, with and without the use of interpreters. Beyond English, there are a number of autochthonous minority languages, such as Welsh and Cornish, in addition to more recent minority languages, which include: Panjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati and Hindi. In more recent years there has been a growth in Eastern European languages following the EU accession. It is estimated that over 200 languages are spoken in Manchester (Long, 2013), and that over 300 language varieties are spoken amongst school children in England (Baker and Eversley, 2000; CILT, 2005; Eversley et al., 2010). There are two surveys that provide an overview of the languages used and language proficiencies in England: the census and the Department for Education and Skills (DfE) School Pupils and their Characteristics. For the first time in 2011, the census for England and Wales introduced a question to establish people’s English language proficiency. The data show that a relatively small number of people speak limited or no English. 92% of the population used English as a main language; 726,000 citizens had limited English language proficiency and 138,000 had no proficiency (ONS, 2012). The DfE (2013) survey found that 13.6% of pupils (436,150) of compulsory school age had a first language other than English; an increase from the previous

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<sup>4</sup> Such as: Cornish, Gaelic, Scots Gallic, Hebrew, Welsh.,

year, although it does not identify language proficiency. As previously mentioned, ‘bilingualism’ is not the sum of two monolinguals (Baker, 1992). Correspondingly:

the assumption of equal competence in both languages is usually inaccurate because it fails to recognise how language use is structured by the demands of different domains, and similarly the assumption that lack of competence in one language is representative of overall linguistic competence is also misleading. (Pugh, 1996:p.32).

As Pugh observes, determining a person’s language proficiency is not straightforward. This may be further compounded by the transient nature of language as people acquire or lose command of particular language varieties. In addition, the relationship between limited language proficiency and the need for linguistic provision is not straightforward, as people may choose not to access linguistic support (Rennie, 1998).

### **1.3.2.3 The English Language**

In this section I provide an overview of the status and use of the English language, I then consider the use of English language and communication in social work.

The English language is a key feature of the local and global context and for over thirty years commentators such as Fishman (1980) and Crystal (2003) have suggested that there are more second language English speakers than native English speakers. English is regarded as the dominant language in multiple domains such as the international market, media, and science (Crystal, 2003). The spread of English is not due to its superiority as a language but due to the economic and political success of its speakers during the course of history (Milroy and Milroy, 1999). This dominance can be traced by international activity, from the beginning of the nineteenth century when Britain led the world’s historical expeditions (Crystal, 2003). This was followed by industrial and economic trading, followed by the economic supremacy of the American dollar and increased international travel, communication technologies and continued migration (Wei, 2007 (ed)). Data concerning the number of bilingual social workers employed by local authorities across England, and service users’ LEP is unknown. Within an English social work profession and discipline there is evidence of the dominance of the English language. For example, while social work interactions and related assessments may be conducted in languages other than English, official documents – reports and

assessments must be recorded in English. Within the social work discipline there has been an increase of translated materials across the internet, including the translation of academic literature, there has been also shift from English language dominated conferences and the introduction of multilingual streams. However, the English language continues to dominate many international conferences and is the official language of numerous academic journals. While there are benefits for people to communicate in a single language, it could be argued to privilege native English language speakers.

#### **1.4 Minority Languages**

As previously mentioned, one of the consequences of the domination of certain languages is the extinction of minority languages. This is a topic of political interest. The United Nations Independent Expert on Minority Issues, Rita Izsák (2012) argues that the protection of linguistic minority rights is a human rights obligation. Izsák has urged governments across the globe to take action to protect minority languages. Recognition of the rights of minority language speakers has been enshrined in a variety of legislation such as the Declaration on Minorities 1992, Human Rights Act 1998 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The Equal Opportunities Act 1995 stipulated that service providers must ensure that services are offered to linguistic minorities in their preferred language, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 stated that limited access to services due to language is reasonable grounds for discrimination. The Equality Act (2010) has replaced the above anti-discriminatory legislation. There is no reference to spoken minority languages, however there is recognition of the need for signed language, in accordance with the protected characteristic 'disability' under the Act (see 'Action on Hearing Loss', 2013). Article 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998 makes a direct reference to language and stipulates to protect against the discrimination of people's enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set out in the European Convention on Human Rights.

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status (Human Rights Act, 1998).

### 1.4.1 Language Hierarchy

The fields of bi and multilingualism have been a major focus of scientific research since the 1970s. Adverse attitudes to bilingualism can be traced to a mythical idea of a monoglot standard of English circa the eighteenth century (Milroy and Milroy, 1999). This was influenced by the ideology that bilingualism is a threat to a presumed monolingual society (Romaine, 2004; Blackledge, 2004; Scollon and Scollon, 2007) and speculation that children brought up in bilingual families would be delayed in their language growth (Saer, 1923). Ellis (2006) argues that not as much attention is given to monolingualism, which is often regarded as the norm. This resonates with the idea that bilingualism is perceived as ‘the other’ and ‘abnormal’ to monolingual tendencies. This outlook may lead to a deficient view of bilingualism (Davies, 1994). At a structural level, Heller (1995) argues that monolingual tendencies of the state reproduce the dominant ideology of language homogeneity and reinforce the symbolic power of the English language and a deficit view of minority languages. This may explain why monoglot English speakers often expect to be able to communicate with persons in English, regardless of whether they are in an Anglophone country (Skey, 2011). This implies that language may function as a social and political apparatus (Bourdieu, 1991; Swartz, 1997; Keating, 2009).

In the education discipline, emphasis is placed on the importance of multiple language use. This is recognised as a way to foster global employment opportunities. England has acquired a poor reputation for foreign language education particularly compared to its mainland Europe counterparts, with an assumed over-reliance on the English language and thus concern about future trade and economic opportunities in regards to the largely monolingual population (Baker, 2011). The idea of monoglot persons’ dependence on English as a mutual language can be associated with the limited recognition given to bilingualism and minority language use. Barker (2013) argues that not enough recognition is given to children’s capacity to speak multiple languages and that bilingual children often lose command of their mother-tongue language during schooling in Anglophone countries, since emphasis is placed on the development of English language competency. A number of studies have pointed to the benefits of bilingualism, in terms of cognitive and social functions (Peal and Lambert, 1962). Despite this, prevailing societal attitudes tend to devalue linguistic difference and favour the monolingual standard-variety. Pavlenko (2006) observes that such attitudes tend to associate

bilingualism as a type of 'schizophrenia', following the idea that multiple language use is related to multiple personality types.

Research has shown that individuals and groups may be positively or negatively evaluated according to the language or language variety they speak (Spolsky, 2004). It is argued that judgements made about the 'correct' use of the English language are ideological, and based on a supposed standard and correct English variety (Milroy, 1998; Milroy and Milroy, 1999; Garrett, 2010). In addition to language use, there is research to suggest that personal names may evoke certain attitudes and behaviours. Lippi-Green (1997) found that particular language varieties can be met with advantageous attitudes in specific contexts and detrimental ones in others. The National Centre for Social Research found that employers discriminated against workers with African and Asian sounding names (Wood et al., 2009). In a study by Creese and Kambere (2003) research participants were found to associate an African English accent with low English language competency. In a US context, Baugh (2003) refers to this as 'linguistic profiling'. Baugh found that telephone callers with an African-American sounding accent were likely to be discriminated against whilst making enquiries for employment or housing. Kerekes et al., (2013) found that one of the factors related to high unemployment rates for immigrants in Canada was related to not 'being Canadian enough' and immigrants who spoke English fluently were judged by their different accents or their unfamiliarity of colloquial terms. This combined with the candidate's overseas education meant that their skills were not valued and hence they were not employed.

The findings discussed indicate that particular language varieties are associated with higher intelligence, social status, and life opportunities. This illustrates the idea that language varieties can be placed on a hierarchical scale on an imagined linguistic market, in which the language norms of the dominant groups serve as a yardstick (Bourdieu, 1991). Following this thesis, the English language may be regarded as the language of the 'powerful', in comparison to other languages, which are relegated to a lower status (Subtirelu, 2013). Language hierarchies can be situated within the broader topic of legitimacy, as explored by cultural theorists such as Gilroy (1987; 2004). Gilroy points to the tacit racial connotations in the symbols of perceived 'Englishness', which is recognised as a marker of normality. This implies that those who do not speak English are regarded as incompetent, moreover minority ethnic people who speak some or even fluent English are not recognised as 'legitimate' speakers of English (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). Hence the concept of legitimacy is not

only based upon one's ability to speak English accurately and fluently, rather it is based upon whether others recognise the person as a 'legitimate' English speaker. Language ideologies and bilingualism are therefore tied to social construction related processes such as citizenship, colonialism and migration (Heller, 2008). Given that attitudes are social rather than linguistic in nature, arguments that particular languages or dialects are linguistically superior are difficult to sustain (Milroy and Milroy, 1999). Moreover, Garrett (2010) recognises that although language attitudes permeate our daily lives; they are not always publicly articulated and linguistic discrimination is difficult to demarcate (Harrison, 2007).

Language use has been associated with a person's identity; moreover, language may act as a site of resistance, empowerment and solidarity (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). A number of studies have demonstrated how people switch between languages to define themselves (Rampton, 1995; Back, 1996). This can be related more broadly to Goffman's idea of the presentation of self (1969). A study by Labov (1966) found that women in a New York department store altered their pronunciation to influence others' perception of their 'higher' class status. Similarly Baugh (2003) found that people 'styleshift' strategically and use different accents in different locations in order to gain goods and services. Farr (2011) argues that vernacular language practices have symbolic value in local communities, even when the dominant language ideologies of global institutions deny or restrict them. In a similar vein, research from Jaspers (2011) found that minority language users enjoyed employing linguistic possibilities afforded by the unequal structures that they lived in. Children were found to deliberately use stylised incompetent broken Dutch at a secondary school in Belgium, and talked 'illegal' as a way of faking incompetence. This provided a way for the children to playfully highlight the contours of the unequal social frame. Jaspers drew upon the work of Rampton and described this as 'tertiary foreigner talk': a language practice where people with a migrant or minority ethnic background 'strategically masquerade' in the racist imagery used in dominant Discourses about them (Rampton, 2001:p.271 cited in Jaspers, 2011).

This section has suggested that language may function as a site of resistance. However, it cannot be assumed that all minority language users experience the world in the same ways. Research by Temple (2010) highlighted a number of intra-group differences in her research with Polish speakers. The participants experienced being and speaking Polish in different ways. There were derogatory accounts of the old Polina language as being out of date and associated with a lack of education. Finally, it is important to acknowledge the

intersectionality of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989), particularly the links between language, accents, class, ethnicity, gender and nationality (Kofman et al., 2009).

### **1.5 Communication in Social Work**

Language and communication are significant features of social work education, theory, legislation, policy, and practice (Habermas, 1987; Hawkins, Fook and Ryan, 2001; D’Cruz, Gillingham and Melendez, 2007). On a daily basis, social workers are required to communicate with a variety of people, from a range of different backgrounds; this may include other professionals and service users, including persons with limited English language proficiency. There is a hybrid of speech exchange systems in social work encounters, which may include therapeutic, instructive, and prescriptive exchanges (Pugh, 2004; Forrester et al., 2008; Lishman, 2009; Koprowska, 2010; Lefevre, 2010; Trevithick, 2012). Modes of communication may include face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, written communication – emails, letters, and text messages. Despite the importance of communication in social work practice a number of Serious Case Reviews have highlighted a number of communication difficulties and ineffective communication amongst service users and practitioners, and between inter-agency professionals. Such difficulties have been linked to the tragic deaths of a number of children, including Victoria Climbié in 2000, Peter Connolly in 2007, Alisha Allen in 2007, Khyra Ishaq in 2008, and Daniel Pelka in 2012.

Pithouse (1998) refers to social work as an ‘invisible trade’ given that much of the work takes place in a closed setting. Social work with users’ LEP and interpreters could also be described as an ‘invisible’ component of social work, since it is an area of practice that has received little academic attention, despite the fact that England has been a linguistically diverse country for centuries (Crystal, 1987) and hence the likelihood of social workers’ working with persons LEP and interpreters. This corresponds with observations from Pugh (2004) who argues that language difference is an area of social difference that has been subsumed under discussions of ‘race’.

### **1.6 Policy, Guidance and Legislation**

This section explores policy, guidance, and legislation in relation to minority language speakers and formal and informal interpreting. Within this section, I consider how the political and socio-economic context may shape Discourses about minority languages and interpreting.

### **1.6.1 Social Work with Minority Language Speakers**

In relation to social work with minority language speakers, the Children Act 1989 and accompanying guidance refers to the importance of 'race', culture, language and religion in interventions (sections 1(3) and 22 (5) (c)). This legislation states that parents have a right to be consulted and informed about matters to do with the care of their child, and parents should be aware of the content of reports at child protection conferences and assessments. Indirect references to formal and informal interpreting can be found in social work guidance, which stipulates that children and family members should not be used to interpret. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) guidance states

All children, whatever their religious or cultural background, must receive the same care and safeguards with regard to abuse and neglect (2.23)

Interviews with family members (which may include the child) should also be undertaken in their preferred language (5.44)

The local authority has a responsibility to make sure children and adults have all the information they require to help them understand the processes that are followed when there are concerns about a child's welfare. Information should be clear and accessible and available in the family's preferred language (10.7)

The London Child Protection Procedures (2011) states the following.

Those for whom English is not a first language must be offered and provided with an interpreter, if required. A family member should not be expected to act as an interpreter of spoken or signed language (8.5.9)

This guidance implies that information should be available in a families' preferred language and service providers ought to use formal interpreting provision and should not rely upon informal mechanisms, namely children or family members. The National Health Service



(NHS) provides guidance for bilingual services ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)). However, I located one policy online<sup>5</sup>; The Interpreting and Translation Policy, Sheffield Health and Social Care, NHS Foundation Trust, which indicates a more flexible approach to child interpreters in recognition of emergency situations. Within this document it states that children under 16 must not be used to interpret, however it also states that:

A child may communicate very basic information in an emergency however telephone and face to face interpreting should be arranged as a matter of urgency (6.1.5).

In the state of California, USA, a bill was put forward, although rejected, to prohibit children from translating and interpreting in medical, legal and social service settings (Assembly Bill 282, 2003). This was based on three arguments, first due to concerns about the accuracy of translations, second, based on assumptions about the negative effect on the parent-child relationship and third, in regards to the potentially traumatic effects of children's exposure when conveying information about parents' medical conditions (Morales and Hanson, 2005). Reasons for the failed bill may be associated with developments in the socio-economic sphere, this will be discussed later in the chapter.

### **1.6.2 Interpreting Provision**

There have been a number of attempts to promote the accessibility and delivery of service provision for minority language speakers. Developments have included: i) translation and interpretation provision - translated posters and leaflets to advertise linguistic provision, translated documents, tape recorded messages, and new technologies such as touch screens with options to speak in preferred language, video and telephone ii) the direct employment of bilingual workers with specific responsibility to work with linguistic minority communities (Free et al., 1999; Free et al., 2003; Alexander et al., 2004; Mir, 2007) and iii) language classes for professionals to learn 'new' minority languages (Martis, 2007). Standards for translation and interpreting services vary amongst public services. Interpreters working in criminal justice; in courts and police stations must be registered with one of the recommended public service interpreters registers (The National Register of Public Service Interpreters

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<sup>5</sup> I did not undertake a search of all NHS policies in relation to Translation and Interpreting policy. The purpose of using this reference is to illuminate a flexible strategy towards informal interpreting provision.

(NRPSI)). There are specific training, registration and procedures for the use of signed support, commensurate with the Equality Act 2010. These regulations are not evident in the context of health and social care, whereby there appears to be more flexibility to use a variety of linguistic support mechanisms. This includes outsourced interpreters and the use of non-professional interpreters, in the form of community interpreters such as, INTRAN ([www.intran.org](http://www.intran.org); Audit Commission, 2007a; 2007b), and informal interpreting by staff members who speak the same language as the client (Rennie, 1998).

### **1.7 The Political and Socio-Economic Context**

Consideration of the political and socio-economic context provides insight into developments and attitudes to minority language speakers and interpreting provision more broadly. As previously mentioned one of the relevant factors to shape social work is welfare reform and reduced welfare budgets. In connection with this, politics of integration have repeatedly promoted the English language as a means to facilitate the social inclusion of non-English speakers and to foster positive relationship between different communities. This movement has formed part of the rhetoric and policies concerning issues of community cohesion. This has been evidenced through the promotion of English language classes, pervasive media Discourse about the increase of new migrants LEP, and concerns about the costs of translating materials for linguistic minorities, particularly following the accession of the European Union (Audit Commission, 2007a; 2007b; Green, 2011; Metro Reporter, 2011; Miller, 2011a; Newton Dunn, 2011; Bustin, 2012; Tipton, 2012). These issues have coalesced into political debates about social inclusion and the failure of multiculturalism (Alexander et al., 2004; Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010), with suggestions that policy focus has moved away from promoting multiculturalism. This movement can be associated with the ideology of monolingualism, in which minority languages are perceived as a problem and a threat to a presumed monolingual society (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004). In this regard, the English language is regarded as a ‘right of passage’ to the receiving society (Wiley and Lukes, 1996:p.520), and as one way to facilitate a person’s integration into British society (Aspinall and Hashem, 2011). This outlook has been referred to as the ‘centre-periphery metaphor’, based upon an asymmetrical ‘us vs. them’ Discourse, looking upon ‘them’ (non-native speakers) as a problem that ‘we’ (native speakers) have to find a solution for. (Weber and Horner, 2012:p.153). In a similar vein, Cederberg (2014) in a Swedish context, reports how migrants perceive that learning the Swedish language is the key to integration. This relates to

the earlier discussion about language attitudes and employment opportunities (Kerekes et al., 2013). This implies that ideas about language membership are closely associated with ideas about integration and citizenship, and may be embedded at a political level and infiltrated at a social level.

The perceived burden of interpreting provision was most notably evidenced in the government document: ‘50 ways to save: examples of sensible savings in local governments’ (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012), and subsequent commentary from the commissioning MP and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles. I present three statements from this document to exemplify Eric Pickles’ political outlooks towards translation policy. A direct reference to translation is found within the said publication, which is concerned with ways for local governments to reduce spending.

Stop translating documents into foreign languages: Only publish documents in English. Translation undermines community cohesion by encourage segregation.  
(sic) (section 35)

Within the document, a footnote refers to ‘native languages’ of the UK that have legal protection, in contradistinction to foreign languages. The underlying Discourse in the instruction to stop translations is associated with an assimilation outlook based upon two arguments. First, the English language is privileged as the naturalised language in contradistinction to ‘foreign languages’. Second, the provision of translation services is identified as an unnecessary burden, and as a direct cause of segregation. A few months after the publication, in a written statement to parliament, Pickles (2012) made reference to this recommendation, and extended his reasoning. The following two paragraphs have been lifted from this statement.

Such translation services have an unintentional, adverse impact on integration by reducing the incentive for some migrant communities to learn English and are wasteful where many members of these communities already speak or understand English.

Stopping the automatic use of translation and interpretation services into foreign languages will provide further incentive for all migrant communities to learn English,

which is the basis for an individual's ability to progress in British society. It will promote cohesion and better community relations. And it will help councils make sensible savings, at a time when every bit of the public sector needs to do its bit to pay off the deficit.

These statements depict migrant communities as being in some way responsible for segregation. The provision of linguistic support is disregarded as an unnecessary burden and deterrent for people to learn English. Persons LEP are stigmatised for relying upon linguistic support and depicted as lazy for not speaking English, as they could if they tried. This refers to an often cited but poorly evidenced claim that immigrant communities 'hold on' to their minority language at the expense of learning English (Tse, 2001). The cost of translation services is depicted as an unnecessary burden and a targeted area for councils to reduce spending. These messages convey fear about minority language communities, in which the use of translation services is demonised. This instruction therefore, is an example of the prestige placed on the English language and signifies that non-native languages are not promoted and that minority language speakers may not receive necessary linguistic support. While there are no explicit links to child interpreting, this outlook raises the question about the role of interpreters and whether informal interpreting is used as a way to overcome absent formal interpreting provision. This will be explored in the following chapter.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have provided contextual information to the study. I have discussed the nature of social work and the social category of childhood and its implications in social work. I have explored migration patterns and language practices in England and attitudes towards minority languages and different varieties of spoken English. This discussion was used to illuminate the effect that the dominance of the English language may have on minority languages. I contextualised this discussion with consideration of legislation, socio-economic and political factors, and their relation to minority speakers and interpreting provision. I begin the next chapter by first considering communication processes, I then review literature pertaining to interpreter-mediated encounters in social work and other contexts.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review: Interpreter-Mediated Encounters**

### **2. Introduction**

In this study, the topic of communication is explored from multiple angles. First, the empirical focus of this study is interpreter-mediated encounters and this is explored from the perspectives of social workers who use interpreting services and young people who interpret. Second, attention is paid to what is said about interpreting encounters and how this is said. This dual approach can be situated within the ‘discursive turn’ in social work research (Hall et al., 2014 (eds)). This refers to research that focuses on talk in the construction of everyday life and a move away from an evaluation of communication skills (Taylor and White, 2000; White and Featherstone, 2005; Hall, Slembrouck and Sarangi, 2006; Hall and Slembrouck, 2009). This will be discussed in more detail in the methodology chapter. In this chapter I first discuss the nature and function of languages. I then discuss the process of communication, with reference to one model of communication, this model provides the foundation to review research pertaining to interpreter-mediated encounters. This includes discussion about formal and informal interpreters and an overview of key research findings in relation to child language brokering.

#### **2.1 The Nature and Function of Language**

Language can be related to two main functions; first, as a system for the expression of thoughts and feelings, by the use of spoken sounds or conventional symbols and second, in reference to a linguistic community, characterised by a common linguistic variety (Collins Dictionary, 2011). A number of commentators propose that language goes beyond sounds and words. Language is considered a key part of identity and is integral to culture (Riley, 2007). Language is also proposed as a vehicle to construct reality (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Burr, 2003) and this outlook resonates with a social constructionist perspective.

A social constructionist perspective purports that language is a social artefact and that we can never know what is universally true or false, or indeed, whether universal ‘truths’ exist (Burr, 1995; 2003; Parton and O’Byrne, 2000). Hence, language is considered to be a means to construct what we perceive as reality rather than a mirror on reality (Berg and De Jong, 1996). Goffman and Locke share a common scepticism about the nature of communication. Locke (1690) referred to the ‘imperfection’ of language and argued that meaning and understandings are mentally ‘private’ (cited in Hutton, 2009). Goffman (1981) talked of the ‘residual

ambiguity' of language, which can present as an obstacle to mutual understanding. Goffman referred to the discrepancies between what a speaker implies and what the hearer understands and states that: 'one routinely presumes on a mutual understanding that doesn't quite exist' (1981:p.10). Despite recognition of the 'residual ambiguities' between the speakers and listener, Goffman maintains that communicators are typically able to reach a 'working agreement' of understanding, which he maintains is sufficient for the 'practical purposes' of ordinary communication (1981:p.10). Rodger (1991) proposes that meaning is not communicated by language alone and that words have different connotations and thus, social meaning is shaped by particular circumstances. Following this vein, it is argued that

In every context of social interaction we respond to cues and act according to implicit rules and shared understanding which none of us could fully articulate (Benton and Craib, 2001:p.46).

Bakhtin (1981) suggests that communication is a co-construction of all parties involved. According to Bakhtin (1981), words are already embedded in history, and are always half someone else's. Hence, when subjects use words, they formulate themselves and their thoughts from the point of others, from the point of view of their community. Words become speakers' 'own' as they use them for their own purposes and, incorporate their own intentions into them. Hence, it is argued that '...language is not seen as a transparent medium through which communication about a single underlying reality [is] accomplished' (Drennan and Swartz, 2002:p.1854). This has relevance for the present study, in consideration of the joint communicative accomplishment in the context of interpreter mediated encounters, and my role in the construction of this thesis.

It is important to clarify that there are inherent complexities in the interpretation of behaviour and language regardless of whether or not interlocutors share a mutual language. It is argued that meaning is always contestable and there is no guarantee that a speaker's intended meaning will be achieved (Benton and Craib, 2001). This is illuminated by Poindexter (2003), who carried out retrospective analysis of qualitative interview transcripts. This examination highlighted multiple points of ambiguity and uncertainty about meaning for the researcher and respondent, which were originally overlooked by the researcher.

## 2.2 The Process of Communication

The aim of this section is to contextualise the process of interpreter-mediated communication with reference to one model of communication; Sharon and Weaver's 'mathematical theory of communication' (1949) (cited in Fiske, 1990). This model has been selected as it provides contextual information to the process of communication. Sharon and Weaver's model was one the first models to be developed in communication studies, and was developed with the telephone system in mind, with the intention of improving the efficiency of telephone communication (Fiske, 1990). The model illustrated in figure 1, demonstrates how the 'source' or internal message is changed by the transmitter (the mouth) into a signal, which is sent through the channel (air) to the receiver (the ear). The model also indicates how noise sources may affect this process.

Since its conception, Sharon and Weaver's model has been developed in a number of ways. Because the model was developed for telecommunication, it pays limited attention to the various ways that people communicate and the negotiation of meaning in communication processes. For example, Fiske argues that each speaker brings their own cultural experiences to interpret messages, which means that communication is more than the transfer of messages from one person to another, and that the message:

...is not something sent from A to B, but an element in a structured relationship whose other elements include external reality and the producer/reader (Fiske, 1990:p.3).

### INFORMATION

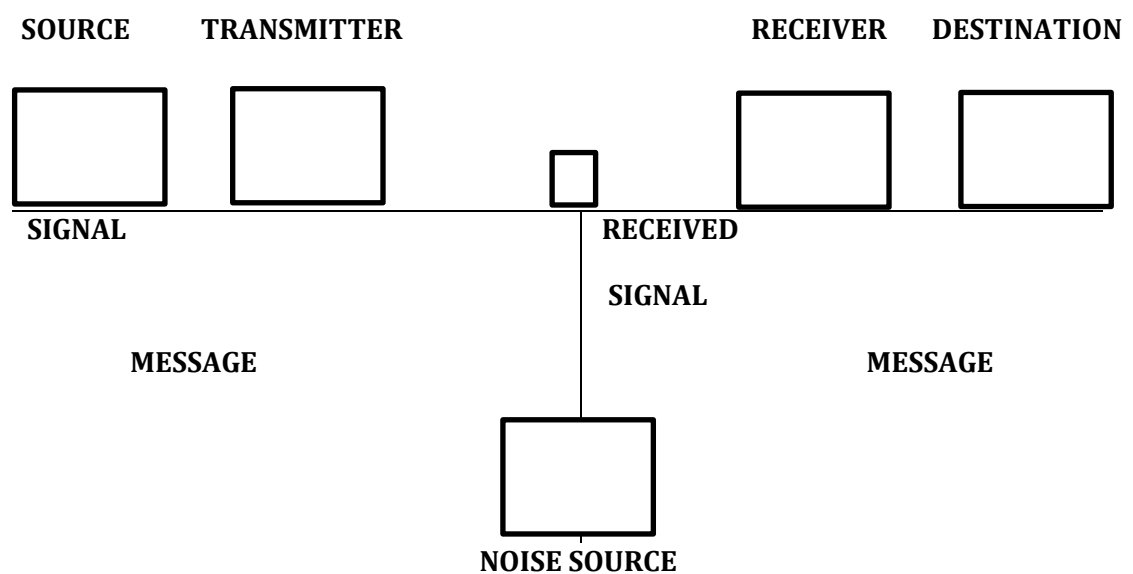


Figure 1: Sharon and Weaver's Communication Model (1949)

The interactive process of communication is discussed by Koprowska (2010) who distinguishes between first-order and second-order communication skills. First-order refers to the skills required in communication itself and second-order skills are employed in planning communication, thinking, observing, paying attention to feedback and modifying future communications. As Hargie (1997) states, at the same time that messages are received and transmitted, the transmitting person receives 'self-feedback', in which the speaker may rephrase or repair their question before the listener has an opportunity to respond to the initial comment. Feedback is therefore an important component of communication and is said to perform a number of features, such as reinforcement, encouragement, and information about performance. Feedback also involves 'backchannel' and 'track-checking' behaviour. Backchannel behaviour allows the listener to demonstrate feedback, through vocalisations, head movements, eye movements and other facial expressions. Track-checking behaviour is used to monitor backchannel cues to assess whether the message is being understood in the intended way. The nature and process of communication provides a useful foundation to explore literature concerning interpreter-mediated encounters.

### **2.3 Interpreter-Mediated Encounters**

There are reports that interpreters were used as early as 1595, cited in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, when Thomas Mowbray complained that while facing exile in a foreign country, his tongue would become like a musical instrument that had 'lost its strings' (Belsey, 2002:p.62). The use of this simile highlights tensions associated with not speaking a mutual language, this will be explored throughout the thesis.

The term 'interpreter' is an all-encompassing term that includes: professional interpreters, ad-hoc interpreters, untrained interpreters, advocates, on-site interpreters, and telephone interpreters (Hsieh, 2006) who may or may not be trained interpreters. Rennie (1998) argues that social work encounters are one of the most complex types of interpreting tasks given the sensitive and complex nature of the intervention, which covers a broad range of domains including: social, procedural, legal and cultural repertoires, in which the communication of feelings and personal relationships can be just as important as facts. This relates to Humphreys, Atkar and Baldwin (1999) who argue that interpreters provide a 'linchpin' (p.285) for service users not fluent in English. Notwithstanding the importance of interpreters, it has been suggested that interpreters cannot be considered as an infallible means to convey meaning as the speaker intended.



A useful way to conceptualise interpreters' roles is in consideration of whether they provide a neutral 'conduit' for speakers who do not share a mutual language (Wadensjö, 1998; Dysart-Gale, 2007). The 'conduit role' has been critiqued for failing to acknowledge the variety of interpreting approaches. First, it is argued that interpreters may perform a number of functions and may carry out interpreting in a range of different ways; including verbatim translation, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and the use of different forms of address; in first and third-person format (Rennie, 1998; Sawrikar, 2013a). The style and quality of interpretation is found to vary from one setting to another (Elderkin-Thompson, Silver and Waitzkin, 2011). Moreover, an interpreter's style of translating is considered to be influenced by the way that the particular actors direct responses to the interpreter (Cambridge, 1999). There is no consensus on which approach an interpreter should adopt, for example, in a health context, Roat, Putsch and Lucero (1997) recommend that interpreters adopt first-person interpreting styles to reinforce the primary relationship between the patient and provider and to minimise the presence of the interpreter (cited in Brashers and Goldsmith, 2009). Similarly, Wadensjö's (2001) research with interpreters in therapeutic encounters found that interpreters preferred to avoid exchanging gazes with the primary parties, in order to allude to the 'invisibility' of their role.

In earlier work, Wadensjö (1998) argues that when messages are separated in interpreter-mediated encounters, each section is translated as a 'decontextualized whole' (pp.234-5) which may lead the interpreter to draw premature conclusions. Wadensjö argues that interpreter-mediated conversations are investigated and measured against implicit or explicit norms of the monolingual conversation, which treats interpreting as a transfer of messages, from one linguistic system to another. This can be contrasted with a dialogical model of language and mind, which implies that meaning-making is a joint product between interlocutors (ibid). Temple (2002) supports this thesis, and argues there is no single correct way of translating, as it is more than an exchange of words from one language to another.

Despite this variability, Kesselman et al., (2010) found that interpreters had an influence on the outcome of asylum seeking minors in Sweden. Two researchers independently coded archived transcripts of interpreter-mediated interviews with officials and asylum seeking minors. They found that while the interpretation was generally accurate, there were some inaccurate renditions in which the interpreter substantially changed the meaning of what was originally stated. This relates to the earlier section, in which the ambiguous nature of

communication was suggested (Goffman, 1981). In relation to this point, numerous researchers have pointed out that interpreters are far from neutral participants and that they have the power to influence and shape and co-ordinate others' talk (Wadensjö, 1998; Metzger, 1999; Temple and Edwards, 2002). This can be associated with the idea of interpreters' 'shadowy existence' and tensions about the inherently opaque nature of interpreting (Venuti, 1995). In consideration of the role and contributions that interpreters make, it is argued that a shared mutual language should not be regarded as a 'quick fix' to bridge cultural divides (Temple, 2002; Sawrikar, 2013a).

### **2.3.1 Supporting Persons with Limited English Language Proficiency**

Research has demonstrated that public service providers struggle to meet the linguistic needs of the population (Barn et al., 1997; Brophy, 2000; O'Neale, 2000; Bender and Harlan, 2005; Hall et al., 2006; Bernard and Gupta, 2008; Westwood, 2012). The problematic nature of interpreter-mediated encounters has been found to be characterised by concerns about accuracy, bias and confidentiality (Sawrikar, 2012b). Practitioners have been found to experience difficulties, particularly in regards to organising interpreters at short notice and outside office hours (Bonacruz Kazzi and Cooper, 2003; Alexander et al., 2004). The British Medical Association (2002) raised concern about insufficient translation; in one locality, neither the midwifery nor accident and emergency department had access to interpreters and relied upon the 'Red Cross multi-lingual phrasebook' to communicate. Difficulties have also been related to resources, which regulate and restrict social workers (Juhlia, Hall and Raitakari, 2010; Masocha, 2013). Tribe and Keefe (2009) found that counsellors at a charity sector organisation were constrained by financial resources. Financial restrictions meant there were not enough interpreters who spoke the same languages as clients. The study cited the example of a client from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who was offered counselling in French - the client's third or fourth language. The client was dissatisfied with this arrangement, because the French language was associated with the education and administration domain in the DRC. This finding raises two points; first that practitioners may be restricted by resources, and second, this finding highlights the emotional and socio-psychological functions of language, which may often be overlooked. In relation to the latter point, Murray and Wynne (2001) found that when respondents spoke in a second language they perceived themselves as less confident, happy and intelligent. Hence it is important to recognise the challenges that face people when attempting to express their thoughts and

feelings in a language others than their first language (Sue, 2006). These findings were echoed in research by Maiter and Stalker (2010) that examined open child protection cases. The researchers found that participants who spoke minimal English were reluctant to express dissatisfaction with the services they received and they had conflicting feelings and fears about the use of English to communicate with professionals. This may be related to the dominance of the English language.

The problems that minority language speakers experience when attempting to access services in the public sphere have been identified in a number of studies (Ahmed, 1991; Thoburn et al., 2005, Chand, 2005; Pugh and Williams, 2006). In the health profession a number of deficiencies have been documented in interaction with patients who do not speak English, this has included increased consultation time, inappropriate treatment, and misdiagnosis (Hampers et al., 1999). Over a period of two years Humphrey and colleagues (1999) observed child protection case conferences and reviews with 12 Asian families that required an interpreter. The study found that out of 14 core reviews, there were five cases when an interpreter was required but was not present and in which the meeting went ahead with no interpreter. On one occasion an Asian worker stepped in despite not being a trained interpreter. In a study by Cox (2011) parents and carers with refugee status were found to have difficulty understanding safeguarding procedures and processes. Cox reported that the interpreter hired at a number of child protection conferences did not speak the family's language, in addition one parent received a letter written in a language they understood but did not speak. These studies highlight communication deficiencies and raise issues about the use of informal interpreters and assumptions about proficiency in modalities. These findings emphasise two key messages. First, how an absent language can affect communication (Mir, 2007), and second, how defunct or absent interpreting services may prevent and deter service users' LEP access to services and subsequently affect minority language speakers' mistrust of community services (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996).

The issue of service users' rights and needs is a perennial concern of the social work profession (McLaughlin, 2009; Wyness, 2014). Harrison (2006; 2007) explored how language policy in its overt and covert forms infiltrates social work, through a study that involved bilingual 'non-native' social workers in Australia. Harrison suggested that there are three broad orientations towards linguistic diversity: i) language as a problem ii) language as a resource and iii) language as a right. The first characterizes lack of English or being a non-

native speaker as a deficit or disadvantage and a significant barrier to participation in social, economic and political domains. The second orientation considers language as a 'resource', this attempts to counter the language as problem orientation to highlight the benefits of social workers' capacity to speak additional languages. The third perspective is a 'rights orientation' underpinned by a human rights perspective. This perspective can be situated in the rights of individuals to identify with their mother tongue and the right of minority groups to maintain their languages. This tripartite orientation is useful because it suggests that outlooks to language are individual as well as institutional, and ideological (Farr, 2011). Following the language as a right orientation, it has been suggested that minority language speakers may not receive the same quality of service as English speakers because they are unaware of their right to request linguistic support (Rennie, 1998) or may feel reluctant to express dissatisfaction with the services they received (Maiter and Stalker, 2010). In relation to this, Drakeford and Morris (1998) argue that the provision of language services contradicts traditional demand-led public administration; they argue that the outlook 'they can have it if they ask for it' or that services are 'available on request' (p.106) is not sufficient. Drakeford and Morris argue that this positioning adds to the service users' burden and marks them out as demanding or difficult. Subsequently, it is argued that the person who requires the interpreting may emerge as an: 'institutional construct'; determined by the routines of the institutional practice (Drennan and Swartz, 2002), rather than by individual need.

It is important not to overlook professionals' viewpoints and role during encounters with interpreters. Kriz and Skivenes (2010) interviewed social workers in England and Norway about their experiences of working with families who did not speak the respective majority languages (English and Norwegian). The social workers in England perceived the challenges of working with these families in negative terms. The authors cited one social worker who described this as a 'bloody nightmare' that delayed the decision-making process (p.1357). Social workers from both countries identified a number of deficits associated with using interpreters, and felt that many messages were lost in translation. This could be associated with research that has found that social workers may choose not to use an interpreter. One of the reasons for this approach, reported by Humphreys et al., (1999) was a social workers' feeling that an interpreter would 'only add to the intrusiveness on the family's privacy' (p.286). In a similar vein, Rennie's (1998) research found that some nurses felt that interpreters should only be used in exceptional circumstances, as they maintained that the patient could speak English 'if they made the effort' (p.63). This finding is illuminating and

can be linked to the broader socio-political context, and wider Discourse about minority language speakers, as discussed in the preceding chapter. The research findings presented in this section suggest that ‘communicative insecurity’ may be felt by both social workers and service users in interpreter-mediated communication.

The relationship between efficient interpretation services and social inclusion has been identified by a number of commentators (Woloshin et al., 1997; Cheng, Chen and Cunningham, 2007; Kofman et al., 2009; Barron et al., 2010; Ngwakongnwi et al., 2011). A connection has been identified between an individual’s health status and their ability to speak English, with evidence to suggest that greater English language proficiency is related to better health status (Weinick and Krauss, 2000). Moreover, it has been suggested that the delivery and advertisement of services in minority languages could increase the low take-up of universal services by minority groups. This thesis has been extended from an economic vantage point, as it is proposed that investment in interpreting and translation services will in the long run, reduce the cost of service provision at crisis point (Robinson, 2002; Jacobs et al., 2004; Graham, Bradshaw and Trew, 2009). These findings indicate that efficient communication and interpretation services are closely linked to structural inequalities and marginalisation, namely the power that resides with majority language speakers, who may have the capacity to arrange interpreting provision. The following section explores research concerning one form of informal interpreting: CLB. In this section the main debates, themes and findings from CLB research are presented.

## **2.4 Child Language Brokering**

CLB can be understood as a type of socio-cultural activity that involves some form of interpretation or translation with the child acting as the broker between adults who do not share a mutual language (Reynolds and Orellana, 2009). Alternative terminology to CLB includes: ‘informal interpreter’ (Cohen, Moran-Ellis and Smaje, 1999); ‘immigrant children mediators’ (Chu, 1999); ‘family interpreters’ (Valdéz, 2003); ‘language/linguistic brokers’ (Tse, 1995; Hall, 2004); ‘natural translator’ (Harris and Sherwood, 1978); ‘cultural broker’ (Jones and Trickett, 2005); ‘para-phraser’ (Reynolds and Orellana, 2009) or ‘non-professional interpreter’ (Meyer, 2001). Following Orellana (2009) I have chosen to use the term CLB, first because this term emphasises the multiple tasks that CLB entails and second it marks the practice as one carried out by persons under the age of 18.

It is likely that CLB has occurred for centuries, throughout the globe and across different linguistic groups, both in spoken and signed language varieties. CLB can be related to migration patterns, in which children have greater English language proficiency than their parents or other family members by virtue of their more extensive exposure to the English language which allows them to learn English at a faster rate than their adult family members. Research on CLB has included children who have recently migrated, child-refugees or asylum seekers and children born in the host country, whose parents speak limited English. Despite the historical existence of CLB, it is a relatively new area of research, which became a topic of academic inquiry in the 1980s. CLB research has been approached both quantitatively and qualitatively. Many of the studies on language brokering have been ethnographic longitudinal studies that have involved bilingual researchers and/or interpreters. This research has involved observations and recordings, children's diary keeping of language brokering activities and interviews with children and family members. Research has focused on the broader processes of brokering; such as: who do children broker for? What is the context of the language brokering? Where does language brokering occur? And how does the child feel about language brokering? The next section explores a selection of findings and attempts to address these questions.

CLB is different to simply being bilingual, moreover not all bilingual children will language broker. It is argued that CLB involves a 'constellation of practices' (Orellana, 2009:p.61) in which children draw upon linguistic, cultural and institutional knowledge to interpret, translate and mediate for family members and other adults in a number of different settings. In light of this, Orellana (2009) argues that language brokering does not just require good control of two languages; it also requires specialised, context-driven knowledge. The practice of CLB has been categorised into three broad experiences: i) CLB in moments of crisis; ii) CLB to seek specific goods and services outside the home; and iii) CLB in quotidian ways both inside and outside the home (Orellana, Dorner and Pulido, 2003). The practice of CLB therefore involves the young person mediating between two adults who do not share a mutual language: 'within the complex world of roles, networks of families and communities' (Hall and Sham, 2007:p.19).

A number of studies have explored different facets of CLB. This has included the experience of CLB in different institutions, at school parent evenings, with the doctor, and in medical settings (Cohen et al., 1999; Garcíá Sánchez and Orellana, 2006; Meyer, Pawlack and Kliche,

2010). Different perspectives of CLB have been explored, for example; bilingual and monolingual children and parents' perceptions of CLB (Cline et al., 2011; Morales, Yakushko and Castro, 2012). The effects of CLB, such as the relationship between CLB and behavioural and emotional development, depression and self-efficacy (Buriel, 1998; Buriel, Love and De Ment, 2006; Martinez, McClure and Eddy, 2009). Review of the existing body of literature indicates that no studies have explored social workers' experience and viewpoints about CLB, although Cohen et al., (1999) reported that children were found to interpret in health and social welfare services and Dominelli (1997) refers to children interpreting and counsels against this practice, a report by the Nuffield Foundation (Cline and Crafter, 2014) concerned with CLB in schools, also counsels against the use of children to interpret for child protection related issues.

#### **2.4.1 Child Language Brokering Experiences**

There have been variable findings about whether or not CLB is a benefit for children. I first consider research findings that suggest CLB is a cause of stress for children. I then consider findings that illuminate the perceived benefits of CLB.

##### **2.4.1.1 The 'Disadvantages' of Child Language Brokering**

A number of commentators assert that the use of children as interpreters is never acceptable (Rack, 1982; Pöchhacker, 2000). These views are also found in health and social welfare guidance that discourage children from interpreting for professionals and other adults (e.g. The London Child Protection Procedures, 2011), however it is not clear how this outlook was determined, to explore this outlook it is useful to consider research beyond the discipline of social work which has illuminated the perceived advantages and disadvantages of CLB.

The disadvantages of CLB have been identified by a number of researchers; these debates are situated within wider questions about typical and atypical work of children within the family and society, related to concern about the excessive and/or inappropriate responsibility that CLB ensues. There are a number of additional findings to consider. First, Weisskirch and Alva (2002) refer to CLB as 'an age-graded phenomenon,' meaning that younger children in the early stages of language and cognitive development may find language brokering more stressful than adolescents. Second, the setting, context and content to be interpreted is said to influence young people's experience of language brokering. For example, Orellana (2009) reports that some language brokering situations entail low level demands and minimal

communication or routine exchanges with the postman, milkman, trade/repair people, which children did not deem to be stressful. Villanueva and Buriel (2010) found that students experienced a heightened sense of stress during parents' evening, particularly if they were communicating about their poor performance. Hall and Sham (2007) reported that children found language brokering stressful, while working in the family take-away business, particularly in relation to their responsibility to serve and interact with customers. Third, a number of researchers have identified concern about accuracy, particularly during medical appointments (Cohen et al., 1999; Meyer et al., 2010). Villanueva and Buriel (2010) found that context-specific vocabulary was the area that posed the biggest challenges for child language brokers. Fourth, CLB has been associated with 'parentification' (see Walsh et al., 2006) or a role-reversal (Candappa and Egharevba, 2002), based on the understanding of CLB as a form of parental dependency. CLB is thought to erode the hierarchical structure of the family and disturb traditional representations of the family, in which the majority of family decisions and responsibilities are carried out by adults and children's work is classified into typical and atypical work (Thorne, 1982; Mayall, 2002; Crafter et al., 2009). Research conducted in England, by Kaur and Mills (2002), found that parents were dependent on their children to interpret with various official bodies; such as the police and teachers. This dependency was conceptualised as a 'role alteration', in which the children were involved in decision-making at a younger age, than children who did not language broker. Kaur and Mills reported that language brokering was mutually rewarding for both the parents and child, although some parents felt frustrated about having to depend on their children to interpret. There are conflicting reports about 'parentification' and 'role alteration' (Walsh et al., 2006). Villanueva and Buriel (2010) found that parents were strategic in their requests for children to language broker and did so as a way to help their children maintain proficiency in their mother tongue language. Nevertheless, the authors highlighted the child's liminal power in the language brokering experience, in which it was recognised that the child occupied a 'borderline subject position' (p.221) in which they were powerless to refuse language brokering yet exposed to adults' critique of their linguistic, cognitive, social and behavioural competencies.

The process of CLB has been identified as intergenerational process. Eksner and Orellana (2012) found that CLB challenges models of expert-novice relationships but point out that '...in language brokering events, knowledge is located both within and between the brokering child and the parent-interlocutor.' (p.200). Eksner and Orellana argue that children did not



have complete control over CLB and that during this process, knowledge and authority are shared and negotiated among children and parents, despite the appearance of the child representing the ‘voice’ of their parents. The authors found that during language brokering, children were found to act under the direct supervision of their parents, who provided ‘scaffolding’ support, particularly in written translation tasks. They did this by breaking up translations, intercepting and instructing. This can be attributed to findings from Valdéz (2003) who argues that although language brokering alters traditional parent-child relationships it does not compromise parental authority, and children conform to traditional childhood roles beyond the language brokering task.

#### **2.4.1.2 The ‘Advantages’ of Child Language Brokering**

Numerous research findings have pointed out that children and adolescents report a sense of pride in helping families through language brokering (Candappa and Igbini, 2003; Orellana et al., 2003; Dorner, Orellana and Jimenez, 2008). CLB has been conceptualised as something ‘normal’ and enjoyable that gives children feelings of pride and allows them to gain more proficiency in their first and second languages and acquire cultural knowledge (Shannon, 1990; Orellana et al., 2003). McQuillan and Tse (1995) report that language brokering is associated with increased first and second language acquisition, and in earlier research Orellana et al., (2003) detected a positive relationship between language brokering and academic performance. In later work, Orellana (2009) found that children’s exposure to adult realms and the use of adult-language improved the children’s syntactical and lexical developments.

It has been argued that CLB experience leads to ‘...increased maturity, astuteness, assertiveness and self-reliance, born of early adult experience’ (Kaur and Mills, 2002:p.125). Md-Yunus (2012) argues that language brokering provides a way for children to develop and manage their own and others’ emotions. In a US study, Weisskirch et al., (2011) surveyed 1,222 university students all of whom had two immigrant parents. The researchers compared non-language brokers, infrequent language brokers and frequent language brokers on a variety of ethnic, cultural and identity measures. The results suggested that language brokering experiences were associated with the development and reinforcement of children’s ethnic identity and cultural values. In consideration of the cited benefits of language brokering, Harris and Sherwood (1978) consider translation as an ‘innate skill’. Villanueva and Buriel

(2010) consider CLB as a type of 'giftedness' that enriches marketability for children's futures, given the multilingual landscape.

Orellana (2009) writes that when children are expected to relay messages from institutional authority figures they effectively act as agents of those institutions and hence contribute to the economic life of the family. This is summarised by the following quotation.

As translators, children make things happen for themselves and their families; they forge connections and open up lines of communication. They make it possible for adults to do things that they could not otherwise accomplish...answering phone calls, setting up appointments, making purchases, soliciting services. (Orellana, 2009:p.21).

The review of literature suggests that CLB may be deemed positive or negative from different vantage points. Hence, it is purposeful to think about the concept of power – namely how dominant messages about the acceptability of CLB are conceptualised. This is one of the starting points for the study, as I consider social workers' experiences of using children to interpret for their families, in addition to young people's experiences of interpreting. As Orellana (2009) argues, language brokering is useful to illuminate the socially constructed nature of childhoods, and to '...denaturalize what is taken for granted in the dominant culture' (p.17) and recognise the diverse ways that families function in society. This leads to the final section of the chapter.

#### **2.4.2 The Family Practice of Child Language Brokering**

The debates about the perceived disadvantages and advantages of CLB appear to relate to relationship within the family. CLB is conceptualised as an intergenerational or family practice (Martinez et al., 2009), in which families pool their skills and resources across generations (Orellana, et al., 2003; Orellana, 2010). Parents in a study by Morales et al., (2012) expressed a preference for their children to language broker rather than external interpreters. Language brokering has also been found to strengthen family bonds, and CLB practice has been associated with the overall wellbeing of the family, identified as a significant feature in the adjustment to a new host country and the process of integrating into society (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Jones and Trickett (2005) contend that 'immigrant children' are often called upon to language broker because their school attendance

provides them with daily immersion into 'native' life and more opportunities to acquire and practise speaking English. Hence there are arguments that such children are an invaluable resource for the survival of their families and make a significant economic contribution to family life (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995). This suggestion is evident in research from Candappa and Igbini (2003) who examined the everyday lives of refugees living in London. Language brokering was one of the tasks children took on alongside household duties and caring for siblings. The children's dual language proficiency was found to be of benefit for one family in their application for asylum, as the child liaised with officials and explained the family situation. Candappa and Igbini (2003) found that young refugees in London used their language proficiency to communicate directly with officials, and in one case this enabled the family to remain in the UK. Despite such contributions, it has been noted that children do not perceive their language brokering to be the most helpful activity that they carried out in the family (Orellana, 2009; Villanueva and Buriel, 2010). Findings from a number of studies have reported that children conceptualise language brokering as a normal and unremarkable part of everyday life: 'not a source of pride but a fact of life' (Cline et al., 2011:p.218).

The literature review illuminated a number of ambiguities and contradictions concerning CLB. It was established that CLB occurs as a lived experience for many linguistic minority families, given the context of global migration and priority placed on the acquisition and command of a majority language such as English. The literature confirmed the multi-faceted reality of CLB, for example, in some studies CLB was reported to be of benefit to the child economically, socially and cognitively, whereas in other studies CLB was considered to be problematic in terms of self-efficacy, and premature responsibility and exposure to adult domains.

The activity of child interpreting in a social work context is an unexplored area of social work practice, despite guidance that advises against this. From the review of literature and policy in this chapter and the preceding chapter, it can be argued that CLB in social work is related to two overarching responsibilities; first, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child and second, respect for the child's wishes and feelings, underpinned by legislation and guidance (Children Act 1989; Every Child Matters, 2003; Children Act 2004). Finally, Orellana (2009) has critiqued the tendency of researchers to dichotomise CLB as negative or positive due to the variability of CLB experiences. In acknowledgement of this, and

following a social constructionist perspective, the present research attempts to avoid this binary logic and aims to present insight into the CLB experiences from young people who language broker and social workers' experience of using interpreting provision. Hence, the research inquiry can be considered as a novel contribution, as it focuses on different forms of interpreting from two different participant groups; young people's experiences of language brokering and social workers' experience of using interpreting provision, including child interpreting. Moreover, this is the first study to consider social workers' experiences of child interpreting in social work.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter I considered the nature and function of language and the process of communication. I illuminated tensions between attitudes towards minority languages and the perceived prestige of the English language, and related this to wider ideologies about the promotion of the English language. It is evident, therefore that despite legislation and attempts to provide and promote services for linguistic minority users, some difficulties remain, and there appears to be challenge in the search for a 'welfare framework that respects, accommodates and is responsive to diversity' (Williams and Johnson, 2010:p.31).

I explored research pertaining to interpreter-mediated encounters and explored some of the complexities of this phenomenon. I outlined some of the key debates associated with CLB. The review highlighted mixed findings about whether language brokering has a positive or negative effect on the parent-child relationship and children's development. The review also demonstrated that CLB may be a form of survival among parents' LEP, as it can help families navigate and contribute in society, it may be also considered a 'normal' and unremarkable part of children's everyday life.

Finally, it is important to note that non-professional adult translators have been found to facilitate a range of exchanges: religious, online, commercial and medical (Orellana, 2009; Hokkannen, 2012; McDonough Dolmaya, 2012; Schouten et al., 2012). In addition, it is important to note that adult interpreters have been reported to find interpreting challenging (Drolet et al., 2014). Hence, arguments about children's capacity to interpret may not be exclusively related to the child's social status. The following chapters are concerned with the research methodology. Chapter three outlines the theoretical perspective, epistemological framework and includes an overview of the research methodology in light of the research

objectives. Chapter four presents the research methods employed; this includes the process of locating the research participants, a description of the research sites and an overview of the research participants.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3. Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodology. To begin I summarise the aims of the research and explain how this lead to the development of the research objectives. I then outline the theoretical framework and the epistemological and ontological positions that underpin this research. I discuss the chosen data collection methods and discuss ethical considerations. I outline the analytical strategy and discuss the steps taken to create a rigorous study.

#### **3.1 Research Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to explore the phenomena of interpreter-mediated encounters. This is explored in two ways. First, the study explores the experiences of social workers, who use formal and informal linguistic provision to work with users LEP, with a particular focus on the role of child interpreters. Second, the study explores young people's experiences of interpreting for persons who do not share a mutual language. The inclusion of both viewpoints provides insight into different aspects of interpreter-mediated encounters. Inclusion of the young people's interpreting experiences provides an opportunity to record the young people's 'voices' (Mayall, 1996). This is in recognition that children and young people's voices are not always heard (Corsaro, 2005). The experiences of young people therefore provide an opportunity to consider young people's experiences of language brokering and positions children as active agents rather than passive objects (James and Prout, 1990; Mayall, 2002; Corsaro, 2005). Focus on the social workers' experiences of interpreting provision provides insight into social workers' perceptions about different forms of interpreting, including their viewpoints of children who interpret.

There are other parts of interpreting encounters which are not explored in this study. This includes the experiences of formal interpreters and parents LEP and children with experience of interpreting in a social work context. As the ethics application states (appendix 2), this project originally focused on child language brokering in a social work context. The intention was to locate children with experience of interpreting in a social work context. Despite making contact with over twenty statutory and voluntary agencies, I did not manage to locate young people with experience of language brokering in social work to participate. I did however locate young people with experience of language brokering in other settings,

including the home, in health and social care settings and in the public domain, as presented in chapter six. I also interviewed social workers about their experiences of children who interpret in social work. Consequently, the focus of the study moved from child language brokering in social work, to spoken language interpreting more broadly. The topic of interpreting is explored in two ways; children's experience of language brokering in a variety of settings and social workers' experiences of accessing interpreting provision, in formal ways through outsourced interpreting services and informal ways, by children and colleagues in the workplace.

The reality of not locating children with direct experience of interpreting in a social work context has consequences for the thesis. The social work participants focused on their experience in social work settings and their work with service users who interpreted, and assumption can be made, that the children or families referred to by the social work participants are likely to be in some form of distress, given that they are in receipt of said services. Moreover, the social worker's involvement may be influenced by organisational duties and legislative demands, including their duty to protect the child's wellbeing. This involvement may shape the social work participants' outlook to childhood and child interpreting. The contextual difference between the children and social workers is important to note, as the children's experiences ranged from interpreting for a stranger in a shop, to interpreting for a family member at the doctors. None of the examples given by the young people included situations in which they or their family members were the 'subject' of social work involvement. As a result, this study does not make claims about children's experiences of interpreting in social work. In addition, it is difficult to draw out areas of convergence and divergence between the children and social workers' experiences, although in chapter nine, I consider the relationship between the findings from the children and social workers.

As a monoglot, I lacked the capacity to carry out research with person LEP, without the use of interpreting provision - which financially, went beyond the scope of this project. In light of these experiences, the focus shifted from child language brokering to interpreting encounters more broadly. The focus of this study is not to compare children and social workers' experiences of interpreting but rather to explore different aspects of interpreting; social workers who use interpreting provision and children who interpret. The study is guided by the following four research objectives.

