

Interpreting in a Community of Practice
A Sociolinguistic Study of the Signed Language Interpreter's Role in
Workplace Discourse

by

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Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Heriot-Watt University

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August 2010

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Abstract

This thesis explores the role of signed language interpreters (SLIs) in the workplace, a setting which presents challenges in terms of role, boundaries and interaction with deaf and hearing employees. The key research aims were to determine how primary participants understand the role of the SLI, and how this influences the dynamics of everyday interaction. Specific attention was paid to norms of discourse and shared repertoires within a workplace Community of Practice (CofP). A detailed description of the interpreting process was thus generated, enabling a deeper appreciation of workplace dialogue where the SLI is an active third participant.

The research takes a linguistic ethnographic approach to examining signed language interpreting within the workplace. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires, practitioner journals, video-recorded interpreted interaction gathered in workplace settings, and video playback interviews.

Findings show that the SLI has a considerable impact on the ways in which members of a CofP interact, specifically in relation to small talk, humorous exchanges and participation in the collaborative floor. The SLI's management of these aspects of workplace discourse influences the extent to which collegial relations can be established between employees. These findings have significance in relation to the training and education of SLIs, as well as their practice in this domain. The findings also demonstrate the need for all participants to re-evaluate their understanding of interpreted workplace discourse, moving towards a collaborative approach.

Acknowledgements

There are many people to thank for their support in enabling me to undertake this research. I begin with Professor Graham H. Turner, for being an invaluable source of inspiration, ideas and energy. Had it not been for his initial interest and encouragement my research 'ideas' would have remained just that- mere thoughts occasionally flitting across my mind. My determination to start my research journey was also strengthened by the kind support of Cynthia Roy, who took time to provide detailed feedback on my research proposal. Thanks also to my other supervisor, Isabelle Perez, for her belief in my project and her valuable contributions to supervision discussions.

I of course owe everything to the research participants. Members of the deaf community allowed me to observe their everyday working lives, which I consider a great privilege. I have been very lucky that interpreting colleagues agreed to being filmed- I know from personal experience just how exposed this can make you feel. The organisations involved in the study have demonstrated a commitment to improving deaf people's access to the workplace, as well as trust in me as a practitioner-researcher. Thank you all.

Nottinghamshire Deaf Society, the University of Central Lancashire and Heriot-Watt University have all been generous in providing financial support, without which I would not have been able undertake the project. NDS also allowed research and study time, for which I am extremely grateful. I am indebted to my manager Frances Connor, and all of my colleagues in the interpreting service, who have been flexible, patient and understanding of my never-ending requests to 'work from home'.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents John and Joan, my sister Tracy and all my long-suffering friends (you know who you are) for believing I would complete this thesis. Special mention to: Svenja, for providing wise words when I have been tearing my hair out. Kyra, for the medicinal champagne mojitos and confidence-boosting sessions. Michele, for your word formatting wizardry. Last, but by no means least, Elvire Roberts, whose wisdom, patience, commitment, input and skill has been a continuing source of motivation and encouragement- thanks Elv!

Jules Dickinson, Nottingham, August 2010

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List of Abbreviations

ASL	American Sign Language
ASLI	Association of Sign Language Interpreters
AtW	Access to Work
BAAL	British Association for Applied Linguistics
BSL	British Sign Language
CA	Conversation Analysis
CACDP	Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People
CofP	Community of Practice
CSW	Communication Support Worker
DEC	Disability Employment Coalition
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
IS	Interactional Sociolinguistics
LASLI	Licensed ASLI member
LE	Linguistic Ethnography
LWP	Language in the Workplace
MRSLI	Member of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters
RAD	Royal Association for Deaf People
RNID	Royal National Institute for Deaf People
SASLI	Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters
SLI	Signed Language Interpreter
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the role of the signed¹ language interpreter (SLI) in the workplace domain. This chapter outlines the origin of this study and introduces the research questions before going on to detail the research aims. An overview of the thesis structure is provided.

The nature of work has changed dramatically over the last 40 years, affecting the way in which many people engage in employment. Deindustrialisation, changes in technology, and a move towards employment in the service industries have all meant a growth in white collar jobs and a decline in blue-collar manual ones (Strangleman & Warren 2008). Over the past 30 years the employment profile of deaf people has changed significantly (Kyle & Dury 2004), with a move away from traditional manual trades to an increased take up of more ‘white collar’ or office based employment.