1. To gain an understanding of the interpreting resources used by social workers to support service users LEP.
2. To explore aspects of interpreting from different viewpoints.
3. To illuminate social workers' experience of using children as informal interpreters.
4. To illuminate the experience of young people who language broker.

### **3.1.1 Theoretical Perspective**

In this study, theory is used as a hermeneutic tool, as: 'a language with which to describe and explain aspects of the social world' (Blaikie, 2009:p.128). The theoretical perspective involved the creation an index of central themes and subthemes. This provided a way to explain the phenomenon under scrutiny and a guide for analysis and self-reflection (Bryman, 2012). This approach offered a way to consider different conceptualisations of: social work, interpreting, childhood and myself, as a researcher (Gilbert, 2008). The theoretical perspective is underpinned by two central theoretical concepts: communication and Discourse and two subthemes: power and role enactment. These concepts are explored in turn.

Communication is a central theme of this study, and is considered in three ways. First, the experiences of social workers in their work in which they communicate with interpreters and service users LEP. Second, in relation to young people's experiences of facilitating communication via language brokering for persons who do not share a mutual language, thus how they facilitate communication. Consideration of social worker and young people's viewpoints highlights that there are different modes of knowing, and my inclusion of these experiences allows multiple realities to be presented (Law, 2004). The third way communication is considered is through analysis of research data. This includes the spoken content generated in the interviews, and the field notes; observations and reflections, in which I draw upon different modalities of communication. This is commensurate with the idea of the 'active interview' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995) and the 'discursive turn' in social work research (Hall et al., 2014 (eds)). Following an 'active interview' approach, in the analysis of findings, I set out to capture i) what was said in the interview and ii) how things are said. I pay attention to the content and the meanings produced in the interviews; namely the way the interview responses were produced through linguistic and rhetorical choices. I draw upon the



interview transcripts, and consider the ways in which meaning is created, and how the phenomena of interpreting and childhood are constructed by me, the researcher and the participant. This follows the idea that '[a]ll participants in an interview are inevitably implicated in meaning making' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:p.18) I draw upon my field notes, to extend understandings about the nature of communication and meaning. I consider aspects of non-verbal communication; the way the space of the youth centre was used, in chapter four (p.62) and attention to codes of behaviour and dress in chapter five (p.78), with reference to field notes. The dual approach to analysis occurs throughout chapters four to seven, as I pay attention to both the content of what was said and the way in which this is said. This approach has benefits, as it accommodates the idea that 'modes of knowing... do not produce or demand neat, definite, and well-tailored accounts' (Law, 2004:p.14). Hence, I do not exclusively focus on whether child interpreting is allowed or prohibited, but rather how these understandings are produced. The nature of communication is closely associated with the second theoretical concept: Discourse.

Discourse is used as a way to consider the ways in which social phenomena is constructed, with consideration of wider political and social ramifications and prevailing views about social reality (Gee, 2010). The power relations between social worker and service user has been characterised in a number of ways, one of which is in consideration of an asymmetrical relationship. The social work profession is understood to have traditionally helped the 'powerless' (Cree, 1995). However the profession has been criticised for abusing its power; for failing to make decisions in time or for making wrong decisions and being overly optimistic (Parton, 2014). There has also been a move towards participatory approaches to alter asymmetrical relations and to value service user voices (Beresford and Carr, 2012 (ed)). In light of this, I consider power as an analytic category and consider what constitutes power in the context of interpreter-mediated encounters. This is based upon the production and distribution of material and symbolic resources as described by the participants, including a consideration of the productive and limiting modes of power (Tew, 2006). I consider structural understandings of power, including the concept of 'disciplinary power' (Foucault, 1979), this involves analysis of the ways social workers' discipline and control themselves by their own self-scrutiny. This provides a useful frame to consider how social workers regulate their practice with interpreters and service users LEP. In light of this, I consider which Discourse may influence social workers' understandings of child interpreting and formal

interpreting more broadly and the ways these roles and ideas intersect with existing structures and power relations.

I consider various roles in the study, this involves the participants' roles, as language brokers and social workers, I also consider my role as a researcher and the disciplinary power of the interview itself (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Law, 2004; Tew, 2006), with consideration of the way that the interview responses are produced, in addition to the meanings produced. To achieve this I draw upon the work of Goffman (1968a; 1968b; 1968c; 1969; 1970; 1972; 1981). Goffman's ideas can be related to a dramaturgical perspective, as he argues that people 'play' or enact roles, consciously or unconsciously. Goffman argues that roles are the 'basic units of socialization' and he states that: 'It is through roles that tasks in society are allocated and arrangements made to enforce their performance.' (Goffman, 1969:p.77). In reference to Goffman, I draw upon ideas of the front and back region<sup>6</sup>. The front stage includes the area of the performance as actors perform their roles, the back stage, refers to a metaphorical behind-the-scene area, in which the actors step out of their roles. In this study, the front region refers to the interpreting encounter, as the social worker 'plays' the role of a social worker and the interpreter (be it a formal or interpreter interpreter) adopts an interpreting role. In the back region, the child or social worker steps out of the interpreter role. This is explored in consideration of the socially constructed nature of the young people's roles as interpreters, and the multiple roles that children adopt.

### **3.1.2 Epistemological and Ontological Perspective**

In this section, I outline the epistemological and ontological positions adopted in this study. Epistemology is a theory of knowledge, concerned with how we can understand knowledge and how this is generated. Ontology deals with the nature of 'being' and in a research context, relates to the researcher's view about the nature of the world, and the nature of what is being studied (Benton and Craib, 2001). The underpinning epistemological framework is informed by a social constructionist framework. This framework proposes that knowledge is socially constructed and that actions are shaped by the cultural, historical, political and social norms that operate within the particular context (Berger and Luckmann, 1979; Witkin and Saleebey, 2006; Witkin, 2011). The social constructionist approach is influenced by post-structural

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<sup>6</sup> In the 'Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' (1969), Goffman refers to front and back 'regions' or 'stages'.

questions about interpreting, and the nature of communication and power. Following a social constructionist approach, I do not focus on a singular independently existing reality of interpreting and social work practice with interpreter and service users LEP; rather I recognise the situatedness of the particular research sites and participants' constructed realities (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This rests upon the understanding that truth is multifaceted and fragile and constructed through talk (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Because of this, the aim of the research is to illuminate multiple 'truths' from different vantage points – social workers and young people. This is influenced by the active interview approach (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995), which accommodates multiple ways of knowing, including diverse and contradictory understandings.

In terms of methodological implications, following Burr (1995) and Taylor and Ussher (2001) I propose that this research does not reveal objective truths about social work practice and interpreting encounters, instead I place emphasis on subjective experiences and realities, which are viewed as constructions (Berger and Luckmann, 1979). It is important to note that the research does not take an extreme social construction position, known as a radical scepticism, about ontological claims, I therefore do not claim that all of reality is socially constructed (Burningham and Cooper, 1999). While the research pays attention to how various actors construct their understandings I do not deny the non-existence of this reality but rather maintain that the meaning of reality is socially constructed (Taylor and Ussher, 2001). Therefore the ontology of constructionism is based on the premise that the social world is built on shared meaning (David and Sutton, 2011). The intention of this research is to examine the participant's meaning-making, particularly the way that beliefs and accounts are talked about. I also pay attention to how particular Discourses are entwined with existing practice in social work and in the lives of the young people. I therefore consider how meaning may be 'constructed':

...by the multifaceted ways in which institutional practices, professional language, technical processes and general patterns of behaviour produce and reproduce meanings... (Rodger, 1991:p.67).

This framework differs to the critical realist approach which is concerned with an examination of underlying structural mechanism (see Bhaskar, 1975; Houston, 2001).

### **3.2 The Sample**

The sample included nine social workers and nine young people. I discuss how the participants were selected in chapter four. Relatively small sample sizes were used because emphasis was placed on the depth of content and the detailed transcription and analysis of text rather than the breadth of social workers' and young people's experiences. The decision to select social workers and young people from different sites was commensurate with the research objectives (p.44). I was interested in multiple experiences of interpreting, therefore I did not intend for the study to focus on one site, rather I sought to gain an understanding of different experiences of interpreting between the participant groups.

### **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

The chosen data collection method with both participant groups was qualitative interviews. In the research with young people, interviews were supplemented with drawings by four of the young people<sup>7</sup> and ethnographic methods of observation of the staff and young people; this informed the recruitment strategy and self-reflection. Interviews were chosen for a number of reasons. First, interviews were commensurate with the research objectives and underpinning framework as they allowed insight into the young people's experience of language brokering and social workers' experience of working with interpreters and service users LEP. The qualitative research methods were selected to move beyond a simple question and answer dialogue, with consideration of the 'active' interviewer and respondent (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Silverman, 2006), this was to gather data about the subject matter of interpreting in addition to 'data about how that subject matter is organized in respondents' narrative experiences' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:p.56). Second, I was familiar with the use of interviews from previous social work practice and research experience. The similarities of interviews during social work intervention and social research interview have been identified by Shaw and Gould (2001) as a way to explore meanings and experiences. It can therefore be argued that

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<sup>7</sup> All young people were given an opportunity to draw a picture of their language brokering experiences. Carlos, Hana, Mirium and Wayne chose to do so. I include two drawings by Carlos and Mirium in chapter six.

Language is at the crux of health and welfare practice because it constructs the internal subjective world of each participant and acts a bridge between the individual and the 'external social world' (Pugh, 1996:p.94).

Therefore, commensurate with the social constructionist position, the interview was understood as a co-construction between the participant and interviewer. Third, the choice to use semi-structured interviews was to allow a standard range of themes to be addressed between the participants. This offered participants some flexibility to talk about experiences of their choice, and meant that the participants were not restricted to the agenda set by the interview guide (see appendices 9 and 10). Therefore, the interviews moved beyond asking a list of questions and followed a format that accommodated: 'contextual shifts and reflexivity. Rather than supressing the respondent's and the interviewer's reflexivity' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:p.55). In the interviews with the young people, I invited the participants to draw their experiences of being in an interpreting encounter, I also used a series of images of places in the local community as a way to encourage the young people to think of the multiple places that they interpreted. Fourth, the use of interviews enabled rapport to be built between in the interviews, this was important since it was not straightforward to locate participants, this is discussed in the proceeding chapter.

### **3.4 Ethics and Governance**

In this section I outline some of the steps taken to gain ethical approval. The study was approved by University of Salford Research Ethics and Governance Committee (see appendix 2). In line with recommendations from the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice (2002), the participants were told about the purpose of the study; they were informed what the study entailed, why the study was undertaken and given details of the funding body. Following D'Cruz and Jones (2004) I demonstrated respect for research participants and provided sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision about participation. Prospective participants were given an information sheet, which highlighted these details, I also provided an information form for the young people's parent or carer (see appendices 6-8 and 11). Prospective participants were given opportunities to ask questions before, during, and after the interviews. All participants signed a consent form and gave verbal consent to participate. A number of measures were taken to protect the research

participants; to ensure that they were not harmed or mistreated during the research. The participants were advised of their rights to confidentiality and that any identifying information would be anonymised in the thesis and other publications and presentations. Before the start of the interview I explained that confidentiality would be breached if the content revealed concern about the welfare and safety of themselves or others. I ensured that the participants did not feel pressurised or obliged to participate and gained consent to audio-record the interviews. The participants were given the right to withdraw consent at any given stage, without reason. After the interviews, the participants were thanked for their participation; refreshments were provided as a means to express my gratitude. I took a number of measures to protect myself during the fieldwork, this included notifying my supervisor of my whereabouts, debriefing with my supervisor and protecting my privacy, by not disclosing my personal mobile phone or home address (see ethics application, appendix 2).

Commensurate with the Data Protection Act 1998, digital recordings, transcripts, and consent forms were kept in a locked cabinet in a secure office. Participants' names were not stored on the hard drive of the PC. Names and identifier codes were stored separately in a locked filing cabinet, encrypted USB sticks which contained data were also locked in a filing cabinet. When the interviews were transcribed, participants were sent a non-technical summary - in written format for the social workers and presented verbally to the young people. Both participant groups were given the opportunity to comment and ask questions. I treated the participant accounts with honesty and considered this during the analysis stage, and the presentation of participant accounts (D'Cruz and Jones, 2004). I followed Humphries' (2008) guidance of what constitute an ethical approach in social work research and ensured that the study included the following actions:

1. locates the researchers' own biographies, histories and identities;
2. positions researchers as accountable not only to themselves, but also to the communities of those they study;
3. takes account of the changing national and international context, the way boundaries are being challenged and the implications for their research;
4. demonstrates a commitment to examining social injustice and inequality;
5. designs research that ensures a plurality of voices is heard;

6. encompasses a view of research subjects as active, reflexive being who have insights into their situation and experience; and
7. demonstrates a concern to understand frameworks for survival and resistance.

In consideration of the above, a number of actions were taken. I reflected upon my role within the research, with consideration of how this may have influenced the study, this is discussed in more detail in the following section and in chapter five. A number of measures were carried out to demonstrate accountability and transparency before, during and after the research. In consideration of point 3, the research is concerned with the nature of communication and interpreting and the way in which boundaries are constructed, guarded and transgressed by interpreting provision. This topic has relevance for an international context, given continued migration patterns and the growth of the English language (Crystal, 2003). Issues of social justice in this study relate the nature of communication and interpreting and an analysis of power relations in consideration of these processes. Finally, the research includes the views of social workers and young people; this includes a view of participants who are active beings, with insight into their own lives and practice. I discuss ethical considerations in further detail in the following chapter.

### **3.5 Self-Reflection**

Self-reflection took place throughout the research process and the 'Listening Guide' for researchers (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008) was used to guide this process. The transcripts were re-read, with attention paid to how the person spoke about her/himself. Doucet and Mauthner argue that this approach is purposeful in the ontological narratives of research as:

It draws attention to the temporal and relational aspects of narratives as well as to the subject's own understanding of how she/he fits into a given narrative (p.406).

After each interview I recorded my personal reflections in a research diary, excerpts from the diary can be found in chapter five. The diary entries offer a practical understanding of ethics and boundaries during fieldwork. Examination of my own responses offers insight into the research phenomena and the complex nature and ambiguity of language, and a deeper

understanding of the social construction and operationalization of linguistic imperialism, as explored in the literature review. The self-reflection therefore allowed for a more textured understanding of the research phenomena (Taylor and White, 2000). I listened back to the audio tapes at the earliest opportunity and I made alterations to subsequent interviews, in which I paid attention to my 'active' role in the interview (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995); the clarity of the questions and way I encouraged participant responses. After the transcription and before analysing the data, I utilised a 'worksheet' approach (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008), in which I added my initial reactions and interpretations. This involved questions, musings, and speculations about the data and allowed me to examine my own assumptions and to consider how these may influence or affect the interpretation process. I continued to carry out self-reflection during the analysis process, by writing analytic and self-reflective memo-writing in NVivo. This helped me to track and develop emergent ideas and to document and enrich the analytic process (Strauss, 1987). Logs of field notes, including my changes in perceptions and attitudes were recorded, analysed and interpreted. I also discussed my experiences and interpretations with the supervisory team throughout the analysis process. These techniques prompted me to develop a critical awareness of myself in the research process, for example how my age, sex, class, language, ethnicity, and status and presence as an adult researcher might have influenced the research process and its outcome. This provided a means to consider power relation, namely how I may be complicit in relations of knowledge and power. This was in recognition that the researcher is not separate from the world studied and in recognition that I am not neutral tool (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Witkin, 2011). I therefore used self-reflection as tool to highlight ethical and power dimensions (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992) and as a way to show how I was part of the research setting and construction of knowledge.

It is important to note that, researchers such as Wyness (2006) and Mullings (1999) recognise there may never be a wholly democratic relationship between the researcher and the researched. Skeggs (2002) adds that problems of power, privilege and perspective cannot be eradicated by inserting one's self into the account. Burman (1996) takes this further and argues: The process of bringing into the focus, of knowledging, can constitute an act of epistemic violence or alienation that disempowers or distorts (p.140). This argument corresponds with Rabinow (1977) who suggests that research is inevitably involved in the reification of symbolic violence. Hence, in respect of this study; there are concerns about the process of re-telling of an experience and the transformation of object to subject; namely that



a fragment of the social actors' reality under investigation (social work and/or interpreting) comes to constitute the entirety of the individual. In consideration of this, I stay sensitive to the construction and reification of the phenomena under scrutiny.

### **3.6 Quality and Rigour**

A strength of this study is that it draws on qualitative methods that allow for in-depth exploration of participant's lived experiences and the themes that emerged through the interviews. Given the nature of interpreting and the complexity of the social worker task, qualitative research was regarded as an appropriate and useful tool to explore and identify key themes and relevant issues. Attention to rigour was achieved by including a plurality of voices (Humphries, 2008): social workers and young people. I participated in prolonged engagement in the 'field' at the youth centre (Padgett, 2008), this was in order to familiarise myself with the social environment, and to build rapport with the young people. To attend to the transparency of the research, all participants were given a non-technical summary of the interviews and overview of the research findings. Accountability was achieved through maintaining an audit trail; which outlined the research process and chronological narrative entries of research activities: interviews, observations, transcription and the evolution of codes and categories coding process. This was in the attempt to identify free associations, cross connections and contradictions. I also looked for negative case analysis to generate new knowledge (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Padgett, 2008). The limitations of this study are considered in chapter ten.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This research explores a taken-for-granted and little known area of social life and social work practice, and offers insight into different perspectives of interpreting provision. This includes social workers' views about the use of formal translation and interpreting provision, and young people's experiences of providing interpreting in the form of CLB.

This chapter has explored the research objectives. I then outlined the theoretical framework and the epistemological and ontological positions that underpin this research. I discussed the qualitative methods employed and outlined the analytical strategy and ethical considerations. I then discussed a number of measures employed to create a rigorous study. In the following chapter I discuss a number of processes of the research, including gaining access, gaining

consent, the interview process and ethical considerations. I then introduce the research participants.

## **Chapter 4: The Research Process**

### **4. Introduction**

In this chapter I discuss elements of the methodological process, first in relation to the research with social workers and second in relation to the young people. I discuss how the sample was selected and outline the eligibility for both participant groups. I discuss how the participants were recruited, and how the data was collected. I introduce the research participants and provide 'thick description' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the youth centre. I then provide an overview of the system adopted for the presentation of the research findings. The research with the youth people was a lengthier process which involved more negotiation than the research with social workers. In respect of this, I spend more time discussing this process.

#### **4.1 Participant Group 1: Social Workers**

Criteria for selection were as follows:

- child and family social workers;
- experience of working with families LEP and experience of using interpreters;
- experience or knowledge of children interpreting or translating for parents, carers, or professionals during social work involvement.

The recruitment of social workers involved multiple rounds. First I approached the Children's Services departments of several local authorities in England; second I posted adverts on a forum of a popular social worker's website and third I contacted former social work colleagues to forward a recruitment email amongst their social work colleagues. At the beginning of the recruitment, I specifically sought social workers who had experiences of children interpreting in a social work context. In response to this request there were a number of refusals and a number of non-replies. Direct refusals from social workers were due to social workers having no experience of children interpreting. I have included three social worker (SW) refusals that I received by email.

SW 1 'Obviously I would never do this as it is my strong view that it is not the child's role'

SW 2 'I have never had a young person translating for me with parents because we are not allowed to use young people'

SW 3 '[I] don't think that I have much experience on child interpreters (avoid using

I have included these excerpts to highlight the sensitivity of the topic and outlook that children should not interpret. I discussed these refusals with a number of my social worker colleagues; we considered whether the social workers' reluctance to participate was concerned with the ambiguous nature of the topic, particularly their awareness that child interpreting is a proscribed part of social work practice, I was also advised that the term 'child language brokering' which I used in my information sheets may be an unfamiliar term for social workers. In light of this, I revised the third eligibility criterion to focus on social workers' understanding of the phenomenon of 'child interpreters', rather than drawing upon their direct experience. This approach proved successful and nine participants were located. Although none of the participants that had earlier refused took part, it is not clear whether this approach improved recruitment. Interestingly, all participants had experience in which a child had interpreted during social work intervention. The approach to focus on participants' viewpoints in the first instance seemed to prove a useful way to gain insight into their thoughts and experiences about this practice. As the literature review outlined, social work guidance discourages children from interpreting and I was aware this may limit participants' willingness to discuss this area of social work practice. I overcame this by emphasising informed consent and confidentiality and attempted to limit fears of reproach by emphasising that the purpose of the research was to gain an understanding of the everyday realities of social work practice. I also disclosed my status as a registered social worker-cum-researcher as a way to convey a sense of solidarity to the participants. I critically discuss this strategy in chapter five.

Tables 1 and 2 present an overview of the child and family social worker participants. They indicate that the social workers had varying lengths of employment as social workers and different language proficiencies. I pay attention to the social work participants' capacity to speak additional languages, including their own experiences of interpreting.

Table 1: Social Workers: Characteristics I

<b>Sex</b>	
Male	3
Female	6
<b>Ethnic group</b>	
British Black African	2
British Asian	3
White British	3
White Other	1
<b>Languages</b>	
Monoglot	3
Bilingual	6
<b>Mean years of Social work practice (SD) 6 (4.4)</b>	

Table 2: Social Workers: Characteristics II

Descriptor	Additional languages used in the workplace	Sex	Ethnic Group	Social Work practice (years)
M6	n/a	F	White British	1
B4	French	M	British Black African	1.5
M8	n/a	F	White Other	3
B7	Panjabi, Urdu	F	British Pakistani	3.5
B5	Bengali, Urdu, Panjabi	F	British Bangladeshi	4
B1	British Sign Language	M	White British	6
B3	Ewe, French	M	British Black African	10+
B2	Panjabi, Urdu	F	British Pakistani	10+
M9	n/a	F	White British	15+

## 4.2 Participant Group 1: Research Process

All participants had experience of working in a statutory child and family social work team in London, albeit in different child and family teams and boroughs of London. This included short-term and long term support for children and families, direct work with 'looked after' children and work with children with disabilities. At the time of the research one social worker worked for a charity and eight social workers worked for statutory agencies, within which one social worker was self-employed as an independent social worker. The interviews took place at the social worker's office (n=3), a cafe (n=4) and at the social workers' home (n=2), and lasted between 38 minutes to 1 hour. Before the interviews began I gained written consent and explained the research process, including issues of privacy and confidentiality, including the participants' right to withdraw data. I advised the participants how the data would be used. I explained my interest in the research topic and told the participants that I was a qualified social worker.

The interviews could be described as a 'guided but informal conversation' (Reynolds and Wetherell, 2003:p.495) and were treated as a way to elicit talk. I used open questions and probed participants for detailed responses about the social work context, in particular the reasons for Children's Service involvement, in an attempt to gain a contextual understanding of the experiences and the service users they referred to. There were three main components of the interview. The first part focused on the participants' experience as social workers; their particular role and length of service. In the second part I asked open questions and prompted the participants to share experiences from practice, as an attempt to generate data with some narrative characteristics. I asked the participants to tell me about an experience in which they had worked with families who spoke limited English and their experience of working with formal interpreters. In this part I learnt whether the social workers used additional languages in the workplace, and if so, I asked the participants about their experience of providing ad-hoc interpreting. The third part of the research placed focus on child interpreting, I asked the participants if they had experience where a child had interpreted or translated and asked them to tell me about this experience. Upon listening to the audio recordings I made a few changes to subsequent interviews, mainly to elicit data about the social workers' own experience of providing informal interpreting, as this was an emergent finding. In this analysis, I paid attention to the content and constructions of the accounts in an attempt to understand how the

participants used language to construct understandings of childhood and interpreting. The pre-determined coding categories for social workers' interviews included three broad areas:

- (a) experiences of formal and informal interpreting;
- (b) social work with service users' LEP;
- (c) construction of the accounts – attention to participants' use of language.

### **4.3 Participant Group 2: Young People**

The eligibility criteria for the young people were as follows:

- aged 10-18;
- bilingual and proficient in English (self-assessed);
- experience of language brokering for a family member.

This age range was selected to encompass a range of language brokering experiences commensurate with age, life experience and cognitive ability. The age range was also chosen in consideration of extensive research by Orellana (2009) who found that language brokering becomes more established after age 10. The age group was capped at age 18, this is commensurate with the upper age range of children according to social services' duties to children in need (section 17) Children Act 1989.

#### **4.3.1 The Research Site for the Interviews with Young People: 'Hillshire'**

The research took place in a youth centre in 'Hillshire', the pseudonym for a multilingual ward in West Yorkshire. Hillshire has a large land mass (36,576 hectares) and a small population (approx. 206,000 people). The ethnic-make-up of the youth centre and Hillshire is important to outline. Hillshire has been home to a number of minority groups over the past century, from: Ireland, Pakistan and in more recent years Central and Eastern Europe. At the time of research, Pakistanis were the largest minority ethnic group (5.3%) and Islam was the

second most prevalent religion after Christianity<sup>8</sup>. The youth workers were predominantly female British Pakistani and interacted with the young people in English and Urdu. This was not characteristic of wider public services in Hillshire, where 87% of staff employed across the local authority were white British. Data concerning language was less widely available as the local authority did not record the spoken languages of staff. The most mutual languages recorded of being translated in the local authority were: Bengali, Czech, Slovak, Urdu and Tagalog and the cost of translation and interpreting services totalled £27,860 in 2011/12 and £78,285 in 2012/13, a 36% increase. This reflects wider trends across Yorkshire which have seen an increase in the use of translation and interpreting services (“Exclusive, Councils Spend £1.5m”, 2013).

#### **4.3.2 Recruitment: Young People**

Purposive sampling was used to locate young people; this was achieved by contacting the manager of a youth centre, in a multilingual town of West Yorkshire (see appendix 5). The manager confirmed there were children aged 10-13 of Pakistani heritage that attended the youth centre, mainly for ‘homework club’, who he thought might interpret for their parents. I was invited to meet the youth workers to discuss the project in more detail. The youth workers, who had more direct contact with the children than the manager, advised that the majority of the children spoke minimal Urdu and Panjabi and therefore would have minimal experience of interpreting. They advised me to locate a different youth centre where there were young people who had more recently migrated to England and that may have experience of interpreting. I followed this advice and made contact with a youth centre in Hillshire. In the following section I describe the youth centre. I then offer a description of the research procedure and examine my own methodological behaviour.

#### **4.3.3 The Youth Centre**

I met with the manager, a female, British Muslim Pakistani who had worked at the youth centre for over ten years. She provided an historical overview of the centre and explained how the youth centre attempted to meet the needs of the diverse community which had changed since 2004, when families from Eastern Europe moved to the area. Before then the largest

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<sup>8</sup> These data were gleaned by direct communication with the local authority (Freedom of Information Act 2000).



ethnic and religious group was Pakistani Muslims from the Kashmir area of Pakistani. The manager reported there were some tensions between Czech and Pakistani peoples, which had led to segregation in the ward. Outwardly, this segregation was visible. There were visible differences in dress and behaviour, particularly evident in the interaction of male and female young people. For example, groups of male and female young Czech people socialised on the streets, this included hugging, and kissing, whereas it was rare to see Pakistani young people socialising across gender groups in public.

The youth centre was operated by the local authority and was situated within a community centre, at the site of a former primary school. A number of services were offered at the centre, including citizen advice, voluntary groups and apprentice schemes during the day and a youth club in the evening. The manager advised that the youth centre was open to all young people aged 11-18 although it was primarily attended by Czech and Pakistani young people. Spoken languages of the young people in addition to English included: Czech, Polish, Slovak and Urdu. The manager advised that the presence of the young, mainly Czech people on the streets was a concern to some of the residents and in response to this the youth workers had undertaken outreach work to invite the young people to the youth centre. She reported that it took several years of relationship building before Czech young people felt comfortable to attend the youth centre. I was advised that the Czech young people were particularly wary of new people and it might take them a while for them to feel comfortable enough to talk to me.

As the youth centre was part of the local authority, local government priorities were adhered to. First, in relation to public sector 'equality duty' (Equality Act 2010) to meet the needs of the diverse communities, to ensure fair and equal access for all and to build cohesion and integrations at a local level (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007). Second, to give the young people a safe place to go in their local areas and improve relationships across generations (Aiming High, 2007). As part of their job description; youth workers were expected to work with partner agencies and the young people; following guidance and statutory duties: Every Child Matters (2003) and Youth Matters (2005) and they were encouraged to foster good relations with the young people. During the youth club it was not uncommon for the session to be attended by teachers and uniformed community support officers. This partnership working was a deliberate attempt to create a climate of transparency, which meant that the youth workers had an awareness of developments and

incidents in the community; this included observations and information about the young people.

The youth centre provided youth services from Monday to Friday; this was organised by 'gender': one boy's night; one girl's night and three mixed gender nights. This structure had been in place for a number of years following parent and other community members' request to observe Islamic codes of conduct and offer separate provision for girls and boys. This structure was observed by the Pakistani young people, who attended the separate gender nights respectively. While all of the young people conformed to this organisational structure, they also appeared to organise their attendance by ethnic group; both male and female Czech young people attended the mixed gender nights but did not attend the separate gender nights which were mainly attended by Muslim young people. This exemplifies how young people appropriate organisational structures to suit their needs. The youth workers were mainly female; three were British Pakistani and one was white British, there were also two male British Pakistani youth workers who helped out and a black African youth worker. There were no Czech youth workers, despite the Czech young people being the largest ethnic group.

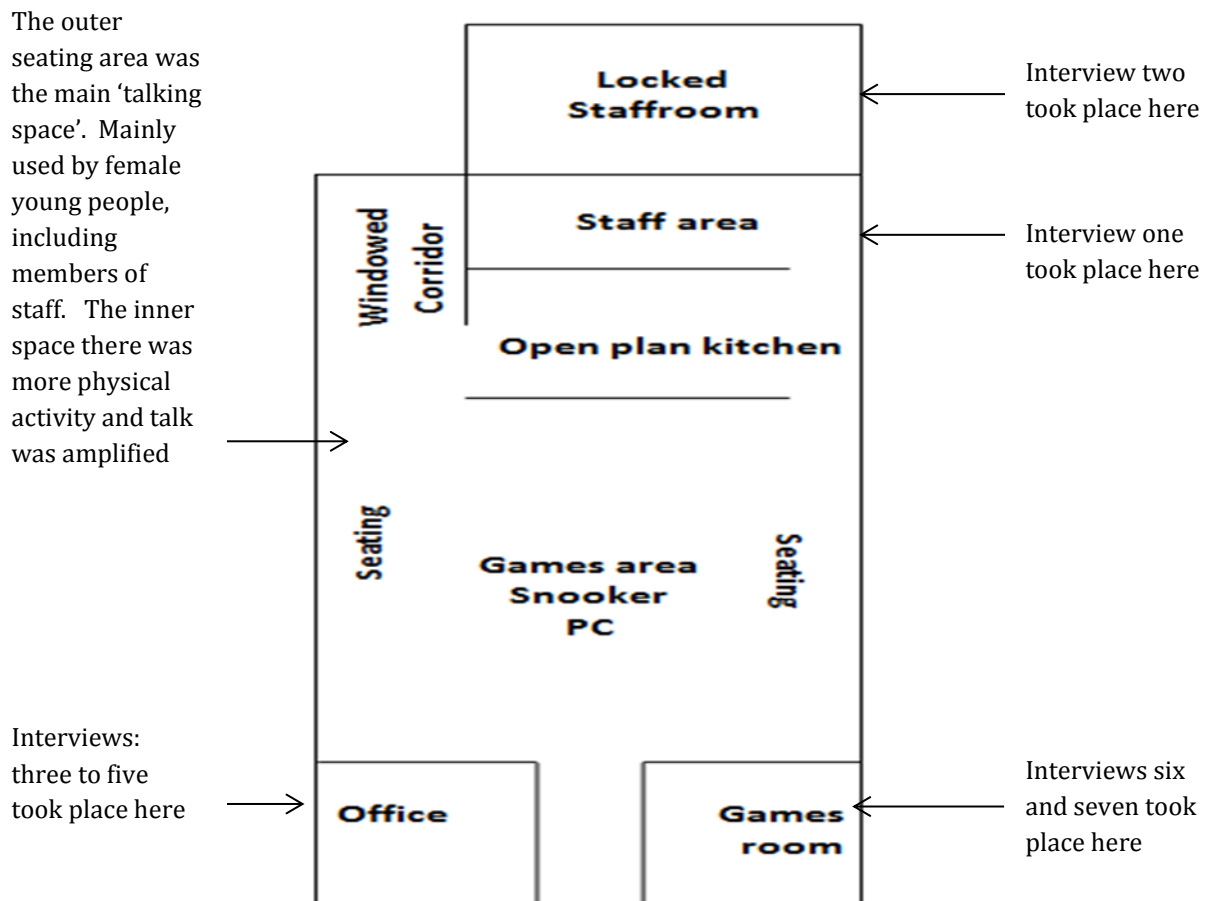
#### **4.3.4 The Youth Centre Space**

In this section I briefly pay attention to the proxemics of communication in the youth centre; namely the use of space and movement.

The space of the youth centre was used in a variety of ways; as space for young people to play, yet controlled by adults, rules and regulations. Identification of the use of space is a useful way to develop a methodological insight, for instance, during the fieldwork, I felt very aware of my position in the youth centre space as an adult researcher. Particularly at the beginning of the fieldwork, I tended to use the peripheral seated area that bordered the central games area, which was used by people playing pool, ping pong and other physical activities. There was a lot of movement and noise in this area, and it was not until I felt more comfortable that I left the seating area and engaged in activities. I consider that my movement from the outer to the inner area was related to my better success in recruiting young people; in other words the more space I used meant that I interacted more with the young people and as a result I generated interest in the project. I extend and reflect upon some of these experiences in the next chapter.

The interviews took place at the youth centre. In the first interview I used an interlinking space between two staff rooms (see figure 2). While nobody walked through these rooms, the participant's friends came to the window and attempted to get our attention. To avoid further distractions, I changed the location and the remaining interviews took place in an unused games room or office area, this was in close proximity to the main goings on of the youth centre, but with limited distractions or interruptions from others. The floor plan in figure 2 outlines how the space of the youth centre was used by the young people, staff and me.

Figure 2: The Youth Centre



#### 4.3.5 Recruitment and Access

When organisational consent was gained, I met the youth workers and explained the purpose of the study. I decided to follow the advice of the youth worker at the first youth centre I

visited and attempted to locate Czech people, thinking that their recent migration would correlate with language brokering for family members and others.

As per the managers' advice, I remained mindful that gaining the young people's consent may be difficult. I attended the mixed gender nights three evenings a week, for three months and in this time interviewed four Czech young people. These sessions were very busy, attended by up to 40 young people. A few weeks into fieldwork; I was invited to attend a charity event during the girls' session; these sessions were a lot smaller, attended by up to 15 young people. I attended and met some of the young people, mainly British Pakistani, who told me they had experience of language brokering and would like to participate in the research. I therefore made the decision to learn about a variety of language brokering experience from the experiences of different migratory experience: British born young people of Pakistani heritage and one young person that had recently migrated from Pakistan. I spent several weeks at the girl's group and interviewed five young people, thus nine young people were interviewed.

I took the manager's advice and before inviting the young people to participate I spent time getting familiar with the youth centre; the young people and staff, and allowed them to get to know me. I made sure they knew the young people knew the reason for my attendance at the youth centre, I also put up flyers to publicise the study (see appendix 6). I soon found out that nearly all of the young people were bilingual and had experience of language brokering for their parents who spoke limited English. Amongst the Czech young people, some spoke more English than others. I consulted with the youth workers, who pointed out the young people who they deemed to be confident in their use of English, and who they knew had experience of language brokering. The youth workers gave me space to talk and interact with the young people and they introduced me to young people who they knew language brokered. After two weeks of regular attendance and my participation in activities and informal interaction with the young people I began to invite people to participate. Some of the young people declined outright, reasons included that they were shy, or were busy or not interested. During the recruitment young people asked questions about the research; a number of young people wanted to know what I would do with the data. I explained that I would write a 'book'. I deliberately chose this term as I thought it would be more understandable than the precise term 'thesis'. A few of the young people pointed out the injustice, that I'd get rich from the profit and their information. Despite my protestation they refused. Similarly, one young person said he would only participate if he was paid, and was not satisfied that I only

provided refreshments. These experiences highlighted the agency that the young people possessed to decline and make informed decisions about their participation in the research. Their suspicion of myself as a researcher, and of being 'subjects' of research highlights the innate power I held as an adult researcher, this will be discussed later in the chapter.

#### **4.3.6 Consent for Participation**

The young people who expressed interest in the research were given an information and consent form for themselves (appendix 7) and a parental information sheet and consent form (appendix 8), in their preferred reading language. These documents were available in English, Czech and Urdu. I used external agencies to translate a number of documents into Czech and Urdu: young person information sheet, parental information sheet and consent forms and part of an interview in which two young people spoke in Czech. The interpreter was given an information sheet, which outlined the purpose of the study. The interpreter signed a consent form, which requested that they upheld the confidentiality of the dialogue translated. The participants were given the choice for the interview to be conducted in English or their language of preference, although all participants chose for the interview to be conducted in English. Parents were given an opportunity to speak with me through a telephone interpretation service, this was clearly indicated on the parental information form, in the parent's respective language, although no parents chose to do so. In respect of the ethical protocol I gave the young people at least 24 hours to decide whether to participate and informed them that the interview could not take place without their written consent and the consent of their parent/carer.

It was difficult to get the forms completed and returned; a number of young people expressed interest and took forms away to read and get signed. There were a number of occasions when I found the forms lying around the youth centre at the end of the session. I realise that although it was necessary to gain written consent, this was, in some ways, a barrier to participation, and the forms in themselves could be regarded as an object of institutional control, which was particularly ironical since the research inquiry was concerned with children's experience of language brokering.

I undertook a number of recruitment techniques. As previously mentioned, I observed the youth centre environment and got to know the young people and staff, I also let the young people get to know more about me, and my life. I learnt Czech and Urdu phrases, to express

my interest in the research topic, and as a way to strike up dialogue about the young people's bilingualism and my monolingualism. I also participated in a number of activities: pool, ping pong and Zumba.

#### **4.3.7 Gatekeepers**

Most of the youth workers had worked at the youth centre for a long time and knew the young people well. The youth workers were accommodating towards me and took an interest in the research. While their support was welcomed, there were occasions when this was met with mixed feelings, as two examples outline. On one occasion, a youth worker used the research to bribe a young person. A particular young person had been 'barred'<sup>9</sup> from the youth centre and was told he could return on the basis that I could interview him. On another occasion it became evident that the youth workers were aware of the research topic, yet were not entirely aware of the research protocol. For example, a youth worker invited a young person to participate in the research on my behalf, when I met the young person I found out she had migrated with her parents from Slovakia, and that her parents did not speak English. I explained that I did not have a translated parental consent and information sheet in Slovak (not knowing how dissimilar Czech and Slovak were). As I explained this to them both, the youth worker attempted to mitigate the problem by advising the young person to translate the English form to her parents. This was ironical since the purpose was to learn about young people's experience of language brokering, not necessarily to re-create language brokering activity. In both situations, I had to balance my gratitude to staff alongside upholding the correct protocol, to ensure that young people were not coerced into participating and had sufficient information and time to make an informed choice.

#### **4.4 Research Participants: Young People**

The young people were from two ethnic groups: four were third generation British Pakistani, born in the ward of Hillshire, one young person had moved from Pakistan in the past three months and four were Czech nationals, who had moved to Hillshire in the past five years. While all the young people had experiences of language brokering, the spoken minority languages used and their English language proficiency, they also differed in regards to

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<sup>9</sup> The young person was barred for violating one of the rules of the youth centre, as he was seen smoking within the grounds of the centre.

different life experiences, migration experiences, and length of time in England, religion, class, and sex. The participants had varying proficiency in English; four young people were born in England and spoke English fluently, the remaining five young people had moved to Hillshire between three months to five years and had less English language fluency. Tables 3 and 4 display brief demographics of the research participants, this includes: sex, age, where and who they language brokered for, length of time in England, ethnic group, and languages spoken. The given names are pseudonyms, chosen by the young people themselves. The tables show that the young people were aged between 12-17 years (mean age 14), and had resided in England for different lengths of time; four were born in England and spoke English and Urdu. Five young people had migrated with their families to England in the past five years from the Czech Republic, one of these young people was Roma, and he spoke Roma, Czech and English.

Table 3: Young People: Characteristics I

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<b>Sex</b>	
Male	3
Female	6
<b>Nationality</b>	
Pakistani	1
Czech	4
British	4

Table 4: Young People: Characteristics II

<b>Name</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>CLB for</b>	<b>Length of time in England</b>	<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Languages Spoken</b>
Hana	F	13	Members of public, neighbours	From birth	British Pakistani	Urdu, English
Miriam	F	15	Members of public, neighbours	From birth	British Pakistani	Urdu, English
Sadie	F	17	Members of public, professionals, grandfather	From birth	British Pakistani	Urdu, English
Simran	F	16	Members of public, mother, professionals	From birth	British Pakistani	Urdu, English
Wayne	M	12	Parents, members of public, professionals	+5 years	Czech	Czech, English
Sara	F	16	Family members, members of public, professionals	+5 years	Czech	Czech, English
Sean	M	17	Parents, members of public, professionals	+5 years	Czech	Czech, English
Carlos	M	13	Parents, professionals	+3 years	Czech	Czech, English, Roma
Iqra	F	15	Parents	3 months	Pakistani	Urdu, English



#### 4.4.1 Interviews with Young People

I carried out semi-structured interviews with nine young people in the youth centre. The interviews lasted between 23 to 36 minutes. After the first interview (appendix 14), I listened back to the audio, I was generally happy with the interview guide, although I was aware that I offered ‘Sean’ too many breaks, which interrupted the flow of the interview. I paid attention to this in subsequent interviews, I adopted a more conversational style and did not offer as many breaks. This created a more free-flowing dialogue.

The young people were invited to be interviewed in pairs to realign the adult-child power hierarchy; two interviews were conducted in this way, thus meaning I conducted seven interviews in total. Participants were provided with refreshments during the interviews. Before the interview began I gained signed consent from the parent and young person and verbally explained the meaning of confidentiality and the limits of this, specifically that confidentiality would not be upheld if an illegal act was disclosed or an act that put the young person or another at risk of harm. I gained verbal consent to use the tape recorder and showed each young person how the tape-recorder worked by recording myself saying: ‘My name is Siân, followed by a banal remark such as ‘...and yesterday I ate spaghetti for tea’. I then invited the participants to say something that was then recorded and played back. The purpose of this exercise was to familiarise the young people with the recorder, and to give them an insight into the transcription process, as I explained that I would listen to the recordings and transcribe our dialogue. During the interview I attempted to create an open context and I stressed to the participants that there were no right or wrong answers, nor would there be consequences for the information that they shared; providing that this information did not bypass safeguarding issues. Each participant selected their own pseudonym (shown in table 4), and I explained that this would be used in the thesis.

At the start of the interview I asked ice-breaker questions about popular culture: fashion, music. I then asked a series of closed-ended questions to gather demographic data such as age, ethnicity, birth place, birth order, siblings’ ages and gender. I then asked a series of open questions:

- language proficiency;
- language dominance and preference;

- language brokering experience: who for; location; type of translated material; and
- an invitation for the young people to talk about their experience of interpreting.

This plan was flexible and participants were offered breaks throughout the interview. I used a number of follow up questions to invite comparisons of their previously mentioned experiences and prompted the participants to say more about the subject and their experiences (Wood and Kroger, 2000). During the interviews, space was given for the participants to speak freely about issues that were discussed in the interview and emergent topics were included in subsequent interviews.

In awareness of power differentials involved in interviewing young people, I amended the questions to be ‘age-appropriate’, this meant I avoided complex language and used a combination of direct and indirect questions, along with the use of images of places in the community: doctors, community centre, children’s centre, jobcentre, school – to aid discussion and to help the young people to think about the different places they language brokered. I brought a variation of coloured paper and crayons and images and invited participants to draw as an alternative tool to represent their CLB experience; two drawings are included in chapter six. These drawings were selected as they were the most clearly drawn and because they provided a useful supplement and addition to the participants’ spoken narrative about CLB. Drawing was an existing activity in the centre; this approximated real-life situations and strengthened ecological validity (Shadish, Cook and Campbell, 2001). Drawing could be considered a ‘child-centred’ activity, particularly since this was used with young people and not the social workers. This technique created a methodological frame in which children could add their own meaning, convey their reality, their own way of expression in a non-verbal mode (Veale, 2005; Lefevre, 2010). Drawing was a method I had previously used during my social work practice with children, to generate discussion about their feelings and experiences as a supplement to spoken word. Drawing was offered to all young people and was not taken up by three of the older participants, all aged 17 (Sadie, Sean and Simran).

Punch (2002) points out the contradiction for researchers to emphasise the competence of children but then to use ‘child-friendly methods’ and asserts that the key difference between research with adults and children is the power dynamics between child subjects and adult

researchers. These ideas lead me to consider the differences in my approaches with the two participant groups. One of the key differences was that I sought parental consents in addition to the children's consent to participate. I also spent more time with the participants before the interviews, in which I became familiar with the setting and the young people had the opportunity to get to know me. In comparison, my contact with the social workers was mainly through email contact. The transcripts show that I spent more time trying to relax the young people; they also reveal that I mirrored the children's vernacular, as a way to make them feel more comfortable and encourage their responses. The interviews with young people also involved more laughter and use of humour following research that has identified the beneficial use of humour in research with young people (Williamson and Butler, 1995; O'Kane, 2008), this can also be approximated with the real life setting of the youth centre. At the end of the interview the participants were de-briefed and advised of ways that they could contact me post interview. The decision to stop interviewing new participants was after a thorough analysis of the data, when I established that I had sufficient data to make arguments and warrant or justify these (Wood and Kroger, 2000). When all of the interviews had been conducted I brought refreshments to share with the staff and young people as a thank you gesture.

#### **4.5 Analysis Procedure**

After reviewing the data corpus: drawings, interview transcripts and notes from my time at the youth centre, I developed an initial coding plan based on the research objectives. The broad coding categories were as follows:

- (a) CLB experience (where, who for, why);
- (b) contributions of CLB;
- (c) self-perceived capacity to language broker.

The analysis process was influenced by narrative and discourse analysis, consistent with the social constructionist paradigm (Taylor and Ussher, 2001). Elements of narrative analysis are used to consider the way in which the narrative is told, with an examination of the structure, linguistic style and rhetorical devices, considering how talk sets out to convince and how actors justify and offer a 'persuasive' performance for a critical audience (Reissman, 1993;

Hall, 1997; Silverman, 2001; Reissman, 2005). The analytic strategy is also influenced by Discourse. A basic tenet of discourse theory is that people use language to construct versions of the social world and that identity is constituted and reconstituted through discourse, rather than waiting to be discovered (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell and Potter, 1988; Mercer, 2000). In chapter nine, I consider 'Discourses' with a capital D (Gee, 2010) and consider wider political and social ramifications and refer to particular prevailing views about social reality and their relation to this research.

I grouped the social worker and young people's transcripts separately for the initial analysis. I began by looking for patterns in experience and perceptions; the findings chapters follow this structure and the discussion chapter explores relationships and patterns across the data. The transcripts were read carefully, multiple times to look for pattern recognition and thematic development. QSR NVivo 9 was used to manage the textual data. The analytic process was based on an immersion in the data. This consisted of sorting, coding and comparing data, and the examination of minute sections of text, made up of individual words, phrases and sentences (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Codes and categories were developed both deductively and inductively; as well as predetermined classifications, the language of the participants guided the development of code and category labels, which were identified with short descriptions, known as 'in vivo' codes (Charmaz, 2006). Following the inductive approach I grouped items of importance and salient quotes. Codes and categories were sorted, compared and contrasted, until saturation: when the analysis provided no new codes or categories. Categories for core status were: i) centrality in relation to other category ii) frequency of categories occurrence in the data iii) inclusiveness and easily relates to other categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These codes and categories were systematically compared and contrasted, to garner increasingly complex and inclusive categories and relationships (Charmaz, 2006). I developed a number of subcategories under each primary category and modified these throughout the coding process. For example, under the heading: CLB experience, codes were developed to categorise the norms and values associated with CLB: language, accents, proficiency and so forth. I summarised the codes using a number of within-case data-display techniques (Miles and Huberman, 1994), as I examined the way the participants constructed their experiences. I theoretically mapped the data and refined the themes to be presented. These were organised into a coherent and consistent account with accompanying narrative and identified points of interest. The themes represent meaning within the data, this is not determined by the size of the theme. I discuss the findings from the

two participant groups separately, and in chapter nine I group the findings from the social worker and young people and consider their relationship.

#### **4.6 System for Presenting Data**

While the term ‘child language broker’ is used throughout the thesis, during interaction with participants I used the verbs: ‘interpreting’ (to refer to spoken interpretation) and ‘translating’ (to refer to written material). I also mirrored the participants’ vernacular, in the attempt to understand how specific terms related to their unique narration and unique situation. Not all participants distinguished between translating and interpreting. As previously mentioned, I refer to formal and informal interpreting, and in relation to the analyses of findings from the social workers, I refer to child interpreting. In relation to the young people I refer to child language brokering, in recognition of the multitude of tasks the language brokering involves. My approach to pseudonyms differs between participant groups, as only the young people were invited to select their own pseudonym. Instead of selecting a pseudonym for them I opted to use an alpha-numerical identifier code to identify the social worker participants, as either ‘B’ (bilingual) or ‘M’ (monolingual) followed by their unique participant number (R=researcher). The alpha-numerical code is an approach more commonly found in the discipline of Psychology, I decided to adopt this method rather than to ascribe a pseudonym to the social work participants, in the recognition that particular names could offer latent or subtle clues to the person’s identity (Wiles, 2012). The decision to identify the social workers’ language faculty was made in the analysis stage, when this emerged as a key theme that emerged from the data.

In the presentation of findings chapters (chapters six - eight), the excerpts are presented in one of two ways. In the first approach, some of the excerpts have been ‘cleaned’ evidenced by minimal or no indication of non-lexical items that are not relevant to the analysis. In these, focus is on the content of the excerpt. In the second approach, focus is placed on the construction of the account and mechanisms of talk (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Parker, 1994). In these excerpts the data is presented in its ‘raw form’ in which the participant and researchers’ utterances and non-lexical items: pauses, ‘erms’, moments of indecipherability, and overlapping speech remain (see transcription guide, appendix 12). My decision to use detailed transcription is in order to consider the construction of the interview (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Corden and Sainsbury, 2006a; 2006b). As well as including excerpts from individual participants I offer detailed and nuanced account of a group of themes within the

data and group data together from multiple participants. In the findings from the young people chapter, I include observations from the interviews that were not captured in the verbatim data, in addition to selected drawings to supplement the verbal accounts. To aid reading, line numbers have been added to excerpts longer than ten lines. A guide to the transcription conventions can be found in appendix 12.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed a number of processes of the research including the recruitment, access, the interviews and analysis process. I considered a number of ethical and value matters and actions taken to overcome difficulties. I incorporate a self-reflective approach, in which I recognised myself as part of the research, this will be extended in the following chapter. I introduced each of the participant groups and outlined the system for the presentation of research findings. In the next chapter I include a self-reflective account. I then present the research findings in chapters six to eight.

## **Chapter 5: Self-Reflection**

### **5. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect upon various parts of the research journey. Within the chapter I refer to the research with the young people and social workers. I reflect upon my position as a researcher in relation to both participant groups and consider some of my assumptions and actions. The chapter is organised into three sections. First, I provide context to ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives. Second, I refer to the research with the young people at the youth centre. In this section I include an extract from my fieldwork diary, to demonstrate how the use of self-reflection was used as a tool to reflect upon my own value base and as a way to garner methodological and theoretical insight to the phenomenon of CLB. Third, I refer to the research with the social workers, I reflect upon my position and the spaces that surrounded the interviews and include observations from this experience.

#### **5.1 ‘Insider:Outsider’**

A useful way to reflect upon the research process is with consideration of the ‘insider: outsider’ debate. There are two broad outlooks to the insider/outside debate. On one hand it is argued that the researcher should be an insider to the group being studied, meaning the researcher and those they study have shared characteristics. For example, Saidat (2010), in the case of linguistic minority groups, argues that only native speakers would understand the linguistic attitudes and behaviours of group-members. In a similar vein, but in a therapeutic context, Sue and Sue (1990) found that black service users were fearful of opening up to white practitioners whom they regarded to be symbols of the oppressive establishment. Alternatively Cederberg (2014) was of the opinion that having a different ethnicity to research participants allowed participants to talk more freely about intra-group conflict than had she been a member of the same ethnic group. In respect of these positions, it may be concluded that the research phenomenon under scrutiny has to be considered (see McCorkel and Myers, 2003). Moreover, there are no simple answers in regards to the similarity/difference of interviewer/interviewee, as the social relations of the interviewer and participant operate in complex and intersecting ways (Phoenix, 1994; Gunaratnam, 2003). Therefore, ‘insiderness’ is not performed in any simple way such as visible attributes such as ethnicity or class (Mullings, 1999). There may be less visible indicators of position such as political affiliations (Ficklin and Jones, 2009) which may affect the research process.

Paying attention to aspects of my identity and status as an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ has therefore been a component of the reflective process and will be considered in the following sections. There were a number of incidents that prompted me to think about my position as a monolingual, adult, researcher, in addition to my ethnicity, sex and classed identity (Tyler, 2012). Given that I grew up in ‘Hillshire’ there were some shared experiences between myself and the young people, my memory of being an adolescent helped me to make sense of some of the young people’s behaviour. However, my white British nationality, ethnicity and linguistic proficiency positioned me as a member of the majority group in contradistinction to the young people. In addition, I did not have experience of migrating to a new country, learning a new language or language brokering for adults.

## **5.2 Research with Young People**

I looked forward to the fieldwork at the youth centre. I had previous work experience as a youth worker and I thought that this, in addition to many months of preparation to conduct research with young people and familiarisation with the body of the literature in the field of CLB, would place me in a good starting position to conduct the research. However, in the first week of the fieldwork, I experienced what Holliday (2007) calls ‘sociological blindness’. My prior work experience in the field and theoretical understanding of the field were temporarily forgotten as I attempted to interact with the young people I became accustomed to my research surroundings and my position as a researcher.

### **5.2.1 Locating Young People to Interview**

The three months spent at the centre saw me develop different strategies to find young people to participate. Initially, I tried to adopt an unassuming role; I made general conversation with the young people and got to know the young people before inviting them to participate in the research. In the first few weeks the youth workers introduced me to a number of Czech young people who they knew interpreted for their parents. I explained the purpose of the study to these young people, and a number of them agreed to participate. I gave these young people a number of forms (young person research information, parent information and parent consent forms) all of which had been translated into Czech. The young people took these forms and said they would read them and return the consent forms to me the following evening. Many evenings went by when I found these forms lying around at the close of the session. I felt disappointed that the young people had disregarded the study. Equally, I



recognised that the young people had lives of their own and participating in research wasn't likely to be at the top of their agenda. Moreover, I realised that their actions were demonstrative of participant choice, which was an integral part of conducting ethical research.

### **5.2.2 Language**

At the youth centre it was not uncommon for young people and staff to draw upon their multilingual repertoire, and speak in a mixture of language. In addition, music played in a mixture of languages and musical genres (English, Czech and Panjabi). I was intrigued by the extent of the young people's hybrid linguistic repertoire; for example I observed young Czech people learning phrases in Urdu to allow conversations with Urdu speaking youth workers. I recognised the currency of communication that I was by default excluded from, largely due to my monolingualism.<sup>10</sup> In recognition of this, when I started to talk about the study to the young people I drew upon my monolingualism as a personal deficiency that I contrasted with their bilingualism. I referred to the young people's capacity to speak multiple languages as a skill that I didn't have. This was not an overt strategy but rather a representation of my feelings about those who speak multiple languages. I also attempted to learn a few phrases of Czech. I already knew some Urdu phrases (from living in Hillshire), however I rarely heard the Pakistani young people conversing in this language.

A number of young people declined to participate in the study. These young people disclosed that they did not wish to be interviewed because they felt as though they did not have good enough command of English to answer the questions competently. There was clearly a distinction between their self-perceived capacity to speak English and my evaluation of their capacity and I was stunned that I had overlooked this, in the depths of my monolingual insecurity. I was somewhat relieved that I had not rushed the recruitment process and that the young people felt comfortable to share their feelings. This allowed me to think more deeply about the research phenomenon under examination, and my position within the research as a native English speaker in a multilingual milieu. Reflecting on these experiences, my monolingualism could be considered as an advantage and disadvantage which mainly rendered feelings of being an 'outsider'. Not understanding some of the conversations meant I developed heightened awareness of sounds, tones and rhythms, which were not always

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<sup>10</sup> I recognise the neglected interplay of gender, class and ethnicity that were likely to have impacted on this process, (see Crenshaw, 1989; Bhabha, 1994).

understandable and may have been taken-for-granted had I been able to speak the multiple languages of the setting. However, my non-understanding brought moments of uncertainty in which I craved linguistic and cultural fluency. As I describe in chapter six, there were a number of misunderstandings in some of the interviews with the young people, in which I attributed to my lack of experiential knowledge of interpreting. I can associate this with reflections from Blackledge and Creese (2010) who carried out research in multilingual schools and in some cases did not speak the same language as those around them. Blackledge noted feeling frustrated at not being able to understand all of the interaction, he described this as a: ‘...journey of becoming familiar with an unfamiliar world’ (2010:p.96). In a similar way, he attempted to transform his ignorance into his strength and sought opportunities from these challenges.

### **5.2.3 Codes of Behaviour and Dress**

This section builds on the discussion about proxemics, found in chapter four (p.62). I consider an additional aspect of communication; specifically behaviour and dress at the youth centre.

My adult status meant that I was allowed entry into both physical and aural spaces at the centre; for example I was allowed into the staff room and given entry into ‘staff-only’ conversations. I often spontaneously fulfilled staff member’s tasks; such as helping to set up equipment, opening locked doors to allow people to enter the youth centre. Upon reflection, these actions were probably my way of ‘giving back’ to the staff, as a way to express my gratitude for allowing me to conduct the research there. As previously mentioned, I spent time with the young people, and engaged in activities and conversation with them. Perhaps due to my sex, I found it more comfortable to speak with the female young people. They were more likely to be sat down conversing rather than the males who tended to be playing pool and ping pong, and thus were less inclined to engage in conversation.

I knew there was no dress code at the youth centre and that I could wear what I wanted. However, I was sensitive to surroundings, and I was conscious of dressing ‘appropriately’ for particular settings. I dressed in casual clothing, similar to what I would have worn as a youth worker: jeans and t-shirt or jumper. When I spend time at the ‘girls group’<sup>11</sup> sessions, I

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<sup>11</sup> This description was used at the youth centre.

dressed more conservatively and wore clothing that covered my arms and legs. This was in an attempt not to stand out from the girls and staff who were nearly all females of Pakistani heritage and followed the Sunni Muslim faith. Staff that worked at the centre wore headscarves and dressed in clothing that covered the majority of their bodies. One youth worker wore a niqab or full face veil outside of work, but removed this inside the centre as she said it was important to have full face contact with the young people. Some of the girls wore headscarves; they also dressed in clothing that covered the majority of their bodies.

I participated in a number of activities at the youth centre, one of which was 'Zumba' dancing at the 'girls group', taught by an external dance teacher, a white British female. I had been wearing shorts and a vest earlier in the day and I changed clothing to jeans and a long sleeved top to go to the centre. The 'Zumba' classes had been going on for a few weeks. This was the first time I and one of the participants from this study 'Iqra' had tried 'Zumba' along with some of the girls and staff. 'Zumba' is a fusion dance-exercise/activity in which Latin-pop music is played (loudly). The music contained sexually explicit lyrics and the teacher was showing us some quite 'suggestive' dance moves. I found the music and dance moves uncomfortable, as did Iqra, judging by the look on her face. It was a particularly warm evening, which meant that we were all sweating. Commensurate with my own norms and values, I was tempted to remove my cardigan to cool down, however none of the other dancers did so, and they were wearing more clothing than I was. I felt uncomfortable and embarrassed to continue dancing and so I quietly slipped away from the class. At the end of the session, I questioned why I had found this experience so uncomfortable. I realised my discomfort related to my feelings about what it means to be a female, with two interrelated and contradictory outlooks. In the first instance, my efforts to dress 'conservatively' seemed to somehow be thwarted through my participation in 'Zumba'. However, I realised that this outlook in itself was repressive as it associated 'conservative' clothing with 'conservative' behaviour. It also mirrored a protective outlook towards children and an attempt to protect their innocence (Katz, 2008).

The following accounts have been extracted and expanded from my fieldwork diary entry. They extend some of these deliberations that arose in the research, some of which I return to in the conclusion.

#### **5.2.4 - Diary Entry I-**

*During a joint interview with two young people, they began to speak in Czech. My initial reaction was suspicion. I suspected that they had lost interest in the topic. I also felt sense of powerlessness, based on my incapacity to understand what was being said. The transcript shows that I waited for 3 seconds (what seemed a lifetime) before I interjected and kindly reminded the young people to speak English. When that section of the audio was translated into English, I was ashamed to learn that my suspicions were amiss; the young people had not lost interest, one person had simply asked the other to clarify my question and he had done so.*

This revelation demonstrated a number of things. The ‘English only’ condition of the interview positioned the young people’s bilingualism as provincial despite its centrality as a research topic. As I re-visit this stipulation I recognise that this decision engendered an official English speaking milieu which restricted opportunities for those who were not proficient in English or simply preferred to speak in Czech and in fact replicated the privilege attached to the English language (Bourdieu, 1991; Heller, 2008) and moreover reflected my needs, rather than the needs of the young people. This inadvertently created a type of linguistic hierarchy as this stipulation restricted those who were not willing or confident enough to speak in English. In addition, the research itself inadvertently instigated a child to interpret for another, hence in this instance the research was a vehicle that both created the existence and regulated CLB (Rabinow, 1997).

### 5.2.5 - Diary Entry II-

*One evening I took a break from trying to find young people to participate and initiated a game of play ping pong with a young Czech girl. As we played her friends came to sit behind me, talking and laughing with her in Czech. I tried to strike up conversations in English, referring to the fact that I hadn't played ping pong for many years and was quickly tiring. The conversations didn't lead anywhere and the girl continued to play ping pong with me whilst talking with her friends in Czech. I felt out of sorts as I couldn't understand the laughter and conversation; which I assumed was related to me. After ten minutes or so of scrappy ping pong (on my part) my tiredness got the better of me. When the ball came towards me I caught it. I put the bat and ball down on the table; wiped the sweat from my brow and said: 'I'm done'. The girl looked confused and muttered something in Czech to her friends, one of whom then said: 'you have offended her'. With a raised voice she said it was rude of me to finish when her friend wanted to play. I expressed my apologies for finishing the game and stressed that it was because of my tiredness and poor ping pong skills. I walked away feeling tired, embarrassed and confused. The young people continued to speak in Czech even louder. I was concerned that I had genuinely upset the girl and that I hadn't applied enough effort to the game and had not communicated my withdrawal clearly. Feeling more and more like an insecure teenager I spoke about the incident to a member of staff. The member of staff said that the young people should not speak to me like that and they should respect me; as they respect members of staff.*

Although it was just a ping pong game, this incident highlighted a number of things. First I realised I had overlooked the importance of establishing my own ground rules as a researcher. I was unsure about the remits of my jurisdiction to challenge the young people; however I didn't entirely agree with the youth worker. While respect was important, I wasn't a member of staff. Second, it was me that initiated and stopped the ping pong game; this somewhat reflected my presence as a researcher: entering and exiting the field according to my terms. Third, I thought about why I had felt uncomfortable being excluded from the young people's conversation. The linguistic exclusion mirrored a physical exclusion on part of my adult and non-member of staff status. I immediately associated the exclusion as a marker to signal that I was unimportant and also the subject of their conversation.

### **5.3 Research with Social Workers**

In this section I illuminate a number of points of interest that arose in the research with the social workers. One of the learning points from the research was recognising my role as both an insider and outsider. While I have some insight to the social work profession, my focus was primarily on interpreter-mediated encounters despite this being a miniscule part of social work practice.

#### **5.3.1 Locating Social Workers to Interview**

Before the interviews began, I explained that I was a registered social worker and that my interest in the topic came from my social work practice, in which I had worked with interpreters and had come across children who interpreted for their parents. The reason for stating this was in an attempt to highlight that I had some insight to their profession and that I wouldn't reprimand the social workers for permitting children to interpret. Despite having some shared experiences, these did not qualify me as a complete insider. There were a number of processes that I had some familiarity with, namely the legislation underpinning intervention, types of assessments and general overview of the social work role, including insight into the complexities of social work. In addition, the interviews were all conducted in English (none of the participants spoke in other languages in the interviews). This knowledge allowed for 'short-cuts', which meant that I did not need to clarify acronyms or terminology that the participants used in the interviews. To some extent, this meant that I could engage with the social workers accounts beyond the surface level and identified the complexities of the social workers' lived experience in the analyses (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009; Blaikie, 2009).

#### **5.3.2 Research Setting**

As chapter three states, four interviews took place in a café, two interviews took place at the social workers' home and three took place at a statutory social work office in London. In respect of the latter setting it was an insightful experience to visit the statutory social work office as a researcher. The last time I had been there was in my social work training, and so I was familiar with the setting. However, it was a different experience being a researcher, with no security pass to get into the social work office above the ground floor public space. My prior experience brought a new lens to this experience. One of the main things that struck me was of the difference between the public spaces, particularly the waiting room area and the

work space above and out of the public view. This was something I had not considered before or not been in the position to recognise. It was interesting to wait for the participants in the waiting room, a space I had only been in a professional capacity to meet people who were waiting to see me. While waiting for the participants I picked up general feelings of discomfort amongst the people in the social work waiting area. I overheard people saying that the social worker was late *again*. While waiting, I needed to use the toilet and so I had to ask for the 'toilet key' from a security guard. The key was attached to a heavy chain and the toilet was in a poor condition. This experience was compounded by my knowledge that the staff space upstairs was much more comfortable. This highlighted my newly aligned position as a non-social worker and thus an 'outsider'. On two separate occasions, upon meeting the participants at the office they apologised for not being able to offer me a drink in the office, which they said was due to limited resources. These experiences gave me the impression that the spaces for the public were less about hospitality and more about business. I therefore sat in an in-between space; with knowledge of the social work system, yet in the capacity as a researcher.

One of the things that I noticed in the waiting room space was a young boy translating a form with what looked like his parents – the child was seated between his parents, a younger girl sat on the outside. The parents were leaning into the boy, their heads almost touching as they told him what to write on the form. This provided a glimpse of a child interpreting for family members in a social work context and perhaps the tendency for forms to be distributed without consideration of a person's preferred language. However, I was aware that perhaps the parents may be able to speak English and the child was being encouraged to translate the form as a test or to improve his English language, as CLB research has suggested (Eksner and Orellana, 2012).

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have reflected upon my position in the research. I have paid attention to my status as a white, female, monolingual adult researcher; I also explored the power relations embedded in language and referred to different aspects of communication. I referred to incidents of the research process and I explored what it means to be an insider and outsider with young people and social work participants respectively.

I have illuminated some of my assumptions and misunderstandings that arose during the research. My attempt to make sense of my assumptions and suspicions can be related to research from Singh, Lele and Martohardjono (2008) which argues that scholars must learn to locate the sources of misunderstandings not only as belonging to the 'foreigner' but also in the systematic distortions introduced and reproduced or constrained by the interpretative schema of the native.

The self-reflection highlights the multiple lived experiences of interpreting amongst the participants, this is particularly relevant since I did not locate children with direct experience of interpreting in a social work context, as discussed in chapter three (p.42). In addition, the reflection illuminates the spaces between the interviews and my role as a researcher as I present selected data (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995).

Through self-reflection, I learnt that the experience of being a research brought new insight to two arenas that I thought I had a fairly good understanding of. In light of this, I propose that insider and outsider statuses bring different insights which are important in different ways. In addition, it is useful to think about the 'space between' as proposed by Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009). This idea challenges the dichotomy of insider versus outsider status as: 'Holding membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group.' (p.61).

The following three chapters present research findings and analyses. In chapter six I present findings from interviews with young people about their experiences of language brokering. In chapters seven and eight I present and explore data from interviews with social workers about their experiences of interpreter-mediated encounters. Chapter seven presents findings about social workers' viewpoints about child interpreters and chapter eight illuminates social workers' experience with formal interpreters and bilingual social workers' experiences of providing ad-hoc interpreting.



## **Chapter 6: Findings from Interviews with Young People - Child Language Brokering**

### **6. Introduction**

The chapter presents findings from interviews with young people (n=9) to illuminate their experiences of language brokering. My approach to the presentation of findings follows the principles of ‘active interviewing’ (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). I adopt a dual approach, and present excerpts and themes that emerged from across the interviews; I also consider how the findings were constructed in the interview. Throughout the chapter I present data generated from the fieldwork at the youth centre. This includes reference to textual excerpts from interviews, two drawings by the participants to explore their experiences of language brokering and field notes.

First, I focus on the content generated about language brokering; data such as where language brokering occurs, and what language brokering entails. I consider components of language brokering that include: organising and carrying out activities in the private and public sphere, advocating and problem solving. I suggest that these components illuminate the contributions of language brokering which go beyond linguistic fluency and include other types of brokering, and include: cultural, institutional, emotional, and educational brokering. I present data to suggest that language brokering can help to overcome difficulties and institutional barriers that language brokering thus indicating that language brokering is a ‘joint practice’ between the young person and various adult counterparts, in some occasions predicated by the young people’s awareness of the difficulties that may face persons LEP. Second, I pay attention to the function and nature of language. This includes interview data that includes participants’ reference to linguistic diversity, accents, linguistic fluency and racial politics. I also focus on the process of collecting the interview data and the meanings that were established through the interview. I argue that CLB research is an important way to gain insight in to a taken-for-granted understanding of social life and method of communication between people who do not share a mutual language.

#### **6.1 Research Participants**

Participant characteristics can be found in tables three and four (pp.67-68). This indicates that Hana, Mirium, Sadie and Simran were third generation British Pakistani, born in Hillshire. English was their first language, their second language was Urdu. Iqra had migrated to England from Pakistan in the past three months and was not as confident speaking English

than the other young people who participated in this study, Iqra's first language was Urdu. Carlos, Sara, Sean and Wayne spoke Czech, Carlos also spoke Roma. English was their second-spoken language, since they had migrated to England within the last five years. The participants were aged between 12-17 years.

While a commonality of all participants was their language brokering experience, two points are important to note. First, the purpose of the research with young people was to gain an understanding of their experiences of language brokering. This means that the language brokering experiences include a variety of practices, in both public and private spheres. Second, there were a number of significant differences between the young people. This included language brokering experiences in different contexts, for different bodies. There were also differences in the young people's self-perceptions about their ability to speak/read or write in their first or second language. Since the Czech young people's first language was Czech, they were found to be more comfortable speaking rather than reading or writing English. In parallel, since the British Pakistani young people's first language was English, they were found to be less comfortable writing and reading in their second languages than they were speaking and listening. These differences can be related to the participant's migratory experience. In consideration of the heterogeneity across the young people, I illuminate language brokering experiences from each of the participants, however I do not discuss the participant's responses equally, instead some participants are referred to more than others. I have arranged the findings in a way to provide an overview of the main findings from across the data and I point out areas of convergence and divergence amongst the participants.

## **6.2 Language Brokering Experience**

In this section I explore participants' experiences of language brokering; I explore where and who they language broker for and what this entails. The young people had experience of language brokering in both private and public spaces, for: members of the public, neighbours, parents, grandparents and professionals. Language brokering took place in planned and spontaneous ways, in a number of places, initiated by adults or the young people themselves.

Language brokering included:

- responding to telephone calls with various bodies;

- arranging appointments for family members;
- translating letters;
- attending planned and ad-hoc appointments; and
- language brokering for members of the public and professionals.

### **6.2.1 Language Brokering Activities**

Language brokering occurred in one of two ways; initiated by an adult who required linguistic support or by the young people themselves. The participants talked about their everyday language brokering activities. These included interactions in person, on the phone and inside and outside of the home for family members, family friends, neighbours, other children, members of public and professionals. As chapter four outlined, the young people were invited to draw pictures of their language brokering experiences. The drawings were a way to make visible the everyday activities of language brokering visible. I include two drawings in this chapter by Carlos and Mirium.

Drawing was treated as a process to explore the phenomena of CLB, following the tenet that: ‘there is no one meaning in any image’ (Bolton 1999:p.67 cited in Lefevre, 2010). The following drawing by Mirium shows a typical CLB experience in a local shop (figure 3). The activity is depicted in two snapshots with related speech bubbles. In the first interaction Mirium, pictured at the top right of the picture, is asked to translate a label, a shopper asks Mirium ‘Can you translate this for me?’ and holds up a piece of clothing with a tag attached. Mirium replies ‘it means’. In the second interaction, she shows the speech of the shopkeeper and shopper, the shopkeeper on the left of the picture says ‘£6.00 please’, the shopper says ‘what did he say?’ Mirium’s absence in the second interaction is illuminating as it indicates that the dialogue continued and language brokering continued.

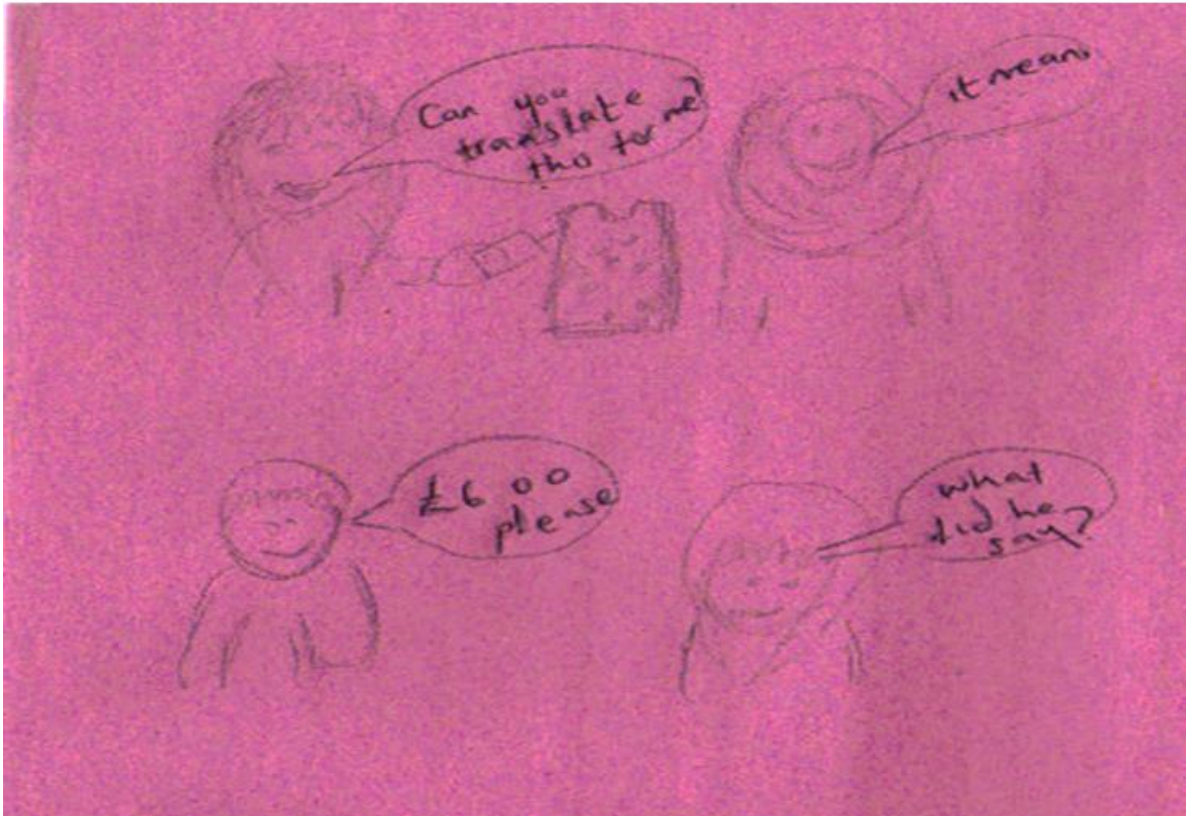


Figure 3: Mirium's Drawing

It is interesting that Mirium presents the dialogue in English, when presumably three out of the four utterances would have been in Urdu. This indicates how Mirium has presented the experience in a way that is understandable to an English speaking audience, and highlights the underlying dominance of the English language in the research process, as alluded to in chapter one.

### 6.2.2 Young Person Initiated Language Brokering

As previously mentioned, the data suggest that adults did not always initiate language brokering, and that this could be initiated by the young people. This is illuminated in the following excerpt as Sadie (S) talks with myself, the researcher (R) and describes an experience in which she language brokers in a shop, for a shopper and shopkeeper. The excerpt illuminates multiple components of language brokering, beyond the particular words spoken.

1. S: on Sunday I went shopping and there was this lady and these two guys; they were
2. Asian but I don't think they could speak it and they... had a shoe shop and [a stranger]
3. came in and she'd worn these shoes but she wanted a size up but they were worn
4. away from the back kind of thing, I think she'd bought them last week...and they were
5. talking in English to her and I don't think she could understand; she was just like:
6. 'take them back, take them back' and they were like: 'no we can't because look you've
7. worn them' and...like I wasn't even in the conversation; I just saw her and I said; I just
8. automatically started talking with her: 'what's the matter?' and she told me and...then I
9. said, then I just felt myself without asking them that: 'you know they're worn; you
10. can't give them back.'
11. R: so then you helped to resolve that?
12. S: no, I just told her like: 'you won't be able to because obviously you've worn them
13. and... like you you've walked around in them a lot and you can't really give them
14. back.'
15. R: did she understand?
16. S: she kind of got... a bit like: 'oh god, no I don't want to give them back, I want to get
17. the next size up' but yeah, it was kind of weird because she didn't know (anybody)
18. there
19. R: did you get a thanks from anyone for doing that or?
20. S: yeah, the shopkeepers were like: 'thanks' and I was like 'OK heh.'
21. R: So why did you help out? That might sound like a silly question but why did you
22. help out in that situation?

23. S: just because I felt like obviously...neither of the people understood...who was
24. saying what; she didn't understand what they were saying and they didn't understand
25. what she was saying and they...weren't Muslim, or Asian should I say, well they were
26. Asian but d'you know you have like Hindus and Sikhs, I think they...were Sikh but I
27. just, I didn't know that they talk Urdu. I just kind of like automatically assumed it
28. and so I just jumped in and I'm just glad that they understood
29. R: and did she understand?
30. S: yeah yeah yeah so it was like better that way. I just thought it would be...obviously
31. she just needed help and so did they sort of thing, so I just like jumped in kind of
32. thing.

This excerpt raises four points about language brokering, and what can be achieved through language brokering. First, Sadie shows autonomy; she 'automatically' uses her language proficiency to language broker for the said adults and 'jumped in' to help the lady (lines 8, 31). Second, Sadie uses her capacity to speak two languages as a resource to problem-solve for a group of adults who do not share a mutual language; moreover she uses her knowledge of retail culture to provide advice to the lady about the exchange and refund system, before consulting with the shopkeepers. Third, Sadie displays empathy as she recognises the predicament of the lady and shopkeeper; namely that the lady was alone and had nobody around to help her to communicate. Fourth, she demonstrates awareness of the heterogeneity of Asian group membership; in particular the diversity of religion and language; as she reflects upon her assumption that the shopkeepers were Sikh and did not speak Urdu. This suggests that language brokering is related to the character and disposition of the young person, particularly the capacity to identify the need for interpreting support and the confidence to communicate with and for members of the public. Sadie said that she often comes across situations in which she recognises that people cannot communicate as they speak different languages. She compared herself with her friends who were also bilingual and usually chose not to interpret. She points out that it is down to her discretion as to whether

she gets involved in the interpreting, thus meaning that she has some control over the extent of her language brokering activities.

The final point to make is to consider the construction of the account, including the way that I as a researcher shaped and helped to construct meaning with Sadie, following Holstein and Gubrium (1995). Sadie recalls the dialogue, and uses her own voice as well as the voice of the lady in the shop. Interestingly, Sadie does this all in English, despite the actual conversation being in Urdu and English. This re-telling and readjustment is indicative of the active process in the construction of accounts and the way that stories are told for particular audiences. In this case it could be argued that Sadie adjusts the dialogue for my benefit; based on her awareness that I did not speak Urdu, this is indicated by the phrase: ‘she kind of got...a bit like’ (line 16) before re-presenting the voice of the lady. The two questions that I, the researcher make (indicated by ‘R’ lines 11 and 15) also play a part in the storytelling. The first question came at a break in Sadie’s dialogue ‘so then you helped to resolve that?’. This could be considered as a prompt for Sadie to evaluate and conclude the story. However, she resists this and continues to add more detail to the story<sup>12</sup> and shares more parts of the instructions given to the lady. In the next question I ask: ‘did she understand?’ Sadie offers a snippet of the lady’s response (lines 16-18). This response illuminates the simplified nature of this question, as it appears that she understood but did not agree with Sadie’s advice. This is indicative of the nature of ‘language brokering,’ which in this case involves advice giving, in addition to the translation between languages.

### **6.2.3 Problematic Experiences of Language Brokering**

The findings suggest the participants’ experiences of CLB were conceptualised in one of two ways, first as in some way eventful or problematic and, second as unproblematic and therefore unremarkable. The presentation of findings follows this broad distinction and first considers some of the perceived difficulties of language brokering, with consideration of what constitutes a difficult and non-difficult language brokering encounter.

The participants’ particular experience of CLB had an effect on the way they conceptualised or evaluated this experience. For one participant, the hospital was identified as the easiest setting to language broker and for another participant the hospital was considered the most

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<sup>12</sup> There is also a possibility that Sadie may not have understood the word ‘resolve’.

difficult setting. This highlights that CLB is a complex phenomenon; experienced and appraised in different ways, commensurate with the young people's unique experiences. There were a number of factors that affected the young people's experience and/or capacity to language broker, this included knowledge of context-specific vernacular; familiarity and capacity or professional status of the adults involved; the content to be interpreted and the young people's confidence and proficiency in the four modalities (reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

The problematic experience of language brokering was found to be related to 'role-anxiety', namely the young person's uncertainty of adults' expectations of their involvement and responsibility to interpret. This can be illustrated with reference to Carlos and Wayne, who in their interview, stated that the easier place to language broker was a familiar place; in which they had some control of the dialogue, procedure, outcome, as well as familiarity of interlocutors. This may be further explained by making a distinction between 'low' and 'high' contexts, following the work of Hall (1992). CLB in a 'low-context' interaction such as the supermarket tended to entail a straightforward transaction that involved a minimal exchange of words. In 'low-context' settings, the young people were confident they had the necessary knowledge to translate accurately. Such interactions tended to follow an identifiable pattern, in which the young people were aware of the speaker's intended goals or outcomes, such as the price of an item or directions. This meant that the young person was aware of their expected input as a translator, and could foresee that the completion of the task signalled the conclusion of the encounter.

'Low-context' settings can be contrasted with translating in 'high-context' settings such as the hospital. The differences in these types of interactions were that the goal or output was unknown, and in such cases the language brokering was a means to facilitate dialogue, with emphasis on meaning-making and accuracy as a way to move towards a certain goal, often in which the stakes were high. In such high-context interactions the young people could not identify an expected pattern of dialogue and hence experienced a form of role-anxiety, as they were unable to guarantee accuracy and mutual understanding between interlocutors. For example, Mirium and Hana were comfortable translating in a low-context setting such as the supermarket, given the likelihood that the conversation would be outcome driven. Sean found the school to be an easy place to translate, given that he felt comfortable with the teachers and was familiar with the interpreting tasks that were asked of him. However, as noted earlier,



there was no agreement about which locations were easier to translate in. The following excerpt is part of a response from Simran, towards the end of the interview I asked Simran if there are any places where children should or should not translate.

S:... they shouldn't do it in a hospital especially where there's a lot of blood you know when accidents happen, little ones especially will get scared and will not be able to control themselves and panic.

Simran's reference to 'little ones' suggests that her views are informed by her own experiences of language brokering, some of which are explored later in the chapter (p.96), this may also be in relation to Simran being one of the oldest participants, having the most experience of language brokering. The identification of a hospital and reference to blood delineates the metaphorical boundaries of CLB. This could be read in a way that indicates a distinction between childhood and adulthood; the former being a domain characterised by control, certainty, safety, vulnerability, and the latter associated with accidents; risk, responsibility and uncertainty.

Four participants talked about language brokering for family members in a health care setting. In these high-context settings, difficulty related to a heightened sense of responsibility placed on the young person to language broker, intertwined with the young person's concern for the family members' ill-health. Part of the responsibility related to the young people's role-anxiety; first relating to whether they had command of dual languages and sufficient knowledge of medical vernacular to convey the intended messages, and second their concern about the adults' (namely professionals') evaluation of their language brokering. Hence, role-anxiety related to the young people's familiarity of particular settings, norms, and procedures.

Language brokering in high-context settings therefore involved complex and lengthy exchanges, which had the potential to expose gaps in the young people's linguistic repertoire and hence threaten the integrity of their language brokering. Notions of involvement and familiarity was therefore found to be related with the level of difficulty; for instance CLB in shops was perceived to be less linguistically challenging than translating a diagnosis at the doctors. Sadie compared the previous experience of language brokering in a shop for a stranger with an experience of CLB for a family member in the hospital. She pointed out that

a key difference was that in her experience of the former she had some control over the extent of her involvement, and therefore could walk away from the interaction, in a physical and metaphorical sense. Sadie used a spatial metaphor to describe CLB with strangers and said: 'you don't feel stuck in the middle'. Use of this expression is illuminating, as it draws upon a comparison of family-centred CLB in which Sadie has felt physically and metaphorically 'stuck' in the middle of adults who do not share a mutual language. This suggests that CLB for family members in a 'high-context' setting requires additional responsibility and obligation than language brokering for a stranger in a shop. This corresponds with Coyne (2006) who found that child patients in a hospital setting were fearful of being in an unfamiliar environment with limited control of the timings of treatments and outcomes; which conveyed a sense of powerlessness to the patients. This indicates that settings and the child's positioning are factors that may affect the child's experiences and thus communication is more than the exchange of information from the speaker to listener (Sharon and Weaver, 1949).

### **6.3 Components of Language Brokering**

In the preceding sections, I illuminated some of the outcome-related experiences of language brokering. In this section I present data to consider different components of language brokering, including language brokering activities that occur in the front and back region (Goffman, 1969), this includes linguistic, cultural and educational brokering that may occur before and after the actual CLB activity. I focus on two components of language brokering: organising and advocating.

#### **6.3.1. Organising**

The first component of CLB to be discussed is organising. I consider this component with reference to two young people: Sean and Simran. As Table 3 indicates, Sean speaks English and Czech and moved from the Czech Republic over five years ago. Sean is the second oldest sibling and language brokers for his parents and other family members. Sean's sister and younger brother also language broker. In the following excerpt Sean talks about accompanying his aunty to the local authority housing department. The excerpt is included to consider how Sean uses languages to navigate around Hillshire to acquire the desired information. This illustrates some of the background activities of CLB.

1. S: ...my aunty she rang me like one day before and she asked me if I can go down

2. with her [to the local authority housing office] cos like she wanted a new house and
3. she heard that she can go to that housing centre and that they can help her out. So she
4. asked me to go with her like cos she couldn't like speak English. So...she rang me
5. first saying like if I could come with her tomorrow, like the day after and I said yes so
6. I came to her house, we went down town and () first we went to the like, it used to be
7. somewhere else so we went there, they tell us that we need to go to [location]
8. R: [yeah. So they
9. told you and then you told your aunty, yeah
10. S: [yeah
11. S: They told me to go there so we went there and we just came there and I like went to
12. the counter and that like and just said to that woman 'excuse me, my aunty she's
13. looking for a house and she wants you to like £give us some tips£ or like if you can
14. show her some houses and that' and she was like 'yeah it's alright and that' then she
15. was like explaining ...about the houses: ...what houses they got, how much it is and I
16. was just like translating to her all the time
17. R: OK and how long did that last for – about?
18. S: about half an hour
19. R: half an hour?
20. S: yeah
21. R: and how did you find the experience?
22. S: yeah it was alright cos she ... was saying things that helped me maybe in the future
23. like when I heh be looking for my own house
24. R: oh OK, so like advice about housing? OK
25. S: [yeah heh
26. R: and ... when your aunty asked you the day before, did you say yes straight away or
27. S: yeah she asked me, cos I like that one heh
28. R: you like your aunty?

29. S: heh yeah
30. R: and how often would you, would you help that aunty?
31. S: like depends, like sometimes sh-she like wants me to like go and translate or
32. sometimes she like call my sister er. But it used to be like one year before but now it's
33. alright cos they learn a bit of English, even like her kids, they can speak English now
34. so they help, but. ...me and my sister [are] used to helping her, like translate letters
35. from schools and doctors.

The activities surrounding the language brokering are important to consider. Sean discusses the process that led to the housing experience, namely trying to locate the department, which had moved sites. Sean treats this encounter as an unremarkable part of language brokering experience (Orellana, 2009). For example, at the beginning of the excerpt he glosses over the experience of locating the housing office; this does not appear to be treated as a separate or significant task, even though the act of accessing this information was essential. The unremarkable nature of language brokering is also alluded to towards the end of the transcript, when Sean states that he and his sister are 'used to' language brokering (line 34).

Attention to the language within the narration, particularly in the earlier part of the excerpt: 'they tell us that we need to go to [location]' suggests partnership between Sean and his aunty. In this scenario, his aunty is the reason for the encounter and Sean is the mouthpiece as he receives the information and facilitates dialogue between adults. It is only after the researcher (R) clarifies Sean's role: 'So they told you and then you told your aunty,' (line 9) that Sean changes to speak in the first person; before then he subsumes himself within the interaction and refers to himself and his aunty as a unit. Sean expresses that he has a choice of whether or not to language broker, in this case, the decision is based on his favourability towards this particular aunty (line 27). In a similar way to the earlier example from Sadie, this choice indicates that young people are not passive language brokers and have some choice in their decisions to do so. It also illuminates the co-ordinating activities of child language brokers, in a physical sense, but also in regards to the spoken language and organisation of talk, as the language broker waits for instructions, makes sense of the

instructions and responds. This resonates with the idea of interpreters as co-ordinators of talk (Wadensjö, 2001).

The excerpt shows that Sean uses coordinates of familiarity to navigate through Hillshire. His presence as an informal interpreter may also be indicative of the availability of linguistic resources and reflect his aunty's awareness of institutions that do or do not offer linguistic provision. Hall (2012) argues that informal arrangements within communities are crucial for people to access knowledge and affirm connections. In consideration of this, the excerpt demonstrates that through language brokering Sean makes three significant contributions which could be of benefit, to: i) his aunty, ii) the housing officer, as he compensates for the absence of linguistic provision and iii) himself, as he recognises that the acquired housing knowledge may help him in the future. However, this could be viewed in an alternative way, in relation to his aspirations to live in social housing. This may be indicative of Sean's low aspirations and that he had adopted a 'poverty of expectation' (Kirk et al., 1991). Finally, the excerpt illuminates the temporal nature of language proficiency, since his aunty and other members reportedly speak more English and therefore require less language brokering than they previously did.

I now consider some of the organising involved in Simran's language brokering experiences. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, Simran is third generation British Pakistani, she had the longest experience of language brokering amongst the participants and regularly language brokered for her mother and grandfather.

Simran organises her language brokering schedule in accordance with her habitus (Bourdieu, 1991) in particular, her knowledge of linguistic resources within the community. Simran forms a collective with her family members; she has an understanding of family members' language proficiency and this information is used to assess their need for language brokering and to ensure linguistic provision is in place. This mirrors research from Back (2007) who identified that young people in 'Finding a Way Home Study' (1996) had a 'sophisticated degree of local situated knowledge' (p.62), and Prevatt Goldstein (2003) who illuminated how families pool their resources to improve outcomes for the family.

The act of translating letters addressed to different members of the family is one activity that takes place in the home and thus could be considered as an activity in the back region.

Simran and her family work collectively to ensure that her mother has the linguistic support

she requires and is aware of events in the monolingual sphere, which are not publicised in Urdu. She also ensures that appointments and institutional demands are kept. Simran uses linguistic knowledge to read and translate the content of the letters from English into Urdu. Letters include: bank statements, letters from the doctor/school and promotional literature that advertise local sales and community events and services. Simran responds to letters in four stages. First, she opens the letters addressed to all household members, she discards letters that do not require attention and groups the letters that need to be translated. Second, Simran translates and discusses the content with her mother. Third, Simran responds to the letters either on her own accord or collaboratively, with her mother's instructions, she then marks appointments and events on the family calendar. The fourth step involves input from other English-speaking adult family members (paternal father or aunty), who retain authorial control by checking through the letters and responding to the letters that Simran has not opened. This four-stage process resembles a type of 'workplace' that involves the co-ordination of activities and household chores between family members (Hochschild, 2003; Morrow, 2011). The family calendar is the focal point; used by all family members to ensure that appointments are kept and diaries are checked against to ensure that Simran's mother has a family member to language broker. This shows that responsibility is shared amongst the family and the adult-hierarchy is maintained. These examples have illuminated a number of components of language brokering in the back region, I next focus on CLB encounters in the front region (Goffman, 1969).

### **6.3.2 Advocating**

The inherent partnership between the young person and the person they language brokered for was identified from the participant's responses in the interviews. Advocating was identified as a component of CLB that highlighted persons LEP need for linguistic support. Through CLB, the young people highlight and overcome difficulties and thus demonstrate support within the family unit. The following excerpt exemplifies how Simran advocates for her mother. The interview illuminates that Simran has the confidence to speak with professionals in a variety of settings, she also has cultural knowledge and insight into institutional processes, such as the likely questions, dialogue and procedures that characterise specific contexts. This experience has given Simran the necessary confidence to advocate for her mother by asking for clarification and challenging professionals where necessary. This is

illustrated in the following excerpt in which Simran's mother went to the community nursery to seek caregiving support for her youngest child.

S:...because the [nursery staff] are mainly English...they speak fluent English and my mum didn't know that, so she tried to understand ... but she didn't, so she took me to help. Their English was too hard for her to understand, there were some words for me to understand hard... I asked [the Nursery Assistant], they explain what they mean to me.

In this short extract it is clear to recognise partnership between Simran and her mother. Simran's mother utilises her daughter for support. Simran has the awareness and empathy to recognise the extent of her mother's English language comprehension and she has the confidence to request clarification from a member of staff. At an institutional level these actions could be considered to alleviate her mother's potential marginalisation. The excerpt is presented as matter-of-fact, in the way that Simran identifies the difficulty, and describes how this was overcome. Simran demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the nursery context as well as her mothers' needs and language proficiency. She juxtaposes her own English language proficiency to emphasise that the misunderstanding was not entirely down to her mother's proficiency in English, but rather related to the professional's lexicon and presumably that linguistic support in her mothers' preferred language was unavailable. Simran infers to different types of English proficiency; she alludes that her mother understands some English, but not 'fluent English'. This draws a parallel with research from Villanueva and Buriel (2010), who found that parents were reluctant to speak English due to their 'heavy' English accents. Finally, it is important to note Simran's positioning of language in the past tense, her mother 'didn't know' English rather than 'does not' in the present tense. Later in the interview Simran said that her mother could now speak more English, in a similar way to Sean stating that his aunty can speak more English (pp.95-96). This highlights the temporal nature of language proficiency. This can be associated with demographics that indicate that increasing numbers of people are learning English as an additional language (Tse, 2001; Crystal, 2003).

In the following excerpt Simran discusses how she advocates and resolves a particular issue concerning her sister, who had been involved in an accident. Simran talks about an ad-hoc

language brokering experience, in which she makes the decision to intercept a telephone call between her mother, the doctor and the receptionist. While the focus of the telephone call is to gain medical attention, the excerpt exposes the linguistic marginalisation of her mother and the way Simran acts on her own volition with prompts from her mother, to advocate and overcome difficulties.

S: ...my mum phoned [the surgery] and [tried to explain what had happened, but]... they put the phone down. I rung, I got really angry, I said: 'my mum just phoned and you put the phone down'... and they said: um 'oh sorry we didn't understand what she was saying'. I said: 'you know what, if you don't understand, just explain to her; wait for someone else to come'. And I went really angry, I flipped on her, I shouldn't have like flipped on her. I explained what happened and said: 'you're not taking it seriously.' [The receptionist] put me on hold so I rang again, I said: 'I want to talk to my doctor' () My doctor was our own man, the same race, I got my mum, I said: 'you speak to him and tell them what happened'

The excerpt shows the intergenerational nature of the language brokering and the tripartite arrangement that involved Simran, her sister and her mother. Simran expresses alliance to her family and again shows empathy about her mother's position as an adult with limited English language proficiency. From a macro-level perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the excerpt highlights an example of institutional discrimination by way of her mother being made to feel different and receiving substandard treatment based on her limited English language proficiency. Simran's actions call into question the receptionist's professional (and moral) responsibility to respond to patients and help to realign the desired professional conduct. This example shows that language brokering is more than the transfer of a message from speaker to listener (Sharon and Weaver, 1949). This excerpt illuminates how Simran exposes the institutional challenges of public welfare services to meet the needs of the multilingual population (Green et al., 2005). This highlights the importance of initial contact with patients and clients and the importance of communicative behaviour between receptionists and outcomes for patients (Hall, 1971; Seabury 1971, Deitrick et al., 2005). This can be associated with wider language ideologies and illusory notions of correctness, based on language varieties and linguistic difference (Lippi-Green, 1997; Milroy and Milroy, 1999; Blackledge, 2004; Garrett, 2010).



Simran's capacity to advocate was underpinned by her English language faculty and knowledge of institutional processes and comprehension of social justice. Simran's cultural and institutional knowledge tells her the receptionist shouldn't hang up. The actions Simran takes demonstrate how she enacts power and has the confidence to advocate by way of challenging the receptionist to ensure that her mother is able to speak with the doctor. In doing so, her actions could be considered to promote the wellbeing of her sister and the dignity of her mother, as she facilitates her mother's need to receive services in her preferred language.

Another way to interpret the excerpt is to trace the narrative threads of the episode. The excerpt begins with Simran's mother's attempt to contact the doctor. Simran's involvement begins when she realises her mother is experiencing difficulties. Given that Simran has the linguistic faculty, cultural and situational knowledge, she pursues her mother's attempts to speak directly with a doctor. This indicates that Simran has an understanding of the way that she can contribute through language brokering. Simran provides intergenerational support by focusing on the wellbeing of her sister and hence respects and asserts the social status and authorial command of her mother. Similar to the former excerpts, the narrative leans towards the finality of the encounter: the outcome or end point in which Simran successfully arranges for her mother to speak with the doctor. These examples show that Simran uses 'interactional logic' (Alanen, 2001) to carry out tasks within the parameters of parental authority. Simran's request to speak with her 'own man' highlights the importance of communication not only in relation to professional affiliation and linguistic membership but also in regards to racial affiliation. This affirms Simran's awareness of linguistic, cultural and racial difference. Towards the end of the excerpt Simran reflects upon the experience, following her understanding of cultural norms, particularly politeness and expected behaviour (Mills, 2003; Spencer-Oatey, 2008). While she notes feeling angry, she rationalises her actions in light of the magnitude of the situation and the need for her mother to speak with the doctor. She evaluates her feelings and recognises that she shouldn't have 'flipped' on the receptionist. This resonates with Md-Yunus (2012) who suggests that children manage their own and others' emotions through language brokering.

In the following excerpt, Simran displays linguistic and emotional empathy toward her mother. Again, similar to the incident at the nursery, the language choices of the doctor are referred to. By doing so, Simran emphasises the communication difficulties are not only

attributable to Simran's mother's limited English language proficiency and thus, Simran marks the professionals' incapacity to speak her mother's first language. Simran realises she doesn't need to translate verbatim, as it is unnecessary that she understands and translates every word of the interaction. She considers that she has sufficient knowledge to make do. This awareness could be associated with her experience of language brokering, it can also be contrasted with some of the other participants and their insecurity about their command of English, translating correctly or challenging professionals.

S:...so my mum goes in [to the surgery] ... [the doctor was] trying to explain, she doesn't understand, she goes: I'll call my daughter, so my mum calls me and then [the doctor] explains it in detail so I try to understand some of the doctor's... words (laugh), I can't explain each little word cos I didn't get what they mean... after we were there... we said ['Mum] if you've got a doctor's appointment take me or my sister, other than that don't, don't go'

The finality of Simran's advice to her mother reinforces the reality and complexity of CLB: it is preferable for Simran or her sister to language broker for her mother rather than her mother going alone. Moreover, Simran feels she has the authority to assert this ultimatum. Simran's instruction to her mother appears to be a response to her mother's frustration and in doing so she conveys solidarity and enacts power. This highlights the complexity of parent - child interdependence in the context of CLB. This raises a significant finding, as it suggests that child language brokering compensates for absent linguistic provision and that young people may play a role to highlight and reduce the chances of marginalisation for persons LEP. There is however a darker underbelly to the predicament that Simran raises, while the intention is for her mother to receive consistent linguistic support in the form of Simran or her sister, this could inadvertently create a dependency on family members, which may relieve public services institutions' duty to provide linguistic provision and dissuade her mother from accessing services. This can be related to research findings that suggest that female adult migrants from 'integrated' or 'settled' communities are often in dependent and excluded positions, hence 'the appearance of integration and cohesion can conceal real need' (Threadgold et al., 2008:p.63) as they are not perceived as a new migrant group.

The presented findings have focused on two components of CLB: organising and advocating. I have demonstrated that language brokering involves more than translation. In addition to the contribution CLB makes to facilitate communication between adults who do not share a mutual language, it was also reported to be of value to the young people themselves. From CLB experiences, young people developed particular skills and knowledge, although it cannot be claimed that CLB is the sole contributor; since other life experiences and skills are likely to enhance and contribute to this experience.

As the earlier excerpt demonstrated, Sean identified that language brokering in the housing office was beneficial as it gave him insight into the social housing system, which he identified could be of help to him in the future. Other components of CLB which could be said to benefit the young people included communicating with and amongst adults, negotiating and navigating institutional processes, advocating and challenging and the expression of empathy, as Sadie explained in the excerpt about her experience at the shops. However, these experiences could be experienced and perceived as disadvantages.

#### **6.4 Self-Perceived Performance of Language Brokering**

In the preceding sections I illuminated some of the actions and outcomes achieved through the activity of CLB. In this section I focus on the process of meaning-making. The following excerpt is from an interview with Sadie and involves an ad-hoc language brokering encounter, for her grandfather at the hospital. The excerpt illustrates the complexity of CLB and raises a multitude of issues concerning racial politics, self-perceived performance of language brokering and a blurring of emotional and linguistic support.

1. S: I was with my grandad, he's like been here for so many years now and he can talk
2. English perfectly fine, but some like hard like jargon m medical stuff he can't like he
3. wouldn't understand but...he talks proper in a Yorkshire accent and everything but he
4. can't like understand medical words and I went with him to the hospital and [the
5. doctor] was Chinese so her accent made it harder for him to understand so, it was
6. like...she automatically assumed that I would interpret
7. R: so then you went to the hospital with him

8. S: yeah and ... he assumed that I would thingy for him because just the hard words
9. that she was using, especially in that Chinese type accent, that he couldn't understand
10. what she was saying, he'd of been able to understand if it was, if she was but he
11. R: [yeah
12. S: was talking English all the way through it, he just didn't understand like the hard
13. words like when he said, erm I think it was angina, no it wasn't angina, it was a
14. different word; he already knows what that means, but it was something like that, but
15. I knew what it meant and he didn't and then I just had to explain to him
16. R: so then she came to you and you explained
17. S: no, she just kind of like, she automatically assumed that I knew what it meant and I
18. just I did at the time so -
19. R: that was lucky
20. S: I know, I was like. But she was that type of really strict type of doctor... and she
21. had that evil type look in her eye, that hh it it was awful it was like a and she was
22. really like I don't mean to sound racist or anyth- but her eyes were, do
23. R: [o:k
24. S: you know just that evil stare type that they give when they just heh
25. R: so ... did you feel like there was pressure on you at that point then to kno-
26. S: [not from his side
27. but from her side definitely, yeah it was really like and she was really snapping kind
28. of like cheeky and cocky kind of thing, like just like you tried to like maybe ask a
29. question or something and she just stare you down so you wouldn't want to ask it so it

30. was kind of weird that.

The excerpt provides insight into Sadie's experience of accompanying her grandfather and providing ad-hoc linguistic support at a hospital in Hillshire. Sadie sets the scene and states that her grandfather speaks English, to further emphasise on this point she refers to his Yorkshire accent: 'he talks proper in a Yorkshire accent and everything' (lines 1-2). Sadie's inference to the Yorkshire accent is delivered in an ostensibly Yorkshire fashion. The 'proper Yorkshire accent' can be understood in terms of an authentic way of speaking, according to agreed conventions, which serves as a qualifier for being a bone fide member of a Yorkshire community. The word 'everything' may serve to denote that her grandfather can get by usually without interpreting support and to qualify that he has some degree of English language proficiency yet not to same degree as Sadie who was born in England and regards English as her first language. These details position Sadie and her grandfather in alliance; as actors that speak English with a Yorkshire dialect, who work in partnership; based upon the joint-sense making they employ to ensure understanding as Sadie compensates and interprets the words that her grandfather does not recognise. In this regard, Sadie positions the Yorkshire dialect as the unmarked category as she refers to the doctor's non-Yorkshire accent as 'different', which, when coupled with the hospital vernacular, made the content difficult for her grandfather to understand. In this way the focus shifts from Sadie's CLB to the doctor's spoken word and physical appearance and demonstrates that perceived dominance is in relation to physical appearance as well as status, language proficiency and dialect. This means that her grandfather's Yorkshire 'accent' could be considered as a qualifier for membership which marks the Doctor as an outsider to this membership. Sadie makes reference to the communicative function of language; as a vehicle to convey information between her grandfather and the doctor, she also alludes to kinesics; a form of non-verbal communication as she speaks of the doctor's physical gestures. She also refers to paralinguistic aspects of communication, as she refers to the manner in which the doctor addresses the questions. This highlights that communication is more than Sharon and Weaver's model (p.27) proposes, given the interplay of verbal and non-verbal communication.

As Sadie is British Pakistani and a member of one of the minority ethnic groups in the UK, her reference to racism is insightful and in some ways echo the inequalities that members of

minority ethnic groups including families' LEP may experience in everyday life. Sadie uses the disclaimer: 'I don't mean to sound racist' (line 22) to stress that she is not operating from racist motives and does not want to be labelled 'racist'. The use of this disclaimer is interesting. Blum (2002) argues that there is a tendency for people to overuse this phrase, particularly when they feel discomfort talking about perceived difference. This disclaimer can also be attributed to a way to avoid the possibility of being charged with racism (van Dijk, 1987). Or as Song (2014) argues there is a 'culture of racial equivalence' as interactions and phenomena are deemed to be racist without explanation for why something is or isn't. Sadie refers to the doctor's appearance in an unvarnished fashion and uses this as a lever to identify her malfeasant behaviour. Ostensibly Sadie knows not to voice this viewpoint to the doctor; in this regard she shows awareness of the presentation of herself and others, in this case her grandfather (Goffman, 1969). It could be argued that Sadie realises that in order for her grandfather to receive treatment she must observe the codes of conduct and her position within two hierarchical dyads: as a granddaughter and as an interpreter for her grandfather and the doctor. This resonates with Mayall (2011) who argues children may have to deal with triangular tensions: themselves, parents and professionals.

The high-context setting described by Sadie is important to consider. Since Sadie's grandfather was ill it was important that Sadie interpreted correctly, this placed increased responsibility on her, which may have led her to describe it as being 'awful' (line 21). The excerpt suggests that Sadie adhered to the expectation for her to translate. Moreover, while she spoke of tension and feeling uncomfortable, unlike the earlier excerpt involving Simran (p.100), Sadie did not challenge the doctor's abrupt nature. This may be due to a number of factors, for example, her character and position as a young person in an adult dominated context. The doctor is positioned in a negative way for not making any concessions in regards to the fact that Sadie was not acting in the capacity as a professional interpreter and may find medical vernacular difficult to translate. This suggests that the doctor may have used Sadie's linguistic proficiency as an informal resource as Sadie gives the impression that there was an expectation that she had the necessary knowledge to translate the messages accurately. This is an example of role-anxiety, predicated by Sadie's perception of being evaluated by language brokering performance. This relates to Villanueva and Buriel (2010) who argue that children are exposed to adult's critique of their performance.

So far the findings have demonstrated that language brokering involves more than linguistic knowledge and involves emotional support, empathy, advocacy, and a host of organising duties in the back region. The experience of language brokering can be conceptualised as problematic or unproblematic and thus straightforward, based on the familiarity of people involved, the content, and context of the encounter, particularly whether this is a 'high' or 'low' context, and the expectations of the adults involved. The findings have demonstrated that language brokering may occur in a planned or ad-hoc fashion and may be a vehicle to overcome deficient linguistic provision and reduce the possibility of linguistic marginalisation. In the following section I present further findings to consider the nature and function of language and dialect.

### **6.5 Straddling Child and Adult Domains**

The young people did not claim to be professional interpreters, as Simran stated in an earlier excerpt, there were times when translating verbatim was not necessary and she translated as best she could, with the language and knowledge she had. While CLB involved the exercise of agency, young people were also required to adhere to institutional processes. In addition to translating, the young people were also being evaluated. Mayall (2002) states that 'Childhood agency has to be understood within the parameters of childhood's minority status' (p.21) in which adults hold authority over children in some way, and children are determined by their difference and relationship to adulthood (Alanen, 2009).

During the fieldwork the youth workers told me that teachers from the local high school had recently expressed concern about children's absence from school because they were supposedly language brokering for family members. Given the flexibility of the semi-structured interview format, in response to this information, I decided to ask the young people about this in the interview. Part way through a joint interview with Carlos and Wayne, after they had already talked about language brokering during the week days, I asked whether they took time out of school to language broker.

R: ... have you ever taken time out of school to go and interpret or translate?

W: sometimes when it was like really, we really need needed it, I have to, and then I would go to school but like a little bit late, because if if the appointment was like at nine o clock and it lasted er one hour, then I would go to school at eleven or summat.

The excerpt suggests that CLB is predicated by need, which indicates two possible scenarios: first, that Wayne's family preferred him to language broker or second, there is no linguistic provision at the specific institution. Either way Wayne emphasises the need for him to language broker 'I have to', which takes precedence over his attendance, and emphasises that language brokering is a family activity, indicated by Wayne's initial response: 'sometimes when it was like really, we really need needed it'. This illuminates the joint-practice of CLB, between the young person and family member.

It is insightful to consider Wayne's role and position in this scenario. Wayne is absent from school due to his care giving duties for his family; by taking on this task, the normal direction of care giving is reversed, while Wayne fulfils these duties he concurrently violates his obligation to receive a 'certain minimum education' (Education (Welfare) Act 2000). The shift from the doctor's surgery to the school illuminates different institutional agendas in relation to Wayne's positionality. For instance, in an interpreting capacity in the doctors, Wayne transcends hierarchy and interacts within an adult-domain to make communication possible. When Wayne returns to school, it can be assumed that he reverts back to his typical role as a student, within the hierarchy of the adult governed milieu. This illuminates space and time, as pivotal themes in the case of language brokering. In this regard, language brokering could be considered as a form of economic labour, which is considered to be inappropriate for children, particularly during school term time as it displaces children from their naturalised place in the school and precludes the children's right to receive an education. Conversely, language brokering activity in the private domain of the family home could be considered unproblematic, primarily because it remains a private matter and is not particularly about the child's place in society

### **6.5.1 The Co-Construction of Language Brokering**

As suggested in the earlier section, language brokering is a family practice in which young people contribute to families and wider society, in addition, three young people stated that they helped their parents to learn English. Language brokering therefore can be considered as a way that young people contribute to the wellbeing and functioning of the family and society (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995; Hall and Sham, 2007) and as a significant contribution to keep the family going '...as a healthy productive organism' (Mayall, 2011:p.183). Through these actions, young people make significant contributions to the wellbeing and productivity of their parents.