This shift has resulted in SLIs being assigned to domains outside of their usual roles in community or conference interpreting. In the workplace, deaf people generally find themselves in the ‘*monolingual, speaking and listening world of hearing English users*’ (Foster 1998: 125). For deaf employees, faced with an environment where the social, cultural and linguistic conventions of hearing people are deeply embedded and are accepted as the norm (Turner et al. 2002), an SLI can, to some degree, enable them to function on an equal basis with their hearing peers. Whilst the body of research into signed language interpreting is slowly increasing, there has to date been an extremely limited exploration of the role of the SLI within the specific domain of the workplace. My aim is therefore to explore and describe the role of the SLI in this

¹ In using the phrase ‘signed language’ rather than the more commonly employed ‘sign language’ I follow Janzen (2005) who provides two reasons for this practice. Firstly, in grammatical terms the adjective ‘signed’ aligns with the adjective ‘spoken’, thus indicating that we are discussing languages that are signed and those that are spoken. Secondly, ‘sign language’, whilst commonly used by individuals to refer to *the* language they know and use (e.g. BSL), is not the name of a specific signed language. Using ‘signed language’ to distinguish between spoken and signed languages, and the name of the signed language (e.g. BSL, ASL etc.) to refer to a specific signed language, promotes an understanding of signed languages as full language systems rather than merely a collection of simple non-verbal signals and fingerspelling.

relatively new setting, in order to consider the impact of their presence, and of the interpreting process, on the interaction between deaf and hearing employees.

The challenges posed by interpreting in the office or workplace domain have been reflected in the variety of emails posted on signed language interpreter e-groups². As a way of crystallising some of the key themes that I intend to address in this thesis I would like to share a posting from one of the e-groups.

'In a meeting for staff, including gardeners, the manager praised everybody for the years work and stated that there had been lots of compliments from tenants about how nice the new flowerbeds look. Even the regular complainers were happy. Then he said, "Do you remember how overgrown Sally's Bush was?" and all of the hearing staff laughed heartily. Sally is the housing officer who went out and trimmed the bush outside her office window and the shrub has been known as 'Sally's Bush' ever since. My question...would other interpreters explain a double entendre to the Deaf person who was the only one not laughing? How should we handle jokes that one side does not get'³ (Pyle 2008)

This example illustrates the three key aspects which will be examined in this thesis, thus providing a route to understanding some of the complexities inherent in examining signed language interpreting in the workplace. The three areas can be summarised as the place, the practices and the participants. Firstly, the place; the lack of exploration of the role of the SLI within the employment domain means that this study is in effect unique in its focus on this specific field. Organisations and institutions create complex environments, with intricate power structures and hierarchies (Sarangi & Roberts 1999). The workplace has its own culture, formed in part through the social interaction of its employees, with patterns and rules developing

² There are three main discussion forums for SLIs in the UK. E-newsli is an e-group open to all people with an interest in interpreting issues, the ASLI e-group is solely for members of the Association of Sign Language Interpreters, and the VLP forum is specifically for members of the professional body of Visual Language Professionals. In all groups members can post issues in order to ask for advice, different perspectives etc.

³ This has been reproduced with permission of the author. All names have been changed.

from those relationships. Employees relate to each other in a variety of ways and on differing levels of formality. The issue of power is prevalent throughout all interaction, with participants continually negotiating and renegotiating their roles (Holmes 2000b). All of these elements place constraints upon the SLI's role and interpreting performance in this domain.

Secondly, the norms and established practices pertaining to the workplace; SLIs employed in workplace settings are at the interface between deaf and hearing interaction, and are not only working between different languages, translating between English and BSL (British Sign Language), but are also negotiating a wealth of cultural differences. These differences relate to deaf and hearing culture, as well as disparate perceptions of workplace norms and practices. This study will examine the norms that underpin hearing dominated workplaces, particularly those which are inherent in discourse events such as team meetings, as these can foreground established patterns of employee behaviour. Workplace meetings are therefore examined through the concept of a Community of Practice (CofP). Originating from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), a CofP is defined as a *'group whose joint engagement in some activity or enterprise is sufficiently intensive to give rise over time to a repertoire of shared practices'* (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999: 185). I suggest that workplace meetings constitute a CofP, with the shared repertoire which exists between members presenting particular challenges for the SLI. The study will therefore look at the interpretation of multi-party discourse, focusing on small talk and humorous exchanges. These crucial elements of discourse can enable employees to establish and maintain workplace relationships, reinforce collegiality, and negotiate interpersonal relationships, as well as allowing shifts between business talk and social interaction. The SLI's role in multi-party dialogue has not been previously examined in any depth. Additionally, the interpretation of small talk and humour is a neglected topic both within signed language interpreting and in the wider field of interpreting. An exploration of these aspects of interpreted workplace interaction will thus add to the body of knowledge in the interpreting field.