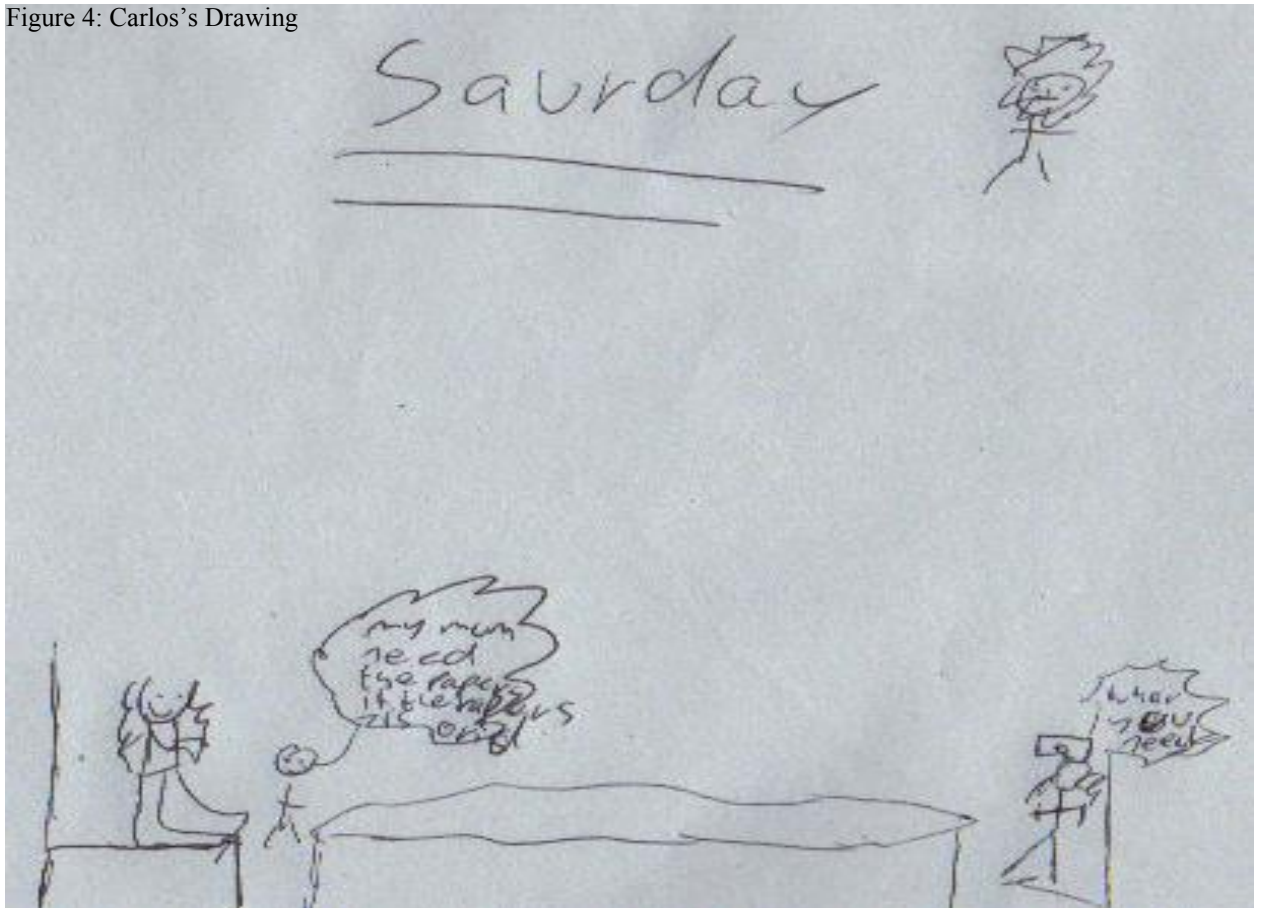
Carlos said that his parents preferred him to interpret than a professional interpreter because he had a better understanding of the family situation than an external interpreter. This speaks to the significance of young people's membership in the family, which may be a reason that persons LEP may ask familiar people to interpret. It also indicates that trust, familiarity and localised knowledge are significant parts of language brokering, in which the continuity of expected behaviour is assumed (Möllering, 2006). As parents and other actors must activate trust, and take a leap of faith or 'suspension' (Giddens, 1990) that the interpreter will convey their wishes and feelings in the expected way. However, family members were also said to use formal interpreters in addition to young people. Sean stated that if his family members were offered a formal interpreter they: '... should say yes cos I'm like wasting my time heh. Like I could be somewhere else heh'

I have suggested that CLB is a co-construction between the child and various actors and have demonstrated that young people play an active role and in some cases exercise autonomy in their choice to language broker, as the findings demonstrated that the young people were able to decide whether or not to language broker. For Sara, language brokering was a choice and like the other young people with siblings, she shared language brokering with her brother. While Simran expresses family allegiance she indicates that there are limits to her agency; she knows which letters she should and shouldn't open and will seek advice from adult members and use other means such as: google translate/dictionaries, if she is unsure about certain terminology or issues that require research. Sean demonstrates that CLB is a choice rather than an obligation. In the following quotation he presents a typical response in a situation when he doesn't want to interpret:

S:...sometimes you ... wanna go somewhere; out or something and they ... [ask] if you can ... translate for them heh and it's just like 'oh I'm busy right now... I can't'

In a similar vein to Sean, when Carlos language brokered for his parents he indicated that this may impede his leisure time. This is depicted in his drawing of a language brokering encounter at the jobcentre (figure 4).

Figure 4: Carlos's Drawing



When I asked Carlos to explain the drawing, he said the smaller figure was him, sat in between his mother on the left and a professional at the other end of the table. The speech bubbles indicate a typical interaction at the jobcentre, in which the professional asks: ‘What do you need?’ Carlos says: ‘My mum needs the papers; are the papers OK?’ I asked Carlos about the face at the top of the page; Carlos said it was because he was unhappy because it was: ‘...Saturday and I don’t want to go’. When I asked what he would rather be doing instead, Carlos answered: ‘sleep, chilling.’ This suggests that CLB was a disruption to Carlos’s preferred activities.

Beyond Carlos’ description, there are two points that I would like to add to interpret the drawing. First, the symbolic representation of Carlos’ small stature, between two larger figures could refer to his awareness as a young person in an adult space. It could also be associated with Sadie’s earlier reference of feeling: ‘stuck in the middle’. Second, the length of the table could be considered to symbolise the spatial distance between the three actors, as

Carlos is positioned closest to his mother, with the professional at the far end of the table. This may also symbolise the family unit. This supports the thesis, that language brokering is a family practice in which young people make a contribution to families and wider society.

## 6.6 The Nature and Function of Language

In this section, I build upon understandings about language and young people's experiences of language brokering, in addition to their references to the medium of language itself.

Examination of the interview transcripts indicates the participants' awareness of different types of English as the following three excerpts from Sean, Simran, and Sara indicate.

1. R: so when you [moved to England] did you speak a little English or no English
2. S: [yeah, like little just like I could
3. introduce myself and like say where I come from and that but like I didn't understand
4. that much
5. R: so in five years you've learnt all of this English?
6. S: [yeah
7. S: yeah
8. R: that's quite impressive
9. S: heh
10. R: so you're pretty much fluent now in English
11. S: erm yeah a bit, no it's not it's not I'm not a really like fluently but I wanna learn
12. more like more English and like I wanna have like proper English accent and
13. everything heh
14. R: you sound to me like you've got like a Yorkshire accent now
15. S: [heh
16. S: alright- that's what teachers tell me in school heh

17. R: do you think so?

18. S: yeah

19. R: do any of your family tell you that?

20. S: like () I think we all got a bit the same heh heh like all m-my sisters and me. My

21. my brother he's got like different accent to me he's more like English like he's got the

22. same accent as English cos he obviou like he's got like English (friends) and that so

23. he ... speaks like them and er I've got like a Yorkshire one

The following excerpt is taken from an interview with Sara, the excerpt relates to an experience of Sara translating for her father at the dentist.

R: [At the dentists] were there any questions or any words that you didn't understand?

S: yeah yeah, [the dentist] ask me like how this pain, but I didn't get it, that question...it was hard because she use different English like. I use English, like street English, like from outside, but she was like using different English and I didn't... get it

The following excerpt is taken from an interview with Simran.

S:...if you didn't know English and you only know Panjabi or Urdu, you'd be really stuck because not a lot of people understand [these languages]

R: OK, so what about your mum then, is she sometimes in a difficult situation?

S: she doesn't cos she doesn't go out alone cos she goes with us lot [siblings, aunty, father] we've been teaching over the years: words, phrases; she gets sentences out.

In the first excerpt I applaud Sean's command of English and point out that he has a 'Yorkshire accent'. Since I speak with a Yorkshire dialect, I refer to the Yorkshire dialect in

an attempt to establish rapport. In doing this, I inadvertently place a high value on the Yorkshire dialect and thus imply that I have the capacity to recognise an authentic dialect. Sean refutes my flattery and expresses his aspiration to acquire a 'proper English accent'. This encounter highlights the nature and function of language and belonging, namely that a person's accent is a marker of group identity (Lippi-Green, 1997). Second, this illuminates ideas about the different intrinsic worth of languages, with some perceived to be more prestigious than others (Crystal, 1987; Bourdieu, 1991; Pugh, 1996) exemplified by the way in which he refers to his brother's more authentic English.

In the second excerpt Sara positions herself as a non-native speaker; she juxtaposes her 'street English' from the 'outside' to the English of the dentist. In doing this, Sara alludes to the subtle connotations and conventions involved in speaking a particular style of English, which can be considered to be a prerequisite for belonging and group membership (Edwards, 1985; Lippi-Green, 1997; Baugh, 2003). This distinction is said to impede Sara's understanding and moreover augments her own perception of her incomplete understanding. A number of researchers have shown how people use a technique referred to as 'style-shifting' (Baugh, 2003) to represent the way in which non-native speakers use language according to the demands of particular contexts. Sadie makes reference to an implicit expectation for interaction in a particular form of English language at the dentist. In addition to Sara's accent and English language proficiency, it is important not to overlook her age in relation to the medical and adult-dominant context, which may augment her anxiety to language broker.

In the third excerpt Simran indicates that English language faculty is associated with integration with the wider English-speaking community. When questioned whether her mother is in a difficult situation due to her limited English proficiency (as expressed by Simran in an earlier part of the interview) Simran refers to her mother's improved English and states: 'she's OK now'. This appeals to the temporal nature of language proficiency and the intergenerational nature of 'family work'; in particular the role that Simran and other family members assume to teach her mother English. In sum, the three excerpts demonstrate three ways that young people refer to the nature and function of language and dialect: i) as a gateway for effective communication, ii) as a signifier of group membership and belonging and iii) as a marker of difference.

## 6.7 Meaning and Understanding

In this section, I focus on the way that meaning was generated in the interview (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). I refer to excerpts from interview transcripts and reflections from my role in the interviews.

Research with children and young people has been reported to be muddling for the adult researcher (James, 2009) and the language of childhood has been described as an: 'exclusive tongue' (James, 1995:p.48). In this section I continue to present findings about the participants' experiences of language brokering, but focus on the meaning-making process and the co-construction of the interview. I argue that my position as a monoglot offers an interesting lens for the research analysis, particularly given that I have no experience of language brokering. The following example exemplifies how I attempted to make sense of Mirium's CLB experience, as a monoglot adult with no experience of CLB.

1. M: I read a letter to somebody in Arabic. I didn't really understand it too much () but
2. yeah. She just mainly wanted me to read it rather than interpret it for her cos she
3. couldn't read it, yet she could speak it
4. R: so you read Arabic, a letter in Arabic and then you told her what it meant in
5. M: [yeah
6. R: English
7. M: no, she knew what it meant; I just had to read it for her if you understand
8. R: no
9. M: it's like she wasn't educated, so she didn't know how to read it, yet she knew how
10. to speak it, if you understand?
11. R: [oh I see, OK
12. R: so she understood what it meant, but she didn't know all the details. Is that right?
13. M: [yeah [no

14. M: no, she couldn't read the lette(h)r heh, she can speak it but she can't read

15. R: [heh, [yeah but she can't read it, I see

16. M: yeah I had to read that for her and a few times I had to translate somet English into

17. Arabic.

The example speaks to the distinction between varying proficiencies in speaking and reading modalities. The misunderstanding was due to my assumption that linguistic proficiency is a combined entity (listening, reading, and speaking). It is likely that this example would be understandable for a bilingual person or person that language brokers, however by virtue of my limited understanding I push Mirium to explain this seemingly taken-for-granted experience in more detail; as exemplified in line 13, I appear to understand the first part but not the second part. By doing so, I mark myself as an outsider to the phenomenon of CLB and promulgate Mirium as expert. This resonates with sociology of childhood perspectives, which regards children as experts on their own lives (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998).

In addition to my absent experiential understanding of CLB, feelings of uncertainty about meaning were further compounded in the interviews with Iqra, who had more recently migrated to England and spoke less fluent English than the other participants. Iqra had experience of language brokering for her parents. Iqra was the only Pakistani young person that preferred to read the participant information sheet in Urdu, although similar to the other participants she said she was comfortable for the interview to take place in English. During the interview, Iqra made reference to her immediate arrival to the UK, three months earlier, and talked about the discomfort she felt in relation to her limited English language proficiency. Although Iqra learnt English at school in Pakistan, she found the application and usage to be different upon arrival to England. Iqra spoke of crying to her father shortly after her arrival to England, about her lack of English and not wanting to go to school. Iqra's distress reinforced the importance of learning English; as her father said to overcome the problem, she needed to practise speaking English. Iqra giggled as she recounted this experience and said that things were 'much better' now that she could speak more English. This highlights that there are different varieties of English around the world (Crystal, 2012) and that the usage of English is related to confidence as well as proficiency. This also

highlights that language could be a source of insecurity for people; this can be attributed to research from Kofman et al., (2009) and Markova and Black (2007) who found that students were bullied and harassed by others in relation to their limited English. Despite Iqra's self-evaluated improvement, there were a number of points in the interview in which I was unsure if Iqra had understood the question or rather if I had understood her correctly. This could be related to a number of factors beyond a shared language, such as Iqra's unfamiliarity with the research process. The reason to include this interpretation is not to assign culpability to myself for arranging the interview without a bilingual researcher to give Iqra the chance to speak in both languages, nor is it to criticise Iqra for her limited English language proficiency, rather the purpose is to consider how meaning is constructed.

Iqra offered jumbled stories about her experience of language brokering, which I struggled to make sense of during the interview. As stated in chapter four, in the opening part of all of the interviews, I made general conversation with the participants, as a way to familiarise them to the interview setting. After learning that Iqra had recently moved to Hillshire from Pakistan I asked the following direct question: 'which is better Pakistan or Hillshire?' Rather than answering this, Iqra avoided the question and proceeded to talk about a school trip. I allowed the discussion to go this way, in the hope that this was a discursive strategy and that she would eventually answer the question, however, she didn't. My immediate thought was that this diversion was a strategy because she did not understand the question. On reflection, an alternative reason could be that she perhaps wanted to 'save face', and did not want to offend me by answering Pakistan. Whatever the reason, this is insightful and highlights that 'banal' questions in the eyes of a researcher may not be straightforward for participants to answer. There were other points in the interview in which I was unsure whether the language I used was understandable. In recognition of this, I attempted to use more simplified language in an attempt to overcome misunderstandings. Examination of the transcript suggests I use considerably more adjacency pairs 'OK, yeah' than in the other interviews, I also used more simplified language and scale questions as a way to elicit experiences as: good or bad, difficult or easy. Despite these strategies there were a number of points in the interview that brought conceptual and methodological insight.

Iqra talked about language brokering for her father and a bank clerk, in which the task involved completing a form. Iqra said that she found some parts of the form difficult to understand, which led her father to call for a family friend to help. We talked about this



experience and I asked how her father might have felt in this encounter. I was shocked to hear Iqra answer that he said: 'very happy' and: 'thanks, very good'. Upon reflection I questioned why I was shocked. Because Iqra had struggled to complete the form, I assumed that there may have been a degree of disappointment on her father's part. This raises two points: first my question could be considered challenging, as it required her to adopt her father's feelings, which may not have been revealed to her. Second, my outlook neglects the unique relationship of Iqra and her father and the gratitude and non-exclusive dependence on Iqra for linguistic support. This realisation highlights that the ontological position, that the interviews are only partial accounts and the purpose is not to reveal truths but to gain insight into the young people's experiences. It also highlights that CLB is a co-construction, unique to the particular young people, interlocutors and setting. My assumptions about language brokering position this activity as an outcome based task.

Another example provided insight to my position as an outsider to the phenomenon of CLB. Toward the end of the interview I asked Iqra to rank her skills as a language broker, with ten being excellent. I hoped that this self-rating technique would lead to discussion about what makes a good language broker. Iqra's answer of 10 out of 10 was surprising and my surprise is important to deconstruct. My reason for including this excerpt is to offer methodological and epistemological insight, as it appears that my uncertainty about whether my questions had been understood by Iqra restricted the way in which I ask questions and resultantly, questions were asked in a simplistic way.

1. R: how good are you at interpreting? So from one to ten (used hand gestures) what
2. number are you?
3. I: ten
4. R: you're ten, why are you ten?
5. I: because it's more heh er, more
6. R: so; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten and you're the top, you
7. I: [yeah
8. R: think you're the top, yeah. So tell me, what what make a good interpreter?

9. I: [yeah
10. I: Er, because I need to practise like that thing, answer questions. Like you know the
11. next Thursday I've got exam and and today when came I've got to practise my exam
12. R: [mm
13. I: and () last month and I've got exam and I don't know what's the result, yeah, I'm
14. R: [OK oh dear.
15. I: very very upset about this, yeah
16. R: what is the exam?
17. I: science
18. R: science, do you like science?
19. I: no, I like maths
20. R: you like maths, so you need to work extra hard?
21. I: yeah
22. R: oh, well good luck; good luck for that
23. I: yeah, thank you, thanks
24. R: OK, so () can I show you this picture now...

I would like to consider my initial question: 'how good are you at interpreting? So from one to ten - what number are you?' First, by asking this question implies that I have an understanding of what a 10 out of 10 score may represent, when this is a subjective and moreover, hypothetical. Second, my reaction is evidenced through the change in cadence and by repeating the question (line 6). The implicit message is that I do not agree with her evaluation and would assign her a lower score. Despite flattering Iqra's 'good' English and speedy progress to gain command of the English language early in the interview, I expected her to answer modestly, having made my own evaluation of her English language proficiency.

When I ask Iqra to qualify the score she'd given herself, Iqra draws upon humour: 'because it's more' (line 5) this shows how Iqra breaks the conventions of the interview, albeit purposefully or not; this reminds me of my limited understanding about CLB and the unpredictability and riches of qualitative research. It also highlights the notion of self-perceived language proficiency and related power dynamics; namely who has the power to define another's language proficiency – the excerpt suggests that I attempted to do so. This excerpt also highlights my power to direct the interview. Iqra's thoughts appear to be on her forthcoming exam rather than talking about language brokering. After multiple discursive answers and uncertainty that Iqra had understood the question I attempted to be more direct and returned to the focus of the research topic, with a smile on my face I said:

R: so I'm interested in the times when somebody comes to your house and

I: [speaks English

R: yes

The act of interrupting the question confirmed that Iqra did indeed understand the research topic, this revealed methodological insight, particularly related my interview style. First it indicates how I privileged my agenda and was, at times, unwilling to go with the flow of the participant's agenda. This in itself highlights the power that I exercised in the adult researcher - child participant dyad. My priority to get back to the discussion could convey the message that other experiences were unworthy or irrelevant. Regardless of whether Iqra had understood the questions I asked throughout the interviews, I felt a latent feeling of uncertainty and felt restrained to stick more closely to the research topic. I interpreted Iqra's diversions as misunderstandings. An important lesson from this experience is the realisation that my decision to include Iqra inadvertently excluded her, since it restricted opportunities for us to speak freely and clarify meanings.

A final uncertainty I wish to discuss is the capricious nature of the young people's experience of CLB, however it is important not to discount the plausible quandary of the way these experiences are evaluated. For instance, Wayne changed his opinion about whether he or a professional interpreter would be preferred. Similarly, while Simran talked in detail about language brokering experiences, toward the end of the interview she stated that her mother is:

'alright now'. This appears to mean her mother no longer requires language brokering. This raises interesting methodological insight; since the timing or even accuracy of the encounters was not established nor verified. This appeals to the socially constructed nature of interview data; in particular it emphasises that the participants' accounts are locked in a particular context. In other words, the interviews can be considered as relics that capture a particular moment in time and do not reveal generalizable truths.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored young people's experience of language brokering from interviews with nine young people, drawings from two young people and self-reflections from the field work. The different young people who participated had different life experiences; some had migrated to England and others were born in England and had different degrees of English language proficiency. The young people language brokered in a range of settings, that included in the home, over the telephone, at the shops, at the bank, at school and in a variety of health and social settings at the; doctors, dentist, job centre and housing office. Language brokering included i) outcome driven activities, to convey and retrieve direct messages and ii) meaning-making experiences; to make sense of information and to garner new information.

The interviews suggest that language brokering involves more than fluency in multiple languages, this implies that communication is more than the transition of messages from the speaker to listener, thus extending Sharon and Weaver's communication model (see figure 1 p.27). Language brokering involves a number of activities beyond interpreting, including problem solving and negotiating. It also involves activities in the back region (Goffman, 1969), for example; planning and preparing for the encounter, in addition to co-ordinating actions; moments of action and inaction, as the young people respond and wait for instruction. CLB also corresponds with the idea of co-ordinating activities (Wadensjö, 2001), as the young person instructs speakers to speak, pause or slow down. The interviews indicate that language brokering includes more than translating and may involve emotional support, problem solving and advocacy.

CLB experiences can be broadly conceptualised as i) problematic or ii) unproblematic. This is based upon a number of factors, such as: the particular setting and whether this is a 'high' or 'low-context', in addition to the young person's disposition and their cultural and linguistic knowledge. I presented findings to explore what makes CLB problematic and have

illuminated that this may involve role-anxiety about the young people's perceived English language competence and capacity to translate. I presented findings to consider the unproblematic nature of CLB, and considered the contribution that language brokering offers to enables people that do not share a mutual language to communicate.

The interviews suggest that child language brokers have a sophisticated understanding of not only multiple languages but they know how to navigate a myriad of systems. This includes cultural expectations, knowledge of institutional resources in addition to an awareness of the institutional barriers that face member of the population on the basis of their language proficiency, this is particularly illuminating in relation to the Pakistani community who are perceived to be 'settled' in England. The interviews suggest that CLB is a co-construction between the young person and the adult who requires linguistic support. The findings therefore highlight the diversity of roles that children undertake within the family and society.

Although none of the young people's spoke about their experiences of language brokering in a social work setting, it is important to consider how the findings might inform social work perspectives. First, the interviews focus on young people's lived experience of language brokering and thus present a different perspective to interpreting encounters, which may otherwise be out-of-bounds to social workers. The interviews indicate that young people language broker in a range of settings and that language brokering may be initiated by a professional, parent or the young person. This may be in the absence of a formal interpreter or to supplement formal interpreters, dependent on the needs and wishes of the persons involved. The interviews offer an understanding of the activities that surround the language brokering, and the perceived positive and negative aspects of this experience. Second, the interviews challenge the idea that interpreting can be classified as a wholly positive or negative, as this was dependent on multiple factors, including the degree of complexity, the time of the encounter, the technical difficulties involved in finding the correct words to translate, and the adults involved, including the professionals, who might assess the young people's interpreting skills. Third, the interviews disturb the generationally organised structure of social life, as children take on roles, thought to be reserved for adults. This challenges traditional understandings of the division of labour within society and within the family, as professionals and adults may be dependent upon children to interpret. In a social work context, language brokering may be crucial as it enables people to access services in the

community and allows social workers and other professionals who do not share a mutual language to communicate.

Chapters seven and eight present findings from interviews with social workers, chapter seven focuses on findings about social workers' experiences and viewpoints about child interpreters in a social work context. Chapter eight focuses on the same participant's experience of using formal interpreting provision.

## **Chapter 7: Findings from Interviews with Social Workers – Child Interpreters**

### **7. Introduction**

The social workers were found to use formal, out sourced interpreting provision and informal interpreting resources; children, family members, colleagues. In this chapter I focus on children as informal interpreters. I present data from interviews with child and family social workers (n=9) to illuminate their experiences and viewpoints about children who interpret for social workers and family members LEP. I consider the events that surround the interpreting encounter and present data to explore how social workers talk about their attempts to manage and make decisions about the suitability of children to interpret.

#### **7.1 Terminology and Presentation**

As explained in the chapter six, in addition to a written overview of the purpose of the study, I also discussed the purpose of the study with the participants at the start of the interview. I explained the concept of ‘child language brokering’. One participant stated that this term had confused her, as she did not understand its meaning. In light of this and given that the participants used a variety of terms in the interview to denote child interpreters, including ‘child language brokers’, ‘child interpreters’, ‘mediators’, and ‘go-betweens’, I adopt the term child interpreter throughout this chapter. I refer to children and parents as service users; I refer to the research participants as social workers or participants, with indication of their unique identification code (see tables 1 and 2, p.57). The children and young people referred to are likely to be below the age of 18.

It is important to consider the contextual factors that may influence the social workers’ responses and viewpoints about children who interpret. First, in relation to the nature of the social workers’ involvement with the service users and second, in relation to the participants’ varied social work practice; in different teams, locations and with different service user groups. It is likely that the service users that the participants refer to are involved with social workers because they are in some sort of difficulty (see glossary for discussion). I include context to the social workers’ description of events and reasons surrounding the service users’ involvement with social work services.

I include both short and lengthy excerpts from the interviews, and I present the data in its ‘raw’ form. This means that overlapping talk between the researcher and participant are

included, in addition to indication of intonation, speed, repetition and moments of indecipherability (see appendix 15). As stated in the preceding chapter, the reason for including this level of detail is to draw attention to the way in which the participants talk about child interpreters. I pay attention to what the participants say about children interpreting in addition to the language they use to construct their accounts, as a way to explore how they make sense, construct thresholds for suitability and justify their actions. I identify a number of linguistic devices that include: the use of direct reported speech (DRS), disassociation and mimesis. Attention to the construction of the interview accounts is influenced by discourse analysis (Wooffitt, 2005; Johnstone, 2008; Gee, 2010).

## 7.2 Reasons that Children Interpret in Social Work

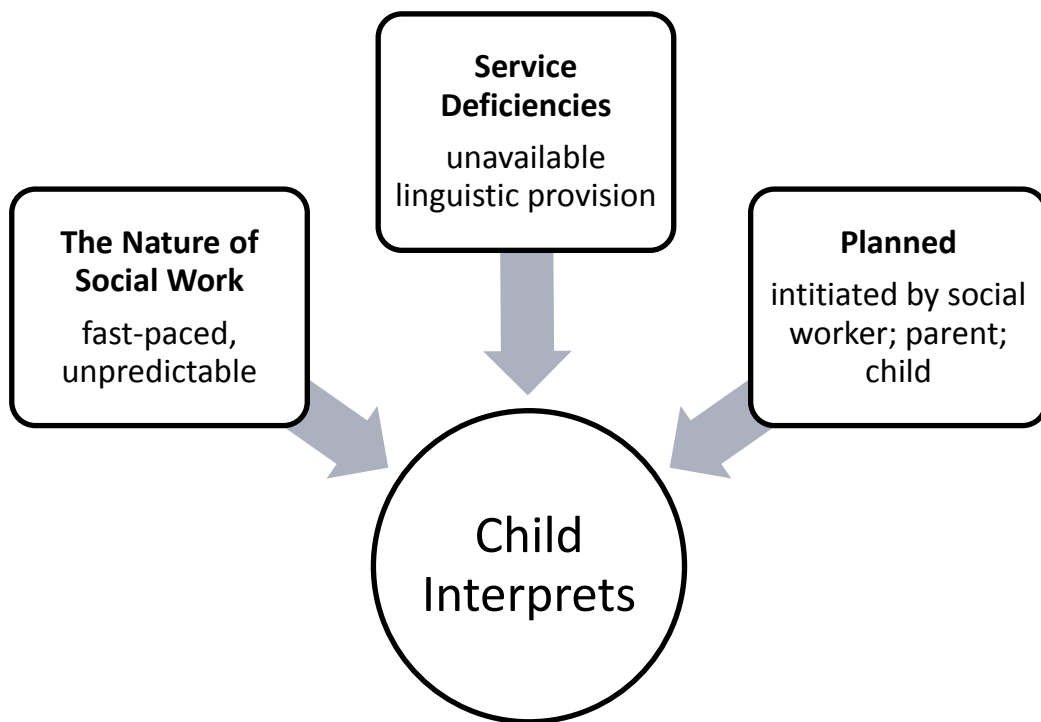


Figure 5: Reasons that Children Interpret in Social Work

Child interpreters were found to be used as informal interpreters for all of the social workers, during their practice within families LEP. As I have illustrated in figure 5, this was due to three reasons. The de facto nature of social work practice was cited as a reason for children interpreting. The social workers referred to work that involved out-of-hour referrals, or visits in which the social worker would make contact with a family without knowing what language they spoke and whether an interpreter was required. In such cases, the participants found that



the child was the only person with dual linguistic proficiency and the capacity to communicate with both adults. Second, child interpreting encounters were linked to the availability of linguistic resources; namely professional interpreters and bilingual members of staff. If these were unavailable or if the former was identified as deficient this increased the likelihood of children interpreting. Third, for two participants, child interpreters were found to be a preferred means of interpreting provision (both reluctantly and intentionally) due to dissatisfaction with the quality and reliability of the interpreting services, or to gain an alternative understanding of the family situation. Child interpreting was also reported to be initiated by parents and children.

### **7.3 Social Workers' Experience of Children Interpreting**

All participants had experiences in which children interpreted during a social work intervention. Only one participant (M9) drew upon social work guidance (London Child Protection Procedures) about children interpreting and used this to justify her reasons not to use children to interpret. However, the participant spoke of a foster placement visit in which there was no other alternative but to use a child to interpret, and she did so reluctantly. All participants identified child interpreters as an unavoidable reality of social work practice, juxtaposed with a desired reality, in which there would be reliable and efficient interpreters, or as two participants stated, the service users would speak English. The following section explores participants' reasons for preventing or avoiding the phenomenon of child interpreting.

#### **7.3.1 The Undesirability of Children Interpreting**

The primary reason cited for the avoidance of child interpreters amongst all of the participants, was based upon a dichotomised orientation between English speaking families and Families' LEP, as participant M6 explains.

M6: ...I think as social workers we are conscious to try and not put children in that [interpreting] position...because with an English speaking family, you would never ask a child to be in the middle of those kinds of conversations.

The participant presents a dichotomy, in which social work with English speaking families is referred to as the basis for comparison. Child interpreting is therefore identified as an

activity that belongs to families' LEP and therefore is an aberration from 'typical' English speaking families. From this starting point, social workers were cognisant that child interpreting disturbed a child's 'typical' role. Participant M8 was concerned that child interpreting detracted from a child's 'true role' in the family, which caused children to worry about 'adult problems'. This is particularly interesting in the case of social work given the need to promote the wellbeing of children and protect them from harm (Children Act, 1989). This resonates with Katz (2008) who claims that children are treated as 'ornaments' whose innocence is under siege.

In the following excerpt, participant M8 problematises the child interpreter role in the context of a 'child in need'<sup>13</sup> case with a family that consisted of: mother, father and two children. Statutory Children's Services were involved with the family due to concerns about domestic violence, perpetrated by the father towards the mother. M8 discusses how the mother was the only non-English speaking family member and she explained that she built rapport with the mother and children, this included gathering information from the child about the family situation and in these instances the child interpreted for the social worker and her mother.

1. M8: [the child] tended to kind of wear the problems of the family, she tended to try
2. and keep hold of everything in herself ... () she had done this obviously for a long
3. time probably, the interpreting ... then generally she feels you know, feels the
4. emotions of the family and >I'm trying to think of the words< she that she um
5. () wants to be the hero kind of role, <so she wants to help everybody> and make
6. everybody happy basically °in the family° and she wants to be supportive to
7. everybody so she can understand where dad's coming from but she wants to be
8. supportive to mum and she wants to help her little brother and things like that but
9. <she was kind of> () trying to be all things to all people and to to me her

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<sup>13</sup> Child in Need, under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

10. interpreting was just a a symptom of a bigger () issue with her and so a lot of  
11. the time I'd you know, a lot of the time I spent talking to her I would say you're a  
12. child, I want you to be a child, I want you to live you know a normal, you know  
13. you shouldn't have to be worrying about adult problems, obviously you know that  
14. might be mixed message(h)s given given that she was having to do interpreting  
15. for her mu(h)m () but um but that so that was a lot of the rapport building I was  
16. trying to do with her was to try and get her to realise what her true role was in  
17. the family and that she she's carrying these adult problems with her parents'  
18. relationship.

Three areas are discussed in relation to the excerpt. First M8 locates the child interpreting within a broader context of social work intervention and alludes to the multiple facets of the assessment process, which included information gathering, making sense of information, decision-making and prescribing courses of action. In this context, the interpreting is related to on-going issues concerning the wellbeing of the child and family. Second, M8 refers to interpreting as an aberration from the child's 'true role' (line 16). She alludes to the multiple roles played by the child, closely related to filial piety, as described in the adopted 'hero kind of role' (line 5). This corresponds with existing literature that child interpreting creates a role reversal (Cohen et al., 1999; Candappa and Egharevba, 2002). This illuminates a 'boundary problem', namely a weakening of hierarchical boundary between the child and adult (Wyness, 2006). Other participants extended this thesis and added that it is difficult for children to be neutral, and unaffected by the emotional pressures of interpreting for a family member and a person in position of authority. M8 alludes to this outlook by speaking from dual perspectives; she stipulates the child's feelings about interpreting '...she feels... the emotions of the family' (lines 3-6). The participant then asserts her expertise as a social worker detailing the actions taken to rectify the problem. The sum of these accounts can be related to her broader duties as a social worker, and depicts M8 as a child-centred practitioner, with knowledge of the potential risks factors involved in allowing a child to interpret. Within this

context the child is positioned as ‘vulnerable’ and in need of protection, although M8 asserts that the interpreter role is atypical for children. Paradoxically, the participant acknowledged that child interpreters provide a vehicle to inform the social work assessment, as the child offers a unique ‘insider’ view of the family’s situation. This quandary will now be explored with consideration of the way in which social workers construct and maintain thresholds in relation to children who interpret.

#### **7.4 Thresholds in Relation to Children who Interpret**

All participants identified that the typical arrangement to communicate with service users LEP would be the use of professional interpreters, rather than informal interpreting from children or family members, however, they stated that informal interpreters were used, this included colleagues or adult or child family members. The participants indicated that child interpreting could be acceptable for initial visits, to establish the families’ linguistic need and to build initial relationships with families without the presence of a professional interpreter. As previously mentioned, discussion about child interpreters was enveloped by normative understandings of ‘typical’ roles of the child, informed by the rubric of safeguarding children. Given this context, certain topics were regarded as appropriate or inappropriate for children to translate. Hence the decision to use children to interpret was filtered through a case-to-case basis, based upon whether the process of interpreting would expose the child to information and knowledge that might cause distress.

Four participants extended the concept of thresholds to the linguistic capacity and character of the child. This was based on the understanding that some children would be more willing or able to interpret than others. Nonetheless, all of the participants were apprehensive about the child’s technical capacity to interpret, with particular concern about accuracy and bias. A number of strategies were found to be used, including monitoring and amending the content children were asked to translate. The following excerpt shows how M6 constructs thresholds for child interpreters by altering her language to aid communication with the child and by monitoring the child’s response. As the social worker does this, she realises that the intended message was somehow lost in translation. In the excerpt M6 refers to a generalised scenario from her social work practice, in which context surrounding the example or actors involved is unknown. The purpose of including this excerpt is not about whether the participant is referring to an actual experience but rather to gain insight into the participant’s presentation of her typical response in the case of a child interpreting encounter.

R: ... are there times when you've queried what the child has interpreted and if they've I don't know, interpreted it in a different way?

M6: [yea:h, >there's been times like that< and I've either said '>no no no< look tell mummy, please tell mummy' this. O:r and I've like re-clarified it. Or there's been times where >she may have said something back and it doesn't make a lot of sense< or you just think the message hasn't got across and you

R: [right

M6: think OK right <let's leave this>, GO AND PLAY AND I'M GONNA meet mum tomorrow with an interpreter. I've done that quite a lot of times.

First, the excerpt illuminates that the social worker establishes the child's capacity to interpret by monitoring the child's interpreted response, and by doing so, she decides to abort the interpreting task. In this case the social worker assumed the child's willingness to cooperate, but neglected his or her capacity to do so. Second, M6 alludes to a distinction between the world of children and adults. The child is temporarily instructed to inhabit an adult space by way of interpreting. In this space, rules and accurate translation matter. Since the child does not meet the desired standard (s)he is instructed back to the archetypal realm of child's 'play': 'GO AND PLAY'. This is a realm of spontaneity and creativity, within which meaning and accuracy are rendered less important. Awareness of age-appropriate spaces is also evidenced by the way in which the participant alters her language to interact with the child, as I have illustrated in figure 6, this will be explained shortly.

The excerpt illuminates a circuit of responsibility and this can be associated with Goffman's (1961) description of a 'role-release', as the child is temporarily ascribed interpreter status, then instructed back into a 'child role'. Although the child is instructed to interpret, the social worker monitors the child and parents' responses, which, to some extent, affirms the existing adult hierarchy, namely the social worker's adult authority to control and supervise the interaction. This is despite the social worker not understanding the additional languages spoken by the service users, thus indicating the social worker's authorial control. These

actions suggest two things: first that child interpreting is a co-construction between social worker and child. Second, this supports the idea that interpreting is an atypical role for children in an adult managed milieu.

Figure 6 illustrates the communication strategy the participant alludes to in her encounter with the said family. The communication strategy refers to the systematic techniques employed by a speaker to express meaning in which there is some difficulty (Koprowska, 2010). The starting point in figure 6 is an encounter in which people do not share a mutual language. Should a formal interpreter be available the communication will follow that pathway (with continued monitoring, as will be explored in the following chapter). Should a formal interpreter not be used (for the reasons given earlier), the social worker will use alternative informal interpreting options, which include: children, family members and colleagues. The model focuses on the use of children as informal interpreters and illustrates how, after making the decision to use a child to interpret, the process will be monitored and the social worker may alter the way s/he communicates, this may mean re-phrasing questions and avoiding certain words. The child's response is monitored and, if deemed to be unsatisfactory, the task is abandoned. While the other interpreting provision pathways are not explored in this figure, it is important to point out that these alternatives are not unproblematic, and may involve the social worker monitoring and/or abandoning the interaction if necessary.

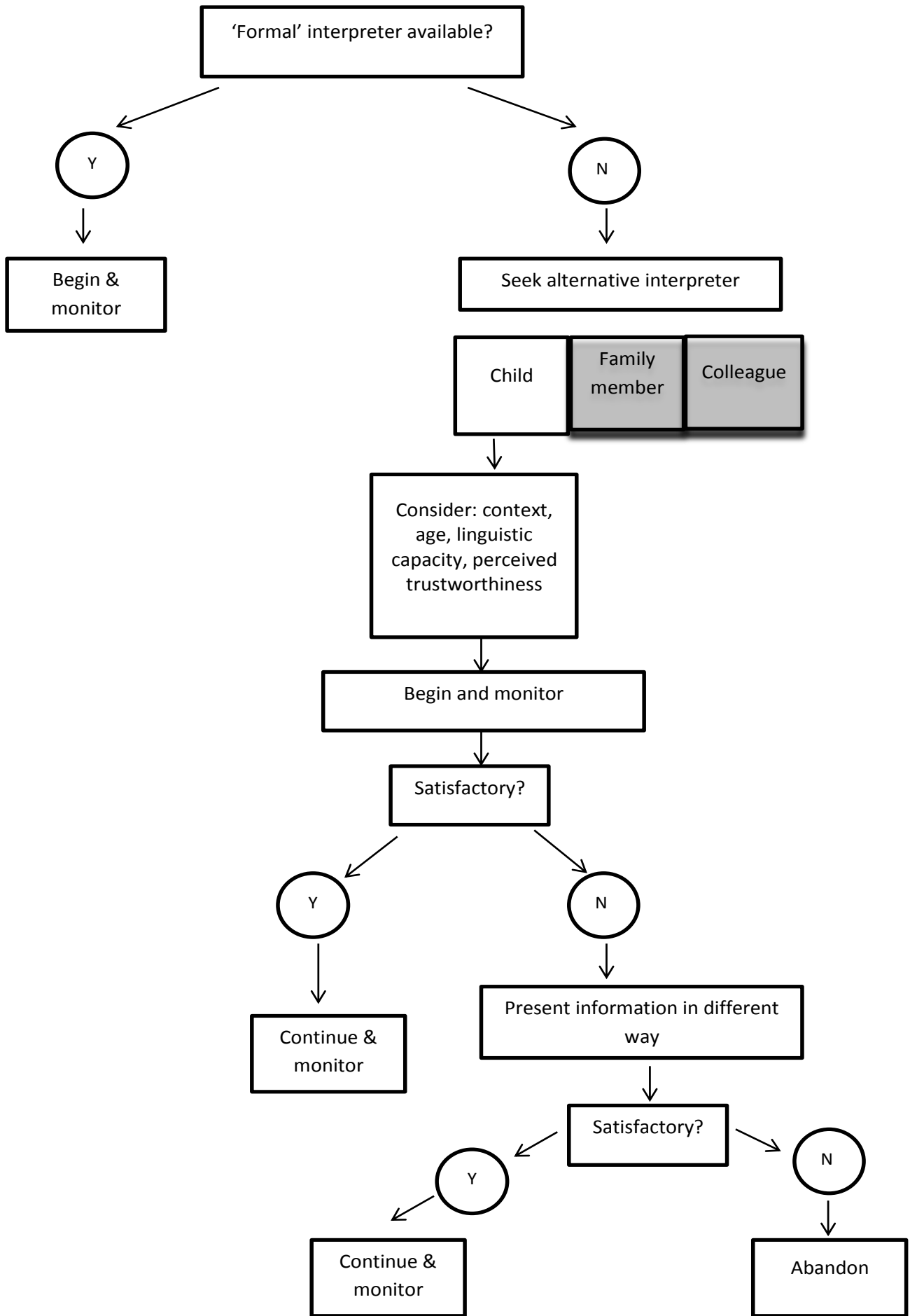


Figure 6: Communication Strategy

The following excerpt extends understandings about appropriate content for children to interpret. Participant B3 recalls an experience to illuminate thresholds for acceptability.

- 1.B3: ...I was working with a Lithuanian family and () she's got a daughter; a child
- 2.wh:o () interprets and there are certain sensitive things that a child shouldn't hear
- 3.because she's the only person who can interpret, you know she listened to those
- 4.things
- 5.R: so what sorts of things shouldn't she hear?
- 6.B3: () ↑things like erm () let's say if we are concerned about the partners that the
- 7.mother brings to the house; the impact of that on the children, you know, these are
- 8.R: [°mm°
- 9.B3: very sensitive things or ↑when: there was this issue of eviction, that mum was
- 10.R: [OK
- 11.B3: about, the family was about to be evicted. >Children don't have to worry about
- 12.this< these are adult issues that they should talk about and find a way of
13. B3: addressing, but even before the mum becomes aware of this eviction, the child
- 14.() you know became aware first because she's the interpreter, >you know<
- 15.something like this is not [appropriate].

The excerpt illuminates how participant B3 constructs and regulates an interpreting encounter, in which the social worker is selective about content to be interpreted. This threshold is based upon three interrelated notions: i) a distinction between 'adult' and 'child' content, ii) the child's emotional capacity to translate and iii) the child's place within the hierarchical ordering of the family. It appears that the child's place within the family precludes the child's capacity to be impartial. The social worker also raises temporal concerns about this phenomenon, namely that a child should not hear adult issues in advance of their adult



caregivers. This highlights that the social worker compares and evaluates the child's interpreting to the assumed impartial position of a formal interpreter and recognises the likelihood that the child may not have the capacity or knowledge to translate the exact words of the social worker and parent.

Although B3 uses this example to raise concern about the problematic nature of the child's capacity as an informal interpreter, it overlooks a fundamental issue: the jump to the existence of the child acting in the capacity as an informal interpreter. In particular, how B3 was in a situation in which the child was used to interpret. Before B3 outlines the threshold for content, he begins by presenting the child as the existing 'interpreter', hence he shows awareness of the existing order; namely the privatised nature of the child interpreting and likelihood that the child interprets for her mother in a number of different contexts. He also notes that the child is the only person with the capacity to facilitate communication between the adults. It appears therefore, that the phenomenon of child interpreting is itself recognised as some form of contribution to the family and indeed the social worker. However, interpreting is not perceived to be beneficial for the child and the interpreting is considered to be problematic in the context of social work intervention. In reference to the same child, B3 extends his thoughts about the problematic nature of child interpreting. In the excerpt the non-English speaking mother is positioned as the initiator of the child interpreting activity, as she queries the discussion between the social worker and child.

1. B3: ... [the mother] invited this daughter >from Lithuania to come and< live with
2. her, who is also a child
3. R: how old?
4. B3: ↑erm she was () thirteen, fourteen years, yeah so she came over to support the
5. R: [°mm°]
6. B3: child, which in its self is not appropriate because a child caring for a child >but
7. the you know<. In addition to that, she's got some level of English, so so any time
8. we want when I undertake [child protection] visit () she is the only one handy ()
9. you know, that I could use and >even if you, you< speaking to mum, mum would

10. tend to her: ‘what is he saying?’ So it’s very frustrating and as I was saying, we
11. don’t have many of the () many () Lithuanian interpreters, so that was very
12. difficult.

At the beginning of the excerpt it appears that the child is carrying out domestic tasks within the home, which is deemed to be inappropriate. The participant associates these activities with child interpreting, which augments his position about the unsuitability of both caregiving activities and child interpreting. The term ‘young carers’ refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years old who deliver various care-giving tasks (Becker et al., 1998; Dearden and Becker, 2001; 2004; Bancroft et al., 2005). Given the many different experiences of caring and that there is no definable understanding of ‘normal’ childhood (Olsen, 1996). It remains inconclusive whether the effect of caring is considered to have an impact on children’s academic, emotional, social and/or physical wellbeing, however this is commonly understood as an activity deemed to be unsuitable for children. In parallel with young carers, child interpreting is considered as an inappropriate role, which disturbs roles within the family. The child referred to in the excerpt is presented as a substitute interpreter, with ‘some level of English’ and more importantly ‘handy’ since a formal interpreter that spoke the desired language was difficult to locate<sup>14</sup> (line 8). Although the child compensates for a professional interpreter she is considered a substandard replacement. This is not necessarily based on her competency to interpret but rather based on her social status as a child. By virtue of this position the child is considered an illegitimate interpreter, who is in the first instance, a child. The contradictory nature of this arrangement is insightful as B3 assumes that the child will interpret, however he takes issue with this arrangement (line 6). This indicates that B3 must uphold his professional duties and adhere to statutory timescales and communicate with the family, while simultaneously protecting the child from harm that interpreting may entail.

The concept of thresholds is extended in the following excerpt from an interview with participant B4. The excerpt presents a poly-voiced scenario in which B4 mimics a 17-year-

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<sup>14</sup> This is despite the encounter taking place in a multilingual borough of London.

old male interpreting, by passing concerns from the school of his younger siblings to the social worker. Again, the excerpt is part of a complex social work intervention in which, the siblings are subjects of the social work intervention, the sibling that interprets is not. Despite not being a 'subject' of intervention, the young person plays a formative role in the social work assessment process because he is the only fluent English speaker in the family. This means that he carries out the majority of interaction with professionals. This scenario offers an alternative understanding about child interpreting, as participant B4 indicates that the young person uses his dual language proficiency as a way to control and manipulate his mother. This is in the context of the young person and his mothers' strained relationship, in which there were ongoing concerns about the mothers' parenting capacity.

1. R: ... so what things then would this boy be translating?
2. B4: like it would be like um you know: 'I've ... received a phone call from the
3. ↓school', um um 'the school wasn't happy ... that the child came to the ↓school
4. this ↓morning... he was a bit dirty' blah blah blah
- 5.R: [ <meaning his sister? >
6. B4: yes, >his sister the sister and brother<, yeah it wasn't quite you know: 'the
7. R: [yeah [mm
8. B4: child didn't present... very- this morning, is there any reason wh:y?' You
9. know: 'what do you think about what the school said? Do you think the school ()
10. was right in saying this?' And then you know, that kind of stuff.

The participant mimics the young person and shows how the young person adopted institutional language in order to pass on concerns from the school. The excerpt depicts the young person presenting information about his sibling's unkempt appearance which highlights problems with their care giving. This puts the social worker in a precarious position since the concerns from the school are significant for the assessment, however the

acquisition of this information through the child is problematic. The social worker must respond to the concerns of the school, while being mindful of the young person's position in the family. Similar to the earlier excerpts; the interpreting is depicted as an atypical activity that crosses the boundaries of expected behaviour and actions of a young person. For this reason, the young person is not deemed to be a suitable interpreter. Thus, the issue is not about the veracity of the young person's claims, the problem was that this information was acquired via the young person interpreting. The following excerpt extends the discussion about thresholds. B4 refers to the same young person and shares an experience in which he invited the young person to translate for himself and other family members.

1. B4: ... I had a situation here (in the office), where I ↑used [the young person] t:o
2. interpret for his mother, I think it was when I was newly allocated the case and they
3. experienced some financial difficulties and when um () he gave me a I would say
4. <he lied to ↑me> by telling me that his step-dad has left the country with the
5. benefit money that the whole ↑family was receiving and tried to get some money
6. from the local authority and I °tried° on ↑that day, I used him to contact Inland
7. Revenue to know the position, the financial situation but what he also did is, he
8. knew his step dad's National Insurance Number which ↑he gave to Inland Revenue
9. () °and preten:d himse:lf to be the ↑dad° which then Inland Revenue then disclosed
10. information ↑to me (). And it was at one ↑point I was talking to the officer at the
11. end of the li:ne, that they said to me, could they now speak to Mr so and so, and
12. when I told them; Mr so and so is not here I've got his son ↑here, they got very
13. ↑angry, that the information found to me, they were ↑not supposed to (). So from
14. that ↑day () there was a question mark about, you know, this young ↑person.

The participant explains that the young person was said to be accustomed to interacting with professionals, since he was the only person at home that spoke English. This may have informed the social worker's decision to ask the young person to speak with the officer at the Inland Revenue. It is insightful to identify how B4 presents himself within the scenario. Although it seems that the social worker initiated this arrangement and the information obtained from the Inland Revenue was the desired and accomplished outcome, the crux of the story is about the inappropriate acquisition of this information and the young person's moral integrity. It could be suggested that the focus on the malpractice of the young person relieves the social worker of potential reproach for allocating this task to the young person.

Interestingly, it can be assumed that the young person spoke in English to the Inland Revenue officer; in this case then, the problem was not due to the fact that B4 was excluded from dialogue in a different language, instead the problem was that the young person had surpassed his duties and acquired confidential information by posing as his father. As B4 alludes, this experience marked the young person as 'untrustworthy'. This has two key connotations: first it illuminates the innate power that resides with the social worker, as an agent with the capacity to identify behavioural expectations and the authority to choose when children can and cannot interpret. Second, the excerpt highlights the importance of trust in interpreter-mediated encounters, this will be explored further in chapter nine. The excerpt alludes to the fluid nature of thresholds, which appear to be informed by experience and on a case-to-case basis. In this case, B4 reflects upon this experience and consequently renounces his decision to use a child to interpret.

This section has demonstrated two interrelated findings: first the contribution of child interpreters and second, tensions about the perceived usefulness of the child's capacity to interpret. This was related to concerns about accuracy and the distress that interpreting may generate. These tensions highlight conflicting understandings about child interpreters and the way in which thresholds for the acceptability of child interpreting are created. This is extended with consideration of the role-reversal.

#### **7.4.1 Role-Reversal**

The findings indicate that interpreting is considered to be a form of 'adult work' (Wyness, 2006) in which children occupy an adult territory. Since the child has the capacity to speak both languages of the adults, this propels the child into a relatively powerful position, in light

of the child's linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). It is useful to consider the interaction between the child, social worker and parent through the lens of the 'server - served' role (Goffman, 1968a). This conceptualisation is influenced by the work of Rebecca Tipton, in her work with public service interpreters (2010).

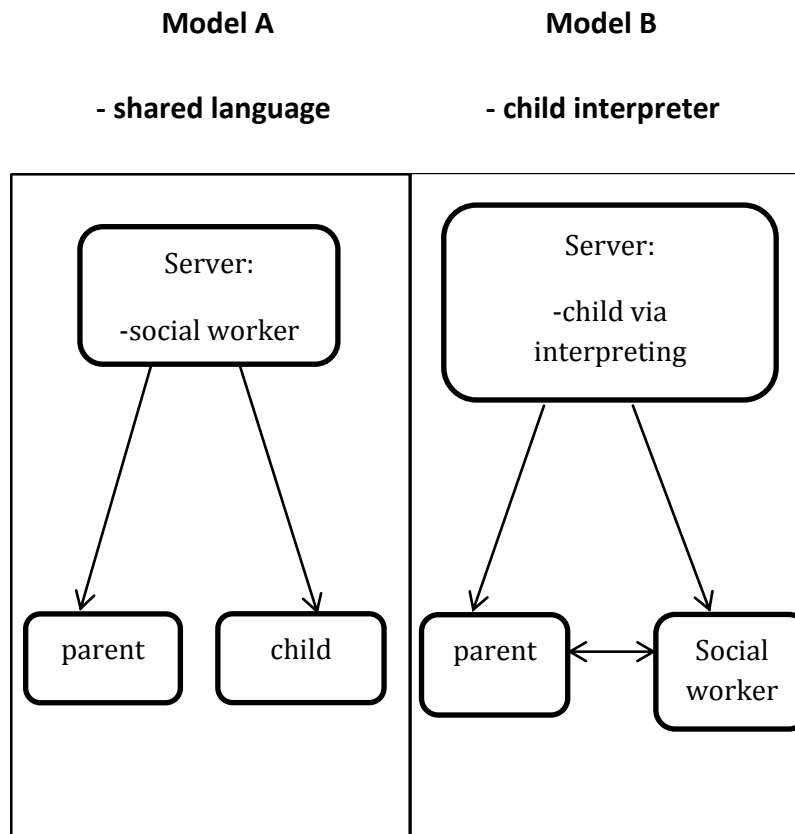


Figure 7: Server - Served Role

Figure 7 has been conceptualised from the data and it depicts two models. Model A positions the social worker as 'server' to the parent and child, thus meaning they are expected to protect and promote the wellbeing of the child. In this arrangement the arrangement is broadly one-directional, as the child and parent as recipients and is thus 'served'. Model B depicts a scenario, in which the social worker is dependent on an interpreter to convey messages in order to carry out his or her duties. In this case, the child is transformed from being 'served' by social workers and parents to the 'server' since they have the necessary linguistic capital required to facilitate interaction.

## 7.5 Attempts to Manage Child-Interpreting Encounters

In the following excerpt participant B7 discusses her observations of children interpreting in domains other than social work, in which the child could be understood as the subject of the encounter as well as the mouthpiece for parent and professional.

B7: ... we go to school meetings and they are sitting there and the child is talking to the therapist and interpreting to the mum what the therapist is saying. Same with teachers; so whatever the teacher () or the care person may be able to say directly to the parent, gets lost in how in the way the child interprets it, and then again IT IS about the child and you wonder how, what the child is saying you know: ... the therapist are saying, you know 'this is what I want the child to work on' and 'this is what I think is the problem', or the teacher is saying: 'this is () the problem at school' or 'this is why he doesn't' () erm 'he's not getting on with this teacher, that teacher'.  
↑You wonder how that child feels when he's saying that to the parents.

Echoing other research participants, B7 raised concern about accuracy, particularly how meaning may be lost through the process of the child interpreting, and that children are not considered to be neutral. It is important to identify the rhetorical devices the participant employs to discuss this issue. B7 alludes to the problematic nature of child interpreters through disassociation; she speaks as an onlooker of neighbouring professionals and their use of child interpreters. This gives her space to identify the problematic nature of child interpreting and relieves her of the contradictory practice she earlier identified. She uses this positioning as a leverage to purport the inappropriate nature of child interpreting, by way of distancing herself. This relates to research from White and Featherstone (2005) who demonstrated how social workers in a multiagency setting pointed out the inadequacy of other professions. The authors argue that this served as a way of 'accomplishing being a 'professional' and legitimating one's role alongside similar occupations' (p.210). Particularly since the participant later stated in the interview that she uses children to interpret. In the final line the participant adopts an emotive stance by appealing to the vulnerability of the passive child. This presents B7 as a social worker that has a nuanced understanding of the complexities of children interpreting in a social work practice.

The following excerpt highlights how the participant uses her professional judgement in her decision to use children to interpret, whilst being aware of the complications.

B7: ...you ARE expected to use professionals [to interpret for families LEP]. But I think in cases... when you - you have to resort to using [the child], you know when you don't have any other option. It is something that has happened, it's hard to avoid it. It's at - at least after, you do get something rather than nothing.

In the final line, the participant positions child interpreting as an informal arrangement in the face of service deficiencies. The participant states that child interpreters are a useful ad-hoc tool, however they are deficient, in relation to their child status and inferiority in comparison to formal interpreters. This outlook positions informal interpreting provision as a commodity. Although the child possesses capacity by virtue of his/her linguistic proficiency, the child's capacity to interpret is considered as a tool and may be used by social workers to enable and facilitate dialogue. The participant considers the complexities of children interpreting as she states: 'you do get something rather than nothing'. This indicates that although child interpreting is not desirable practice, it provides *a* choice.

The following excerpt alludes to some of the benefits of child interpreting. Participant M8 refers to the aforementioned family at the start of this chapter, to explain how the act of a child interpreting inadvertently led a child to reveal important information to the social worker about domestic violence, perpetrated by the father towards the mother.

R: so can you tell me about how the children were used as interpreters?

M8: ...the daughter was the older of the two and she um at times did () you know kind of made her mum's wishes and views known, >a lot of time< when dad wasn't around because he was not always there uh and she would take the opportunity to kind of you know convey to me how her mother felt...

This excerpt indicates that the child makes her mothers' wishes known, however it is not clear if this is done verbatim, or even if her mother was aware of this. In light of this, it could be considered that this example illuminates how the child interprets by presenting the views of



her mother. The participant states how the child offers an alternative and broader understanding of the family situation and this information is used to add weight to the social worker's concerns, particularly the mother's denial of domestic violence. The excerpt shows how the child and social worker meet at certain times to talk about the family situation, and to avoid her English-speaking father, thus showing that the social worker and child navigate space, in cognisance of each other's language proficiency. In this context, it appears that the child's mother is strategically excluded from conversations due to her English language proficiency, while the child's English language proficiency is perceived as a vehicle to reveal insight into the family situation. This places the child in an irresolute position, as her dual linguistic proficiency is bifurcated as a resource and deficiency. It is a resource in the context of being able to offer insight into her family's situation, and a deficiency since this capacity gives her some responsibility to speak about her mother's situation, in the awareness that her mother could not speak directly to the social worker. In this case, although the social worker considers that interpreting disturbs a child's 'natural' role, as stated earlier in the chapter, she is aware of the importance for the child to share her understanding of the domestic violence in the family.

While the benefits of the child presenting her mother's predicament are realised by the participant, there is concern that the child is not a legitimate interpreter and resultantly should not worry about 'adult problems'. There is an underlying paradox here however, as it appears that the child's interpreting assisted in the social workers' understanding of the family situation, without which she would not have known the full extent of the family's predicament. While the participant acknowledges the insight that the interpreting brought to the family situation, she acknowledges this contradiction. In order to alleviate this difficulty, the participant said she took a number of precautions, she ensured that information was verified with a professional interpreter and arranged for formal interpreters in official meetings. The participant managed the contradictions of using children to interpret by taking a number of measures, this included: asking the child if they would be willing to interpret and checking in with the child, during and after the interpreting, to consider their feelings and to see whether they were willing to continue. These examples illuminate the co-production of interpreting, since the outputs are related to the social worker and the service user. Moreover, this finding suggests that thresholds in relation to children interpreting in social work are flexible, since, with appropriate management, child interpreting may have the potential to aid and benefit social work involvement.

The preceding sections have outlined three key findings: first the problematic nature of children interpreting. Second, that child interpreters may be used as an informal resource to facilitate intervention and third, that social workers manage children who interpret in accordance with thresholds informed by the social worker's assessment of the child's character and perceptions about their capacity to interpret.

## 7.6 Ramifications of Children Interpreting

One effect of an absent interpreter was 'harbouring'; this was not a specific term used by the participants but I find it a useful way to conceptualise the restriction of information sharing in the absence of a shared language between social worker and service user. Harbouring is associated with the time and metaphorical nature of 'holding' information. In the following excerpt participant B3 builds on the earlier excerpt and explains how he alters or retains information during child-interpreter encounters.

1.B3: ... I am very selective as to what I would want the child to to interpret, you

2.know reserve the sensitive ones for the professional interpreter to come and

3.interpret >but anyway it it< it holds the family in saucepans

4. R:            [°OK°

5.R: what do you mean?

6.B3: in saucepans – that they know something is coming and the child () you know,

7.you cannot tell the child's, that: 'tell your mum this' or there is a decision to be

8. made and you come on a visit, they would expect you to () you know tell them the

9.decision and but because you don't want the child to know of that () you know

10.you'd say that: 'look we'd have to arrange for another meeting when an interpreter

11.would be coming with us' so that sort of thing.

The excerpt presents a situation in which the child's dual language proficiency is identified as a resource; however the social worker chooses not to use the child to interpret due to the

aforementioned concerns about the perceived effects that interpreting may generate. The participant alludes to an inherent irony; while he attempts to protect the child by monitoring and reducing content for the child to interpret, he is inadvertently compelled to harbour content until the correct medium, a ‘professional interpreter’, is available (line 2). This indicates that child interpreting is an ad-hoc informal resource that complements formal interpreters but does not necessarily relieve the presence of an absent formal interpreter. Moreover, content deemed to be ‘sensitive’ or inappropriate are reserved for formal interpreters.

This section has discussed the theme of harbouring, to demonstrate one of the ramifications of social work across linguistic difference and the role of child interpreters. The following section builds upon the preceding sections and examines excerpts from the interviews to present findings to illustrate how social workers’ mitigate the complex nature of child interpreting. I consider a number of rhetorical devices used by social workers and I suggest that the use of these devices enables social workers to minimise the problematic nature of child interpreting.

## **7.7 Rhetorical Devices**

In this section, I focus on the language and rhetorical strategies identified within the interview data. I consider strategies of diversion, disassociation and the use of direct reported speech.

When the social workers talked about child interpreters, they acknowledged the complexities of this practice and presented their experience of this with the use of a confessional narrative. The participants’ talk was located in the past and/or as part of a collective, or in the third person perspective, this highlighting the unavoidable nature of child-interpreter mediated encounters. The use of diversion and disassociation devices were identified in the participant’s accounts. These provided two benefits: first they emphasised that child interpreting is beyond the social worker’s control and second, they provided a safety net for participants to avoid potential reproach.

Table 5: Diversion and Disassociation

Interview with Participant B1	Interview with Participant B5
<p>B1: I've seen, seen a lot of children being very distressed at parents evenings, teachers have used them for &lt;to try and talk&gt; about their child that they're not achieving certain grades and it was just, really inappropriate and &lt;absolute nightmare&gt; for that child to sit in here and have to interpret information that was about them and I think that was really unfair &gt;and taking them to doctors&lt; it's just ss °it's not appropriate°</p>	<p>R: Do you have any direct experience in where, where a child has been used to interpret for their parent or a family member in social work?</p> <p>B5: ye:ah, I have to admit, we don't do it a lot at all mm, but yeah, when I've worked in other boroughs where, where () yeah, where I was doing duty work in disabilities...</p>

In the left-hand column, participant B1 alludes to knowledge of children interpreting but abrogates responsibility to other professionals, in a similar way to the earlier excerpt from participant B7, who referred to teachers and therapists who may allow children to interpret. In the right-hand column participant B5 discloses her knowledge of child interpreters; however she locates this in the past and identifies this as an uncommon practice. These examples demonstrate how the participants discuss child interpreting and attempts to minimise individual responsibility and thus regulate and protect the 'self' by illuminating desirable practice, through the critique of past performance or other professional's performance. Following Goffman (1970) diversion and disassociation techniques may be used to try to shape how people are perceived and the impression they make.

R: how common is it for a child to interpret for their parents in a social work intervention?

B1: I'd say probably quite common

R: OK

B1: whether I think it's appropriate or not is another thing, I think it just () happens with some visits that we d:o, it happens with some situations we're in. I think some

R: [°OK°

B1: ... parents have an expectation () that that's OK for the children – can do it or children can explain this, some services may, as well

Participant B1 refers to child interpreting as a pre-existing phenomenon that occurs, given the fundamental nature of social work: 'it just happens with some visit that we do' (see figure 5). He disassociates further and infers that child interpreting occurs due to some parent's expectations. These strategies relieve the participant for being in some way responsible for the perceived malpractice of child interpreting. The following two excerpts from an interview with B7 illustrates her ambivalent outlook toward child interpreting.

R: So why does it happen then? Why are some children used to interpret then, do you think?

B7: I think it's just because the families don't know the language.

When the researcher (R) probes further, B7 deflects the question, then advances the above claim and points to the service user's inability to communicate with her.

B7: ...But again, because this mum hasn't got the ability to communicate directly with ME, doing this assessment, I think it impacts on the assessment for putting you know, you know the wrong emphasis on things. I suppose if the mum WAS able to speak that language it wouldn't be that case. And again we we've offered, we've used interpreters but then again I've I've not been satisfied with the quality of the interpreter, I think the child understands the mum better, I've worked with that child so she understands ME better as well, so she knows and her experience of being in care.

In the excerpt above, the participant depicts the mother as being dependent upon external linguistic support. The social worker abdicates responsibility by focusing on the mother's lack of English, which the participant marks as an aberration from routine aspects of intervention, with English speaking families, and thus her limited English language proficiency is inferred as an impediment to the assessment process. This could be what the participants means when

she states ‘...it impacts on the assessment for putting...the wrong emphasis on things.’ This outlook can be associated with a wider political agenda, based on an alleged connection between English language faculty and entitlement. In consideration of the social worker’s assessment and dissatisfaction with interpreters, she makes a decision to use the child to interpret. This indicates that in this case, the child is privileged over a formal interpreter, based on the child’s understanding of the family context, and his or her experience in care. In the following excerpt, participant B7 continues to discuss experiences of children interpreting. It emerges that while she actively uses children to interpret she still recognises that this is problematic. In this context, the child’s position in the family affects the way the social worker perceives her capacity to interpret. While the excerpt offers a condensed account of what appears to be a complex situation, it provides insight into the social worker’s experiences of children interpreting, which are enveloped in broader issues, particularly as there are concerns about parenting capacity.

B7: ...I’m doing this particular assessment with this mum and erm () she speaks Bengali and I have to do this assessment for court. And the trouble is yes, that I can’t communicate to her erm erm directly and you know erm just just have a one-to-one conversation because we won’t be able to understand one another. Her English is very minimal and erm my, >because I can’t speak the language then I need another person< to – to be the go-between, and that is her daughter. Which makes it ve:ry awkward because er () the assessment is around her ability to care for this chil:d, which is what we question, whereas she is fighting that and again it doesn’t really help because it it’s just, it’s a lot of pressure on the child.

A third rhetorical device identified in the interviews was direct reported speech (DRS). I pay attention to the following excerpt to gain an understanding of the ways that participant B1 uses DRS to throw light on the role and functioning of two target speakers (Zetterholm, 2002) and his interactions with service users. In the excerpt the participant re-presents a telephone call with a child, who is attempting to interpret for her father. The story is part of a sequence of events in which a family did not want to use a formal interpreter. The participant reports the child’s speech, this is marked in red text and his own speech is indicated with the use of quotation marks. In the proceeding analysis I pay attention to the function of the participant’s talk.

1.B1: ... [the father] () got his daughter to ring me, who was about ↓sixteen () and say

2.you know, **why are you involved** etcetera and I kne I really wanted to keep the

3.conversation very ↑minimal, that () >you know< ‘I know dad’s feeling a lot of

4.R: [°OK°

5.B1: of frustration at the moment and he’s **got** a lot of questions () as have I,

6.R: [°mmm°

7.B1: but that’s why I’ve: arranged that appointment for Friday so he needs to come

8.in and I have to get an interpreter ... that’s what we have to do here, that’s our

9.expectation’. **He’s saying that you can just ask me**, and I could hear all of this going

10.R: [OK

11.B1: on and I was saying: ‘I know that, and that that might be helpful but I I think at

12. the moment it’s quite complicated >what I want to talk to him about< and I

13. R: [OK

14. B1: don’t think if I’m honest that’s fair on yo:u, to have to do that, that that’s

15. Dad’s responsibly; Dad’s got to come and talk to me’. And we put the () you

16. know, the appropriate kind of action in place and that, that was back and forth

17. R: [right

18. B1: and this young person’s getting distressed and this is exactly what we wanted

19. to avoid, because she was trying to reason with him, saying: **no it’s fine I can talk**

20. **for him it’s not to worry about** but just () none of that was appropriate because

21. () the young person’s getting distressed, it’s sort of not the it’s not really what

22. we’re in the position to be doing. So it was trying to acknowledge with dad

23. R: [yeah, yeah
24. B1: that, that you know; 'just let dad know you're getting very upset and I, I don't
25. want to kind of continue this conversation with yo:u, wou wou you know the
26. expectation is that he can come in on Friday and talk to us then about °what's
27. going on°' ... I think there's maybe not a lot of thought about what that may feel
28. R: [right
29. B1: like for a child sometimes...

There appear to be four reasons why B1 weaves DRS into his narration. First as a way to present himself as a moral actor, empathetic to the family's predicament. Second, as a means to demonstrate how child interpreting is managed, particularly how he refrains from engaging in conversation with a child and thus restricts the child from interpreting. Third, identification of DRS illuminates the complexities of child interpreting, and enables the participant to appeal to the frustration, irony and distress that surrounds child interpreting in a social work context. Fourth, the re-presentation of speech and events allows B1 to reflect upon his actions whereby '...the words of the past are given new voice and renewed relevance in a contemporary context' (Abrahams, 1986:p.229).

B1 indexes the speech as belonging, simultaneously, to himself and the daughter, from whom the speech has been taken (Bangerter, Mayor and Doehler, 2011). The examination of DRS offers insight into the participant's internal dialogue; how he managed the predicament, and what he perhaps wanted to, but did not say. B1 mimics the voice of the child, evident through his use of a distinct voice and the use of DRS to represent the dialogue (Tannen, 1989). This can be associated with Bakhtin's (1986) sense of polyphony, as he argues that utterances are filled with the echoes and reverberations of others' utterances. The use of DRS has the effect of presenting a dialogue that goes back and forth and through the re-presentation the participant conveys a dramatic scene, in which the participant conveys the reasonableness of his actions in addition to underlying frustration. Albeit without explicitly declaring that he found the encounter frustrating.



It is insightful to identify how participant B1 depicts himself and the service users, with attention to three key themes. The participant presents himself as a social worker with knowledge of what is best for the child. He draws upon her position as a child: 'it's not fair on you' (line 14) to justify his decision to curtail the dialogue. The participant conveys the difficulty of this situation; in particular, he presents a situation of temptation, for instance, it is easy to see how he could easily speak with the daughter, however he avoids this. These actions uphold the participant's authorial position as he constructs and manages the boundaries of child interpreting, this decision is informed by organisation stipulations: in particular the need for a formal interpreter. By doing so, the participant positions the service users in a subordinate position. He depicts a child attempting to mediate and concurrently becoming distressed at the participant's refusal for the attempted translation. This depicts an awkward predicament, in which the child appears to have followed the guidance of her father to make contact with the social worker, yet is advised that this is inappropriate. This indicates the child is caught in dilemma: exposed to conflict between the social worker and her father, in which she is acting in the capacity as an interpreter for both bodies. This resonates with Mayall (2011) who argues that children may have to deal with triangular tensions: themselves, parents and professionals.

The excerpt depicts insightful power relations. It appears that participant B1 harnesses linguistic and institutional capital, by virtue of his social worker status and as an English speaker. It could be argued that the father has restricted agency since he does not have the linguistic capital to speak with the social worker directly. While the child possesses linguistic capital as an English speaker, she experiences structural disadvantage as child. Hence it is not the English language or the child's technical competence as an interpreter that renders power unequivocally. This corresponds with an understanding of power as a relational concept, in consideration that it is possessed and exercised in different ways by different bodies (Taylor and White, 2000). The contextual factors in the co-construction of the encounter are important to consider. The participant depicts a father dependent on his daughter to interpret and unfamiliar with the institutional process and professional outlook that asserts that children should not interpret. This illustrates an asymmetrical relationship. Because the child and father do not take heed of the social worker's advice, the father is positioned as unthoughtful (see Juhlia, 2003) as he states: 'I think there's maybe not a lot of thought about what that may feel like for a child sometimes' (lines 27-29).

The excerpt therefore highlights the complexity of child interpreting and the challenges this presents to social workers. Of particular interest is the irony, that the social worker's attempt to stop the translation is itself a cause of distress. This highlights competing demands for the social workers; to uphold organisational demands and use formal interpreters, while being mindful of financial constraints and the quality of this provision, in addition to listening to the child and minimising the child's distress. A ramification of the curtailed dialogue is that this restricts the family's attempt to make contact with the social worker, this reinforces the idea of 'harbouring', as discussed earlier in the chapter. Consequently, by restricting dialogue the child inadvertently harbours knowledge for her father. This suggests that service users LEP may be trapped in a peripheral space, incapacitated by their limited English language proficiency. Participant B4 makes an implicit reference to the parent's lack of consideration for the child that is asked to interpret (lines 11-13, 25). By doing so he delineates appropriate roles to the child and her father's parenting capacity. Child interpreting could therefore be considered as a privatised arrangement within families, in which it may be expected and commonplace for the child to interpret. However, child interpreting appears to be problematic in the sphere of social work. Second, the excerpt indicates that the parent is culpable for instructing the child to interpret. This draws parallels with research from White (2003) who reviewed a sample of case files and child protection minutes; she found a tendency for social workers to assign culpability to particular individuals and a clear preference for causal accounts that ascribed parental culpability. This resonates with the idea of social workers' regulating their presentation of 'self' (Goffman, 1970; Berger and Luckmann, 1979), in relation to the complexities involved in their attempts to manage child interpreting and in relation to the critique of the social work profession from politicians and the mass media (Parton, 2011).

## **7.8 Conclusion**

The variability of responses to child interpreting indicates that child interpreting is not a practice that can be restricted, nor wholly managed through legislation, policy and guidance alone. The data suggest that the social workers employ discretion and localised knowledge to guide their decisions of whether or not to use a child to interpret, moreover only one participant referred to guidance which advised against children interpreting. Within the chapter, I considered the participants' accounts and how they presented themselves. Identifying the way participant's use language and talk about child interpreting provides

insight into their understandings of the concept of childhood in social work, as children are constructed as passive agents, unaware of the potential harm associated with interpreting. The constructions also illuminate components of social work practice, particularly the way in which social workers attempt to absorb the uncertainty and ambiguity of interpreting and present themselves as moral, professional actors, in order to sustain the appearance of control (Aronson and Smith, 2010). Identification of the contradictory space in which social workers base their decisions demonstrate social workers' sustained commitment to the social work task and concurrent awareness of the potential problems of interpreting and social work with families' LEP. Child interpreting can therefore be considered as an invisible task within social work, and difficult to demarcate as it may be subsumed within social work involvement. While much of the literature suggests that professionals wield considerable power, the findings illustrate a struggle for the social worker to retain control, and child interpreting is positioned as an activity that disturbs fixed hierarchies and assumptions that family units are headed by adults and children are 'served' by the state and their parents. Consideration of the social workers' attempts to mitigate and manage children who interpret show that the participants did not follow prescribed guidance, and in one case chose to use children to interpret over a formal interpreter. This converges with Horwath (2007) who argues that assessment is much practice as moral activity as a technical-rational one.

In many cases the excerpts depict situations in which the social workers had the impetus to define whether or not child interpreting took place, however they did not always have the resources to prevent the child from interpreting. Hence, the unavailability of formal interpreters propels children into adult territory, as substitute interpreters and potentially economically productive actors (Corsaro, 2005) as they are used to overcome absent formal interpreting, moreover, as discussed, in some cases, children's capacity to interpret was found to be useful for the social workers and their families respectively. While the social workers recognised the potential contributions that child interpreters offered, this did not entirely overcome the deficiency, as concern about whether the message had been conveyed accurately, or whether the content to be interpreted was appropriate, were questions that enveloped the participant's understanding and reasoning to avoid child interpreting. The social workers' experiences therefore highlight that communication is more than the direct transfer of messages from speaker to listener (Sharon and Weaver, 1949). The following chapter presents findings from the same interviews with social workers to explore their use of formal interpreting provision in work with service users LEP.

## **Chapter 8: Findings from Interviews with Social Workers - Formal and Ad-Hoc Interpreting**

### **8. Introduction**

This chapter presents findings from the interviews with child and family social workers (n=9). The findings illuminate different aspects of interpreter-mediated encounters: social work with formal interpreters and bilingual social workers' experiences of providing ad-hoc interpreting. The chapter is organised into two sections. The first section presents the participant's social work experience with service users in the absence of a mutual language, and their use of formal interpreters, meaning interpreters employed by a professional interpreting service. In this section I discuss a number of difficulties that were found to characterise this work, including: access difficulties, temporal and fiscal concerns and general uncertainty about accuracy and meaning. I present some of the ways in which the participant's attempted to mitigate difficulties and I focus on one social workers' experience of working with a service user LEP, without interpreting provision. The second section focuses on bilingual social workers' experience of providing ad-hoc interpreting for colleagues and service users. I pay attention to what is said about interpreting and work with service users LEP. In section, 8.5, I focus on the way language is used in the interview to construct meaning.

### **8.1 Terminology and Presentation**

The participants were asked about their general child and family social work experience with service users with limited English language proficiency. In their responses, the participants made reference to their social work experience in statutory child and family teams. One social worker referred to working for a third sector organisation with adults seeking asylum. One participant referred specifically to his experience of working with D/deaf service users. The participants drew upon their experiences of working with: i) individuals or groups that spoke no or limited English, ii) individuals or groups that used a different dialect to the social worker, and iii) family members who spoke different languages and had varying levels of linguistic proficiency.

The linguistic proficiencies of the participants are found in table 2. This indicates that six participants spoke languages other than English during work with service users and one participant used British Sign Language (BSL). I refer to these social workers as 'bilingual' social workers. I refer to social workers who use English only, as 'monolingual', regardless

of the additional languages that they may use beyond the work place. All participants had experience of working with interpreters and service users in which there was an absent mutual language, regardless of whether they were bilingual or monolingual.

Excerpts from the interviews are presented throughout the chapter for two purposes. First, to consider the participant's particular experience of interpreter-mediated encounters and second, to consider the way that certain events and experiences are constructed, with the examination of a range of rhetorical and literary devices. To achieve this, the data is presented in its natural form; this means that overlapping speech, between the researcher and participant are included, along with moments of indecipherability, pauses, utterances, hedges. I also indicate speed and intonation. The reason to include this level of detail is to represent the complexities of the social interaction (Potter and Wetherell, 1987), and to focus on the construction of the participant's talk.

## **8.2 Formal Interpreting Provision**

The participants were found to use formal interpreting and translation services in their work with service users LEP. While some participants said that the use of interpreting provision could work well, all of the participants spoke of some of the difficulties that were experienced in this work.

M8: ...in reality [booking interpreters] doesn't always work [out] because people being pushed for time ...or a new influx of cases coming in, um so um yeah it can work really well, °but it doesn't always work that way°.

Interpreting provision for dominant minority languages was reported to be generally available from outsourced translation and interpreting providers. This was offered in person or over the telephone. Provision was said to be harder to locate or even unavailable for less prevalent languages. There was also found to be discrepancies between the interpreter booked in advance and the interpreter that attended. Participant M9 spoke of working with a family who migrated from a country in Africa. The family spoke minimal English and required an interpreter. The social worker requested an interpreter who spoke the family's specific language and was advised that this was possible. On the day of the visit to the family, the interpreter spoke the official language of the country rather than the specific language requested. The participant stated that this was an uncomfortable experience, as she was aware

that the family did not have complete command of this language. However, the social worker was restricted by the urgency of the case and the need to make contact with the family. This example raises issues of symbolic and tacit linguistic discrimination (Harrison, 2006; 2007). Namely, the political, emotional and socio-psychological dimensions and functions of language and the difficulties that people may experience in their articulation of thoughts and feelings when not speaking their preferred language (Murray and Wynne, 2001; Sue, 2006; Tribe and Keefe, 2009; Maiter and Stalker, 2010). This highlights the importance of interpreting provision in social work practice, in addition to the difficulties that accessing this provision may entail.

One of the recurrent findings about interpreter-mediated practice was concern about time. This was in relation to organising interpreters in advance, arranging for letters to be translated, allowing extra time for meetings, in addition to time delays in the cases where an interpreter did not show up or if it was necessary to arrange for a different interpreter. These factors impeded the social workers' existing busy caseload. Interpreting provision was reported to be difficult to locate at times of crisis and in the cases of unplanned contact from service users LEP. In the cases when formal interpreters were unavailable, the social workers used two alternative resources. First, the use of informal interpreting provision, such as children, family members or colleagues. Second, meetings proceeded without linguistic support.

Absent linguistic support was identified as an undesirable reality of social work practice, namely because this impeded social workers' complete understanding of the service users' situation. In the following excerpt participant B4 describes that progress is limited in the absence of a shared language or interpreter.

- 1.R: ...what's it like for you then when a family comes that can't speak English, when
2. they come here t to reception?
- 3.B4: w- very challenging, very challenging especially when you've got family with
- 4.complex need, you know, quite often they're gonna come here if they've got
- 5.housing ↓issues, they've got benefit ↓issues, they've got schools ↓issues () you
- 6.↑don't, you won't even know where to start to try to help these families. But whe:n

7.they come >for example< to the office ↑here () the ↑only thing you can ↓d:o, you  
8.know they're gonna either - they bring the letter, the letter that they have received  
9.from maybe the ↑housing or from the ↑benefit, give you the ↓letter and you will  
10.↑read the letter and see what the problem is () and try t:o () deal with it, but quite  
11.often () I ↑will have to re-arrange an appointment and make >you know< make an  
12.appointment with an interpreter to come along either for a home visit o:r >°you  
13.know°< to the office so I can clearly understand what has been going on.

The excerpt indicates that an absent mutual language can be a source of difficulty for the social worker and family. Multiple references are made to the letter (lines 8-9). This appears to be the main foci of the encounter, since the actors cannot verbally communicate. Although the letter is addressed to the family, they lack the linguistic faculty to understand it. This orients the social worker as a symbolically powerful agent, by virtue of his role as a social worker and his English language proficiency; which enables him to understand the letter. From reading the letter, the social worker has an understanding of the family situation, however he is compelled to harbour this knowledge until an interpreter is available, thus the subject of time characterises this encounter.

It is insightful to consider the participants' use of repetition, rhythm, and intonation. The participant lowers his tone and uses the word 'issue' three times (line 5). By doing this he highlights the multiple difficulties that characterise his experience of encounters without linguistic provision. He increases his intonation for the word 'only' (line 7) to emphasise that options are limited without linguistic provision. This example chimes with the view amongst the other participants, that the quality of their service delivery is contingent upon the quality of translation and interpretation provision. This point will be explored in the following section.

A further factor that affected social workers' work with interpreters was the cost of outsourced interpreting provision. Two participants made reference to the cost of translation

and interpreting services. In awareness of the cost of linguistic provision, they tried to monitor and limit their use of these services.

1. M6: ... generally I try and avoid [using outsourced translation and
2. interpreting services] because I know that ... resources are really limited
3. and ... we're supposed to get... managers' authorisation...>You know<
4. like ...getting [an interpreter or documents] translated... that's like
5. ridiculously expensive... and you are aware of that, it's >you know< at
6. least like sixty pounds an hour and I'm like really aware of it, if you've
7. either booked it maybe you've made a mistake and booked it for the
8. wrong tim(h)e or maybe the family aren't i:n or whatever erm and you
9. you're just really aware that there's not a lot of money. And hundreds and
10. hundreds and hundreds of pounds are spent erm on interpreters, literally it's
11. like () shocking if you look on some of the children's files, where children
12. are in those families it's like thousands, like tens of thousands if they're
13. >kind of< an open case °for a long time it can be hugely expensive°.

In this case, concern relates not to the unavailability of interpreting provision, but rather that the social workers' awareness of the cost of this provision. The participant infers to internal pressure within the social work organisation, signalled by repetition of the words: 'aware' (lines 5,6,9) and 'hundreds' (line 10). This awareness influences her use of interpreting provision. Participant B3 echoed these concerns. His awareness of interpreters' hourly charge meant that he monitored and tailored meetings with service users, to hour-long appointments.



This section has explored some of the difficulties of interpreter-mediated encounters. The following section presents findings to explore the social workers and interpreters' working relationship.

### **8.2.1 Working Together: Social Workers and Interpreters**

Within the participant group, one participant was a qualified professional BSL signer and one participant had received training to work with language interpreters (as part of a broader training day concerning diversity). Working with interpreters was characterised with uncertainty, and the participants alluded to the potential difficulties that this may entail. There were concerns about the potentiality for missed meaning, for example there was no guarantee that the interpreter would understand the speakers' (social worker and users') intended meaning, since the social workers were absent from core communication processes. There were also a variety of interpreting styles amongst the interpreters employed. Some interpreters were found to interpret verbatim, others summarised content and were thought to extend instructions and offer advice to service users, beyond the instructions of the social worker. The variability that the social workers experienced raised uncertainty about interpreter-mediated encounters, particularly the possibility of miscommunication.

B1: in order for us to work with a family (LEP), we're going to need to use [translation and interpreting] agency, so if, if that fails and they're not providing... good quality interpreters, when we might need them, then that's obviously going to have a reflection on us.

The excerpt illuminates the earlier point and suggests that the variable quality of translation and interpretation services has an impact on the social workers' delivery of services for the service user. This places interpreters in a tenuous position; on the one hand as a pragmatic instrument given their capacity to facilitate communication for people who do not share a mutual language. On the other hand, the interpreter is rendered an implicit threat, whose actions may generate difficulties and thus reflect poorly on the social workers and their relationship with the service users. This highlights the importance of the working relationship between social workers and interpreters. In relation to this, a distinction can be made between a view of interpreters who work 'for' social workers or interpreters who work 'with' social workers. The former approach appears to be taken by participant B7.

B7: ...I've found that interpreters () they're not aware of mm our jobs – so why we do things the way we do. So they won't be able to interpret the way that would be reflective of you know, how we want the questions answered

The participant is of the view that interpreters have limited understanding about her role as a social worker. This implies that the working arrangement is disjointed, and the interpreters do not meet the social workers' expectations. The social workers' desire for questions and answers to be proffered in a particular way is indicative of a view that the interpreter works 'for' the social worker. The interpreter is therefore depicted as an external body, whose involvement is considered problematical. This highlights the interpreter's role beyond the translation of words. The following excerpt illustrates how a social worker realises that the interpreter is integral to the relationship building and that she must work 'with' the interpreter in order to benefit the service user.

- 1.B2: ...when I worked in (area) I had a boy who was a Bengali boy. He actually
- 2.appeared to be quite a humorous child erm but often his jokes were lost in
- 3.translation erm so the the interpreter and the ↑boy were building up quite a good
- 4.R: [°OK° [right
- 5.B2: relationship because of the humour that was being battered backwards and
6. forwards. And the interpreter always () let me know what the joke was and the
7. punchline and all of that but it lost in translation, so I would LAUGH () but
- 8.R: [mm [o(h)k [heh politely
- 9.B2: actually I didn't get it () yeah. But you could tell that they were building up
- 10.quite a good relationship because, because they could engage in a one to one,
- 11.R: [OK
- 12.B2: they could engage and actually °I was outside of that really°

In this example, the interpreter is said to develop a 'good' relationship with a service user, and this highlights the redundancy of the social workers' role, as she realises that rapport is contingent upon a mutual language. It therefore appears that the interpreter is not a neutral body, as it appears that he does more than convey and retrieve messages from the social worker and child. The exchange of jokes between the interpreter and child suggests that the interpreter has autonomy to extend conversation. Despite jokes being translated for the social worker, she describes content as: 'lost in translation' (line 7) as contextual or cultural understanding is absent. Her incapacity to participate in the jokes means that she is an onlooker to the relationship building between the child and interpreter. The participant follows social conventions (Foot, 1997), and laughs along (line 7) despite not understanding the jokes. Thus the act of laughing could be considered as a linguistic device, to signal approval for the continued relationship building, in the awareness that the social worker was dependent on the input of the interpreter to build relationships with the child. This example is indicative of the social worker working 'with' the interpreter. This echoes the work of Pöchhacker (2000) who reports that familiarity was an important concept in relationship building between interpreter and practitioner, which could lead to the interpreter being granted greater autonomy to take the lead during interactions with clients. This example highlights that communication is more than the direct transfer of messages from speaker to listener (Sharon and Weaver, 1949).

### **8.3 Attempts to Minimise Difficulty**

The participants talked about some of the difficulties they experienced in their work with interpreters and service users LEP. Some participants talked about some of the strategies they employed in their attempt to minimise difficulty.

During interpreter-mediated encounters, the social workers monitored both verbal and non-verbal communication, and paid attention to the length of conversation exchanged between the interpreter and service user. These measures were an attempt for the social worker to identify whether the interpreter was summarising and omitting content, or adding information beyond the social workers' instructions. Another participant was found to monitor the interpreter and service users' exchange by drawing upon his social work practice and comparing encounters in which similar messages were given to service users without the input of interpreters.

B1: ...usually if we're working with parents that say speak English and we're explaining °...a case conference or something or we're gonna go to court° () there's certain triggers that I think we know, ...[the parents will] want to ↑challenge or want to discuss ↓more. But I think in some situations I think where () there's these non-English speaking families, that might be a bit lost and there's just there () there seems a sense to accept it and ↑maybe they ↑are and they're fine with that, but I kind of I'm a bit scepti↑cal that did, uh I often want to ask [the interpreter] ; oh how did you explain that. Cos I'm wondering why I'm not being °challenged° or I want [the parents] to ↑ask ↑more...

The juxtaposition of 'English speaking families' with 'non-English speaking families' is the reference point from which the participant makes his observations about the interpreters' conduct. The social worker's practice experience enables him to anticipate likely junctures for questions or points that the service user is likely to request clarification. However, because the interpreter has authorial control, by virtue of translating for both parties, the 'usual' chain of events does not take place. Hence, the presence of the interpreter transforms the social worker and service users' relationship, as the interpreter forfeits the need for the social worker to explain processes or offer more information. Some of these points are referred to in the following excerpt from an interview with participant B2. She recalls an experience from her former job as social worker with people seeking asylum.

1.B2: ...I would ask a question that probably only had about six words in and [the

2.interpreter] was talking for ↑ages and I would be thinking, what are you actually

3.R: [mm

4.B2: asking them! I didn't really know what was being asked and the questions, the

5.answers that I would get bac:k. So that was really quite difficult and erm it became

6.really apparent one time when there was this girl and she'd come in and she needed

7.to fill out a NASS<sup>15</sup> form and I had an interpreter erm °and she [was] giving me

8. all these answers on this NASS form° and then she came back in a couple of weeks

9. later and I pulled out the form and had another interpreter, a different one and this,

10.>the first interpreter was talking quite a lot and I was thinking<; what are you

11.R: [mm

12.B2: actually saying erm. The second interpreter was actually really very good and I

13.liked working with with her because I knew she would say what I was only asking

14.her to ↑say and the information that came out very different to the first information

15.R: [OK

16.B2: she had given, like religion she'd put that she's a Christian and then on the

17.R: [right

18.B2: second one, the second time around erm with the second interpreter she'd said

19.that she was a Muslim. So I'd questioned why the first time she'd said Christian

20.and the second time she'd said Muslim. So the interpreter asked her and the lady

21.said when I spoke to the first interpreter she said to me this was a Christian

22. country and I was more likely erm for my application to be approved if I

23.R: [°oh my gosh°

24.B2: said I was a Christian. So it it's just you don't kno:w >d'you know< what's

25.going on in in the exchange that ↑they're having.

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<sup>15</sup> NASS: The National Asylum Support Service, UK Immigration.

In this excerpt, the notion of power and trust are interesting to trace. The social worker is dependent on an interpreter to convey and retrieve messages. She is also suspicious about whether the interpreter can be trusted to do this without offering the service user advice. Since the social worker cannot act upon these suspicions, this reduces the social worker to an onlooker in which she must activate trust in the interpreter (Möllering, 2003). In a similar way to participant B1, the social worker reports how she monitored the audio-cues of the dialogue between the interpreters and service users. Subsequently, the social worker's suspicions are confirmed through the second interpreter. This example illuminates the variability of interpreters and indeed the working relationship between interpreters and social workers. It appears that interpreters can extend the interpreting task beyond the instructions of the social worker, and offer unsolicited advice. In contrast, the second interpreter proved to be a useful asset for the social worker, in a similar vein to the interpreter referred to earlier, who used humour to build rapport with a child. The participant's favourable outlook and familiarity to the second interpreter (lines 12-13) is indicative of 'personal trust' (Giddens, 1994b; 1998). Namely, the social workers states that she likes working with the interpreter because she knew the interpreter: 'would say what I was only asking her to say' (lines 13-14).

In this section, I have presented findings to suggest that the participants have experienced variable standards of interpreting provision. In some cases, suspicions about accuracy were confirmed, however in others there remained uncertainty about the interpreter's contributions, and concern that the interpreter may extend the social worker's instructions. Despite this uncertainty, the data suggest the importance of interpreters and the different ways in which 'good' interpreting is constituted. It appears that 'good' interpreting entails translations as close as possible to the interlocutors' speech. However, the interpreter's role beyond the translation of messages was found to be useful for one participant, who recognised that rapport building was contingent upon a mutual language. She recognised the value of the interpreter's capacity to build relationships with a service user, in a way that she was unable to. This implies that the working relationship between interpreters and social workers is important and varied. Interpreters may have the capacity to make multiple contributions in social work encounters that extend beyond the conduit model of translation (Wadensjö, 1998).

#### **8.4 Social Work with Service Users with Limited English Language Proficiency**

In this section I present an excerpt to illuminate a participant's experience of working with a service user LEP. As previously mentioned, some of the participants noted that interpreters

would not always be used with service users, this was intentional or unintentional. It was also noted that service users' command of English may improve during the course of social work involvement and/or that the service user may attend English as a Second or Other Language classes (ESOL) as part of a support plan or public law recommendation. The latter case was one of the points illustrated in the following excerpt, taken from an interview with participant B7 as she talks about an experience of working with a service user LEP.

1.B7: ... I worked with this erm Chinese mum and er she was very resistant erm to

2. go in for language classes and that was part of the care plan actually, erm

3.R: [ah, right. Sorry – why was it part of the care

4. plan, if you remember?

5.B7: Because erm, the child was accommodated because erm () mum was a sex

6. worker and she had er, she'd entered the country illegally, she had no recourse to

7. public funds, she could not access any universal services and then this child had

8. been born; father wasn't on the scene, mum didn't know who the father was and

9. she had no means of providing for the child, but she WANTED to keep the child.

10. And we'd said, we'd put in this package of support for her, we'd put in different

11. services, different groups she could join who who worked with women who

12. were displaced. There are lots of organisations who work with women who've

13. been in the sex trade, women who are displaced, coming in from other countries.

14. There there are lots of really good organisations. But to be () to be able to use

15. their service you have to be able to know the language or be willing to learn the

16. language and she I think. I don't think it was because she was being difficult. I

17. think she just () wasn't aware of what was out there and I think she was also

18. probably scared of being out of her comfort zone. She much preferred to () stay

19. within her community, not go out, but I think it it actually stopped her from  
20. accessing services and being able to care for the child. And again I could never  
21. have a discussion with her, even with interpreters because () it it's just that, she  
22. just could not understand why it was so important.

23. R: how did you mitigate that?

24.B7: erm I think WE did our best, I think we went through several interpreters who  
25. got the dialect right because she was from a very remote remote part of China, it  
26. was really hard to find somebody who spoke that specific dialect and it, and  
27. because, she was from a very remote, rural part of China so the cultural, her  
28. cultural values were very different than British values and () she could not grasp  
29. the reason of why the child needed to be kept ↑safe under the British law and she  
30. just could not understand it and because she was illiterate that just made it even  
31. harder. She couldn't even read Chinese, so it was just impossible for her to read  
32. documents and she was just so, not willing to learn. I think she just probably ()  
33. didn't have that much faith even in herself that she would be able to do it but then  
34. it had a very negative impact on her ability to care for this ↑baby – and in the end  
35. she LOST<sup>16</sup> the baby. Because I think cos everything, we went through –  
36. proceedings and she just could not engage or follow through with any  
37. programme. Finally after two years she decided to return to China without the  
38. ↑baby.

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<sup>16</sup> Meaning the child was removed from the parent (Children Act 1989).



This excerpt illuminates the complexities of contemporary social work practice in the globalized world. The participant refers to a multitude of issues that characterised the social work involvement, involving immigration, human trafficking, sex work, child protection in addition to communication difficulties. To analyse this excerpt, I pay attention to two broad areas. First, I pay attention to social worker's role and the processes referred to in the excerpt. Second, I pay attention to different dimensions of communication.

The participant makes reference to a former case that involved a service user LEP, in the context of a child protection intervention. As the participant states, the service user had no recourse to public funds (lines 6-7). This illuminates current developments in immigration control, namely that the law excludes some groups of people from receiving services (Immigration and Asylum Act 2002; Immigration Act 2014). Despite the service user's immigration status, the child was eligible to be protected and supported in accordance with legislation and guidance (Children Act 1989 and Every Child Matters 2003). This meant that the child's mother would receive support, with the aim of promoting the wellbeing of the child and preventing family breakdown. Lines 11-15 suggest that community services played a crucial role in this case; first as a way to protect the child and to prevent family breakdown but also as a means to facilitate the service user's integration into society. However, it appears that community resources did not meet the service user's cultural and linguistic needs. This highlights the latent centrality of the English language. The social worker explains that services are not available in her first language and the service user must have a command of English to access said services (lines 14-16). This alludes to the latent power of the English language and its inherent connection to the outcomes for this service user. It appears that the English language is a key measure of compliance and the service user is depicted to be non-compliant, or unable to grasp the importance of engaging with relevant services. This can be linked to an assimilation model of race relations, in which importance is placed migrants' acquisition of the English language and limited competency in the dominant language as social or intellectually inadequate (Gumperz, 1982; Pugh, 1996; Aspinall and Hashem, 2011).

The excerpt highlights that the attempt to locate an interpreter who spoke the same language as the service user was difficult and despite arranging this, difficulties persisted. One difficulty was that the service user was illiterate, thus written material was redundant. Moreover, the service user's illiteracy was thought to impede the service user's capacity to

learn English. The components of intercultural communication provide a useful way to make sense of the communication difficulties. Within the excerpt there are a number of references to the service user's ethnicity and 'value system', which is said to differ from 'British values' (line 27). It is not entirely clear what exactly these differences entailed, however it is relevant to consider intercultural dimensions of communication. According to Robinson (2004; 2009) values refer to explicit or implicit expectations about how one should behave. There are a number of intercultural dimensions that have been found to affect communication, such as the status of the interlocutors and whether this is high or equal, the non-native speakers' self-perceived capacity to converse and immersion time in the country (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Lu and Hsu, 2008; Robinson, 2009; Vargas-Urpi, 2013). Another dimension of communication to consider is the 'talk-orientation' in social work practice (Juhlia, 2003; Hall et al., 2006). Hitzler (2011) argues that institutional structures pre-structure the identity of individuals through social norms and expectations. This appears to be the case in the excerpt, as the participant notes that the user: 'just could not understand why it was so important' (lines 21-22). This emphasises the prevalence of the talk-orientation, as the service user may not have understood these expectations. This dissonance is not exclusive to service users' LEP. For example, research by Miller (2011b) found that adolescent offenders were 'socialised' to attend to their language and produce a narrative account of their offences congruent with the practitioner's narrative tendencies.

Another component of the talk-orientation is to consider the ways in which institutional identities are produced in talk (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1998; White, 2003). The service users' dearth of institutional knowledge (to engage with the services) and learn the English language, could be said to echo an anti-colonial discourse; with the social worker (as an agent of the state) positioned as an expert attempting to socialise the service user (Murial, 1999; Semali and Kincheloe, 1999; Shiva, 2002; Wane, 2008). Considered from this perspective, this example could be argued to be an indication of institutional oppression, based on the users' linguistic standing, which differ from 'typical' English-speaking service users. Following this theme, the social worker inadvertently reinforces the hegemony of the English language, which is associated with entitlement to services, socialisation, and as an antidote to family breakdown. This highlights the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) attached to the English language, as it appears that communication difficulties appear to be one factor related to the conclusion of the narrative - the removal of the child.

The findings have explored social workers' experience of working with formal interpreters. Some of the difficulties have been explored with consideration of the relationship between the social worker and interpreter, in addition to social workers' attempts to mitigate difficulties. The following section explores bilingual social workers' experience of interpreting for service users and colleagues.

## **8.5 Bilingual Social Workers**

Three substitutes to outsourced translation and interpreting services were found, these included: i) getting by without linguistic support; ii) seeking interpreting support from colleagues, and/or iii) seeking linguistic provision from the parents' children or other family members. This section explores the bilingual social workers' (n=6) experience of interpreting for service users and colleagues. In this section I present findings about social workers' viewpoints of sharing a minority language with service users, I then present findings about social workers' experiences of interpreting in the workplace.

### **8.5.1 Speaking the Same Minority Language as Service Users**

Sharing the same language as a social worker LEP was found to offer useful insights into a service users' behaviour, however in a similar vein to the role of the formal interpreter, a mutual language did not relieve all difficulty.

1.B3: [sharing the same language as service users] come:s with mixed you know,  
2.mixed results. Because you speak the language, they say; 'oh, he is one of our  
3.own, he he understands us, we are one', you know. And at the same time, it kind  
4.of er you know () it doesn't ↑make you neutral ... also there is that feeling of er ()  
5.you know scepticism because () they, they would say: 'is he not listening to us?'  
6.and would go and ↓tell () you know others about it. ↑Or () if they know that... you  
7.understand their language >there are certain things that during home visits< they  
8.can tell. They can be speaking to their children () not knowing that you understand  
9.them, but once they know that you understand, then they will start to unfold that  
10.information.

This excerpt provides insight into the participant's experience of speaking the same minority language as a service user. First, the participant alludes to an implicit assumption on the part

of the service user, that a shared language is synonymous to shared group membership and mutual understanding (lines 1-2). The participant indicates that a shared language can provide insight into a family's situation, however he points out that this does not make him 'neutral' and does not compromise his responsibilities as a social worker, thus meaning that he would not be compelled to treat the service users with leniency because of this reason. This is related to research findings from Holland (2011) that suggested social workers were aware that their personal characteristics could have an impact on the quality of the relationship and therefore used 'compensatory tactics' to minimise the impact of self in practice. Later in the interview, participant B3 stated that sharing the same minority language as service users, and having an understanding of cultural norms and parenting practices, particular to his country of origin offered a way for him to have discussions with service users about parenting practices, and disciplinary strategies that differed to practices in the UK. This suggests that the social worker utilises his linguistic and cultural knowledge to inform his practice.

Participant B2 alluded to some of the difficulties that arose from speaking the same minority language as service users. She shared an experience of covering for a colleague and visiting a family who switched between languages (English and Panjabi), the family were unaware that the social worker understood both languages.

B2: it was just interesting because [the family] weren't...interpreting or translating or ... answering the questions as they should have been.

The social worker's command of both languages placed her in an interesting position. Following Goffman (1969), the social worker's understanding of the minority language meant that she was privy to dialogue which would otherwise have remained out-of-bounds. The social worker's comprehension of the minority language therefore placed her in a tenuous position, as it revealed information that was at odds to what was discussed in English (the front region) and of which the family assumed was out-of-bounds to the social worker. This predicament raises issues about the ownership and accessibility of language, as the social worker asks the rhetorical question.

B2: Anything that they say () .hh can we use it [in the assessment]?...Because as far as they're concerned I can't understand the ...language.'

Returning to Goffman (1969), the English language used in the front region can be regarded as the official space of interaction, as it seems the family expected the dialogue to be conducted in English. Similarly, Elder-Vass (2012) states that when we speak we do so with substantial knowledge of a particular audience; therefore in this case, the perceived audience were the other family members, and not the social worker. The social worker was aware that her revelation of this understanding may hamper her relationship with the service user. This example highlights competing tensions, for the social worker to build evidence for the purpose of the assessment and build relationships with the family. This highlights that a mutual language does not overcome difficulties and may generate additional difficulties.

The examples in this section highlight the ownership of knowledge through language and the nature of ascertaining information in an ‘appropriate way’ and suggest that sharing the same minority language as service users has advantages and disadvantages. This was found to be a similar theme in the case of the bilingual social workers interpreting for colleagues in the workplace.

### **8.5.2 Ad-hoc Interpreting**

The monolingual participants referred to experiences of asking their colleagues for linguistic support to supplement or substitute formal interpreting provision. All bilingual social workers had experience of being asked to provide linguistic support for colleagues, despite only one participant being a qualified sign language interpreter. The bilingual participants expressed that they would interpret for colleagues if they could, they also pointed out that they could request the linguistic support of their fellow bilingual colleagues. Participant B4 shared an experience about wanting to interpret for his colleagues, but declined to do so because of the ramifications of the additional workload, and concern that this might impede his personal caseload. Therefore the bilingual interpreters were aware that interpreting in the workplace may interrupt and burden their workload. Participants B5 and B2 spoke of their frustration of being expected to interpret and work exclusively with service users that they shared the same minority language with. Although they identified that their dual language proficiency was a resource which enabled them to carry out direct work with some families LEP, they were also aware that their colleagues recognised this as a ‘valuable resource’.

B5: ...I’ve worked with teams where people have just used me, where their, where the culture of that team is to use you like an interpreter because you are just ↑Bengali and

I think that's quite racist you know whereas like, you know °(you should respect me) as a social worker° and um I've worked for £teams where there are no£ Bengali social workers and I wonder what's going on there, and you know other teams have have loads and um it's quite worrying, cos, if that the team is like that, then <how do they treat their clients>, you know.

The participant identifies how her former colleagues treated her dual language proficiency as a commodity, and the discrimination that she faced by being expected to act as an interpreter. This highlights that there is a linguistic expectation upon the social worker and she is recognised for her capacity to interpret in lieu to her professional competency as a social worker. This highlights the untenable situation of minority ethnic staff and tacit expectation that they are responsible for representing and supporting members of minority ethnic community (Lewis, 2000; Temple, 2002; Williams and Johnson, 2010; Drolet et al., 2014). These findings draw a parallel with Harrison's (2007) tripartite orientation to linguistic diversity, in which non-native Australian social workers' capacity to speak additional languages was considered in three ways as: i) a problem, ii) a right, and iii) a resource. The findings from this study could be considered in this way: first an additional language was conceptualised as a problem as it affected the social workers' case load management, second, their additional language was considered as a right, particularly the need to represent the multilingual population, and third, the capacity to speak additional languages was regarded as a resource to be used by colleagues, since none of the participants received recognition for the additional interpreting duties they provided.

## **8.6 Rhetorical Devices**

In this section, I focus on the interview transcript as a source of data, and pay attention to the participant's style of narration and use of DRS.

Participant B1 was the only social worker with experience of signing for colleagues and service users in the workplace, he was the only participant who was a qualified interpreter. The following excerpt from the interview with participant B1 presents a scenario in which professional signers are unavailable to sign at a forthcoming meeting. The purpose of this analysis is twofold; in addition to paying attention to his experience of being asked to interpret. I also pay attention to the participant's style of narrative, following Holstein and

Gubrium (1995). I focus on the ways the participant constructs his experience as dialogue and reports his inner speech, and the speech of others, with the use of DRS.

Tannen (1989) refers to DRS as a 'discourse strategy', as it demonstrates that dialogue is constructed, rather than a representation of the precise words spoken. Commensurate with the social constructionist bent, the excerpt shows how meaning is transformed by the reporting context and: 'that the speech of another, once enclosed in a context, is - no matter how accurately transmitted - always subject to certain semantic changes' (Bakhtin, 1981:p.340). Ongoing narration is found to the right side of the excerpt and at the end of the excerpt.

1.B1: so sometimes, >I can think of a situation a few  
2.weeks ago< somebody came to me and said: oh are  
3.you around this ↓morning? and I said oh what  
4.↓for, we kind of, and I knew about this case <that  
5.they, this social worker> was working on um, can I  
6. interpret for a child protection case conference.  
7. So I said I couldn't because I didn't have the time,  
8. but also it it's a very complex, sitting for two,  
9. three hours with one person trying to interpret um  
10.in BSL, um and it it wouldn't be appropriate,  
11.but they, I ↑think the social worker did book the  
12.interpreter, but for whatever reason that didn't  
13. work out. But in situations like that I know they'd  
14. have to use two interpreters because it it's hard,  
15. quite a complex process, and it it'd usually work

Begins as a storyteller, he draws the reader in by imitating a colleague

Justifies why he declined but adds the underlining reasons to his refusal; what he perhaps did not say to his colleagues.

Conveys empathy with his colleague, signalled by the conjunction 'but' as a response to an imagined question, about why the interpreter did not turn up. He justifies the social worker's actions and points out that an interpreter was booked. B1 recognises that this was a difficult situation for his colleague yet he has to think about his

16. for twenty minutes, break sort of one each, um ()
17. so I think what I did () I discussed with the chair
18. ...that erm () I'm happy to come and explain
19. to the parents that the conference can't go ahead
20. today because they're here... they're in the room...
21. and it's very difficult because they're not ()
22. so we... kind of did that really, >just to explain to
23. them: that °the conference couldn't go ahead today,
24. there wasn't an interpreter°. I mean so... there's
25. been some situations where they'll kind of say; well
26. you know what it's like >in a difficul-< or you know
27. what it's like >we have limited acc-< or for whatever
28. reason>and it's a difficult thing to be drawn into.

Notes the usual protocol for interpreting as a way to justify his reasons for his initial refusal, and therefore still shows commitment and collegiality.

In the excerpt B1 presents himself in a struggle. To do this, he adopts the speaking parts of a number of characters: himself as social worker, responding to service users and colleagues, in addition to the storyteller of this experience. In this example, the social worker had the capacity to interpret however there were other factors that prevented his involvement, first he lacked time and second, he lacked the support of another signer to meet organisational requirements. The participant describes the experience as being 'uncomfortable', this appears to be related to his inability to support his colleagues' and awareness that this would cause delays and be unfair to the family, who had already arrived at the office. Within the excerpt, there is an internal narrative about the participant's reason for declining to interpret. The participant justifies his reasons for declining to interpret and draws upon organisational guidance to justify why two signers were needed. As the participant re-presents this event he depicts himself as both a thoughtful and assertive practitioner; he does not directly point out



his irritation for being asked to substitute for the absent signer, not does he convey blame explicitly. Identification of DRS offers a way to recognise the deeper tensions that bilingual social workers may experience. It shows how the participant rationalises his decision and responds to professional boundaries, as a social worker and qualified sign language interpreter.

This section has presented some of the participant's experiences of sharing a minority language with service users and their experiences of being asked to interpret for colleagues in the workplace.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored social workers' experience of work with formal interpreters, service users LEP and bilingual social workers' experience of providing ad-hoc interpreting. The participants were found to use outsourced translation and interpreting services during social work with service users LEP, supplemented with linguistic support from colleagues and family members. Communication with the aid of interpreting support was found to add a heightened sense of uncertainty, which was characterised by concern about accessibility, quality, accuracy and the cost and time that social work with interpreters involved. While the interpreter played a crucial role to facilitate communication, there appeared to be tensions in this arrangement and their performance was scrutinised by social workers. Scrutiny of the interpreter appears to be related to the devolution of responsibility, namely the disruption of the social workers' expert disposition, with reduced opportunities to build relationships and other key communication processes such as explaining and offering feedback, this highlights the idea of active interpreters (Wadensjö, 1998; 2001; Meyer, 2001). This is particularly important since the performance of interpreters bears a reflection on the social worker's performance. In consideration of this, there is need for more understanding on the tripartite relationship between service user, interpreter and social worker, with the intention of crafting an approach that combines awareness and mutual respect of these respective positions, in the anticipation of improving service delivery and effective inter-professional working. The findings also suggest a correlation between English language faculty and entitlement to social work resources. This raises questions about the accessibility of social welfare services for linguistic minority families.

In relation to bilingual social workers, the findings demonstrate that shared language proficiency with service users does not grant automatic understandings or rapport. The findings demonstrate that an absent shared language adds a number of constraints to the social worker's workload such as added time pressures, in addition to assumptions about meaning and understanding and their availability to interpret. It is important to point out that whether or not a social worker and service user speak the same language does not mean that the family will engage with the social worker. The multidimensional nature of communication, including intercultural communication will also affect this likelihood in addition to ongoing events in the service users' lives. In light of this, the findings suggest that social workers' bilingualism is conceptualised as a commodity, drawn upon by other workers and thus reported as both an asset and burden. Despite the difficulty the participants experienced in their work with interpreters, the findings highlight the importance of interpreting provision.

## **Chapter 9: Discussion**

### **9. Introduction**

This study has investigated interpreter-mediated encounters. This was explored in two ways, through exploration of social workers' use of interpreting provision and young people's experience of providing interpreting (referred to as child interpreting). In this chapter I draw upon the data collected in this study, this includes the interviews with social workers and young people, the drawings by the young people, observations and self-reflection. I situate the data with existing theory and research. I begin by discussing the interpreting resources found to be used by social workers and draw upon themes of uncertainty, trust and risk. I discuss social workers' use of informal interpreting resources with focus on children who interpret and bilingual colleagues who provide ad-hoc interpreting. I then focus on the young people's experiences of language brokering and use this to explore the relationships with the findings from the interviews with social workers. I use the metaphor of boundaries to highlight the way that child interpreting blurs private and public activities and intergenerational relationships. Finally, I focus on the theme of communication and review the multiple ways that communication was considered throughout the thesis.

#### **9.1 Terminology and Presentation**

Within this chapter I refer to young people and children synonymously, this follows the adopted presentation throughout the thesis, in which the term 'child' was used in a social work context and 'young people' was used to refer to those people in the youth centre. I distinguish between formal and informal interpreters. The outsourced interpreters used in social work are referred to as 'formal' interpreters, colleagues and family members and children are referred to as informal interpreters. The concept of communication is considered in terms of the practical use of language in addition to the symbolic power of language, which can be understood as a tool to structure experiences (Bourdieu, 1991; Burr, 2003). This was examined in consideration of the participants' experiences of receiving or offering interpreting and attention to my role in the interviews and analyses. I refer to Discourses with a capital 'D' to refer to prevailing views and political and social influences that are used to explain the research phenomenon and social practice.

## **9.2 Interpreting Resources Used by Social Workers**

The interviews with the social work participants illuminated that the social workers used two forms of interpreting provision in their work with service users LEP. The first were formal resources in the form of translating and interpreting services. The second were informal interpreting resources. Bilingual social workers and colleagues were found to interpret on an ad-hoc basis, bilingual family members including children were also found to interpret.

### **9.2.1 Working Together: Social Workers and Interpreters**

One of the themes from the interviews with social workers was the issue of co-working with formal interpreters to facilitate communication with service users LEP. While social workers were expected to work with interpreters, there appeared to be a number of challenges in achieving this.<sup>17</sup> This can be associated with the broader challenges of partnership work,<sup>18</sup> which is an important feature of social work practice, and a fundamental part of Every Child Matters (2003). Despite emphasis on partnership working, and the movement towards the co-location of health and social care professionals, there is research to suggest that partnership working is a challenging part of social work practice (White and Featherstone, 2005; Petch, 2012). A number of Serious Case Reviews have highlighted concerns about insufficient communication and coordination between agencies. Hall and colleagues (2010) argue that inter-agency working is treated as ‘a problem to be corrected’ (p.356), with little regard paid to the intricacies and multiple elements of partnership working, beyond structural components.

The social workers were aware that the interpreter’s input was necessary to work with users LEP; however, absent, inadequate or variable standards of provision were found to impede the social workers’ capacity to engage with individuals and families. There were concerns about misunderstandings and inaccuracies, and queries about whether or not the interpreter had

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<sup>17</sup> An example of the importance of trained interpreters relates to the case of Iqbal Begum in 1985, a woman of Pakistani heritage who spoke minimal English. Ms Begum was put on trial for the murder of her husband. During the trial a solicitor was used to interpret despite not speaking the same language as the defendant or being a trained interpreter. Resultantly, the terms ‘murder’ and ‘manslaughter’ were not translated correctly. This was found to significantly affect her defence (Halliburton, 1996). Thank you to Professor Ian Butler for drawing my attention to this case.

<sup>18</sup> This may also be referred to as interagency work, multi-agency work, inter-professional working, integration or interprofessional collaboration.

retrieved and conveyed messages as the social worker intended. Participants reported that the interpreters were found to vary in their approaches to the interpreting task; some interpreters were said to interpret verbatim while others summarised and added their personal opinions. The social worker's concern therefore extended beyond concern about accuracy and appeared to be related to the social worker's absence from the meaning-making process. For instance, the participants stated that they were unsure what the interpreter was 'actually' saying to the service users, since they did not understand the communicative exchange. This challenges the idea of the invisibility of the interpreters' role as discussed by Wadensjö, 1998; Mason, (2001) (ed) and highlights the active presence of interpreters, particularly in response to the division of labour between the social workers themselves and interpreters in their efforts to communicate with service users LEP.

In chapters seven and eight, I explored some of the strategies that the social workers used to minimise difficulty in response to their attempts to maintain authorial control given their absence from the meaning-making process (Goffman, 1969; Sarangi, 2010). The social workers' attempts to regulate the interpreters' conduct could be seen to be an 'obedience test' performed by the social worker (Goffman, 1968c), for example the social work participants questioned and examined the interpreters' role and their role enactment. In some cases, although the social worker did not understand the dialogue between the interpreter and service user they still attempted to control this interaction by monitoring the interlocutor's body language and length of spoken accounts, thus the social worker may have an understanding of what makes an 'ideal' interpreter, although this was not explicitly referred to. Moreover, as Goffman states '...what is really enforced is not words but standards of conduct' (1970:p.134).

In chapter seven, I explored the idea of the 'server' and the 'served' role (Goffman, 1961, following Tipton, 2010) to explore how social workers and interpreters experience a form of role-reversal, when children interpreted in a social work context. This relates to the social workers' temporary role dispossession, based upon the social worker's dependence on the interpreter to retrieve and convey messages. This theory was used to illuminate the issue of boundaries and the shift of power and roles in the relationship between the social worker and interpreter, this can be associated with a form of inter-professional conflict, on the basis of the social workers' awareness that the interpreter may compromise the social workers' good practice. Hence, interpreting in a social work context facilitates a shift of power in social

interaction with service users and highlights that the social workers experienced a form of anxiety as the social work experienced role-dispossession in interpreter mediated encounters.

Social work with interpreters was also associated with time constraints. This was in relation to the time required to organise interpreting provision and in relation to the social workers' duties to meet statutory requirements; and to conduct visits and undertake assessments in accordance with nationally proscribed timescales.<sup>19</sup> The participants were aware that inefficient or absent interpreting provision may lead to 'harbouring', in which messages may not be shared between service users and social workers. If an interpreter did not attend an appointment, this delayed the social workers and service users respectively. The social workers were concerned that such delays may impede the delivery of services for service users.

Time constraints were related to the participant's awareness of the cost of formal interpreting provision, and this was found to be associated with social workers' use of interpreting provision. Two social work participants discussed how they deliberately kept appointments with service users and interpreters to an hour in length, because they were aware that the translation and interpreting agency charged hourly rates. The links between time, cost and outlooks towards formal interpreting provision indicate that social workers may be influenced by service organisation priorities with their concerns to save money, hence driven by financial expediency rather than the needs of service users. This echoes some of the concerns raised in a survey of frontline social workers in Britain who expressed that priorities were about saving money rather than meeting service user's needs (BASW, 2012).

The negative financial implications could be influenced by a political Discourse, which characterises translation and interpreting services as an unnecessary burden, and subsequently, shifts the responsibility on to persons LEP to learn English or to use informal interpreting provision (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). This Discourse can be related to two broader outlooks towards multilingualism. First, the need for linguistic minority communities to learn English is treated as a solution to promote integration and relieve public spending. Second, the purported 'failure' of multiculturalism is used as an

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<sup>19</sup> The consultation on Safeguarding statutory guidance 2012 (DfE) reported that too much focus was placed on procedures. At the time of writing there are proposals to replace nationally proscribed timescales to enable social workers to carry out assessments in timescales proportionate to the needs of individual families.

excuse for the deteriorating conditions of ‘native citizens’ and used to justify and create intolerance to public spending on migrants or members of minority ethnic groups (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010; Bhambra, 2013). A ramification of this Discourse may be that the additional time, cost and general uncertainty found to be involved during social work with interpreters resultantly marks social work with service users LEP as an aberration from ‘typical’ English speaking service users, where these concerns do not necessarily apply.<sup>20</sup> This can be associated with research from Park and Bhuyan (2011) that analysed social workers’ responses to an online survey about immigration and immigrants. They found that social workers associated service users’ lack of English proficiency as representative of a lack of assimilation and their undeserved entitlement to resources. This line of thought may perpetuate oppressive attitudes towards persons LEP, who may be held accountable for their need for interpreting provision, which may be characterised as a burden on public spending. Similarly, Drakeford and Morris (1998) have highlighted the inequities for minority language speakers in social work. To conclude this section, it appears that social workers’ experience with interpreters might be influenced by

... attempts at rational decision-making but set within competing demands of managing uncertainties, negotiations with others and getting by with initial formulations of people and events, all of which takes place within contexts of political imperatives, policy formats and resource constraints. (Hall et al., 2006:p.8).

### **9.2.2 Trust and Risk in Interpreter-Mediated Encounters**

Trust was found to be an important part of the social work participants’ work with interpreters and in the social work profession, as discussed in chapter eight. There is a wealth of literature pertaining to trust (Smith, 2001; Möllering, 2003; 2006; Brownlie, Greene and Howson (eds), 2008). The findings suggested that the social workers mobilise Discourses about trust and distrust inherent in their use of all forms of interpreters, including child interpreters.

Trust is considered to be an important concept in the context of relationship building and maintenance between social workers and service users and inter and intra-professional

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<sup>20</sup> However there are likely to be other difficulties within those families that social workers support.

relationships (Brehm and Gates, 2004; Pinker, 2013). A number of studies have highlighted that persons LEP are required to mobilise trust in professionals (both practitioners and interpreters) and others who provide linguistic support (Edwards et al., 2006; Nawyn et al., 2012). As previously mentioned, the social workers were cognisant of the potential for missed meaning and the possibility that messages might not be translated as per their or the service users' intention. Despite this, the social workers remained dependent on interpreting provision, however trust remained an issue. It is useful to draw upon a number of understandings of trust. Möllering (2003; 2006), argues that trust can be considered as a 'suspension' or a 'leap in faith' and that people 'activate trust' (Möllering, 2003). Edwards et al., (2006) draw upon the work of Giddens (1994a; 1998) to distinguish between 'personal' or 'characteristic' based trust and 'abstract' trust. Personal/characteristic trust refers to bonds among individuals that have a familiar interest in others' needs, interests and preferences. This relates to an expectation that the interpreting task will be carried out according to shared understandings. Abstract trust refers to a person's expert knowledge, competence and adherence to particular principles and duties, and can be related to formal interpreters. Thus, bilingual social workers and colleagues' understanding of social work procedures and values could be said to promote social workers' reason to trust these persons to interpret.

The social work participants' concern was that while the outsourced interpreters were understood to be professionals, they were thought to have limited understanding of the social work role. This could be argued to limit abstract trust. It is important to note that there is currently no requirement for interpreters in social work encounters to be professionally trained or certified. This is in contrast to the language services standards that apply to the Ministry of Justice.<sup>21</sup> The findings suggest that trust is not synonymous with efficiency and this can be related to research by Edwards et al., (2006) who found that that trust was a key element for people who used interpreting provision from non-professional interpreters, family members and professional interpreters, however different understandings of trust did not mean that messages would be translated in the required way. In the present study, one social work participant was a trained interpreter, the other social workers that interpreted were not trained interpreters. This augments the argument that being bilingual does not translate to being culturally and institutionally competent (Lishman, 1994; Pugh, 1996; Casado, Negi and

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<sup>21</sup> The Ministry of Justice has responsibility for HM Courts and Tribunal Services, Probation and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).



Hong, 2012). It may also be explained by the idea of personal trust. In relation to the use of children as interpreters, while some challenges were identified by the participants, one of the reasons to use children was based on ‘personal’ trust, namely, the expectation that the child had knowledge and interest in their parents’ situation and preferences.

It is important to situate the concepts of trust and uncertainty in the context of social work as a profession. Despite advances in translation and interpreting provision (Alexander et al., 2004; Sawrikar, 2013b) and the use of outsourced interpreting provision, the findings indicate that social workers were mistrustful of interpreters. This resonates with arguments from Beck (1994) who suggests that despite advances in technology and investments to calculate cost-evaluation approaches to intervention, there are hazards brought about by the development of the ‘expert system’ and the erosion of trust to the advance of scientific knowledge. Hence, interpreter-mediated encounters may tend to be treated as a ‘risky’ process; however identification of this risk does not tell us what social workers should do. As Beck (1994) states: ‘risks tell us what should not be done but not what should be done’ (Beck, 1994:p.9). Smith (2001; 2005) argues that trust is of minimal importance because social work is characterised by rationality, with emphasis placed on service providers’ confidence to meet targets and performance indicators. This has parallels with trust in health care, for example, Sheach Leith (2008) argues that the NHS is no longer a trusted institution following a series of high-profile scandals.<sup>22</sup> Thus, whether or not interpreters are informal or formal may be irrelevant, as Möllering argues:

[i]nstitutions can be seen as bases, carriers and objects of trust, trust between actors can be based on institutions, trust can be institutionalized, and institutions themselves can only be effective if they are trusted (Möllering, 2006:p.74).

Hence, risk anxiety is perpetuated by broader pressures for social workers to satisfy inspecting bodies and a sceptical wider public that they are ‘doing the right thing’ (Taylor and White, 2000).

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<sup>22</sup> Such as the organ retention scandal at Alderhey and the criminal activities of Harold Shipman.

Despite the numerous concerns raised about formal interpreting provision, the social workers remained dependent upon this provision. This emphasises the need to examine the social work and interpreter co-working arrangement. As Raval (2007) argues, the service user:

...is unlikely to develop trust and a sense of being contained if they do not experience this between the practitioner and language interpreter (Raval, 2007:p.66).

Trust is related to the concept of 'risk', as according to Luhmann (1988), trust presupposes risk (cited in Christensen, 2013). This helps to explain why social workers may experience 'risk anxiety' in their work with interpreters regardless of whether a formal or informal interpreter is used, given their understanding that some risks cannot be eliminated (Ferguson, 2005). This highlights the idea that miscommunication often remains an 'off-the-record matter' between the interpreter and interlocutor, given the difficulties of translating and to co-ordinating activities that this involves (Wadensjö, 1998; Temple, 2002; 2006; 2009). Temple argues there is not a correct way of translating, as this involves more than an exchange of words from one language to another in which there are a plethora of alternative words, which could be used.

Having discussed the findings from interviews with the social work participants about their work with interpreters I now discuss the participants' use of informal interpreting resources, with focus on children and bilingual colleagues.

### **9.3 Informal Interpreting**

In this section I consider social workers' use of informal interpreters and the contributions and challenges of using bilingual social workers to interpret. As discussed in the preceding section, the social workers did not assume that formal interpreters would be technically more competent than informal interpreters. Figure 8 extends figure 5 (p.124). Figure 8 outlines the broad services available for families' LEP and identifies that there are three main linguistic resources: formal interpreting provision, bilingual employees and bilingual family members. In the absence of a formal interpreter or employee with the capacity to interpret, family members including children may be called upon to translate. Hence, it can be argued that family members provide an informal linguistic resource, and compensate for absent or deficient linguistic resources

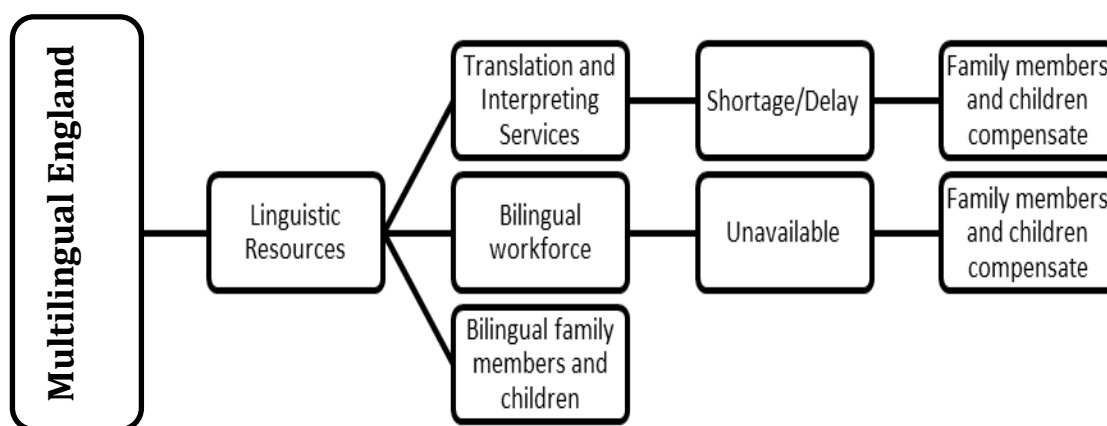


Figure 8: Linguistic Resources

The use of bilingual social workers as informal interpreters was not reported to be problematic in terms of their capacity to interpret. However, the bilingual social workers illuminated tensions related to their colleagues' expectation that they would be willing to translate. The bilingual interpreters conceived this as a form of role-anxiety, in which their capacity to interpret was treated as a commodity, which had ramifications for their personal workload. Hence the bilingual social workers were critical of being treated as an informal linguistic resource, which disregarded their professional capacity as social workers. This corresponds with research by Harrison (2007) which found that bilingual social workers recognised their capacity to speak multiple languages was characterised as a resource yet was taken for granted. This augments the idea that linguistic-matching alone does not relieve the challenges of social work with persons LEP (Temple, 2002; Sawrikar, 2013a).

The co-existence of trained and untrained translators and interpreters has traditionally been considered as a source of tension in the translating field, since untrained interpreters have been willing to work for low or no fees. This has been associated with an erosion of recognition for translator's training and professional merit (Pérez-González and Susam-Sarajeva, 2012). Despite this tension, research has suggested that non-professional interpreting takes place in a number of settings: in churches, on online forums, in schools and in health care (Cohen et al., 1999; Meyer, 2001; Crafter et al., 2009; Orellana, 2009; Hokkanen, 2012).

...non-professional mediators fill the gap left by the retrenchment of the state as the default provider of mediation services, at a time when the funds required to facilitate

social integration within our ever more multicultural and cosmopolitan societies are becoming depleted by global economic austerity (Pérez-González and Susam-Sarajeva, 2012:p.156).

The above quotation can be applied to the present study, as it suggests that bilingual colleagues and individuals may fill a gap and be taken-for-granted. Following this outlook, it could be argued that informal interpreters are not rewarded for their contributions, despite providing an essential form of labour as they compensate for unavailable or inadequate provision. The contributions of CLB may reflect the ‘logic of the market’, as children are a pliable workforce and can be considered economically productive actors (Stack and McKechnie, 2002), hence child interpreting could be considered as a form of invisible labour.

As stated in chapter six, the youth workers shared concerns from school teachers that some of the young people were known to language broker during school time and this was confirmed by one young person. In light of this, tensions of whether or not it is acceptable for children to language broker relate to ideas about children’s activities within their regulated and structured lives. This corresponds with understandings of child labour; whether CLB is a form of child labour and whether or not this is harmful to children. On one hand child labour is considered to be profitable for children and parents, with benefits to the whole family (Song, 1996; Nieuwenhuys, 2009). On the other hand, child labour can be understood to be harmful and exploitative to children’s health, development and detrimental to child and family relations (Lee, 2001; Wyness, 2006). This relates to arguments by Orellana (2009), who argues that it is not straightforward to categorise CLB as beneficial or problematic.

### **9.3.1 Young People’s Experiences of Language Brokering**

The findings indicated that young people language broker in a variety of settings with a range of people, including family members, a range of professional bodies and members of public. From these examples, CLB can be considered in three ways: first, as a gateway for effective communication, in relation to the practical purposes of communication; second, as a signifier of group membership, given the way that the young people recognise the need for people to translate for persons from the same linguistic minority community; and, third, as a marker of difference, given the young people’s capacity to speak multiple languages and their position as young people in an adult regulated world (Moran-Ellis and Sünker, 2013).

CLB was found to be an activity that went beyond translating and had benefits for themselves and others. CLB was found to be a practice that had benefits for members of a linguistic community who spoke limited English. CLB could also be identified as a practice entwined within the family as language brokering was found to play an important social and economic role in the family. The findings demonstrated that through language brokering, the young people enabled their parents to get the necessary knowledge, for example, at the jobcentre, from the housing department, at the doctors and the hospital. The practice of CLB could therefore be said to be outcome driven, as it enabled the person LEP to access necessary advice and information. As previously mentioned, the young people used their linguistic and cultural knowledge to identify the needs of the people who required linguistic support. They also read the norms of the setting and identified the ‘type’ of English required to interact with the particular English speaker. In this regard, CLB could be considered as a type of ‘language game’ (Wittgenstein, 1958) as the young people recognised and/or demonstrated awareness of desired norms and conventions of language practices and had awareness of persons LEP and the distribution of interpreting provision in the community.

English dialect was found to be an important identity marker for the Czech young people, who were aware that they sounded in some ways different to those who they presumed to be ‘native’<sup>23</sup> English language speakers. This could be related to their more recent migration to England. For the British Pakistani young people, accents were not found to be markers of difference, however they alluded to the accents of people who they language brokered for and referred to different types of English. Amongst all of the young people, there was recognition that they had been in situations in which they did not have extensive vocabulary to translate all of the speakers’ words. Some of the language brokering was found to be challenging for a number of reasons, and required the young people to retain their emotions, or to challenge professionals and advocate on behalf of the person they were language brokering for. Such challenges may be related to the position of the young people in adult-orientated environment and thus highlight the productive and limiting modes of power (Tew, 2006). The productive mode being the young people’s capacity to translate and the limiting modes being the setting or knowledge base that restricts these activities.

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<sup>23</sup> The term ‘native’ speaker is used in this sense to refer to those who speak English as a first language from a variety within the UK. This term is problematic, given the increasing varieties of English spoken across the globe (Crystal, 2012).

None of the young people claimed to be the only interpreter used by their family. The young people stated that family members used additional interpreting resources including people within the family, in the community or translation and interpreting services. The findings highlighted the fluid nature of people's need to interpret and indicated that people LEP have variable need. Some of the participants identified that their parents were learning English, and indeed that they helped their parents with this, and thus they were no longer needed to language broker. First, this emphasises the idea that the young people can be considered as a flexible resource for people who do not share a mutual language. Second, CLB can be understood to be a practice that is negotiated by the young people and the people involved. For instance, the young people would language broker if they were able to and wanted to do so. Third, the young people were aware that they may not have the necessary linguistic knowledge to translate all words and they were aware that professionals, rather than their parents may critique their practice. Fourth, the findings reject the conduit-model of interpreting (Wadensjö, 1998) and extend Sharon and Weaver's communication model (figure 1, p.27) as the interviews with young people suggest that they are not passive receivers of messages. The young people were not trained interpreters, and therefore did not claim to be impartial to the people who they interpreted for. This suggests that the young people may extend or add their personal understandings of the situation, and extend the instructions of the person who required the interpreting (Pérez-González and Susam-Sarajeva, 2012). In sum, the findings suggest that CLB yields symbolic value within the multilingual landscape, as the young people are a source of knowledge and a linguistic and cultural resource for the people they language broker for. In the following section I consider these findings with findings from the interviews with the social work participants.

#### **9.4 Child Interpreting in a Social Work Context**

The findings from the two datasets can be compared to gain an understanding about child interpreting. The findings from the young people and social workers offer complementary and distinctive understandings about interpreting.

The findings suggest that young people language in a variety of settings and this may be considered as an informal interpreting resource, which can supplement alternative linguistic provision, moulded for the needs and requirements of people who do not share a mutual language. The social workers were found to use three forms of interpreting provision, first formal interpreting provision from an outsourced translation and interpreting agency, second

bilingual colleagues were found to offer ad-hoc interpreting and third, family members including children were used as informal interpreters. The findings from both datasets highlight that there were positive and negative understandings of child interpreting. The young people's positive experience included, recognition of the skills and knowledge gained from language brokering experiences; filling in forms, communicating with professionals and developing emotional awareness. The young people's negative experience included the impediment of leisure time and the technical difficulties involved in finding the correct words to translate.

The social work participants adopted varied outlooks to child interpreting, on one hand as an activity to be avoided and on the other hand as a substitute or even as a preference to formal interpreting. The social work participants alluded to some of the difficulties of using children to interpret, this included general uncertainty about the child's capacity to translate accurately and concern about the emotional challenges of interpreting.

The findings from the young people present a perspective to interpreting encounters, which may otherwise be out-of-bounds to social workers. The findings indicate that young people interpret in a range of settings, for family members, members of the public and professionals. The young people's experience of interpreting in the wider community suggests that informal interpreting arrangements occur amongst multilingual communities. The young people were aware that their language brokering contributions could enable persons LEP to access information and services in the community. The young people were not the only designated interpreters for their parents, as formal interpreters were used in addition to young people. The young people's input can therefore be seen as an informal and flexible arrangement, as the young people respond to needs and demands, as persons LEP gain greater English comprehension, or until formal interpreting provision is available. Moreover, the young people use their initiative to decide whether or not to interpret.

The findings from the young people illuminate the multiple demands that are placed upon children, as they are expected to interpret in some circumstances and judged on their performance by their adult counterparts. There was awareness amongst the young people that, professionals might assess their interpreting skills, and the participants talked about feeling under pressure by the professionals they interpreted for. This implies that, if social workers and other professionals request young people to interpret, they should be aware that their input, as recipients of interpreting may be a source of stress. The findings from the

young people, therefore, disturb the generationally organised structure of social life, as children respond to the multilingual reality and take on an interpreter role, traditionally thought to be reserved for adults. This challenges traditional understandings of the division of labour within society and within the family, as professionals and adults may be dependent upon children to interpret

From a policy and organisational perspective, child interpreting is identified as a practice that should be avoided in social work encounters, and instead professional interpreters should be used (London Child Protection Procedures, 2011; Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures). However, the findings from the interviews with social workers suggest that this guidance is not followed and that children are used to interpret. Moreover, only one social work participant made explicit reference to this guidance. This complements the findings from the young people, which suggest that children interpret within the home, in public and across health and social care settings.

The interviews with social workers indicate that children interpret in a social work context in both planned and unplanned ways, first to compensate for the absence of formal interpreters, and second, as a deliberate way to garner alternative understandings of the family without the presence of a formal interpreter. In a social work context, language brokering may be useful for three reasons. First, language brokering allows social workers and other professionals who do not share a mutual language to communicate. Second, language brokering offers support in the interim period where a speaker's linguistic needs are unknown. Language brokering may offer a window in which professionals can establish linguistic need and locate formal interpreters. Third, language brokering enables people; social workers and others, to access information and services in the cases where interpreting provision is unavailable.

To make sense of why there appears to be disparity between policy and practice I discuss the findings from the social workers and young people and consider why there is a prohibitive outlook towards child interpreting in social work.

#### **9.4.1 The Regulation of Children Interpreting in Social Work**

The data from the social work participants indicate how social workers may or may not restrict child interpreting. Child interpreting was found to be allowed in certain contexts, namely for task-orientated work; to confirm times and locations of meetings, and during initial visits to gather preliminary information about the family. Child interpreting was



considered to be unadvisable during exploratory work, and meaning-making activities, however this was sometimes unavoidable if formal interpreting was unavailable or if the social worker considered that using the child to interpret was preferable to a formal interpreter. The social workers' reluctance to use children to interpret related to two concerns: first, the child's ability to translate accurately and second, in relation to the child's emotional capacity to manage this task, given the possibility that interpreting might cause distress to the child.

#### **9.4.2 Understandings of 'Children' and 'Childhood' in Social Work**

The interviews with the social workers suggest that the social workers have a certain view of the child, which is commensurate with an age-based categorisation<sup>24</sup> or a 'chronologization' orientation, which implies first, that age serves as a category for differentiating and rationalizing norms, rules and organisational structures and second, that people are defined in terms of their behaviour and judged against standard models of their life stage (Alanen, 2009; Gillis, 2009; Zeiher, 2009). This suggests that social workers' construction of child interpreting is related to understandings of the way that childhood is constructed. This implies that children are distinguished in the first instance by their position as children, which unsettles their capacity to interpret.

Child interpreting was conceptualised as a practice to be avoided in relation to understandings of naturalised roles ascribed to adults and children. For example, one of the reasons for not interpreting was because the child was 'taking on an adult role'. Hence, the interpreting could be regarded as a role reserved for professionally trained adult interpreters and therefore child interpreting is perceived as an 'invasion of adult territory' (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998:p.37), which indicates that childhood is conceived (by adults) in terms of different duties and polarisation from adults (Lahman, 2008:p.282). This was illustrated with consideration of 'role-enactment' (Goffman, 1969). In chapter seven, I paid attention to children's ascribed roles in social work encounters and illustrated how children may be

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<sup>24</sup> In social work practice, a child refers to those aged from zero to eighteen. This means that anyone under the age of eighteen is bracketed together, susceptible to legal provisions and regulations. Nevertheless, support is offered to those that were previously 'looked after' up until the age of 25. Moreover, there is a separate legislative framework for children who are 'looked after and accommodated'.

guided into atypical roles, following the idea of 'role-release' (p.129) and the 'Server-Served' role (figure 7, p.138).

A further reason for restricting child interpreting was in relation to a 'parentification' Discourse. This is the idea of a decline of authority, or crisis due to a weakening of hierarchical adult-child relations (Wyness, 2006). The parentification Discourse can be associated with broader arguments concerning the perceived pressure that children are thought to face in the contemporary world (Bailey, 2011). This implies that adults have the jurisdiction to determine the speed at which children ought to develop and the activities that they should or should not be involved with. In relation to child interpreting, the parentification Discourse purports the idea that social workers have the power to determine whether or not children interpret. This appears to complement the findings from the young people, as they referred to the boundaries of child interpreting and explained that there were some contexts and places that they considered difficult to language broker.

Additional reasons the social work participants avoided child interpreting were related to concerns about whether this practice would mean that the child was presented with information in advance of their parents. This highlights the 'generational ordering', in other words, the ways child-adult relations are socially constructed (Alanen and Mayall, 2001). It also highlights the idea that children's views of the world may be overlooked since childhood is defined in relation to adults' praxis (Qvortrup, 1994). An alternative way to consider this reason for avoiding child interpreting is to draw upon Hochschild (2003) who refers to children as 'eavesdroppers', who may already have some understanding of ongoing events within the family. Hence it could be argued that attempts to distinguish information intended for parents rather than children may be difficult to achieve, particularly as social work can also be understood as a profession that straddles private and public domains (Warner and Gabe, 2006).

Since the findings from both datasets suggest that young people language broker in a variety of locations, it is useful to consider the way that boundaries between the private world of family and the public world of the state intersect. It has been suggested that contemporary politics have spilled in to the private sphere of the family (McKie, Cunningham-Burley and McKendrick, 2005) and that families are intensively governed. Moreover childhood is argued to be: 'the most intensively governed sector of personal existence' (Rose, 1999:p.123).

Rodger (2003) argues that although governments can control the state, public, social and

private spheres,<sup>25</sup> they cannot control the ‘personal sphere’ and intimate relationships within the family. This is relevant as the findings from the young people suggest that child interpreting takes place in a variety of settings, also the social work participants alluded to child interpreting as an existing practice. Hence it could be argued that children will continue to interpret, regardless of guidance that proscribes this.

The interviews with the young people illustrated that by language brokering, young people transcend hierarchies in adult-domain environments and resist the boundaries imposed upon them by adults. Hence, child interpreting calls into question the paradigm of children as dependent and adults as providers and protectors (Katz, 2008). This relates to research that highlights the adult-dominated nature of children’s lives, even in the context of child-centred practices; for example, children’s complaints of advocacy services in Wales (Pithouse and Crowley, 2007) and children’s position at school councils (Moran-Ellis and Süner, 2013).

A further way to extend the idea that child interpreting is an activity that disturbs age-based categorisations of childhood, is by considering other activities in which age related norms activities are somewhat blurred. One such activity is children’s Internet use. Drotner (2009) states that children’s Internet use can be considered as a form of vulnerability, based upon the child’s access to the public domain and capacity to access unsolicited information.

Alternatively the use of the Internet provides a way for children to make their voice heard, and this is regarded as resource that children use and are increasingly expected to use. Hence, Drotner argues that: ‘The internet pushes boundaries between public and private issues’ (2009:p.362). This has relevance for child interpreting, as the findings from the young people indicate the potential benefits in addition to the disadvantages that may arise from child interpreting, whereas the findings from the social workers highlight difficulties that may arise from child interpreting. This highlights the socially constructed nature of the acceptability of child interpreting, which is dependent on particular outlooks and the context and content of the interpreting. The findings therefore suggest that children do interpret in a social work context and that social workers either permit or restrict child interpreting. To explore some of

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<sup>25</sup> The state sphere is considered as the source of legislative control, which underpin social service regulations and laws relating to child welfare. The social sphere contains activities of welfare professionals, and therefore relates to the domain of the social worker. The private sphere relates the caring and supportive functions within the household. The public sphere relates to arenas of public opinion formation, through the mass media, political debate and issues in public spaces. The personal sphere relates to activities of self-identify formation, in the context of postmodernity (Rodger, 2003:pp.48-49).

the underlying reasons for the ways social workers were found to regulate child interpreting. I focus on social workers' duties towards children.

### **9.4.3 The Duty to Protect Children**

In addition to concerns about the child's technical ability to translate, there were concerns about whether the process of child interpreting was harmful for the child. The social workers highlighted that while children may be treated as subjects of intervention, interpreting meant that the child was responsible to retrieve and convey messages for both interlocutors. This was identified as one of the reasons to restrict child interpreting and was related to the social workers' awareness that their role was to protect the child, hence their reasons for avoiding child interpreting derived from this position.

A key tenet of child-centred practice is the commitment to meeting children's rights as well as their needs, including the right to have a voice in decisions that affect them. This means recognising children's competence and intentionality, facilitating their self-expression and listening carefully to what they convey. (Lefevre, 2010:p.69).

This quotation illustrates social workers' multiple duties, including responsibility for facilitating children's self-expression and their right to participate. This corresponds with law and policy, for example, the Children Act 1989 states that social workers must ascertain children's wishes and views. The Every Child Matters (2003) places emphasis on listening to young people and their families. Hence in social work encounters that involves children it is always necessary to speak directly with children. Despite the emphasis that is placed on listening to the child, research suggests that children may not be consulted even when the legislative base requires this (Thomas, 2002); that parents are often listened to more than children (Clever, Walker and Meadows, 2005) and professional and adult agendas still dominate proceedings involving children and professionals (Wyness, 2014). A number of serious case inquiries which have examined child deaths and non-accidental injuries have evidenced that social workers and other practitioners have failed to pay attention to what children say and how they feel, which has placed the children at risk (Ayre, 1998; Holland and Scourfield, 2004; Aldgate et al., 2006; Brandon et al., 2009). This can be related to findings from the Serious Case Review of Daniel Pelka (2013).

Daniel was a migrant child, of Polish heritage who was murdered by his caregivers in 2012. While there was awareness that Daniel and his family spoke Polish in addition to some English, professionals made limited attempts to use interpreters to communicate with the family. Moreover, the review reported that:

...there appeared to be an assumption that [Daniel] was unable to express his wishes and feelings and that the use of interpreters would be ineffective (6.64).

The inquiry also found that Daniel's sister (who was also a child) was used to interpret for family members and professionals and moreover, that she was coerced not to tell professionals about Daniel's treatment. This raises two issues. First, views about the presumed ineffectiveness of formal interpreters and second the informal role of child interpreters.

The findings from the present study suggest that child interpreting presents a challenge concerning the matter of uncertainty of whether the interpreting may be harmful to the child, whilst maintaining awareness of the importance of communicating with the child and other family members. The child interpreter therefore highlights the difficulty of separating the child's voice from that of their parents, and vice versa as the child takes on the 'metaphorical voice' of the social worker or parent as they translate. This may disturb the social worker's duties to protect the child. The findings from the young people indicate that they played an active role to decide to language broker or not, thus demonstrating a degree of autonomy.<sup>26</sup> While none of the young people spoke of an experience in which they were asked to stop interpreting, they highlighted that they felt as though their language brokering was being evaluated in some way by the professionals involved. This resonates with findings from Villanueva and Buriel (2010) and James et al., (1998) who highlight parallel trends concerning autonomy and increased regulation. They argue that while children are at the centre of political strategies, children are accountable for their own actions and monitored by others. Hence children are thought to be caught up in 'politics of participation', in which their participation is governed by adult norms and values (Moran-Ellis and Sünker, 2013).

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<sup>26</sup> However, the young people were specifically asked about their experience of language brokering, not their non-language brokering experience.

Following Mayall (2011) and Warming (2013), child interpreting may present a situation in which the child must deal with triangular tensions: themselves, parents and professionals.

While social workers can be thought of as gatekeepers, who protect children from the potential harm of child interpreting, they can also be recognised as gatekeepers of a social order (Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996). The social workers were found to regulate or prohibit child interpreting while upholding their organisation and moral duties. It was also necessary that the social workers made contact with families even in the face of absent formal interpreting. It can therefore be argued that outlooks towards child interpreting stem from legislative and organisational frameworks that dictate practice and treat childhood as a: 'configuration of social processes, discourses and structures' (Zeihner, 2009:p.127). Since the social workers were aware of the potential harm that child interpreting may render, they reported a number of strategies to minimise the negative effects of child interpreting. First, the social workers would assess the child's capacity to interpret. Second, social workers used words and sentence structures commensurate with the child's age and perceived cognitive ability. These strategies show how the social workers remain cognisant of the potential distress of child interpreting and used child-centred techniques to minimise these concerns. This suggests that Discourses about childhood may influence social workers' perspectives about child interpreting, however the social workers may resist these understandings and allow or initiate child interpreting.

The regulation of child interpreting can therefore be understood in consideration of broader tensions in social work, namely debates about care and control as social workers cross boundaries between private troubles in the home and public issues. Hill (2005) states: 'Professionals tend to operate with the concept of boundaries in relation to two issues, namely managing children's behaviour and keeping children safe.' (p.86). Hence, social workers have a vested interest in children's rights and participation.

The social workers' awareness of strained resources should not be overlooked, as this appears to be related to the use of translation and interpreting provision. This relates to Cooper (2005) who states that practitioners might turn a blind eye to 'risk' if resources are strained. This predicament relates to the findings of the present study, in which children would be allowed to interpret, if formal interpreters were unavailable. This is indicative of the idea that social workers must balance their roles as gatekeepers of users' eligibility to services and their role as supporters (Hall et al., 2006).

This section has explored the social workers' roles and has considered why and how social workers regulate child interpreting. I have highlighted that social workers' outlooks towards child interpreting are influenced by Discourses about childhood, which distinguish children's roles from adult roles and distinguishes interpreting work as work suitable for adults rather than children. I have suggested that child interpreting challenges essentialist understandings of childhood and may benefit social workers who are restricted by formal interpreters, who are perceived to be inefficient.

## 9.5 Boundaries

The metaphor of boundaries provides a useful way to extend the discussion about child interpreting as an activity that obscures boundaries of private and public spheres. The idea of boundaries is predicated by the way that social institutions depend on patterns of social interaction and are guided by social roles, norms and expectations. Boundaries may be understood in the form of guidance that prohibits child interpreting and related to social categories of childhood and formal interpreter. The findings suggest that this boundary is re-shaped by the actors involved: social workers, interpreters, children and parents. This suggests that social workers have the authority to implement boundaries in relation to child interpreting, as they determine the time, space or activities that children are restricted from (Hill, 2005). Hence, it could be argued that social workers construct understandings of the risk associated with child interpreting, as they define which activities are appropriate for children. The young people's descriptions of their CLB experience indicated that they had autonomy in their decisions to language broker, hence they co-constructed the boundaries of their language brokering activities.

Following (Goffman, 1968b) the child interpreter could be seen to already stand in some form of social relationship to the social workers and their parents. These matters seem to determine whether the child is allowed to interpret (Goffman, 1972). As Goffman argues

...face-to-face interaction is an arena of conduct, not merely expression and communication is judged first off not in regards to sincerity and candor, but *suitability* (Goffman, 1968c:p.134, original italics)

The findings from the young people suggest that CLB takes place in 'zoned times', which are largely organised by the provision of linguistic resources in the community, which dictates whether they are needed to language broker. The findings from the social workers indicate that they attempt to regulate the boundaries of child interpreting and have some jurisdiction to permit or prohibit this practice. Therefore, it is important to recognise that children's competence to interpret cannot be separated from the structural context (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998). This highlights that boundaries and competence are socially constructed and related to structural factors, particularly the availability of provision and perceived suitability. This suggests two things. First, that child interpreting is shaped by particular settings, and the need for interpreting. Second, CLB is a discursive practice, shaped by adults and children who create boundaries relating to the existence of interpreting.

### **9.5.1 Child Interpreting as a Family Practice**

Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2004) provide a useful definition of parenting, and propose that parenting is a: 'fluid state that demands the performance of appropriate activities on the behalf of children' (p.57). This definition can be associated with the way in which the social workers referred to parents and parenting in the context of child interpreting. The social work participants constructed parents LEP as either passive recipients or as active participants, who may burden their children with their need for interpreting. The findings from the young people challenge this orientation and indicate that CLB is a form of 'family practice', as the young people played an active role, in their decision to language broker, and in some cases enjoyed this, and gained money or other items for their input. This suggests that CLB can be understood as a flexible arrangement and is shared amongst family members and professional interpreters. This outlook corresponds with research from Orellana et al., (2003) and Martinez et al., (2009) which found that parents regulated children's language brokering and they offered 'scaffolding support' with guidance and directions, despite not speaking both languages (Eksner and Orellana, 2012). This highlights that parenting is characterised less by an authoritative style than by a negotiation between parent and child (Chambers, 2012), as the findings suggest that CLB may be considered as a family practice (Morgan, 1996; 1999), which does not exist without the reciprocal action and the interdependence of the child and adults involved (Alanen, 2009). This can also be related to the recognition of family members



as familial resources. For example, there is research to suggest that black<sup>27</sup> children are vital part of family in the context of contemporary racism who allow families to pool resources and strategies to survive in face of institutional racism and when resources are limited (MacPherson, 1999; Parekh, 2000; Prevatt Goldstein, 2003). The practice of CLB can therefore be considered as a diverse form of family life in which children contribute to families' economic and emotional wellbeing. This challenges arguments from Olk (2009) that children are dependent members of the family household because they are not fully-fledged citizens and do not contribute to the family income.

The social work participants alluded to parents who allowed or relied upon their children to interpret for them. This can be related to the idea that parenting is a matter of public policy (Jamieson, 1998). It can also be related to the reality that a significant number of children have been victims of child abuse and that some children's problems may be related to family dysfunction. This highlights an important point: that the context of social workers' involvement with the family is likely to have an effect on the social workers' perceptions of whether a child interpreter is acceptable or not, particularly if there were wider concerns about care giving. One social work participant talked about a child she worked with who would not interpret for professionals and parents because he had a difficult relationship with his parent, this illuminates the autonomy of children, as supported by data from the young people. The concept of 'adequate care giving' has been questioned by a number of researchers, for example, Horwath (2004) found that social workers struggled to define the term: 'good enough parenting'.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, it is purposeful to point out that the experience of childhood has never been universal (Valentine, 1997), and that forms of knowledge can be considered to be insecure and open to question (Giddens, 1994b). The findings therefore indicate that child interpreting is an activity that disturbs traditional understanding of roles and activities in the generational order. This highlights one of the central tensions of child interpreting in a social work context, namely social workers attempt to protect the child, while providing opportunities to hear the child and parent's voice. This presages the idea that child interpreting reshapes inter-generational relationships between: children, parents and social workers.

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<sup>27</sup> The term 'black' is used as a unifying political Discourse, to emphasise common experiences of racism and disadvantage and relates to those who share a history of British colonialism.

<sup>28</sup> Similarly there are problems with the term 'at risk' and vulnerability (Daniel, 2010).

## 9.6 Communication

As stated in chapter three (p.44), communication is a central theme of this study. In chapter one, I presented data about the language practices across England, I considered the nature of language hierarchies and considered the role that communication plays in social work. In chapter two, I focused on the process of communication. I made reference to Sharon and Weaver's communication model (p.27) as a way to broaden understandings about the process of communication.

In chapters four and five, I discussed various aspects of communication, this included aspects of proxemics; my use of space, movement and behaviour within the youth centre, in addition to the symbolic nature of dress. In chapter five I discussed an experience during an interview at the youth centre, in which I stopped two young people from speaking in Czech (diary entry 5.2.4). This illuminated the way I imposed the regulations of the 'legitimate' English language, following dominant Discourse and thus highlighting the symbolic nature of language (Bourdieu, 1991). In chapter five, I referred to field notes taken in and around the interviews with social workers. I included observations in the reception waiting areas as another aspect of interview data. These experiences and misunderstanding were used to engage more deeply with the nature and function of language and the different aspects of communication. Attention to communication was extended in chapters six to eight. In chapter six, I focused on young people's experiences of language brokering, to enable adults to communicate. In chapters seven and eight I focused on social workers' experience of communicating with service users LEP, with the input of informal and formal interpreting provision.

Following an 'active interview' approach, in the analysis of findings from both datasets, I set out to capture i) what was said in the interview and ii) how things were said. I paid attention to the spoken content generated in the interviews between the researcher and participant. I also drew upon field notes, observations and reflections, to consider different aspects of communication. In chapter six, I focused on young people's experiences of language brokering for professionals and other adults. In addition, I paid attention to the young people's awareness attention of accents and awareness of persons LEP. In section 6.7, I focused on the way that meaning was generated in the interview (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). I referred to excerpts from interview transcripts and reflections from my role in the interviews as a way to consider the process of meaning-making in the interview itself.

In chapter seven and eight I presented data from interviews with social workers to focus on their experiences of using various interpreting provision to communicate with persons LEP. In chapter seven, the data focused on social workers experiences and viewpoints of children who interpret in a social work context. In chapter eight, the data focused on social workers' experiences of using formal interpreting provision and ad-hoc provision of colleagues, to communicate with persons LEP.

Throughout the thesis I have considered different aspects of communication and I have gained insight into the subject of interpreting encounters from different viewpoints. I followed the dual approach to analysis and paid attention to construction of the interview in chapters seven and eight. In chapter seven, I identified a number of rhetorical devices in the interview data, this included: diversion and disassociation and DRS to talk about child interpreting. In chapter eight (pp.155-156), I touched upon the notion of humour as an aspect of communication. I referred to an example presented by participant B2 in which a joke between a service user and interpreter was translated to the social worker, in which the meaning got 'lost in translation'. This extended understandings of communication as more than the transfer of messages from speaker to listener (Sharon and Weaver, 1949). I included data about bilingual social workers' experiences of interpreting in the workplace (p.167) and illuminated that the capacity to speak multiple language and translate may be advantageous for service users and the organisation, but it may increase the social workers' workload. In section 8.6 (p.170), I paid attention to discourse in part of one interview with participant B1. I presented interview data and pay attention to the participant's style of narrative, in particular his use of DRS as he presented his experience of being asked to interpret.

## **9.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the research findings from both participant groups. The findings provide a way to gain understanding of different aspects of interpreting. Focus on young people from two minority language groups illuminates CLB as an activity that takes place amongst established migrant groups, including children born in England and migrant children. The focus on child and family social workers provides different and complementary aspects of interpreter-mediated encounters.

Social work interpreter-mediated encounters were characterised with inherent uncertainty, this was in regards to the quality of adequate formal interpreting and the working relationship

between social workers and interpreters, with particular concern about the interpreter's role in relation to social workers. It is perhaps surprising that there were shortages of formal interpreters, given that London is the most linguistically diverse city in England. This highlights concern about the availability of interpreting provision in more rural areas.

A particular tension illuminated through the research was that social workers were required to communicate and build relationships with families in which children spoke more English than their parents. Child interpreting was found to occur in social work practice, however, the social workers varied in their approaches to allow or restrict this practice. Children were found to language broker in unplanned or planned ways; first in the absence of formal interpreters. Second, social workers used children to interpret as a deliberate way to garner alternative understandings of the family. The research illuminates how social workers justify and make sense of their practice with interpreters, children and users LEP. An integral dilemma that faced the social workers was their attempt to 'protect' children from the perceived risk of child interpreting, while facilitating communication and continuing ongoing involvement with the family. Therefore, it can be argued that social workers construct understandings about the acceptability and regulation of child interpreting. The research findings therefore challenge the idea that child interpreting is a practice that is avoided in social work, as it appears that social workers use child interpreters as informal interpreters and as a substitute for absent linguistic resources. The findings from the young people challenge naturalised assumptions about childhood as a period of dependence. This illuminates a diverse conceptualization of childhood and intergenerational relations. Restricting child interpreting may not necessarily improve the child's welfare, and at worse it may restrict communication and the distribution of resources for persons LEP. Ignoring the existence of children who interpret denies the important contribution that some children make to families, social workers and society. It is relevant to recognise more diverse conceptualisations of social worker-child relationships, in particular the capacity in which children facilitate communication and enable persons LEP to access services and resources.

Bilingual social workers provided a further informal linguistic resource and interpreted for colleagues in the workplace. However, their capacity to interpret or translate was not recognised to be personally advantageous, as it brought added responsibilities. This draws parallels with child interpreting and other forms of interpreting which are overlooked areas of social work practice. In consideration of social work with service users LEP, the findings

suggest that interpreter-mediated encounters that involve formal and informal varieties of interpreting provision are problematic in regards to access difficulties and the suitability of interpreters. This raises implications for social work practice and highlights the idea that social welfare services may be orientated towards service users who are proficient in English, as there appears to be a latent need for service users to speak English in order to access services. This is indicative of political and socio-economic Discourse that emphasise the importance of the English language and considers translation and interpreting services as an illegitimate resource that burdens public services. In turn this augments the hegemony of the English language and implies that speakers of languages other than English may be disadvantaged, by virtue of inadequate or absent linguistic resources. The findings highlight that it is essential that there are appropriate resources to allow social workers to support service users LEP and more support and training for social workers to work effectively with interpreters. There is concern that cuts to resources may shift the responsibility for linguistic provision to voluntary and community services, including bilingual employees and family members. If this becomes the case, it may create tensions amongst the bilingual workforce and increase the likelihood of child interpreting.

## **Chapter 10: Conclusion**

### **10. Introduction**

In this chapter I review the research objectives. I outline the substantive contributions that this study makes to theory and policy in addition to the implications for social work practice. I highlight the weaknesses of this study and propose areas for further academic inquiry.

#### **10.1 Review of the Chapters**

The focus of this study was interpreter-mediated encounters in a social work context, with focus on formal and informal interpreting, namely child interpreters. The research drew upon interdisciplinary thinking with input from social work, sociolinguistics, cultural studies, sociology and childhood studies. The phenomenon of interpreter-mediated encounters was explored from two perspectives. First, exploration of social workers' use of formal and informal interpreters and second, exploration of young people's experience of language brokering. In the first chapter I provided an overview of the social work profession, and introduced the topic of communication and social work in a multilingual world. I provided an overview of migration patterns and guidance and legislation pertaining to minority language speakers and interpreting provision. In the second chapter I reviewed literature concerning social work with linguistic minorities, interpreter-mediated encounters and child language brokering. In chapter three I presented the research methodology; I outlined the research objectives and presented the theoretical perspective, epistemological framework and the methodological strategy. In chapter four I discussed aspects of the research process, this included the methods employed, and the ethical considerations and analytical strategies. I provided an overview of the research sites and introduced the research participants. In chapter five I provided a self-reflective account, I made reference to different points of the research and my role within the research. The findings were presented in chapters six to eight. In chapter six I presented findings about young people's experiences of language brokering. In chapters seven and eight I presented findings from interviews with social workers about their experiences of working with interpreters. Chapter seven focused on social workers' experiences and viewpoints about children who interpret. Chapter eight focused on social workers' experience of work with formal interpreters and bilingual social workers' experience of providing ad-hoc interpreting. In chapter nine I discussed the findings from this study and situated these within wider theory, research and developments in social work.

## **10.2 Looking Back and Looking Forward**

In this section, I refer to the research objectives and consider the substantive contributions of this study and implications for social work practice.

- To gain an understanding of the interpreting resources used by social workers to support service users LEP.
- To explore aspects of interpreting from different viewpoints.
- To illuminate social workers' experience of using children as informal interpreters.
- To illuminate the experience of young people who language broker.

In order to meet the research objectives I conducted semi-structured interviews with social workers and young people to illuminate different aspects of interpreting. The interviews focused on social workers' experience of working with formal and informal interpreters, this included children who interpret and social workers' experience of ad-hoc interpreting in the workplace. I explored young people's experiences of language brokering for adults who did not share a mutual language. The language brokering included a number of components beyond translating. This included advocating and facilitating communication for family members, members of public LEP and various official bodies in a range of spheres inside and outside the home. Throughout the study I considered the socially constructed nature of interpreter encounters, with attention to the language used by participants to construct their accounts, in addition to my meaning-making.

## **10.3 Substantive Contributions**

This study makes three broad substantive contributions. First, theoretical contributions for the social work discipline and scholars concerned with CLB and non-professional interpreting. Second, the study offers methodological insight. Third, the study makes suggestions for policy and service providers, with particular focus on the contributions for social workers, persons LEP and child interpreters.

First, this study promotes an idea of social work that is underpinned by notions of social justice and social inclusion. I engaged with anti-oppressive outlooks and articulated concerns about the surveillance and control of linguistic provision and the potential marginalisation of persons LEP, in chapters six, seven and eight. Adopting a critical stance towards taken-for-

granted understandings of interpreter-mediated encounters helps to identify and challenge naturalised understandings and privileged positions. I drew upon a variety of knowledge, this included theory, research and legislation from the social work discipline and input from sociolinguistics, cultural studies and the social sciences. This enabled me to make sense of the research phenomenon in a variety of ways and to extend thinking about the social construction of realities and taken-for-granted understandings of communication, social work and childhood and everyday life. The study included a plurality of voices: social workers and young people who language brokered, this included young people born in England and young people who had migrated to England during their childhood. The inclusion of young people's experiences brings an alternative lens to interpreter encounters, this is particularly important since young people are often excluded from research and developments that concern them (Wyness, 2006). Focus on child interpreting as an activity and theoretical construct enabled me to consider the way in which the social work participants shared their understandings about the roles of children, and interpreters, in addition to their duties as social workers. Consideration of the young people's language brokering experiences illuminated the socially constructed nature of childhood. This was valuable to gain a multidimensional understanding of child interpreting; first an understanding of child interpreting as a concept and second, a practical understanding of the day-to-day operation of communicating and interpreting in social work practice and the lives of young people.

A second substantive contribution of this study is the wealth of methodological insight garnered. Semi-structured interviews were regarded as an appropriate and useful tool to explore and identify key themes and relevant issues, this allowed for in-depth exploration of participant's experiences. I included 'thick descriptions' of the field work (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and used diagrams to conceptualise connections between themes (see figures 5-8). Prolonged engagement at the youth centre enabled me to pay attention to the research phenomenon more deeply and include observations of interactions and discussions that took place during this time. This provided a more contextualised understanding of the research phenomenon and the individual research participants. To attend to the transparency of the research, all participants were given a non-technical summary of the interviews at the end of the transcription; the social workers were given a written summary and the young people were given a verbal summary. Attempts were made to keep the analysis process explicit. The use of detailed transcription and large excerpts of text used in the findings chapters allowed me to illuminate the complexities of social work and young people's experience of interpreting.



This enabled me to examine an area of social work and social life and consider the way that the participants constructed their accounts of interpreter-mediated encounters. Full interview transcripts can be found in appendices 13 and 14. Accountability was achieved through maintaining an audit trail, this included narrative entries of research activities: interviews, observations, transcription and the evolution of codes and categories identified in the coding process. I used self-reflection as a tool to situate myself in the research and to consider my status as an ‘insider’, ‘outsider’ and ‘in-betweeners’ to the research phenomenon and research participants. I considered my presence and impact on the research process, with attention paid to my perspectives and biases, including my position in the research, as an adult, monoglot, with no-experience of CLB.

I sought to identify how the social workers constructed understandings of work with interpreters and service users LEP, with emphasis on how the participants told stories and how they presented themselves and the phenomenon they talked, following Holstein and Gubrium (1995) and Hall (1997). Commensurate with the constructionist framework, the study did not claim to reveal universal truths. The subjectivity of the research is recognised in the acknowledgement that the interviews are locked in a particular space, location and time. This suggests that while interpreting is a reality of social work practice, this practice may be constructed and experienced in different ways. Gill (1993) argues that this does not invalidate the data, rather it emphasises the constructive action oriented nature of language, which orients the viability rather than the validity of an individual’s unique worldview (Niemeyer and Niemeyer, 1993). This is congruent with the outlook that: ‘language may not be capable of representing reality *in toto*’ (Alvesson, 2002:p.80, original italics). Thus, the interpretation is my response to the text and I acknowledge that other interpretations may be drawn (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This is in recognition that social work: ‘is *constantly being* constructed and reconstructed both by the way it is talked about and in the sites where this talk takes place.’ (Kearney, 2004:p.170, original italics).

The third contribution is in relation to social work practice. The study has deepened and enriched knowledge pertaining to social work with interpreters. The research makes a contribution to knowledge in the field of child language brokering, and it appears to be the first study to examine social worker's viewpoints about children who interpret. The research offers insight to the contributions that child interpreters make, to facilitate communication for persons who do not share a mutual language and to relieve service providers of absent or

deficient formal interpreting provision. It is hoped that this study will evoke dialogue for practitioners, academics and service users to recognise the contributions of formal and informal interpreters and to improve services and experiences for service users, social workers and interpreters. This will be expanded in the final part of the chapter.

#### **10.4 Limitations**

In this section I explore some of the limitations and challenges of this study. There are different ways to consider interpreter-mediated encounters, this study focused on social workers' experiences and children's experiences of language brokering. The study did not include formal interpreters. Throughout the thesis, I used two distinct terms: 'child interpreter' and 'child language broker' (CLB). The term child interpreter is used in relation to the social work participants. This was to make a distinction between formal interpreters, namely interpreters from translation and interpreting services. The term child language broker was used in respect of the young people and was used as a way to depict the multiplicity of activities in addition to translating. The use of these terms emphasises the different focus of the study: social workers' use of interpreters (formal and informal) and young people's experiences. However there are problems with both terms. The term 'informal' may imply that 'formal' varieties are preferable. Moreover, the latter term may incorrectly imply that 'formal' interpreters are qualified or trained interpreters. While the term CLB captures a variety of activities beyond the act of translation, it contains the term 'child', which differs to the term 'young people' which has been used throughout the thesis.

It is important to identify differences between the individual participants, and indeed the participant groups: the social workers and young people. In consideration of this, a weakness of the study is the limited attention paid to the relationship between the participants' self-identity and role-identity. While the focus of this study was social worker and young people's experiences of interpreting encounters, the research potentially overlooked other aspects of the participant's identity, for instance the way in which gender, class and ethnicity and life experiences, particularly the young people's different migratory experiences and lengths of time language brokering may affect experiences and outlooks. In addition, interpreting is only one aspect of the social worker and young people's lives. While there are shared social work knowledge, values and skills, there may be different organisational processes, team dynamics, personal values and specific involvement with interpreters, children and families, which may affect the social workers' outlooks towards interpreter-mediated encounters.

Since viewpoints are part of a wider compound of values, beliefs and feelings, which may be difficult to measure (Oppenheim, 1992), it was difficult to disentangle factors that may have contributed to the participants' viewpoints about interpreting. Moreover, the participants told their stories in different ways, some provided more context than others and appeared to follow a chronological narrative, whereas others shared their experiences in 'disorganised fragments' (Pratt, 2010:p.348). Resultantly, it was not straightforward to disentangle the interpreting from the participants' unique and seemingly complex circumstances.

The social constructionist position could be critiqued for being overly concerned with language at the expense of failing to engage with structures, power and exploitation. It has been proposed that constructionism and postmodernism are more a part of the problem than the solution, as these perspectives deflect attention from the main challenges facing social work and the people with whom they work. Ferguson and Lavalette (2004) argue that postmodern thinking about subjectivity and the diversity of truth are not particularly helpful in allowing social work to pursue social justice and emancipatory practice. Despite this criticism, social constructionist scholarship provides a critical and alternative position to that offered by modernist, realist and objectivist "science" and the increasing dominance of the evidence-based movement. An interrelated contribution of social constructionist scholarship therefore has been to expose a neoliberal agenda that purports risk as a dominant Discourse. To quote Parton: 'we do not so much *find* facts as *make* them' (Parton, 2011:p.145, original italics).

There were a number of methodological challenges, particularly in relation to the research with the young people. As outlined in chapter five, my monolingualism could have been considered to limit the research. For instance, I was unable to verify the meaning of the translated information (participant information and consent forms) and had to trust that this had been translated accurately, this is summarised in the following quotation.

When we invite people to use their own voices, forge their own meanings, and articulate their own conclusions...we should be prepared to receive and deal with layers of complexity (Poindexter, 2003:p.406).

I was aware that some of the young people were speaking in their second language and that there was a possibility that there would be differences in meaning and difficulty of translating

words due to cultural differences or non-equivalent words. Although the young people declined an interpreter, the opt-in choice of the interpreter limited the young people's choice to switch between languages as they may have preferred. There were a number of moments in the interviews when some of the young people struggled to find the words to express themselves and in one interview I was unable to understand dialogue between two young people as they began speaking in Czech. It is important to state that this uncertainty is not restricted to research with young people who speak different first-languages. This is because language is subject to interpretation and misinterpretation; hence we can never be certain that we completely understand what people are trying to communicate.

Different languages construct different ways of seeing social life, which poses methodological and epistemological challenges for the researcher (Larkin, Dierckx de Casterlé and Schotsmans, 2007:p.468).

The unstable nature of meaning through different languages and communication processes was also echoed in the findings from the social workers, in their work with interpreters and service users LEP. One of the concerns highlighted was the social workers' reliance on the interpreters to convey and retrieve meaning and their absence from the meaning-making process. This highlights the symbolic power of language and the power relations that are expressed in communicative exchanges. As Bourdieu argues 'Language at most represents this authority, manifests and symbolizes it' (Bourdieu, 1991:p.109).

I transcribed the data and used a modified version of the Jefferson technique, however I found that the interviews generated a wealth of data which were sufficient to meet the research objectives and I did not spend as much time as I originally intended examining the 'discourse' (Gee, 2010). In regards to the data collected, it is important to note that is 'contrived data' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). This raises questions about the 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972), this is the argument that people's behaviour/utterances changes in response to the researcher (see van Dijk, 1987). This resonates with Goffman's understanding of the self as a 'sacred social object' (1970). This was particularly relevant for the social work participants, in respect of guidance that advises that children should not be used as interpreters. In consideration of this, in the analyses of the interviews with social workers' perceptions and experience of child interpreters, I paid attention the way the social workers presented their

accounts and their attempts to try to shape how they were perceived and the impression they made. However I excluded detailed identification of my role in the interviews.

In relation to the interviews with the young people, it is important to be aware of the impulse of treating experience with authenticity (Silverman, 1993). In consideration of the relative 'powerlessness' of young people's position in society, there may be dissonance between what is possible for young people to: i) say and ii) for adults to hear them say (Alldred and Burman, 2005). This is particularly relevant given I have no experience of language brokering. This meant that the young people talked about language brokering in a way that compensated for my lack of experiential understanding, this can be treated as either a weakness or strength, as it enabled me to clarify and bring meaning to taken-for-granted processes. In addition, attempts to eradicate the 'observer's paradox' may be unrealistic and it may be neither possible nor desirable to avoid influencing the behaviour and content of research participants (Heller, 2008). Similarly, Giddens (1990) claims that '...social practices are constantly examined in light of incoming information about those practices, thus constitutively altering their character' (p.38). In light of this, the interview data for both participant groups were treated as social products; not a set of facts or a '...transparent carrier of that experience' (Lawler, 2002:p.242). Therefore, it is important to take heed of the inaccessibility of experiences and viewpoints. The following quotation has relevance for both participant groups.

In western cultures the observer of children tends to assume that their activity and verbalizations are products of, or in some essential way connected to, the child's experience. However, the nature of any child's (or adult's) experience is always in part inaccessible to an outsider (Greene and Hill, 2005:p.5).

I recognise there may never be a wholly democratic relationship between the researcher and the researched, and that problems of power, privilege and perspective cannot be eradicated by inserting one's self into the account (Skeggs, 2002; Wyness, 2006). Burman (1996) takes this further and argues: 'The process of bringing into the focus, of knowledging, can constitute an act of epistemic violence or alienation that disempowers or distorts' (p.140). This argument follows Rabinow (1977) who suggests that research is inevitably involved in the reification of symbolic violence and that: 'practices of listening bring different subjects into being' (Pratt,

2010:p.349). This is not necessarily a weakness of the study, but it is important to illuminate the way that this study contributes to understandings of CLB, social work practice and social work interpreter-mediated encounters.

Finally, there is a subtle yet significant paradox, namely that the research was concerned with aspects of social reality for minority language speakers and children who language broker and was conducted by an English speaking monoglot researcher, with no experience of language brokering. Moreover, the main research output (this thesis) is written in English for an English speaking audience. Hence a limitation is that the report is not accessible to the 'subjects' of the research: persons LEP. It is perhaps ironical that the study was concerned with the way the young people represent their parents and other adults through language brokering, however they were not deemed responsible enough to solely agree to participate in the study and parental consent was sought, following ethical protocol. This is indicative of the debates that this study has generated in relation to tendencies to 'protect' young people and to treat them in a way that marks them as different, and less able than their adult counterparts.

### **10.5 Areas for Future Research**

This study has focused on the phenomenon of interpreting encounters, which was previously a little-known area of social work practice and social life. The study has highlighted that there is scope for service providers to improve service delivery for persons who require interpreting provision. Therefore, three areas for future social work academic inquiry have been identified. First, it would be insightful to consider how different forms of interpreting, both formal and informal mechanisms, are used in social work practice and to highlight the availability and distribution of interpreting provision across local authorities in England. Second, since this study involved one monolingual researcher, there is scope to devise a project with bilingual researchers, to examine naturally occurring interpreter-mediated encounters in a social work setting, in order to make sense of meaning-making processes for all actors. Third, it would be beneficial to conduct international comparative research to consider how different multilingual social work agencies support the multilingual population. Fourth, it would be beneficial to gain insight to children's experiences of interpreting in a social work context.

## **10.6 Implications for Social Work Practice**

Identifying messages for practice is not straightforward. As I stated at the start of the thesis and commensurate with the social constructionist perspective, I did not aim to reveal objective truths that could be proscribed to policy makers practitioners. Nevertheless, in this section I do illuminate areas of practice for development. This is on the basis of my position as a social work academic and my intention to contribute to the social work profession. In consideration of the implications for policy and social work practice I highlight two areas for development.

- Improve Services for Minority Language Speakers.
- Recognise the Contributions of Informal Interpreters.

### **10.6.1 Improve Services for Minority Language Speakers**

This suggestion relates to the difficulties that the social work participants highlighted in their work with service users LEP and interpreters.

I have used the group ‘minority language speakers’ as a way to include persons LEP. It is important to recognise that language is not a fixed entity; thus meaning that people’s language needs are not static, that people’s language proficiencies may change over time and persons LEP may have differing need for linguistic support. In light of this it is important to determine the service user’s individual preferred language needs. There is need to improve linguistic provision, particularly to allow for minority language speakers to make unplanned contact, since the research findings indicated that linguistic matching via interpreters or bilingual colleagues does not alleviate communication difficulties and relationship building. It is important to ensure there is opportunity for persons LEP to give feedback on their experiences as a way to improve provision. The findings from the young people and social workers highlight that interpreters provide valuable contributions to facilitate communication for persons who do not share a mutual language. However, the social workers raised concern about the availability and quality of formal interpreting provision. Since social workers routinely signposts families to services in the community, it is important for workers to be aware of whether said services are linguistically and culturally appropriate. It is inhibiting to expect service users to access services that are not available in a person’s preferred language. This corresponds with the EHRC ‘How Fair is Britain’ (2010) report, which identified that

‘communicating in the language of a person’s choice’ was a key area of equality priorities in Britain.

There remain questions about whether outsourced translation and interpreting services should be regulated and whether interpreters should be qualified and registered to an official body. Nevertheless, structural changes will not relieve the tensions of co-working arrangements between social workers’ and interpreters’ joint practice. In light of this, there is scope to learn more about the co-location of interpreters and social workers and to consider what constitutes effective interpreting in social work, with focus on outcomes and service delivery for service users. Finally, the idea that persons LEP should lose their mother tongue and speak English must be rejected. Focus on people’s limited English language does not address the need for public services to support minority language speakers. The challenge is to resist Discourse that regards limited English language proficiency as a deficiency and associate interpreting provision with notions of entitlement and availability.

#### **10.6.2 Recognise the Contributions of Informal Interpreters**

This suggestion is twofold: first for service providers to recognise the role of informal interpreters and to make the distinction between formal and informal interpreting provision more explicit. Second, service providers and monolingual social workers should not mistake a colleague’s capacity to speak multiple languages as capacity to translate, and thus expect bilingual colleagues to interpret.

The findings from the social workers suggest that there are times when the use of informal interpreters was unavoidable in certain circumstances, particularly during initial contact with families, should the linguistic proficiencies of the family be unknown. In consideration of this, it is important to think more broadly about service delivery. The findings from this present study indicate that children interpret across a number of different spheres. Child interpreting was found to be an informal interpreting resource in a social work context and was used in both planned and unplanned ways: to gain an alternative perspective on the family situation or as an alternative to inefficient or absent interpreting provision. This is despite statutory social work guidance that advises against child interpreting. In consideration of this, it is important to recognise the valuable and unique contributions that children make when they interpret. In sum, child interpreting should not be a phenomenon abolished for children and social workers without their consultation. Following child-centred practice,



children need detailed and honest conversations with social workers; they need to be asked whether they would be willing to interpret or be told why they are deemed to be unsuitable for interpreting, moreover social workers need to be able to have honest conversations about their experiences of working with interpreters, including the challenges this entails.

It is also important to recognise key challenges in social work practice. Focusing on reasons to prohibit children from interpreting neglects the de facto existence of child interpreting and in particular ignores the structural deficiencies, namely absent or deficient interpreting provision. Following Katz (2008) child interpreting can be understood in the context of a neoliberal turn, particularly the idea that the state abrogates responsibility to the public. This raises a further challenge, that of social workers' duty to protect children from harm, this includes the potential harm of interpreting. There appears to be a challenge for social workers to balance the potential harm of child interpreting with the need to facilitate communication in contexts in which the child may be the only person with the capacity to bridge the communication gap. Conversely, restricting child interpreting may cause tensions and stress for social workers, children and adults and may marginalise persons LEP. Therefore, consideration of the complexities of social work suggests that complete restriction of children interpreting may not be desirable.

In regards to bilingual social workers, the research has shown that social workers provide ad-hoc interpreting. The findings suggest that this contribution is overlooked and in some cases expected. It is important to recognise bilingual social workers' contribution, in addition to the tensions that this presents and consideration of how these difficulties may be overcome. It is essential that social workers do not overlook the importance of the interpreting provision, and that service providers and colleagues do not mistake a colleague's capacity to speak multiple languages as capacity to translate.

## **10.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored the strengths and weaknesses of this study. I have highlighted implications for social work practice and identified areas for development in social work practice. I have suggested that there is a need to pay more attention to interpreter-mediated encounters and social work with service users LEP. I have proposed a number of areas for future academic inquiry.

This study has illuminated three competing tensions in social work practice: i) providing adequate linguistic provision for service users LEP; ii) working effectively with interpreters; and iii) protecting children from the perceived risk of interpreting. The findings from the young people offer a contextualised understanding of CLB, as an area of social life and childhood, and as one activity that enables persons LEP to access services in the community. CLB therefore illuminates a diverse conceptualization of childhood and intergenerational relations in social work and social life.

This thesis has shown that interpreting encounters are not straight-forward and that the use of interpreters evokes political tensions and illuminates fiscal and pragmatic challenges. Given that England is a multilingual country, it is important that continued attention is paid to improve linguistic provision, with attention paid to the collaboration between social workers, interpreters and service users LEP.

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## Glossary

- ‘Social welfare services’ refer to the variety of social care services available to the public. This may be offered for specific individuals, families and groups, e.g. Children’s Services, Adult Services, Children with Disabilities and so forth. Services may be delivered by statutory, voluntary or third sector agencies and range from universal to remedial services (Statham and Smith, 2010). In the context of statutory social work services, social workers may undertake assessments and intervention. Assessments are considered as an ongoing process to identify the needs and functioning of individuals, families and groups and to plan for what needs to be done (Coulshed and Orme, 1998). Intervention is an integral part of assessment and can be considered as a form of direct action (Walker and Beckett, 2007).
- ‘Service user’ refers to recipients of social welfare services. Service users may access social welfare services for a plethora of reasons, this may be on a voluntary or involuntary basis. McLaughlin (2009) provides a useful critical discussion about alternative terminology employed in social work practice and academia.
- I use the terms ‘children’ and ‘young people’ to denote persons age 0-18. I follow social work conventions and refer to these persons as children when presenting data from the social workers. I follow the conventions of youth studies and refer to these persons as ‘young people’ when referring to the young people who participated in this study.
- I refer to persons or service users ‘LEP’ meaning people with limited English language proficiency. Alternative terms found in the literature include non-English speaking clients (NESB), culturally and linguistically diverse clients (CALD) and linguistic minority or linguistic minority speakers (Sawrikar, 2013a; 2013b). These terms have been rejected in recognition that a person may be a linguistic minority speaker but may be bilingual and proficient in English.
- I follow sociolinguistic tradition and use the term ‘bilingualism’ to refer to linguistic proficiency in two or more languages; hence a bilingual individual is anyone who can communicate in more than one language. ‘Monolingual’ or ‘monoglot’ refers to a people who speak one language. The use of primary and additional spoken languages is categorised into ‘first’ or ‘mother tongue’ and second language. A number of

commentators have noted the problematic nature of this categorisation; since a speaker may have multiple first languages which may be used in different settings. In addition the term 'second language' may not necessarily relate to competence or usefulness or numerical status but rather to the official status and prevalence of the language (Crystal, 2003; Temple, 2006).

- I use the term 'participant' rather than 'subject' or 'respondent' as a way to acknowledge the active involvement of those involved in the research.

## Appendix 1: Literature Review: Key Search Terms

<b>Social actors</b>	children	linguistic minority groups,
	social workers	
	practitioners that use interpreters	
<b>Processes</b>	childhood	interpretation/ translation guidance
	communication in social work	language policy
	models of communication	language attitudes
	language	linguistic support
	language policy and guidance	
<b>Interpreting</b>	ad-hoc interpreter	culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
	adolescent interpreter	
	bilingual children	interpreter, translator
	child interpreter	language barriers
	child mediator	limited English language proficiency
	child translator	linguistic difference
	child language broker	linguistic minority
	family interpreter	non English speaking background (NESB)
	informal interpreter	
Truncation searches: child* communication* interpret* linguistic minority* language broker*		



## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

Name of Student: **Siân E Lucas**

Name of Supervisor: xxx

School: Social Work

Course of study: PhD

Name of Research Council or other funding organisation (if applicable): ESRC

### 1a. Title of proposed research project

**Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**

### 1b. Is this Project Purely literature based?

NO (delete as appropriate)

### 2. Project focus

The project is concerned with the phenomenon of child language brokering (CLB); the act of interpreting and translating by a child for adults; family members, parents, professionals and/or strangers. The project explores two areas of this phenomenon; the experiences of CLB and the language used to construct discourses of CLB. The first area illuminates the experience of CLB from two viewpoints; a social welfare milieu (social workers) and from children with experience of brokering in a social welfare context (see appendix X). The second area is an investigation into the language that social workers and children use to construct discourses of CLB.

### 3. Project objectives

The research objectives explore the complex and underreported area of CLB in a social welfare context. There are four research objectives:

1. To explore aspects of brokering in social welfare contexts from different viewpoints.
2. To illuminate the experiences of children that language broker in a social welfare

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context.

3. To illuminate the experiences of one group of social welfare workers' (social workers) experience of using brokers.
4. To explore the nature of language used to construct brokering by various actors (2 participant groups).

### 4. Research strategy

(For example, outline of research methodology, what information/data collection strategies will you use, where will you recruit participants and what approach you intend to take to the analysis of information / data generated)

#### Methodology

The research is a qualitative study that will develop a conceptual understanding of the experiences of CLB by two social actors; social workers and children and the nature of language used to construct brokering by these actors. The study will run from XXX.

#### Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews will be used to gain insight into social workers' ( $n=8$ ) and children's ( $n=8$ ) i) experiences of brokering in a social welfare context and ii) the language used to construct child language brokering (CLB). There will be a pilot study this will involve interviews with: one child and one social worker. The findings of the pilot will be used to inform the main study. There will be one interview per participants. Interviews with the children will be no more than 1 hour long; this limit is used to promote attention spans, it also corresponds with advice from child researcher Greene and Hogan (2005). Interviews with social workers will be more flexible, it is envisaged they will last between 45 minutes – 2 hours, although no more than 3 hours for the same reasons.

The purpose of the interviews is for the participants to express their experiences about brokering and to share stories about this and to construct an account with a child that goes beyond simple questions and answers and to create a relaxed and comfortable environment. The children will be asked about the prevalence and

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frequency of brokering with specific focus on social welfare contexts. See interview themes (appendix X). Research methods will allow room for spontaneity in the interviews; the children will have the opportunity to choose preferred instruments such as; images and drawings alongside talking. Activities may include: asking the participants to draw who they interpret for in the family, the places they interpret, a cartoon of the brokering experience.

The drawings will be discussed with the child to talk about the meanings behind them. The investigator will ask for consent from the children to use the images (names and any self-identifying items will be censored in any publications). While the drawings may reveal interesting data, the written conversation will be the main foci for the purpose of analysis.

### Recruitment

#### 1. Children

Children will be recruited through contact with youth centres and schools. A letter will be sent to these sites to request organisational consent to recruit children (appendix X) and to locate children that fit the criteria stipulated:

- between the ages of 10 – 18;
- bilingual (spoken English essential);
- monolingual parents (Little/ no English spoken);
- experience of language brokering in a social welfare context (desirable).

When organisational consent is gained, the investigator will request to meet the youth centre/school staff and explain the purpose of the study. The investigator will then request to introduce herself to groups of children within the school/youth centre, in the presence of the staff, in this meeting the investigator will outline the purpose of the study to the children and offer a chance for the children to ask questions.

Following this meeting, the investigator will request that the agencies identify

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children that 1) are interested in taking part in the study and 2) fit the eligibility criteria. These children will then be given an information letter about the study. If the children decide they are interested, information about the study will be sent to parents (appendix X and a separate consent form for parents to agree to their children to be interviewed will be sought (appendix X). All documents given to parents will be translated into the appropriate language and there will be the chance to speak to the investigator; 'languageline' will be used for telephone contact with parents. Children will also be given an information sheet prior to the study (appendix X) in both English and the language spoken in the family home and will have the opportunity to ask questions via phone or email about the study. Participants will sign a consent form to before the research begins (appendix X).

It is anticipated that the linguistic group will be Urdu and Panjabi speaking children, given the linguistic composition of the recruitment site, 'Hillshire', however this remains flexible; this will be determined by the children that are identified in the social welfare sites.

Interviews with the children will take place at an agreed safe and private place within the community e.g. Children Centre, Community Centre, Library. The overriding requirement of the location will be that it is a place that the child and investigator deem to be safe. Health and safety regulations will be observed and upheld.

The age range has been chosen to represent the wide diversity of competence and experiences of language brokering. Age 10 is the starting age, this has been chosen to allow for a comparison of age in relation to language brokering. In addition longitudinal research by Orellana (2009) found that brokering becomes more established after age 10, moreover as children get older their cognitive abilities improve (Scott, 2008). The age group is capped at age 18, this is commensurate with the age range of children according to the Children Act 1989 and accompanying policies.

To address power differentials, parents can choose to attend the interview with a friend/family member and this will be encouraged. An interpreter will be used if the

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parent requests to sit in the interview, this would increase the time of the interviews, this will be explained to the participants, but not used to deter them from choosing to invite their parents. Interpreting services will also be available to children should they require this.

While the investigator will attempt to recruit children that have had experience of language brokering in the sphere of social welfare, it may be difficult to identify these children therefore bilingual children will be recruited in the first instance, following the recruitment method of Green and Hogan (2005) (further criteria is specified further in the application).

### **2. Social Workers**

The investigator will approach Children's Services Departments of several local authorities in the UK to recruit social workers to participate in the project. A number of former social work colleagues will be approached and asked to send an introductory email to colleagues, inviting participation to the study (appendix X). Social workers who agree to participate will be given an information sheet (appendix X) and should they agree to participate, they will sign a consent form (appendix X).

using the eligibility criteria stipulated:

- English language speaking social workers, that work in the Children and families sector;
- experience of working with linguistically diverse service users.

Interviews with social workers will take place either in the workplace or place in a safe place within the community e.g. cafe, library, university.

### **Data Analysis**

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the investigator to immerse her into the study. Analyses will be formed with the use of discourse and narrative analysis. The whole interview will be transcribed using the 'Jefferson' system as a guide to transcription, with attention paid to prosodic and paralinguistic features. The transcripts will be read carefully to look for pattern recognition and

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thematic development. Narrative analysis will be used to identify patterns and themes in the data that relate to the experiences of CLB to represent the stories of brokering from different viewpoints. Discourse analysis will be used to examine the language used to talk about CLB and to elucidate the way CLB is constituted by social workers and children. The 'seven building tasks of language' as expounded by Gee (2005) will be used to analyse the data (see appendix X). Patterns in the data will be explored to understand the action achieved in talk and to illuminate how is language used to make certain things significant and not and in what ways? And to illuminate what is taken to be 'normal' 'right' 'good'. The social workers and children will not have worked together as the project does not intend to compare accounts of an identical event. The research does not attempt to garner a homogenised picture of language brokering for all Panjabi and Urdu speaking children. Rather the research aims to illuminate different experiences of CLB in a social welfare context and the way that language is used to construct the notion of CLB. This will reveal insight into a little understood phenomenon.

### **The use of interpreters**

Interpreters are a valuable part of the research and will be used in the study to communicate with parent participants and to translate documents to the participants. Parents and children will be advised that an interpreter can be at the interview should they require. The interpreter will be paid to interpret the interviews for the parents/child and to translate documents for the participants. Interpreters will receive an information sheet about the purpose of the study (appendix X). They will have the opportunity to ask questions about the study and will sign a consent form (appendix X). The interpreters will be briefed and debriefed after the interviews.

The interpreter will have experience of interpreting and translating and will be sought from the council translation and interpreting service or youth service. The investigator will pay the interpreter for their time and services. This will be negotiated with the interpreter.

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### 5. What is the rationale which led to this project?

(For example, previous work – give references where appropriate. Any seminal works must be cited)

The United Kingdom has a wealth of diversity in linguistic practices; with more than 300 languages and varieties spoken on a daily basis in England (Blackledge and Creese, 2010). English is the language most widely taught as in over 1000 countries and is a key demographic feature of the local and global context. Increasingly more people are becoming bilingual and there are estimates that more people use English as a second rather than first language (Kachru, 1996).

Communication is a central element of the social workers' role and forms the basis of interventions. Due to migration patterns, globalisation and the domination of the English language (Dominelli, 2010) it has become increasingly common for social workers to operate in multilingual contexts and support service users across language divides. To alleviate language barriers often interpretation and translation services are employed, alternatively bilingual workers are used and on some occasions, family members, including children are used.

Regrettably service providers often struggle to meet the linguistic needs of the population. Research from the United Kingdom has demonstrated that welfare services often fail to meet the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of the multi-ethnic population (Barn, Sinclair and Ferdinand, 1997; Brophy, 2000, O'Neale, 2000). Moreover, the problems that minority language speakers have in accessing services in the public sphere have been identified (Ahmed, 1991; Thoburn, Chand and Procter, 2004, Chand, 2005; Pugh and Williams, 2006).

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There is a paucity of literature to explore social workers' attitudes to using children as language brokers although rhetoric and policy guidance from private, public and voluntary health and social care agencies unanimously advises against the use of children as interpreters (East London and The City NHS; London Child Protection Procedures, 2011; 4Children Charity, 2011). Despite this guidance, there is research to suggest that multilingual children are used to interpret between professionals and their families in both private and public spheres (Cohen *et al.*, 1999; Orellana *et al.*, 2003; Green *et al.*, 2005; Orellana, 2009). Not only does this raise concerns about adequate communication services, it also points to a discrepancy in the practical delivery of services that bypasses policy guidance. The project aims to secure qualitative data to inform policy and practice on this area of under-developed research. It is anticipated that the findings will offer new insights to the experiences of CLB from children's perspectives and from a social welfare context. In addition, it is hoped that it will offer insight into the ways that discourse construct notions of CLB. This will offer new insight for social work practice and social welfare policy.

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Thoburn, J., Chand, A., & Procter, J. (2005) *Child welfare services for minority ethnic families: the research reviewed*. London, Jessica Kingsley.

### 6. If you are going to work within a particular organisation do they have their own procedures for gaining ethical approval

(For example, within a hospital or health centre?)

**NO** (delete as appropriate)

*If YES – what are these and how will you ensure you meet their requirements?*

The sites do not have their own procedures for gaining ethical approval. The investigator will clearly convey the aims of the projects and will negotiate any request with the management.

### 7. Are you going to approach individuals to be involved in your research?

**YES** (delete as appropriate)

*If YES – please think about key issues – for example, how you will recruit people? How you will deal with issues of confidentiality / anonymity? Then make notes that cover the key issues linked to your study*

#### **Social Workers**

Contact will be made to a number of managers in Children's Services and using this conduit an email will be forwarded to social workers to recruit participation. A number of former social work colleagues will be approached and asked to send an email to colleagues. Prospective participants will be sent a letter in the first instance (appendix X). Social workers that agree to participate will be given an information sheet (appendix X) and should they agree to participate, they will sign a consent form (appendix X).

#### **Children**

Information about the study will be given to parents before the children are approached (appendix X) and a separate consent form for parents to agree to their children to be interviewed will be sought (appendix X). Parents will have the opportunity ask questions about the study. An interpreter will be used –face to face interpret or through a telephone interpretation line i.e. 'languageline'.

Children will be given an information sheet (appendix X) and will have the

## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

opportunity to ask questions by written or verbal communication. The participants will sign a consent form prior to the interviews (appendix X).

### **General**

The cost for the field work; translating and interpreting and so forth will be covered by the investigator who is sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Participants will be given a minimum of 24hours to consider their involvement in the research.

The participants will be asked whether the interviews can be recorded and will be informed that only the investigator and supervisory team would hear the interviews.

The participants will be advised that the audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription and checking. That any identifying information would be removed. The participants will be informed that parts of the transcript will be used in the thesis, presentations and publications although these will be anonymised.

There will be an attempt to create an open context and stress to the participants' that they will not be judged on the answers they give, nor will there be consequences for the information they share, however this information would not extend if there are safeguarding concerns.

There is a concern of potential invasion of privacy, particularly in regards to topics of social welfare. There may be suspicion that the participants feel they are being judged or feel suspicious about the questioning. Personal questions about immigration status, salary will be avoided. There is a possibility that the discussion may move on to sensitive area of particularly stressful experiences of applying for benefits, lack of linguistic support and involvement with public services. The general experiences of these encounters of the role language plays will be focussed on rather than the content of these episodes. Topics will be restricted to: types of welfare support that have been applied, barriers that are faced, support mechanisms.

The investigator will not ask any leading questions about child language brokering and if asked will remain neutral to the subject and explain the two main responses; that some think it should be avoided and others think it is necessary.

The participants will be able to refuse to answer questions on whatever grounds they feel necessary. The analysis of interviews interpretation of work will be offered to the participants to look over and discuss when the transcripts are transcribed if desired.

## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

### 8. More specifically, how will you ensure you gain informed consent from anyone involved in the study?

In line with recommendations from the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice (2002), the participants will know the purpose of the study, what the study entails, why the study is being undertaken, who is funding the study and how it will be promoted. The participants will have chance to ask questions throughout the process. Interpreters will be used to aid this process.

Prospective participants will have the opportunity to access an information sheet (appendices XXX) that highlight what is involved in the study if they decide to participate. In line with the context of the research, respect to language proficiency will be assured; written materials will be translated into the participants' preferred language and interpreters will be used.

There is the opportunity to ask questions in a variety of ways: participants could call the investigator on the telephone number provided on the consent form in their chosen language with the use of an interpreter (the interpreter will be briefed about the research and will translate the content of the conversations to the investigator). Email in their preferred language (the correspondence will be translated into English) and ask questions on the day of the study. Participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions in advance of the interviews.

All participants will sign a consent form (appendices X) highlighting what would be involved if they decide to participate in the study. In regards to seeking consent to interview the children, the investigator will first seek consent from the parents who will sign an additional consent form (appendix X). The investigator will then seek consent from the children themselves with an information sheet and consent form (appendices X).

The participants will be thanked in person for their participation and travel expenses and refreshments will be offered.

Further steps will be taken to promote informed consent:

- The investigator will ensure that the participants do not feel pressurised or obliged to participate.
- The participants will be informed of their right to withdraw consent at any given stage.
- The investigator will request to digitally record the interviews.
- The investigator will protect the identity of the participants. The sites of the study and names of the participants' will be anonymised in all reports and

## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

publications.

- Confidentiality will be upheld, however if child protection concerns (concerns about the welfare and safety of the child in accordance with the Children Act 1989) arise the investigator will seek guidance from the supervisor and speak with a duty social worker Children's Services if it is perceived to be necessary.
- Where there are concerns about the safety of a participants who may be at risk there is a moral obligation to inform an appropriate third agency.
- Information or views from other participants will not be divulged, including information from the children.

### Endings

- The investigator will think carefully about appropriate endings for the research and will ensure the participants are debriefed and are clear about how the data will be used.
- The participants will have the contact details for the investigator at the end of the study so they are aware of what has happened to the information shared or if they wish to withdraw from the study.
- The participants will be aware of the extent of the investigator role and will be advised that only correspondence about the interviews will take place.
- The parents and children participants may be understood by some to be vulnerable. To alleviate any concern that the research may reinforce negative perceptions or stereotypes, the investigator will feedback on the perceived progress and outcomes of the research.
- A shorter, non-technical summary will be offered in different formats; both written and verbal (in accordance with age, cognitive ability and language). Should there be disagreement about analysis of data; the participants will have the right to request the withdrawal of data.

### 9. How are you going to address any Data Protection issues?

*See notes for guidance which outline minimum standards for meeting Data Protection issues*

- The investigator will not use a personal phone for the research. A new sim card will be bought and used in the investigators' old mobile. This will be used throughout the research and the sim card destroyed after the research.

## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

- No personal data will be obtained from the interviews with social workers.
- The research will uphold the guidance of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Digital recordings, transcripts and consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet in a secure office. Transcripts will not include names, instead identifier codes will be used on files.
- Recordings will be destroyed after transcription and checking.
- If at any time the service users or social workers request to have their records destroyed, this would be done.
- Transcripts will be kept for 3 years, although it may be appropriate to request permission for longer if there are plans for future research in this area.
- Any external interpreters and transcribers used will sign a form to say they will conform to the Data Protection Act (appendix X).

### **10. Are there any other ethical issues that need to be considered? For example - research on animals or research involving people under the age of 18.**

#### **The Investigator**

The investigator is a registered social worker and has an enhanced CRB (dated X). The investigator has experience of interviewing children, parents and professionals both in practical social work and research work. The investigator is aware of child protection issues and procedures.

Issues in relation to field work that include training and lone working will be managed within the supervision team. On interview days, the investigator will notify the supervisory team of their whereabouts and the estimated duration of the meeting.

The investigator will have support from the supervisory team to debrief and access to the university counselling team where necessary.

Interviews will take place in public environments e.g. university, social care office and by telephone. The location will be negotiated with all those that take place to ensure safety, convenience and comfort. The investigator will carry a mobile at all times and ring the supervisory team for support if necessary.

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### **Language Issues**

The principal investigator is monolingual. Respect to language proficiency will be managed with the support of community interpreters. Where possible, attention will be paid to the service users' preference to the interpreter. If there are concerns about the gender or if the interpreter is known to the subject, participants will be given a choice to postpone the interview until a suitable interpreter is found.

If the subject prefers to speak in English with the aid of family members to interpret this will be considered on the grounds of the case and the age of the family member. If children are requested to interpret, separate consent will be requested. The investigator will be aware of subject matter that is technically challenging or potentially distressing if family members are used to interpret.

The interpreters will be given an information sheet (appendix X) that clearly states the purpose of the study. The interpreter will be given a consent form (appendix X) to agree to uphold the confidentiality of service users in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Further agreements will be discussed, agreed and drawn up into an extended consent form prior to the interviews. This will include: ground rules for interviews, details of payment, hours of work and expectations of conduct in interviews. The interpreter will be briefed prior to the interviews and debriefed.

### **The Participants**

Participants will be given the investigators' work email address.

The child participants will be given the choice to be accompanied by a friend/parent during the interviews.

There will be no added pressure for the participants to answer any questions that they find too personal, confusing or distressing. The investigator will avoid asking direct questions about traumatic events, sensitive issues will be broached with extreme care and sensitivity.

It is possible that those taking part in the interviews (particularly the parents and families) may become distressed at the content of the interviews. In the event of this response, the investigator will offer to end the interview if necessary. This would be accompanied with a debrief.

The study is concerned with social welfare services hence the investigator will be familiar with local support services to signpost if necessary.

In awareness of the power differentials (the age difference, and status of the investigator) involved in interviewing children, the investigator will amend the

## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

questions to be age-appropriate, this means asking a combination of direct and indirect questions, the use of drawings to accompany or represent their answers to promote understandings and elicit responses.

If any of the participants or interpreters have any concerns about the nature of the study or the content of the interviews they can seek guidance from the supervisory team.

11. **(a) Does the project involve the use of ionising or other type of “radiation”**

NO

**(b) Is the use of radiation in this project over and above what would normally be expected (for example) in diagnostic imaging?**

NO

**(c) Does the project require the use of hazardous substances?**

NO

**(d) Does the project carry any risk of injury to the participants?**

NO

**(e) Does the project require participants to answer questions that may cause disquiet / or upset to them?**

YES

*If the answer to any of the questions 11(a)-(e) is YES, a risk assessment of the project is required and must be submitted with your application.*

12. **How many subjects will be recruited/involved in the study/research? What is the rationale behind this number?**

The decision to stop interviewing new respondents will be when the investigator has undertaken a thorough analysis of the data and has sufficient data to make arguments and warrant or justify these (Wood and Kroger, 2000).

**Pilot study**



## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

One social worker and one child.

### Main Study

Up to 8 social workers

Up to 8 children

The anticipated depth of these interviews, and particularly the use of discourse analysis and the degree of detail this encompasses means that a relatively small sample size is required. The decision to stop interviewing new participants will be when i) no new linguistic patterns emerge and ii) when no new themes emerge from the data.

Wood, L. A., & Kroger, R. O. (2000) *Doing discourse analysis: methods for studying action in talk and text*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

### 13. Please state which code of ethics has guided your approach (e.g. from Research Council, Professional Body etc).

*Please note that in submitting this form you are confirming that you will comply with the requirements of this code. If not applicable please explain why.*

General Social Care Council

British Sociological Association (2002)

ESRC

**Remember that informed consent from research participants is crucial, therefore all documentation must use language that is readily understood by the target audience.**

*Projects that involve NHS patients, patients' records or NHS staff, will require ethical approval by the appropriate NHS Research Ethics Committee. The University College Ethics Panel will require written confirmation that such approval has been granted. Where a project forms part of a larger, already approved, project, the approving REC should be informed about, and approve, the use of an additional co-investigator.*

***I certify that the above information is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate and correct. I understand the need to ensure I undertake my research in a manner that reflects good principles of ethical research practice.***

Signed by Student xxx

Print Name Siân E Lucas

Date xxx

***In signing this form I confirm that I have read this form and associated documentation.***

## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

**College Ethics Panel:  
Application Checklist**

**Ref No:** Office Use Only

**Name of Applicant:** Siân E Lucas

**Title of Project:** **Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**

The checklist below helps you to ensure that you have all the supporting documentation submitted with your ethics application form. This information is necessary for the Panel to be able to review and approve your application. Please complete the relevant boxes to indicate whether a document is enclosed and where appropriate identifying the date and version number allocated to the specific document (*in the header / footer*), Extra boxes can be added to the list if necessary.

Document	Enclosed?			Date	Version No
	(indicate appropriate response)				
Application Form	<u>Mandatory</u>		If not required please give a reason	16.02.2012	2
Risk Assessment Form	Yes			16.02.2012	2
Participant Invitation Letter	Yes			16.02.2012	2
Participant Information Sheet	Yes			16.02.2012	2
Participant Consent Form	Yes			16.02.2012	2
Participant Recruitment Material – e.g. copies of posters, newspaper adverts, website, emails	Yes			16.02.2012	2
Organisation Management Consent	Yes			16.02.2012	2

## Appendix 2: Ethics Application

/ Agreement Letter						
Research Instrument – e.g. questionnaire		No	Not required for this project	No questionnaires will be used.		
Draft Interview Guide	Yes				16.02.2012	2
National Research Ethics Committee consent		No	Not required for this project	Not required for this project		
<p><b>Note:</b> If the appropriate documents are not submitted with the application form then the application will be returned directly to the applicant and will need to be resubmitted at a later date thus delaying the approval process</p>						

### Appendix 3: Risk Assessment Summary of Student Project

**All student projects must include a risk assessment. If this summary assessment of the risk proves insignificant: i.e. answer no to all questions, no further action is necessary. However, if you identify risks you must identify the precautions you will put in place to control these.**

*Please answer the following questions.*

**1. What is the title of the project?**

**Working Title: Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**

**2. Is the project purely literature based? YES/NO**

*If YES, please go to the bottom of the assessment and sign where indicated. If NO, complete question 3 and then list your proposed controls.*

**3. Identifying the Risks**

Hazards	Risks	If yes, consider what precautions will be taken to minimise risk and discuss with your Supervisor
1. Use of face-to-face interviews  Participants or interviewees could become upset by interview and suffer psychological effects	YES	Consider:  What initial and subsequent support will be made available for participants or interviewees?  What to do if researcher uncovers information regarding an illegal act?  What/who will be used to counsel distressed participants/ interviewees, what precautions will be taken to prevent this from happening?
2. Sensitive data	Exposure to data or information which may cause  upset or distress to Researcher YES	Consider:  What initial and subsequent support will be available to the researcher
3. Sensitive issues i.e. Gender / Cultural  e.g. when observing or dealing with undressed members of the opposite sex	Exposure to vulnerable situations/ sensitive issues that may cause distress to interviewer or interviewee	Consider:  Use of chaperones/ Translators.  What initial and subsequent support will be made available for participants or interviewees?

### Appendix 3: Risk Assessment Summary of Student Project

Children		Adhere;  to local guidelines and take advice from research supervisor
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**If you have answered yes to any of the hazards in question 3, please list the proposed precautions below:**

**1. Use of face-to-face Interviews**

The researcher will explain that the information given is confidential and will be anonymised. They will also be informed that this would be broken in the case where there were concerns about the safety and wellbeing of the child. The parents would be advised of any decisions to make a referral to Children’s Services unless this decision may harm the child. Any decisions will also be made with consultation with the supervisory team.

Any information that involves the disclosure of an illegal act will be disclosed to third party.

For emotional support, the participants will be directed to the local authority family support services and other voluntary aided support services. The researcher will pay close attention to the body language and responses of the interviewee and will stop the interview to promote their wellbeing.

**2. Sensitive Data**

The researcher is a qualified social worker, with experience of interviewing children and parents. The researcher is aware of counselling facilities at the university and will be given the opportunity to debrief with the supervisory team after each interview.

**3. Sensitive Issues**

Participants will be given an outline of the topics to be discussed in the interviews. The participants will be informed that they can choose not to answer any of the questions (this will be verbally told and is in the participant information sheet). The participants can decide to withdraw from the research with no questions asked. The participants will be given the opportunity to participate at a later date or withdraw completely.

The participants will have the opportunity to speak with the overseeing supervisor and will have access to his contact details at any point in the research. Participants can choose to speak in their preferred language with the use of an independent interpreter. Alternatively ‘languageline’ (an instant tele-interpretation service) will be offered.

Signature of student:            xxx                            Date xx

## Appendix 4: Letter to Ethics Committee

Siân E Lucas, School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work

FAO: xxx, College of Health and Social Care.

Dear X

### **Ethics Application: HSCR12-15**

Please send my thanks to the College Research Ethics Panel for their comments. In response of this, the following changes have been made:

1. The term 'actors' refers to the 2 groups of participants; social workers and children. This has been clarified in the application.
2. The children will be encouraged to bring their parent/carer to the interview. This has been clarified in the application.

There is further clarification to ensure that these interviews take place in a mutually agreed safe venue.

3. The investigator will meet with the school/youth centre staff to introduce herself and outline the purpose of the study, she will then speak to the children in the presence of the staff. This has been clarified in the application.
4. Information letters to participants have been amended and now state the following.
  - Although interview tapes will be destroyed, transcriptions will be kept in line with data protection requirements.
  - Interviews with SW will take place at a mutually convenient, safe and private location.
  - Children are advised that interpreting services are available for their use or their parent/carers.
  - Letters to all participants and interpreters state that all information shared in the interviews is confidential with the exception of the disclosure of illegal acts.

5. The error identified on Appendix X has been corrected.

The term bilingualism has been replaced with a more understandable term.

There are seven documents attached which evidence the above points. These are: Ethics application and appendices: X

Yours sincerely

XXX

## Appendix 5: Letter to Organisations to Locate Young People to Participate



Sian E Lucas XXX

University of Salford XXX

XXX

### **Research Project: Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**

Dear XXX

I'm a PhD student at the University of Salford, sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council. I'm writing to enquire whether XXX might allow me to carry out research with a small number of children.

My research is concerned with a little known area of research, child language brokering (also referred to as child interpreting). To learn more about this, I am exploring child language brokering from two perspectives; the first is through interviews with social workers, about their experiences of working with child language brokers. The second part is to explore children's experiences of language brokering in social welfare contexts, and this is why I'm contacting you.

I would like to interview up to **8 children** that have experience of brokering in social welfare contexts. This may be: social work interventions; housing; benefits and services in the community - Children's Centres, Youth Centres. I'd therefore like to locate children that are:

- 1) aged up to 18;**
- 2) bilingual;**
- 2) proficient in English; and**
- 3) whose parents/carers speak little English.**

Are there any children at XXX that fit the above criteria and would you be willing to help me to invite some of these children to participate? If so, I'd be very grateful to discuss this proposal with you.

## **Appendix 5: Letter to Organisations to Locate Young People to Participate**

It will not be necessary for me to know about the content of the child/families' social work intervention, nor will this be raised in the interviews. The purpose is to learn about how they experience brokering.

The interview will be in English, will last for approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour. They will be audio taped with the consent of the child. The outline of the interviews will be offered nearer the time and a friend/professional or parent may be present.

Full ethical approval has been granted by the Research and Governance Committee at the University of Salford. Full confidentiality and anonymity for the children will be upheld, although the principles of child protection will remain paramount. There will be an opportunity for the child and parent to talk with myself about the research and 'languageline' will be used to speak with the parents in their preferred language. The children will also be able to ask as many questions as they wish before they decide to participate and can drop out at any point.

It is hoped the research will contribute to a more informed understanding child language brokering in social welfare contexts, this is to improve services for minority linguistic families as well as giving children 'a voice' to talk about their experiences of language brokering.

I would be very grateful if you would consider this proposal, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

xxx

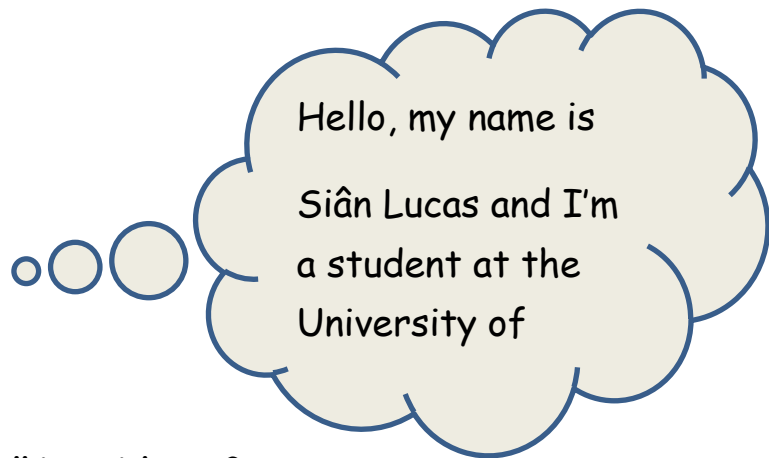
Siân E Lucas

PhD Student

University of Salford



**Research Project: Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**



**Why am I interested in talking with you?**

- <insert organisation> have told me you speak more than one language.
- I am interested in speaking with young people about interpreting for family members.
- I would like to hear about how you use your language skills in everyday life, but particularly in social welfare contexts.

**Have you ever interpreted: between parents/family members/strangers and social workers or other staff members?**

**Have you interpreted at the job centre, housing department, Children's Centre, Youth Centre etc?**

**What would happen if you decide to take part in the research project?**

- The research will involve talking with a researcher about how you use languages in everyday life. The discussion will be tape recorded. The interview will last between 45 minutes - 1hour.
- You are free to bring a friend or family member to the interview.

## Appendix 6: Research Flyer for Young People

- Interpreter Services are available - you will be asked whether you would like an interpreter to be present.

### What would happen with the information you give?

- Any information you give will be treated anonymously; this means that in the future no one would be able to recognise you and the things you talk about.
- The information you give will not be shared outside the research team. Only the researchers involved with the project would have access to the recordings.
- Everything that is discussed with the researcher is confidential unless an illegal act is disclosed.
- If an interpreter is present at the interview, they will also uphold the above points - they will ensure that the information you give remains confidential.

### What will I do with the information?

- Findings from the research will help professionals to understand more about the experiences of children that interpret. This information may go to groups who influence services in the community

### Who can answer questions?

You can contact the researcher before the research, using the contact details below. On the day of the project there will also be an opportunity to ask any questions. Remember you are free to decide not to be in this project or to drop out at any time. **If you need more information, you can contact the researcher, Siân Lucas** ✉ XXX ☎xxx **or Siân's supervisor, XXX.**



Research Project: Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context

## Information sheet

My name is Siân Lucas and I'm a PhD student at the University of Salford.

My PhD is about children that interpret for non-English speaking family members and social workers. **I am looking for young people who have experienced this.**

---

### ***CAN YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS?***

---

- Do you speak more than one language?
- Have you ever interpreted between a social worker and a family member, carer or professional?
- Would you be willing to be involved in a project to express your views about this?

### **Why am I interested in talking with you?**

- The purpose of the project is to learn about your experience of interpreting for your non English speaking family member as a child/young person during social work intervention.

### **What would happen if you decide to take part in the research project?**

- The research will involve talking with a researcher about your experience of interpreting for a non-English speaking family member and social worker.

## **Appendix 7: Participant Information for Young People**

- The interview will last between 45 minutes – 1 hour. The discussion will be tape recorded.
- The interview will take place in a quiet, local and safe place to be agreed by the interviewee and researcher. You are free to bring a friend or family member to the interview.

### **What will happen to the information you give?**

- The tape recording will be deleted after transcription and checking.
- Everything that is discussed with the researcher will remain confidential unless an illegal act is disclosed.
- Any information you give will be treated anonymously; your name and any places or people who you talk about will be changed so that in the future no one would be able to recognise you and the things you talk about.
- The information you give will not be shared outside the research team. Only the researchers involved with the project would have access to the recordings.
- You are free to decide not to be in this project or to drop out at any time. If you decide to withdraw, the interview data will not be used.

### **What will I do with the information?**

- You will be sent a copy of the main findings.
- Findings from the research will be used in publications about children that interpret for parents.
- Findings will also be shared with professionals and academics at conferences and universities.
- It is hoped that research findings will help professionals to understand more about the experiences of children that interpret in social care contexts. This information may be of interest to policy makers/pressure groups who influence social care services.

### **Who can answer questions?**

- There will also be an opportunity to ask any questions on the day of the interview.

Please express your interest or any questions to: **Siân Lucas** ✉ **xxx** ☎ **xxx**

Overseeing supervisor: xxx

**Research Project: Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**

Thank you for reading this form. The information that follows tells you what will happen if you allow your son/daughter to participate in the research. If you have any

The purpose of the project is to learn more about child language brokering, also known as child interpreting. This is to find out how children from bilingual families (ages 10-18) experience interpreting in the community.

- This will involve one interview, between 45 minutes – 1 hour.
- Your son/daughter can bring a friend/family member to the interview if they wish.
- The interviews would be recorded.
- If you are willing for your son/daughter to take part they will then be asked separately, your child does not have to join the study.

questions about the research I will try my best to answer them.

**General Information**

**Q: Why should I allow my son/daughter to participate?**

**A:** I am interested to learn about children's views and experiences of how they may help with translation and interpretation in the community. The research may lead to recommendations to improve services for families with limited English language.

**Q: Where will the interviews take place?**

**A:** In a local, safe and private environment

**Q: Anything else?**

**A:** You are free to attend the interviews – if you do so, an interpreter will be arranged to interpret the discussion.

Interviews will take place in English.

Local travel expenses (bus/train) will be reimbursed.

## **Appendix 8: Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians: Young People's Participation**

Refreshments will be provided.

If you agree, please complete the consent form and return to XXX

### **Other information you should know**

- I hope to record these discussions so that I can review the opinions that are expressed and build a picture of what families think about how languages affects the access of services in the community.
- If any of the topics are upsetting, the interview can be stopped at any time, with no questions asked, all data will be destroyed. The child will be given an option to speak with the investigator at a later time.
- Names will be changed to protect privacy. Any information given will be treated anonymously and in confidence and will not be disclosed to anyone outside the meeting or research team.
- The interpreter will also uphold confidentiality. This would only be broken in a situation where there were concerns about the safety and wellbeing of the child. You would be advised about this.
- Only the researchers involved with the project would have access to the data and recordings. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription and checking.
- I plan to communicate the general findings of the study to other academics at conferences and to policy makers. The children will not be identified.
- It is hoped that the outcomes of the study will be available in late 2013. There will be an opportunity to receive notification of any publications concerned with this project.

If you need any more information about the study in English please contact <X> on <insert number >. If you would like more information about this study you can email xxx in your preferred language or contact <>

Your child is free to decide not to be involved in this project or to drop out at any time. You will always be able to contact an investigator to discuss any concerns.

---

**Researcher: X Overseeing supervisor: X**

This research is sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council.

**Topic Guide**

Specific questions will be developed in relation to the themes below. This guide was adapted from Green et al., (2005).

**Introductions: talk about the project, check consent, icebreaker**

**Background information**

Tell me a bit about yourself: how many brothers/sisters do you have? Are you the oldest/youngest?

Where were you born? Who do you live with?

How many languages can you speak/ read/ write?

What language do you mainly speak at home? (with siblings, parents, friends...)

**Interpreting Experiences**

Can you tell me about a time when you've interpreted or translated for a family member who speaks little English...

What happened? Who made contact?

Did you help out alone or with other family members/interpreters?

How often do you help out in this way?

What is good about it? What is not so good about it?

Do the professionals allow you to ask questions?

How confident do you feel about translating choices/instructions to x?

Can you tell me about other situations where you have interpreted?

**Summing up:** Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences?

**Thank you - Any Questions - Debrief**

## **Appendix 10: Topic Guide: Interviews with Social Workers**

### **Project: Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**

Specific questions will be developed in relation to the themes below.

- Introduction, consent, background information – social work practice experience
- What languages do you use?
- Which languages are used in the workplace/community/ with service users?
- What services are available for linguistic minority families? (the use of interpreters and translators and/or bilingual staff)
  
- Experiences with service users LEP
- Experience of children interpreting in a social work context
  
- Other comments
- Close
- Debrief



## Appendix 11: Participant Information for Social Workers

### **Project: Child Language Brokering in a Social Welfare Context**

The information that follows tells you what will happen if you chose to participate in the research. If you have any questions about the research I will try my best to answer them.

#### **The project**

The focus of the project is an exploration of communication across linguistic difference in the context of social welfare services. I am interested in the phenomenon of child language brokering, also known as child interpreting in social welfare services. I would like to explore one group of social welfare providers' experience (social workers) or ideas about child language brokers in social welfare.

The research will involve an interview with the researcher. This will take place at an agreed convenient, safe and private location e.g. at the university, at the office or at a local library. The interview will last no longer than 3 hours.

#### **General Information**

I hope to record these discussions so that I can review the opinions that are expressed and build a picture of what social workers think about child language brokering and to explore some of social workers' experiences in practice.

Any information you choose to give will be treated anonymously will not disclosed to anyone other than the researcher and her supervisory team. Everything discussed with the researcher is confidential unless an illegal act is disclosed. Only the researchers involved with the project would have access to the data and recordings. The transcripts will be kept by the research team in line with the data protection requirements. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription and checking.

I plan to communicate the general findings of the study to other academics at conferences and to policy makers. This may include anonymised quotations to highlight language use in the community. It is hoped that the outcomes of the study will be available X. There will be an opportunity to receive notification of any publications concerned with this project.

If you are willing to participate, please complete the consent form and return to the researcher, who will then contact you to arrange a suitable date for interview. You are free to decide not to be in this project or to drop out at any time. You will always be able to contact an investigator to feedback or discuss concerns.

**Researcher: xxx Overseeing supervisor: xxx**

## Appendix 12: Transcription Conventions

Originally developed by Gail Jefferson (cited in Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008:pp.vi-vii).

[ overlapping speech

Cu- cut off

>fast<

<slow>

LOUD

°soft°

Underline-emphasis on particular word

Lon:g stretching of the preceding sound

↑word, pitch rise

↓word, pitch descent

() pause

heh - laughter

wor(h)d laughter within words

£word£ said in a 'smile voice'

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

**Interview with Social Worker (R= Researcher, S=Social Worker)**

R: So hi [name] thanks very much for allowing me to interview you. Can you start me by telling me a little bit about your job as a social worker?

S: OK, erm I work for the looked after team and I've been there for three and half years erm and the age group I work with is from nought to eighteen and that's children erm who ARE in care and also children who are coming into care, so erm the interaction we have with adults er who are related to the children it would be: foster carers, prospective adopters, birth parents erm extended family members er as well as mm mm I think, other adults who are who are involved with the proceedings, so it could be friends and neighbours as well mm () I think yeah, I think that's it. And erm the, er because the age range is nought to eighteen it's, the work is quite different in relation to the age groups, with the younger ones er it involves more work that's more around care proceedings and adoption process so any discussion that we have would be around those and with older ones er they're more who are coming into care. A lot of them come into care through voluntary erm accommodation as well which means the consent of the responsible adults in their lives, which involves cases with (birth) parents and of, also as well as children who have been in care for a long period of time, so that would be then foster carers or other family members who are involved in caring for them

R: OK, thank you. And how is your time divided? Could you tell me about a typical week?

S: Er a typical week could have erm, there may be a day spent in court, there could be er one day maybe a visit to a family, so then you would have, be having a discussions with the child, depending on the child so the kind of the discussion you would have age appropriate discussion and then with a responsible adult, that could be the parent or the carer erm (). You could possibly have a day spent in the office where you could have meetings arranged in the office instead of going to a a family home, but you may still have discussions, conversations over the phone. Erm there may be another day when you could be on a visit outside the city, where you would be going and seeing family members or prospective adopters or children who are in long term foster placements outside outside the city. Er because the work is so varied, so again you can't really predict which way a week would be going, you may have planned meetings but there could be a lot of unplanned work as well, depending on what-what may be happening

R: OK, thank you (). So can you describe the area that you work in?

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

S: Erm, I work in an inner London borough, it's multicultural; there are two significant erm mm ethnic groups, of course you have a significant number of white population, there's also a significant number of Bangladeshi and Somali erm people living there and then there is erm quite a decent number of Chinese and Vietnamese families there, so that so quite, quite erm, as well as well as black and erm I think, yeah quite a number of black and mixed black families, mixed race. It's very varied

R: And then what about the service users?

S: Er, service users is er again you have. If I have a look at my case load I have an equal number of each erm from represented er each race represented on my case load so I've got quite a lot of White British clients, I've got Bangladeshi clients. I've got er () mm I think mixed race, black and I used to have a Chinese client as well. So it's been a good mix, and that's the way, because cases come and go but that's usually been the case; the flow is quite similar, there is usually an equal representation of each, I think each race

R:OK

S: So that may be again because it has, I think () there may, there's usually a shift, which that has a lot to do with I think the family background as well and the financial circumstances of that family too, I think that that's a big reason of why people have problems in the families and why they come into care. And that that's quite particular to OUR borough. It's (all) needs, because they're high needs, the area is small, it's not a big borough, area wise but population wise I think it's quite significant in comparison to other boroughs because there there's such a densely populated area; so you have big families living in quite enclosed areas and then again that means you –a lack of options available in their life, for that place again you know, and that has a big impact on social circumstances and which is a lot of times which is why we get involved with them

R: OK, so are cases allocated-how are cases allocated to social workers? Is it according to language proficiency? Or, ethnic group or - how's it done?

S: [er it isn't, mm I think each each social worker usually has a case – the case load is between twelve to fourteen, that's the maximum for children in care. And erm the way it's allocated is, they usually try to give you a few court cases-cases which are in proceedings and then you would have cases that would be in long term

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

placements, any new cases that may come up it may usually go to persons that have space available. I don't think they make an effort of to go to a particular person because of language or anything like that, they usually try to give you the opportunity to have the experience of working around different, I think ethnicities, it doesn't usually go that if you have a

R: [OK

S: social worker that speaks a particular language that you would have a case for a family who speaks that particular language family, that I don't. I've not seen that happen in our teams. It make, makes sense for that to happen, but usually I don't think. They'd rather you have that experience across the board –of working with different groups, yeah

R: [OK

R: You've talked a little bit about the composition of of ethnic groups in the borough, so what

S: [mm [mm

R: languages erm are predominantly spoken in this borough?

S: mm English, I think. Shletti, Shletti is a Bengali dialect. But as the population in the borough is usually originated from Shlet region in Bangladesh, that's the predominant language that's spoken but that's very much reflective of the languages that the client group speaks. Erm there are not that many Somali children that I have seen in care, er but again I suppose that is one of the languages but it is not the main ones

R: [OK

S: erm you have Chinese clients, they, Chinese has been a language we have come across, a few Vietnamese children, so that's another language. Erm I-I think these are, er there are a lot of, some clients, some Bangladeshi clients, whereas a child may not be speaking an another language usually the parents I have come across are able to speak Hindi or Urdu so that's another experience that I I've had with these parents, whereas the child doesn't speak the language but the parent does, because I know these languages so that's what I've found helpful, that even though I don't know Shletti I can speak to them in Urdu or Hindi

R: OK

S: yeah

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: and can you tell me a little bit more about that? Because I'm interested in that you said

S: [mm, yeah

R: you could be useful because you can speak these languages.

S: [mm, yes, mm, it helps because erm, because, then the parent may be able to () speak more freely because they know that language erm because sometimes erm like, I've got children who are unaccompanied asylum seekers erm and they may have birth parents erm back home, in another country and if you are able to call those parents and speak to them over the phone and if you don't know the language, then that's the real issue. Like we've had quite a few parents whose children are here but their parents are back in Bangladesh so then that's been quite difficult because then you need to then go and find a person who who's able to go and speak to the parents, I think that, that's a real hindrance. Yeah, yeah

R: What've you done in tha- in those situations?

S: [mm, usually it's, we have a lots of Bangladeshi social

R: [OK

S: workers then they can talk on your behalf again, that's something you come across in meetings as well; if you have a meeting with a person that doesn't speak the language, then again your client may not be available to sit in a meeting with you, then we've had to book interpreters, but I've personally I've found that interpreters () they're not aware of mm our jobs – so why we do things the way we do, so they won't be able to interpret the way that would be reflective of you know, how we want the questions answered -that's a complication and oddly enough it's easier then to talk to the child, because somehow the child would have a better understanding of why you're involved with that particular family or what's going on, and that's a quite a <I don't think it's an ideal> situation, but then you've had to resort to have the child as a go-between and that's again something that's ↑happened. But I-I've found there to be more, I think rewarding cos you get a much better reply if if it's a child interpreting rather than a professional interpreter

R: OK. Do you know when you said that sometimes erm staff that can speak particular

S: [mm

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: languages will come to meetings, how does that work out? Are they given a reduced case

S: [yes [mm [no, it's-

R: load or do they do it as a favour?

S: no, it doesn't really I think, because the work pressure is () immense, it's not always possible for them to take time out from their OWN work to go and assist another person, unless it's an emergency

R: OK

S: if they are on duty then of course they could, but then it doesn't really happen that much so then we do resort to having to book interpreters. Given that we are an inner London borough I think we are lucky to have that resource but then the quality is questionable so I think I'm I've not always been a fan of having to use interpreters because it it doesn't always give us the results we would want. You always feel you know they're not, that they're not that they don't do a good job

R: In what ways?

S: erm I think that just, the quality of interpreting is never that high () it isn't

R: How do you know that?

S: Let's say for instance you ask a particular ↑question and the reply is quite ↑long, so you've

R: [right

S: heard that lots has been said and then when you ask what's been said, they would give yo:u () erm you know, they would just tell you something in a few words, instead of hearing two, three sentences, all you get is a very short sentence and you're thinking actually a lot

R: [mm

S: more was said and ↑maybe you can understand it's a different language so maybe () you

R: [mm

S: can condense it, but then I'd rather hear word for word. Then it's up to me to make sense

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: [OK [OK

S: of that, so yeah, that's that's you always think OK it's not fine; I'm not hearing everything that I want to hear, so yeah

R: Do you get training on like, how to work with interpreters?

S: We do, yes, but I think it, it's more than that (). The problem is this; the interpreters, they they work for different erm agencies and hm different, they they do a general job, it's not related to to being trained to interpret for social workers. So of course, that's missing and that's not something that

R: [OK

S: you really can come across unless we have people who have been specifically trained to work—ah for, to interpret for social work

R: Do you think it would help if these interpreters WERE trained in social work matters?

S: mm, I think given the financial client I don't see that happening heh. I think it shall be, I

R: [OK

S: think it would be very unrealistic because I don't see them committing resources, anybody

R: [right

S: committing their resources towards that, I think yeah

R: OK. So what services are available for non-English language speakers, in social work?

S: Erm, I think mm. Reports are translated, reports are available in all languages spoken in the borough, so anything you have, you can have a copy in your own language, any

R: [so

S: information that you want to have

R: And how is that managed? Is that done on a like a – just by request only or mandatory?

S: I think it is, they are usually published in several different language, languages that are spoken, so there's it's al-always already available. So if you want to give somebody



**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: [OK

S: something, some information; a booklet or a document, you would have that. There may be a problem when you get, have to get a LEGAL document, you it's a legal document or you've had some information specific to the case, then you have, need to get that translated, but we do have that service. It's not a cheap service, but it IS there, so then, but then again it's across all languages; you can have the documents translated in any language you want, any kind of document. Yeah

R: And you know you mentioned, like it's not a cheap service, erm how - do you feel that?

S: [mm

R: Do you feel like there's pressure on you to NOT use them or?

S: No, I think there isn't, we do understand that this is something that has to be done. And it

R: [no? [yeah

S: is stan- but you do know that OK, it's going to cost, so you have to be very sure that you onl- you're doing it only when you have to do it. Yeah

R: Is that transmitted to you verbally or do you just know that?

S: I think you just know heh

R: You just know heh OK, OK

S: [heh, I think yeah, yeah. The more time you spend in a particular place, you find out how things work

R:OK. And how often do you work with service users that you don't share common language with, so you don't speak English, Hindi or Urdu?

S: Quite, quite often, like I'm doing this particular assessment with this mum and erm () she speaks Bengali and I have to do this assessment for court. And the trouble is yes that I can't communicate to her erm erm directly and you know erm just just have a one to one conversation because we won't be able to understand one another. Her English is very minimal and erm my, >because I can't speak the language then I need another person< to – to be the go-between, and that is her daughter. Which makes it ve:ry awkward because er () the

### Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)

assessment is around her ability to care for this child, which is what we question, whereas she is fighting that and again it doesn't really help because it's just, it's a lot of pressure on the child

R: how old's the child?

S: she's eleven. And it's confusing her and er it's it's you feel like we're having her () take on that role, you're putting that pressure on her, that somehow makes her feel like OK, it's her responsibly now () erm to say, and do things that () she may think she thinks that may help her mum or will protect her mum and that's not really fair, it's not fair on the child, it's not, it's taking the emphasis from the child you know the child, it-it being about the child's needs, rather than it, er it's about the child's needs but rather by HER being put in that place, the emphasis has shifted towards ↑mum's needs, which I think I think is n-not why why we're there; the child comes first, it has to be about the child first and foremost, if that's not the case then the child is given the responsibility of being the go-between and having you know a (child) as a go between with her mother

R: So can I ask, who's put her, put her in this position?

S: It's just that you know, erm it's just erm hh () er I think it's because it's it's a mum and daughter who live together and the question's around mum's ability to care for the child that's why and given that she's that age group, we think OK fine, she is in that place where she CAN make that decision. But again, because this mum hasn't got the ability to communicate directly with ME, doing this assessment, I think it impacts on the assessment for putting you know, you know the wrong emphasis on things. I suppose if the mum WAS able to speak that language it wouldn't be that case. And again we we've offered, we've used interpreters but then again I've I've not been satisfied with the quality of the interpreter, I think the child understands the mum better, I've worked with that child so she understands ME better as well, so she knows and her experience of being in care. I think children are very very () bright, I think they they know and understand things far better than we give them credit for and so she knows exactly what's going on, even even at that young age, she knows exactly what's happening, what it means () erm and I think it's just unfair because I think it it's a bit too much for her, and then that that's what happens

R: It seems like a bit of a contradiction there, a bit of a challenge so-

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

S: [it is [mm and then again with children in foster care as well, ↓that happens. There are foster, some foster carers erm, where the foster carer doesn't speak the ↑language, I mean doesn't speak ↑English. They are employed by the local authority but they not able to speak English. Let's say there's a female foster carer and a male foster carer, the male foster carer DOES so he would attend meetings but then he won't always be available because he's working full time and again usually it's a

R: [mm

S: female foster carer who's the main care giver, but if she's not able to speak the language and if I'm asking her if the child's happy, if her needs are being met or not and then I have to use that child as a go-between, it's just you know hh oh what's the point of doing that because then () the child WOULD interpret for you but then she she'd be conflicted, she'd be saying OK, cos if she's not happy () er or erm () then she she'd wonder how how she communicate that and then if the foster carer has a problem with the child but then the child has to interpret for the foster carer and the foster carer's saying well actually she's a very difficult person to work with and you know she doesn't listen and she doesn't do this and doesn't do that then you ask that child to say that to me ↑£ it just you know £↑you wonder what will get transmitted ↑back to you. The child may choose to say something entirely different than what the foster carer's saying and the foster carers may be saying one thing and I may be hearing another £ I-I would be none the wiser, and the foster carer wouldn't know what what's being said to me£. So yes, it it's awkward

R: [So, so in that situation, what should happen? What would be the ideal situation?

S: [ahh, I think () jus, there need to be more opportunities for these adults to know the language I think, there has to be, there's just no getting around it () and I think we are lucky enough, where we live in London, to have those resources. There are lots of centres where you CAN go and learn the language, you know this is something that needs to be done. It may not happened over night, but again it's something you CAN do and cos I I think, what happens is that THESE children have to step in and take on that role which is an adult's responsibility, it's not theirs, you know, just just being-being part of discussion which are, which actually they shouldn't be ↑part of, because it's not for them to be aware of what's

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

going on and it's not, they're usually too young you know to be able to, to be part of those serious discussions

R: But still in some situations it would be more preferable to use the child rather than to use

S: [yeah

R: an interpreter, whose standards are questionable?

S: [mm, erm yes [mm probably not so for child protection matters, where there may have been some abuse that's gone on or there's a risk that the child suffered significant harm or things like that. It it, I think it would be more damaging in those cases, I suppose where it's a matter of where the child's safety is not an issue, maybe, maybe again it's better in those circumstances but I think where the child's safety is concerned then I think that's when it becomes problematic. I suppose if you got to a bank and are interpreting or if you're going to () erm you know speaking to a shopkeeper or thing like that, that's much more safer because it doesn't really concern the child, that that directly

R: [OK

R: wh- what about in social work though?

S: I think in social work, hh it's just () cos a lot of times you, the reason why you get involved is because things have not been right, there have been problems, you've heard from the school or some somebody else refers them through, some, you know, the child's safety is in danger, or you know something's happened to the child – that that's usually the reason you get involved with the family and again it's just you know it may, it may be more damaging because important information may not be shared or won't get shared with you

R: So why does it happen then? Why are some children used to interpret then, do you think?

S: I think it's just because the families don't know the language

R. OK

R. Do you find that there any differences between supporting families that you share a

S: [mm

R: language with and those that you don't?

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

S: mm I don't think there's a difference mm in the level of service that they get, I think you probably actually make more of an effort, yeah. I think you want to get 100 per cent out of

R: [yeah?

S: what what you're willing to give and what you think they can be offered. So I think usually you just you try extra hard with these families so you, you're not missing out.

R: [OK, is it harder to speak- to work with families you don't speak the same language with?

S: er yes I think it is, cos I worked with this erm Chinese mum and er she was very resistant erm to go in for language classes and that was part of the care plan actually, erm

R: [ah, right. Sorry – why was it part of the care plan, if you remember?

S: Because erm, the child was accommodated because erm () mum was a sex worker and she had er, she'd entered the country illegally, she had no recourse to public funds, she could not access any universal services and then this child had been born, father wasn't on the scene, mum didn't know who the father was and she had no means of providing for the child, but she WANTED to keep the child. And we'd said, we'd put in this package of support for her, we'd put in different services, different groups she could join who who worked with women who were displaced. There are lots of organisations who work with women who've been in the sex trade, women who are displaced, coming in from other countries. There there are lots of really good organisations. But to be () to be able to use their service you have to be able to know the language or be willing to learn the language and she I think, I don't think it was because she was being difficult. I think she just () wasn't aware of what was out there and I think she was also probably scared of being out of her comfort zone. She much preferred to () stay within her community, not go out, but I think it it actually stopped her from accessing services and being able to care for the child. And again I could never have a discussion with her, even with interpreters because () it it's just that, she just could not understand why it was so important

R: how did you mitigate that?

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

S: erm I think WE did our best, I think we went through several interpreters who got the dialect right because she was from a very remote remote part of China, it was really hard to find somebody who spoke that specific dialect and it, and because, she was from a very remote, rural part of China so the cultural, her cultural values were very different than British values and () she could not grasp the reason of why the child needed to be kept ↑safe under the British law and she just could not understand it and because she was illiterate that just made it even harder, she couldn't even read Chinese so it was just impossible for her to read documents and she was just so, not willing to learn. I think she just probably () didn't have that much faith even in herself that she would be able to do it but then it had a very negative impact on her ability to care for this ↑baby – and in the end she LOST the baby. Because I think cos everything, we went through - proceedings and she just could not engage or follow through with any programme. Finally after two years she decided to return to China without the ↑baby

R: So you think, do you think her inability to erm () positively respond to some of these programmes that you'd put in, was related to her lack of English?

S: I think so () but then again, it's case to case is different. You can understand that she was coming from an especially different circumstance but then it does happen if you look at other, other families too, it does happen. It is a problem

R: So if she had shown a willingness to erm () erm °what's the word°, if she had shown a

S: [yeah

R: willingness to to learn English and to participate would, how would that have been how

S: [mm mm

R: would that have changed her situation?

S: I think the other organisations or agencies I'd put her in touch with, they were very experienced about working with women that come from these backgrounds and if I compare her to other mums that I've sent to the same programmes, they, they've benefitted a great deal and they've managed to turn their life around quite significantly and I just feel that she missed out on all of that, just because of her inability to speak to us directly and our you know in turn OUR inability to talk to her which is very sad, °yeah° and again if, if like if the

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: [it is

S: other mum's I've seen, we go for medical appointments, we go to school meetings and they are sitting there and the child is talking to the therapist and interpreting to the mum what the therapist is saying. Same with teachers, so whatever the teacher () or the care person may be able to say directly to the parent, gets lost in how, in the way the child interprets it and

R: [yeah [yeah

S: then again IT IS about the child and you wonder how what the child is saying you know OK fine, the therapist are saying, you know this is what I want the child to work on and this is what I think is the problem or the teacher is saying this is () the problem at school or this is why he doesn't () erm he's not getting on with this teacher, that teacher. ↑You wonder how that child feels when he's saying that to the parents

R: So do you think it's () good enough?

S: It WOULD be, but then again () it would have an impact on the child, because you're expecting the child to say all of that to the parent, very impartially without () experiencing any emotion of what's been () said to the parent about HIM or ↑HER and how can you disengage from your emotions and just say robotically to your parent: this is what's been said about me, so yes, what is your response? And if the parent comes with (?) and says well actually I want them to do this and that, how () honest would that () be you know, shared back with the parent with the therapist or the teacher, you know it's a very () awkward place to be in

R: yeah, it must be both awkward for the child but also for the social worker. How do you

S: [yeah, absolutely [everybody, yes it's-

R: feel in these situations?

S: ahh () I think it's just y-you. It it's like you're missing out on a good opportunity there to communicate with the parents AND you feel sorry for the child, you don't think they shouldn't be listening to all of this. I don't want them to not KNOW what's going on but then that role where they have to be the person you know who's communicating all this

R: So in an ideal world, there'd be a very reliable interpreter, who had awareness of all the

S: [yeah [mm [yes [mm yeah

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: social work jargon and procedures that in these situations would be interpreting. Would

S: [mm

R: that be the ideal situation?

S: I think better still, the parent understands the language and whatever jargon they don't understand because they would know the language we'd be able to explain that jargon to

R: [OK

S: them. I think that's much more, that would be much more better- er more helpful.

R: [OK [OK

R: Are there any times when you think that it COULD be a positive thing for the child to be

S: [ahm [ahm

R: interpreting?

S:>I suppose when things are going really well< so yes (), that that would be quite positive for the child. () Yeah, I think, suppose in those circumstances it would be good, °yeah°

R: So then when they're when they're talking about things that have gone well for them as a fami or unit about them individually, OK. So why would that be good?

S: [mm, mm [yes, yes

S: Because they've made positive changes and by them having to say it I think it would automatically make them feel proud of themselves ↑too, it's re-emphasising what has been

R: [OK

S: done, even if they are saying that to someone else I am sure °you know°, it would mean more to them.

**-waiter interrupts, pause in dialogue-**

R: Do parents ever prefer their child to interpret than a professional interpreter or a colleague?



**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

S: Ahm, I think they do, cos they trust their child more. I think it again depends on your relationship with the child, if it's a good relationship then you would, but also if it's not a good relationship then it depends on how much you value your child and how- how close you ARE to the child, if you're not close then you probably won't

R: is, is is it ever an issue if erm a child if a parent didn't want to engage with an interpreter and preferred to use their child or?

S: [er oh yes

S: I suppose it is, but then the problem is that it's very hard to get around it. They can say; well they don't speak my dialect and you know, that's not what I said and what was said to you, you know; it's their own interpretation, it's not what's been said to them, so yes, that, that does happen

R: So some of them would out rightly say: I don't want this interpreter, I prefer my child?

S: [mm [yes, yeah

R: OK

S: and sometimes you have to go by that. Yeah

R: OK and what does the guidance say about this, in in your local authority?

S: [ahm [I suppose it's case to case, it depends on-on the seriousness of of the situation; if it's a high risk case, if it IS high risk, if there is high risk of harm and abuse then you would of course not use the child, then you would say that in our () within our professional capacity and you know, our decision would be to use a professional instead of even though you may not agree with what they're saying, but that is the preferred option. But where I suppose there is low level or risk or where there is no risk I think I suppose you would be OK using a child. I suppose if there was any risk you wouldn't

R: [OK

R: and that would generally would be decided by the the case worker?

S: [yes, yeah

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: OK (). So I wanted to ask you; what are the general attitudes to service users in your workplace that speak minimal English, if any – if you can-

S: [mm heh [frustration. I think. It's more about just being frustrated because () even if you do manage to get the work done, it does slow it down and you lose, you can lose valuable time, and I think sometimes you can't afford to lose time and then it becomes problematic, there are delays and er it's a snowball effect; once thing get delayed then other things get delayed and I think that, that's the bigger problem.

R: OK. So I'm going to move on to now the final section which is about child interpreting -

S: [yeah

R: so you've already kind of naturally talked about some instances, but can I just ask you to

S: [yeah

R: tell me if you've had a direct experience where a child has interpreted for a parent or

S: [mm

R: family member. Can you just tell me about the situation?

S: [Yeah. Yeah. Ah, yes () this girl she was hm, she came into care at the age of () fifteen. Ahmm, she accommodated herself voluntarily, she left the parents' home. The reason was because erm her brother in law had sexually abused her as well as another of her older sisters, so both sisters had left home. The other sister was older- was over eighteen so of course she went erm to live independently but because this girl was younger, she came to us. And when we tried to engage the family, the mu- the parent, both parents don't speak the language () and they would not engage with us, erm er, they totally blamed the girl for what had happened, even though it was the brother's fault, er brother-in law's er fault and er they said that by speaking up she had brought shame to the family and that they refused to be part of her life anymore and then and we'd said the thing is she's of that age where we can, maybe cannot go for a care order, it just doesn't make sense.

R: how old was she, sorry?

S: She was, she was fourteen at that time, by the time I started working with her she she she was, she had turned fifteen and we usually don't go for care orders for a much older child.

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

Erm and erm and we wanted the family to work with us so that she can return home because and we'd said that actually the brother-in law, the brother-in law wasn't living in the parents' house, he he was living of course separately, but we said actually the girl SHOULD be able to return home because it's whatever's happened is not her fault and the family needs to () work with us and that, and they were very resistant, whenever I had any meetings erm, so the girl was going back home, then she was leaving, then she was returning, it was just always, she was always in motion. And I think the reason she kept going back was because she °did want to be there° and erm cos h h() it was the brother-in law who was at fault, not the parents but the parents' by default () you know, made things just as hard for her by not accepting what had happened to her and we just could not work with them because even though she tried to communicate with the parents, when I would speak to them, they were very resistant and it, and I could see how hard it was for HER to speak to them about what I wanted them to do and for her to share their response with ME. It must have been very devastating for her to hear that. And they were totally resistant with having interpreters being brought to the house

R: why was that?

S: they just didn't want any – I think it's harder for them to speak, when it's very difficult for just ME to get through the door and so the only did because I was working for their daughter

R: [OK [w-what was the language they spoke at home?

S: er, it was Shleti and they just would not accept anybody else. The child, they could but it was, she was in a very difficult place, them blaming her and for her to say that to me, ↑it was extremely difficult and I think after a few tries, we just gave up on that because we thought, we just can't do this anymore, they would NOT work with us and it was not worth putting the girl in that emotionally hard place, it's not it's not fair on her. Yeah, I think that that can become very very painful

R: what was the outcome of that case?

S: <the girl stayed in care>. Yeah, I think she's () turned eighteen now, so she's left care but she's got her own place so she she's done quite well for herself. She did get in to lots of trouble before, but she's managed to () work out all her anger and all that sadness, I think she's () fine now, but we were never able to get through to the parents

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R: Do you think if the child was, this young lady was asked about that time, and about being put in that situation, what do you think that she's say about it?

S: [mmm [yeah

S: this girl?

R: ye:ah

S: she did talk about it, she was very good at speaking, and she did say that it was, it hurt her a lot, it's just you know it's, to be rejected for no fault of her own, ah she had already suffered enough cos of what her brother-in law did and for her to remain part of the family and for her to be kicked out, it was just so wrong and then for them to keep on saying that to me. It didn't make it any easier

R: so both of her parents spoke no or minimal English

S: °yes°, they just didn't, ONLY their children did

R: so then they went via their child to communicate with you?

S: yeah, cos their, their old older daughters were all married so they'd left. Then, this child, the other daughter who had been abused had left the home as well so she wasn't in touch with them and () er I think so yeah, so then there was this girl at home and there were other young children, other boys, so she was only person who could talk with them, for me and it was just not right

R: <that sounds really difficult, a really difficult situation>

S: [mm [yeah and then you had all this, and they were saying 'well you're Asian aren't you', and I said 'yes'; 'well you should know about family honour' but I said 'but, it's, it's not about family honour'

R: and again that was via the child, was it, that said tha(h)t

S: [yeah, yes [heh so yes, it it's, it's not right

R: And again, as I asked you earlier; what could be done, what could be done in this

S: [mm [hh

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: situation, to, to avoid that?

S: [ah I mean. This particular family, both parents had been in the country for thirty forty ↑years () I I don't see why they shouldn't know the language, really. If you <want to be>, if you, if you are living here, if your children are born here, for YOUR children's lives as well, <you - you need to know>

R: So why wasn't an interpreter used in this situation?

S: [Cos they were very resistant. It was, it's only because I was the child's worker, that I was able to go and they would not, they just did not accept anybody else entering the house

R: was there anything erm, any sort of anything in the guidance which would say that they would HAVE to agree for an interpreter to co- come to the house?

S: [no [no

R: no

S: it was just our efforts on () seeing if there was a possibility for the girl to return home

R: And do you ever talk to management about some of these challenges, of what we've talked about?

S: Oh yes, because () we have regular supervision, so it's something you do talk about, and they say well you know, you have to trying and keep on being creative heh yeah. £I think

R: [heh

S: that's what it is really£. Yeah.

R: OK, and what is the-your organisation's perspective about children- child interpreters, do you think?

S: er I think it's not () well of course there there are no regulations or guidelines on this; you ARE expected to use professionals for this. But I think in cases it's sometimes when you - you have to resort to using them, you know when you don't have any other option. It is something that has happened, it it's hard to avoid it. It's at - at least after you do get something rather than

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

R: [OK

S: nothing. Yeah.

R: Do you think it happens on a regular basis this, in social work as a whole, in England?

S: [erm

S: I think it depends on the ethnic groups as well in this particular area. I think it's how the demographics are, it's because where I am there is significant BME groups I think it's different, but it may be a different story elsewhere

R: OK. When you were in this situation that you talked about, how did this effect - when the

S: [mm [mm

R: child was used as the interpreter, how did that affect your relationship with the parent?

S: It's always an awkward one because () I'm the looked after team so it's always the case. We work on with the high end of the cases where things are significantly difficult, there is significant harm there, that's already been proved, so not many parents are () happy to accept that. Some are happy for their children to be in care, but most are not. So it's always an awkward relationship, it's it's it can I don't think it can be a very easy one unless. I think there, there are, there are exceptions, where the parents do turn their life around and make things work and are willing to work with you but that's really rare. I think

R: [So generally, it's already awkward, so then using a child to interpret () how would

S: [it is [yes

R: that then affect it?

S: [I think it's just very very hard, you have to be very patient, you have to be very resourceful, I think and persistence. I think, yeah, it's jus-

R: Does it make it even more awkward then using a child to interpret? With - I'm thinking about your relationship with the parent

S: erm () I think in some ways it is, it is, yeah () it's because you can't communicate, it is, it is that much harder

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R: and what about erm, your relationship with the child, how would that dynamic affect it?

S: [oh, mm

S: I think it oh – I think it's more about on how your relationship is with the child already; how it's been going and how you've been working so far and how you engage with each other and I think it, if -if you've not been able to engage with the child there is no way you can get the child to interpret so there is, you have to be on a certain level of comfort with the child for them to be able to do that. If they're not engaging with YOU, there's no way they're going to help you engage with anybody else

R: OK. OK. Have you been in a situation where it's been the CHILD that's indicated that

S: [mm

R: they'd like to interpret for their parent?

S: Ah () ah no, I don't think I've personally come across that

R: So, it would usually, in your in your experience be initiated by either the social worker or

S: [mm [yes

R: the parent?

S: that's right, yeah

R: OK, so in that sense, would the child be mm perhaps not as powerful in that situation, would you say so, or

S: ah, yeah, I think so. yeah

R: OK, I'm coming towards the end of my questions now, erm so just to end can you give me some arguments for why children should be used used as an interpreter in social work situations and why they shouldn't and then perhaps end by telling me what you personally think

S: mm, I think it's OK to use them where () the risk is very minimal () and er in cases where you're trying to () bring the families closer together and where there's a good chance of rehabilitation, where the families have already worked with you and you can see a lot of

**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

positives, but I think it () doesn't do much good in o-other situations, I think it it's probably more harmful and I think quite unfair on the child. I think and yeah, I I think it's already hard enough being a child who's part of a family where there there's lots of issues and () and you're already not getting much from the family, they're already suffering. I think it just adds on to that, I think that's my personal opinion, so I would be very, I wouldn't be happy having to put a child in that situation

R: OK, that's the end of my questions. Is there anything that you'd like to say or ask, or anything you think perhaps I've missed out that you think I should hear about?

S: erm () I think it's always, if if you always whenever, whenever the children are used or whenever the child interprets for their parents, it's very important to check in with them before and after, as to how they've felt in this experience; if this experience is for them; if they think it helped and () what they think could be improved upon. I think it is very important to have their views on that because they they're in the thick of it. I think they're the best people to speak to about this, because they are, they would know how it feel and how it's helped or not helped

R: is that how you practise?

S: ahh, yes, yes

R: and what have the children fed back?

S: I think again, they- they feel their loyalties are divided so you don't really get an honest reply because () even with the best of parents- even with the worst of parents, they would not bad mouth their parents and unless they've really really been hurt and if you're you're a much younger child, it would be much harder for a younger child to talk, maybe an older child would be able to if they'd been able to deal with anxiety, if they've been able to work through it, but not many kids have been able to and I think it's it's really hard for them to be very honest about this

R: Do you think other social workers follow this practice and check in with the child?

S: I think, I think most, most do, I think, probably all, yeah I think it would be very very rare for ANY not to, yeah generally they do

R: OK, that's the end for me, is that OK for you?



**Appendix 13: Interview Transcript: Social Work Participant B7 (57.56 minutes)**

S: mm, yea:h

R: Thank you very much for your time

S: You're very welcome.

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

**Interview with Young Person**

R: OK so [Sean] thank you again >for< allowing me to interview you.

S: °mm alright, s'fine°

R: [so there's gonna be erm four sections today and there's gonna b:e two breaks

S: [°alright°

R: so if at any point you want another break just let me know(.) it's no problem

R: OK () so first section is about getting to know each other, so I'm gonna ask you some questions and you can ask me some questions. Is that OK?

S: [yeah

R: OK so how long have you been coming to this centre?

S: erm for about two years

R: two years, OK. And what do you like about it?

S: I like er all the like () equipment that they've got here and er that like we're not outside we're inside the building when it's like raining or somet and erm we are not bored in here as- as we are outside

R: OK

S: so it's like er ts I dun.. mm yeah, I jus like it heh heh

R: that's a good answer, I should say there's no right or wrong answer, OK it's just what you think

S: ye:ah

R: and how many brothers and sisters do you have?

S: I've got two brothers and two sisters

R: And () are they older, younger?

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

S: er my three, my two sisters and one broth. like two sisters are older than me and then a brother older than me as well and then one brother s' like youngest and I'm the second

R: OK [you're the second youngest?

S [heh heh, yeah

R: OK, do you want to ask me ↑anything?

S: erm have you got some brothers or sister(h)s?

R: °heh° yes so I've got three sisters

S: alright

R: and I'm the youngest. as well

S: [alright

S: °heh°

R: do you like being the middle↑ or

S: mmm yeah

R: What's the best thing about being- so are you number four?

S: yeah heh

R: yeah. I'm number four too

S: Yeah heh

R: What's the best thing about n- being number four?

S: I think there's like () there's not like a number or somet,

R: [°right°

S: I just s'like all the same, things the same

R: right

S: yeah

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

R: do you get things from your older () erm brothers. Clothes and things?

S: [yeah, like, yeah my sisters yeah they always like give me money and that heh

R: They give you money↑ [that's nice of them

S: [yeah

R: and do they live close by?

S: yeah – my yeah, both of my sisters

R: So do, who do you live with here?

S: My mum my brother, like I've got disabled brother, like older disabled brother, and like my youngest brother and then that ol- the-sister she's got a house and another sister, she's got a house as well

R: all in [Hillshire]?

S: yeah

R: OK. And do you want to ask me↑anyth- the same questions? If you don't it's fine

S: [erm

R: It's alright heh heh

S: You're not bothered...£you're not bothered about me£ heh heh

S: [heh heh

R: OK and where were you born?

S: Ah, I was born in Czech Republic

R: OK and when did you come to [Hillshire]?

S: er about ss five and a half year ago

R: So how old would you have been?

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

S: about eleven

R: eleven

S: yeah

R: OK, and can you tell me the best and the worst thing about living in [Hillshire]?

S: heh erm the like the worstest thing was ()°like° () I dun - just like from the start when I came here it was that I couldn't like <understand> and I couldn't like speak but it's alright now and like the best thing is that it's sma:ll and like everything's close >you know< like close to () like where you wanna go when you like wanna go somewhere it's close to like it's not that far like in other cities like like bigger cities and erm that like there's a loads of like Czech people here

R: °yeah°

S:° heh° so like [he he] you can like you've got friends straight away like when you come here () and I duuno like I don't have the worst-est like the worst-est the wor .pt like the worst- the worstest thing like that I can say about [Hillshire]

R: ah that's goo[d I hope it stays like that

S: [°he he°

S: yeah

R: so when you came here did you speak a little English or no English

S: [yeah, like little just like I could introduce myself and like say where I come from and that but like I didn't understand that much

R: so in five years you've learnt all of this English

S: [yeah

S: yeah

R: that's quite impressive

S: heh

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

R: so y you're pretty much fluent now in English

S: erm yeah a bit, no it's not it's not () I'm not a really like fluently but () I wanna learn more like more English and like I wanna have like proper English accent and everything heh

R: you sound to me like you've got like a [Hillshire] accent now

S: [°heh°

S: £alrigh- that's what teachers tell me in school£ °heh°

R: £do you think so?£

S: yeah

R: do any of your family tell you that?

S: like () I think we all got a bit the same heh heh like all m-my sisters and me. My my brother he's got like different accent to me >he's more like English< like he's got the same accent as English cos he obviou like he's got like English (friends) and that so he cha- he

R: [o:k

S: speaks like them and er () I've got like a Yorkshire one ↑he he

R: heh £that's not bad though£↑ °heh heh°

S: [°heh°

R: >so< are most of your <friend's Czech?>

S: erm ye:ah but I've also got like Asians an:d English friends °as well°

R: o:k cos you go to school don't you?

S: yeah

R: yeh and what year are you in at school?

S: I'm a sixth former now

R: sixth former OK . >right<. So that comes to the end of the first section so thank you. are you OK to carry on or do you ↑want a break?

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

S: [yes

S: no it's alright

R: [yeah

R: OK >so< () How many languages can you speak?

S: like () fluently I can speak like two: English and Czech but then erm I can () understand () even like read in Polish and er:m Slovakian

R: OK

S: and like a bit of °Spanish°

R: [wo:w!

S: [like just introducing myself and like °saying where I come from and that°

R: that's impressive and what about erm writing and reading?

S: [heh

S: In erm what? like I c-could write in Slovakia and a bit of Polish

R: OK and English?

S: yeah heh yeah English same as I talk I can write °heh°

R: [yeah

R: so what language do you mainly speak with friends?

S: erm I think in the day I mostly speak English, heh yeah

R: [yeah and what about like on an evening?

S: cos like my sister...I always like at my sisters' house and I always like sleep at her house and she's got like a an English like a boyfriend so we always like talk in English so like it's

R: [ Oh OK [OK

S: mostly English

A group of young people come to the window. I gesture for them to go away. Sean ignores them.

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

R: mostly English

S: like but like when I'm with my family who couldn't speak that much English like my Mum or my Dad they're not good at English that much, so I speak like Czech with them.

R: OK. And...so who speaks English in you your maybe you've already answered this, so your mum

S: [heh

R: speaks little English

S: yeah she can't understand

R: and your sister speaks English. Mmm so who else in your family () doesn't speak much

S: [yeah

R: English?

S: I think it's just like erm mum and dad

R: mum and dad

S: Like my brothers and sisters they're alright, their English

R: OK and what about grandparents?

S: erm they're not near, they're back in Czech (unclear)

R: OK. So do you ever speak to them on Skype?

S: Yeah, every time, yeah, heh

R: Often?

S: yeah, often.

R: OK, if you were listening to music, what mu what language would you be listening to music in?



**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

S: Mostly in English

R: English. Do you like any Czech music?... yeah

S: [yeah [Yeah, yeah I've got a favourite singer in Czech

R: Who's that?

S: er, he's called Ritmus and er there's other as well but he's the like, most I like is that Ritmus heh

S: what sort of music is that?

S: It's like R and B and the Rap and that

R: OK, so erm (). Have you ever helped anyone to read any letters in English?

S: Yeah loads, lots of times

R: [OK

R: Lots of times, so what sort of -give me a s give me a selection of what types of letters that

S: they'd be like if they had a like a like some er I dunno like application to fill in. So I was like filling in applications and like reading letters that from like tax (queries) that they get or benefits that like they need to like to send em erm letters saying like they need to some

R: [OK

S: documents or informations. So I like was translating for them and like saying to just like the letters saying like where they need to send them or like what they want. Or like erm

R: [OK

S: from electricity l-letters, I was like reading and er mmm like school letters I was translating as well school letters and erm Doctor, from Doctor

R: OK

S: heh that's it I think heh

R: so do any of your other s- erm siblings help with the to read letters or is mainly you or?

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

S: no it's like er who who's handy heh

R: Oh, whoever's nearest?

S: Yeah heh

R: OK I see, and i-is this for your mum and dad right?

S: yeah

R: [yeah, OK, and how did you find that? Is there any - been any - ever- has it ever been difficult? Any words you didn't understand o:r erm has there ever been any difficulties?

S: like there might be like some words that I don't understand properly and if I don't like understand it I just go on google and just type that word in and just translate into my own language, both mostly I don't like – I I get it straight away like when I read it, cos it's the same as in school

R: OK

S: Like, same words and that heh

R: So nothing too difficult with the letters? () sometim-

S: No

R: no? no. And, and you know you said when you came to England that you didn't speak much English. So were you still – wh who was helping then with like translating?

S: erm I er - there used to be like my cousin who already lived here like long time before. Then he was like helping us from the start, but like after one year like one year passed then a my English was like alright so then, that one year my cousin like that helped my mum and er speak English and that

R: So from age say eleven - twelve something like that? twelve

S: [Yeah, twelve

R: OK, I'm going to show you some pictures now and I want to ask you if you've ever helped a family member at any of these places?

**Appendix 14: Interview Transcript: Young Person 'Sean' (33.20 minutes)**

S: heh yeah at [Hillshire] High School erm then see I think is it (name?) something like that

R: Yeah, yeah like housing- housing place

S: [Yeah yeah housing place and in the hospital and er is it like just in the house that one?

R: Yeah down the house-

S: yeah I've like translated there as well.

R: and then

S: [Is that the bus station?

R: That was a children's centre. Have you ever been there?

S: No

R: and then do you recognise that?

S: Is it town centre?

R: Yeah () What about that one?

S: Jobcentre?

R: yeah

S: no I didn't translate on jobcentre, never done that before, but like in the school I have and hospital, that housing thing and er in the city centre as well like, yeah in the shops.

R: OK, thank you.

R: Do you like drawing?

S: ye(h)ah

R: OK it's up to you now. You can either erm we'll have a short break and then I'm gonna ask you – if you want to – to draw a cartoon or choose one of these places that you've interpreted at and then do draw me a cartoon – I've got some paper and pens and then we can talk about it

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S: °alright°

R: is that OK? Or if you don't want to do a cartoon we can just talk about it, it's up to you.

S: [yeah

S: Like do I just need to like draw like some place that I ever been and translate?

R: ye:ah like what it felt li erm so drawing you and whoever you interpreted for and where it was and, just like a bit of a picture

S: alright, yeah I get you () heh

R: Do you wanna do that?

S: yeah

R: i-if you don't it's n-no problem, we can just talk about it.

S: °Alright° so you can, er°

R: would you prefer to just talk?

S: yeah. yeah

R: [Yeah, OK that's fine

S: heh

R: Do you want a break or shall we carry on?

S: No we can carry on

R: OK, co:ol

S: Unless you wanna? heh

R: no no no I'm fine. Right so which place would you like to talk about? W-which example would you like t-to use?

S: erm hospital I think yeah cos I was there like loads cos of my brother's disabled. So like

R: [the hospital

[OK

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S: from the start he couldn't speak that much English so I was like translating for him in hospitals and like the Doctor like his GP and that

R: OK. So () what happened then can you remember do you wanna talk about like tell me one time like a typical time when you've when you've interpreted for your erm for your brother

S: It was erm ()

R: just tell me the story

S: Alright, er he had a appointment for for his new wheelchair and er they had to like er measure him and like take some er, they wanted some details off him so he had to come to the er hospital and er like the they wanted like the h-height and like how much he like weighed and that. So we went there and er I was translating for him, like yeah, they were like asking er about things like when er when () when did he get like his er previous wheelchair and questions like that and then er they was asking him what type of wheelchair does he wants like for future and that, s:o and I think that's about it heh

R: how old's your brother?

S: he's XXX

R: So was it just the ↑two of you that went to the hospital?

S: yeah

R:yeah. er were there any other adults around?

S: yeah like in car – in the car, my sister's boyfriend.

R: waiting in the car

S: yeah

R: OK. so then when you came back from the hospital, did you need to then tell someone else what had happened?

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S: Like just my mum, just tell her like er what type of wheelchair does he gonna get and like when he's gonna get it and er what did they like ask what questions so I just like told her everything about about like wha what they were asking me heh

R: OK. And again erm same question as before; were there any difficulties or anything where they used some language that or words that were difficult?

S: [yeah, cos like in hospital they use different er like you know the names of like, it did it was. It didn't happen that time when I was in the hospital for the wheelchair appointment but like before they were like saying er when he was getting his check up and that, they were like saying things like er you know them like Doctor names I dunno like this, I think it's an illness or summat I dunno and er I couldn't understand it and I just like. But when I when I didn't understand I just asked them like 'excuse me I don't know what this word means can you just explain it to me, what does it mean like properly' and if I like didn't understand I asked what it means and they just like explain it to me in like more simple language

R: OK. And you could then tell them. OK

S: [yeah, yeah heh

R: Erm how did you feel about () helping in this way – how did you feel about doing this?

S: Good like I. cos. I think it's difficult like when someone can't speak like the language and he wants like something like to be. Like when he needs to talk and that and he can't so I think like it's nice if you like help someone by translating for them cos it's not good like when you can't speak the language when you want to

R: Cos you've experienced that, right? So you know what that feels like

S: [yeah [yeah

R: OK. And, what is not so good about the experience – if anything?

S: what's not go(h)od? Like sometimes yo:u like you wanna go somewhere, out or something and they like call you if you can like translate for em heh and it's just like 'o:h I I'm busy right now and I can't and that' but I still go heh

R: So that's like the that's one of the. Is there any other bad things about about it?

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S: [yeah

S: mmm, no

R: no, have you ever got paid for doing it?

S: No I didn't want to heh

R: heh you've not tried that one?

S: no

R: OK. And has there ever been a professional interpreter, like some of the places that you've been?

S: er yeah, er I think. My brother, when he was in hospital and like we'd didn't been there and he had his own interpreter, but I think on the phone as well like he had an interpreter on the phone or like even my mum when I'm not at ↑home she use like a interpreter to the phone and like er, yeah

R: like what places?

S: like er any places actually now. when she like were like she were ringing er gas [company] you know that company. She was asking there and they asked he if she wanted an interpreter

R: [yeah yeah

S: and she just said 'yes' and I think most places now they've got interpreters or they put them on the phones

R: so erm do your parents. WHO do you they prefer using, a professional interpreter or their children, what do you think?

S: Like when I'm home then () me, or like when I'm not busy then they use me or like when

R: [mm

S: they like () have to use like interpreters through the phone or a special interpreter then they use that

R: [yeah

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R: what do you think, if I were to ask them, I'm not going to, but erm, how they feel about

S: [yeah heh

R: you interpreting, what do you they'd say?

S: I think nothing cos they're used to it no(h)w heh

R: [heh so they say nothing heh

S: yeah heh

R: do you think they'd say it was positive, negative or just () neutral (HEH HEH HEH)

S: [er [neutral (HEH HEH) yeah

R: heh OK, erm do ↑you think it's helped you in anyway, like with

S: [ye:ah cos like that could be like  
my experience like cos sometime like in future if I want to do like interpreter or somet I  
already gonna like have experience °from°

R: yeah, that's true. In what other ways do you think it might be helpful?

S: Like. I'll learn more English by like by tr, like when they say something that I don't  
understand and I ask I ask them to explain it to me then I also like learn more English like So  
it's like better for me heh

R: OK. And then, do you know when you've been in some of these places, like the hospital or  
the housing place. How do you think the staff have felt about erm, you interpreting?

S: [yeah

S: er like, I think they didn't mind, cos like they they were happy they got someone that could

R: [yeah

S: interpr like translate for them and er I think they was alright with it.

R: And have ever- h-have any adults ever thought that you shouldn't help, or that you  
shouldn't help your parents or your brother?



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S: no

R: no?

S: no (cough)

R: OK. Right. So now we're coming to the final section, so we're nearly done. Are you OK

S: [alright heh

R: to carry on or do you want a quick break?

S: do you want a break?

R: it's up to you?

S: I don't want to st. yeah I'm alright. Yeah we can carry on heh

R: [yeah, shall we carry on?

R: OK. Great. We're doing really well. We're doing really well for time. So the next section is gonna be about comparing experiences so you've told me a little story about when your

S: [mm

R: brother was in hospital erm so I want to ask you about () let's see (looks at paper) I'll give you a selection of two (). So that one there, that's supposed to be a social worker

S: [alright

R: So and that there is, °where is it° –that there is the housing. So have you ever experienced

S: [yeah

R: any of those?

S: [yeah, that one (points at paper) the housing one

R: what about that one? (points at paper)

S: No. What's like what's that about? is it like juss

R: A social worker, so someone who who'd help erm they they basically protect children,

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S: [oh I know [yeah

R: that that's their job

S: or even like from school. Like when they come to your home. And like they come and like

R: [yeah [yeah

S: some social social worker heh come like to school heh yeah

R: [yeah, has that ever applied?

S: no not to me

R: OK, so shall we talk about this one then, the housing one. Right OK. So again can you tell me another story about when you helped to interpret or translate. So start from the beginning, were you asked to do it on the day or before, was it planned? And take me through to the end of it

S: alright er yeah, my aunty she rang me like one day before and she asked me if I can go down with her cos like she wanted a new house and er she heard that she can er go to that housing centre er and that they can help her out. So she asked me to go with her like cos she couldn't like speak English. So went down like the other- like she rang me first saying like if I could come with her tomorr, like the day after and I said yes so I I came to her house, we went down town and er () first we went to the like er it used to be somewhere else so we went there, they tell us that we need to go here, the same picture as on there (points to picture)

R: [yeah. So they told YOU and then you told your aunty, yeah

S: [yeah yeah

S: They told me t-to go there so we went there and er we just came there and I like went to the counter and that like and just said to that woman 'excuse me, my aunty she's looking for a house and er and she wants you to like £ give us some tips£ or like if you can show her some houses and that' and she was like 'yeah it's alright and that', then er she was like explaining, saying like saying about. Saying things about the houses, what's, what houses they got, how much it is and I was just like translating to her all the time

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R: OK and how long did that last for – about?

S: er about half an hour

R: half an hour

S: yeah

R: and how did you find the experience? Was it

S: [er yeah it was alright cos er she she tell me like. She was saying things that helped me maybe in the future like when I heh be looking for my own house

R: oh OK, so like advice about housing. OK

S: [yeah heh

R: and were you OK, did your, like when your aunty asked you the day before, did you say yes straight away or-

S: yeah she asked me cos I like that one heh

R: you like your aunty?

S: heh yeah

R: and how often would you, would you help that aunty?

S: like depends, like sometimes sh-she like wants me to like go and translate or sometimes she like call my sister er. But it used to be like one year before but now it's alright cos they learn a bit of English, even like her kids, they can speak English now so they help, but. We

R:[OK

S: used to me and my sister used to helping her, like translate letters from schools and doctors and erm. Did you ask how often she wants? heh

R: >yeah yeah yeah<

S: I think not now, but before every time she like get a new letter or like she like needed something she just like give us a ring or she like let us know and then

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R: so it's less and less in person but it's still about the same would you say, or or less?

S: [yeah [mm it's less

R: less letters

S: yeah

R: OK so that's for one one aunty. What about for the aunty that you perhaps £don't like as much£ heh

S: heh erm actually she's not my aunty but just like calling her aunty cos she knows my mum

R: [oh, OK [I see

S: but like sometimes like () she asks me to go with her but I said I've got somet that I can't make it cos heh I'm busy and that cos I like couldn't be bothered t'go and or like really I have to go somewhere or, I told someone else like that I'm going somewhere with them or like that and er she wasn't like happy that

R: And what about your parents, how often would you say you do it for your parents?

S: erm like twice a month, in a month, like two times in a month

R: What would that be? Letters?

S: [er letters or a phone call

R: Phone call. What about in person. Do –do you do that?

S: yea:h like in Doctors' again heh and er () in school yeah, in school as well and erm °where was I° yeah er council, you know that council? Tax? is it tax-council, tax

R: [Tax office, benefits?

S: yeah, there

R: and have they ever offered a professional interpreter on the phone like at the Doctors for example?

S: yeah, first like when I said to them like 'my mum can't speak English and that, is alright me to translate?' and er she was like 'if you want, we've got interpreter as well' but I was like

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'no it's alright' and she goes 'yeah that's fine you can talk to her, it's the same'. So we were like, s-yeah they were offering us interpreters, loads of times.

R: and then did your mum, do you know when they offered you it, then did you ask your

S: [yeah

R: mum – do you want an interpreter? And what – what did she want?

S: like she goes no it's better you talk heh

R: why's it better when you talk d'you think?

S: cos like erm I know like information about her so like I know her and er if they like ask for her date of birth of something I already like got it in my head er. Like I still ask her, but heh I

R: [OK [yeah yeah

S: know. Er and I think I don't know. I think it's better for her like cos maybe like when it's through a phone it's not that good, and er like when I'm there, with my mum I think it's better for her to like explain it more to me like what exactly like she wants me to translate. So I think that might like, might be the reason heh

R: Do you think erm it's cos she trusts you as well?

S: Yeah. maybe as well cos like sometimes she might not understand like what the translator's like saying () to the person

R: Why would it be the wrong - why would that be?

S: heh er I dunno like sometimes () I think sometimes it happen to my mum or somet, I dunno

R: like an accent or something or

S: yeah, or like I think she, I dunno, £I don't actually know£. Cos like once she told me that it's better me to translate than like trans- interpreters cos. I don't know why did she said it to me but heh she just said it to me. I think she likes it more

R: and how does that make you feel?

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S: like, not that good heh cos I s I -was like if you can't if you're offered an interpreter you should say yes cos I'm like wasting my time heh. Like I could be somewhere else heh

R: °heh° so it makes you feel good but then frustrated because you wanna be, doing your own

S: [yeah [outside

R: thing

S: [yeah

R: OK. So if you weren't available who else would be helping?

S: my sister

R: your sister. OK ()

R: And where is the easiest place that you've interpreted, like looking at these pictures again (shows picture) where would be the easiest?

S: easiest. I think in town centre, I think yeah

R: why would you say that?

S: cos erm heh I dunno heh I just think cos. You don't speak that much HEH HEH HEH

R: [HEH HEH HEH

S: HEH Like you're in shops, shopping and that heh just asking a few questions and that like 'how much is this', or like

R: OK, I see. And like where would be the like more of a difficult place to interpret?

S: [yeah

S: I think hospital

R: and why's that?

S: cos they've got er this hard words and that you know like for the illness and that and I like no, I can't still like I don't know these words, some of these medical words. They're like quite hard heh

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R: OK, and has there ever been. If they're talking about something that is personal or sensitive. How, has, how does that make you feel? Has that ever happened?

S: erm

R: in the Doctors or hospital?

S: like, no I think that like didn't ever happen to me before

R: nothing embarrassing or anything

S: no, no

R: OK. So that brings me to the end of my questions. So erm I just need to tell you a few more things. So first of all is there anything else you want to either tell me or about your experiences helping to interpret and translate?

S: mmm () like. I dunno. I was like translating in school to little kids like that came in to our school the first time. And they couldn't like speak that much English so in the lessons I was helping them like interpr like saying like they get like some work to do, I just like translating for them like saying, tell them what they're supposed to do and how to do it and that. And even I doing it til now, like when I see someone struggling in school like that doesn't speak that much English. Just like help them out () and yeah that's it

R: so you take time out of your class or to go and help them

S: er like I've got in a day I might don't have like all day but I'm still like in school all day. I might have only like second and last lesson yeah in a day. So I'm like I'm going for my first lesson then I do like my extra work like what I need to finish and that, like catching up or like do like whatever for one hour, like my thing, then when I've got another free two lessons I got like into lessons different lessons and like help someone out or like go out, yeah but like

R: [wh – what do the teachers think about you doing that?

S: yeah, they they like happy with it. Even like once teacher goes, er she comes to me in my lesson and she goes 'oh [Sean] can you translate that in er into'. She she brings me a letter in English and she goes 'can you write write re-write it and write it the same as in English but in Czech because I want to send it to a parent' and like she wanted it in Czech like so they

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understand it better and that's it, 'yeah. I said no problem', so I like translated for her, write it and then I send it her through my email and she sent it to the parent heh

R: That's really kind of you. Did it take you a long time to do it?

S: No, it was just like a paragraph like

R: oh, OK. So did you ,was there anyth, did you have to go on google translate for any words or?

S: no

R:it was all straightforward?

S: yeah

R: OK, have you got any other questions that you want to ask me () about this?

S: [mm, no

R: If you do, I'm gonna to be here, most evenings, so you can just, if any questions come to you then I'm here and then you've got my email address on the letters so – do you use email?

S: [alright [yeah [yeah

R: So you could always send me an email if you want

S: OK

R: OK, so I'm gonna be interviewing some other people from this centre so everything you've told me is private, I won't be discussing what we've talked about. And I'm gonna be

S: [alright

R: meeting – coming back here in about a year and I'll be showing you – showing you what

S: [alright

R: I've done erm, and what else. The final thing is that I just need to say thank you very much for talking to me, I really appreciate it

S: [You're welcome, it's alright.