Lastly, attention will be drawn to the primary participants in interpreted workplace discourse. All participants play an important role in ensuring interpreted interaction is successful. However, the SLI's recent move into the workplace domain means their

role has yet to be fully established and ‘fleshed out’. As a result, uncertainties over role expectations exist for all participants: deaf employees, hearing employees and the SLI herself.

1.2 The Deaf/ deaf Debate

Before moving on to outline the research questions and the aims of the study it is important to address the use of the term ‘deaf’ throughout this thesis. There are different conventions in the use of this term, depending on the cultural allegiance of the deaf individual(s) being referred to, and the perspective of the author(s) writing about deaf people and the deaf community. Deaf people are frequently defined by their membership (either self-selecting or assigned by others) of what are often considered two very distinct categories. Originating in the 1970s, the convention of writing deaf with a capital D has been used to refer to deaf people, usually those born deaf or deafened at an early age (Ladd 2003), who use a signed language and who identify as part of a minority cultural group (Woodward 1972), or as members of the deaf community. The use of lower-case ‘deaf’ has been used to signify those individuals for whom deafness is primarily an audiological experience (Ladd 2003), thus measuring them against the ‘norm’ of hearing people (Valentine et al. 2003a). Lower case ‘deaf’ has therefore meant that the individual is unable to hear rather than having any linguistic or cultural connotations (Atherton 2005), usually describing those who tend not to use a signed language as their main or preferred method of communication.

The use of what is often referred to as ‘big D Deaf’ has considerable emotional and political weight attached to it, signifying pride in belonging to a linguistic minority, and implying the rejection of the medical model of disability imposed by the non-deaf majority. Whilst the notion of deaf people as a linguistic minority can promote a positive image of deaf people and deaf culture, this is mainly dependent on individuals being signed language users (Taylor & Darby 2003). The opposite and often unacknowledged aspect of the use of upper-case ‘Deaf’ is the implication that

those labelled lower-case 'deaf' are judged in some way as being of inferior status (Atherton 2005).

Even a brief survey of the literature appertaining to deaf people, deaf culture and the deaf community reveals a disparate (and frequently confusing) application of upper and lower case 'Deaf'/'deaf' terminology, often with a combination of all possible terms ('Deaf', 'deaf', 'D/deaf') used within the same chapter or article (see for example Taylor & Darby 2003:18- 19). After considering all the possible conventions for describing deaf people I have decided to use the term 'deaf' to refer to the whole range of individuals with a degree of hearing loss. The reasoning behind this decision is two-fold. Firstly, it is an approach intended to provide clarity to the reader, rather than to make any political statement. It is a decision which causes a considerable amount of personal tension as my natural inclination is towards the usage of 'Deaf' when referring to deaf individuals who use a signed language as their first or preferred language. As an SLI I have been acculturated into perceiving deaf people who use BSL as members of a distinct culture and community. However, as one of the deaf participants in the current study pointed out in personal correspondence, despite her use of BSL and signed language interpreters, her hearing loss is not profound and she wouldn't necessarily identify herself as culturally 'Deaf'.

Secondly, as Napier (2009) states, the deaf community has evolved due to recent medical advancements and changes to educational policy. This has resulted in individuals becoming members of the community '*as late learners of sign language*' (Napier 2009: 4), and thus potentially likely to define themselves differently to long-standing members. It therefore seems appropriate to acknowledge that things have changed and that the 'deaf community', and membership thereof, is less clearly defined than in the past. The boundary between 'big D' and 'little d' identities can be fluid over time and space (Valentine et al. 2003a), and it is important to recognise that individuals can, and do, '*over time and in different spaces*' move between the two identification categories (Valentine & Skelton 2003b: 9). Ultimately, it is likely that any individual with a significant hearing loss will experience considerable problems in the workplace, irrespective of their cultural identification, and therefore it is not appropriate to assign the word 'Deaf' to cover what is in reality a range of people with varying degrees of hearing loss, affiliated to different cultural backgrounds.

As in Atherton et al. (2000) the use of the lower-case deaf is meant to be inclusive. No judgment is being made in regard of the audiological status or linguistic identity of people who use a signed language (Napier 2009). Lower-case 'd' will be used consistently for all references to deafness, deaf people and deaf community throughout the thesis. However, the usage of the original upper-case 'D' has been retained in quotations.

1.3 Research Questions, Aims and Data

In examining the impact that SLIs have on workplace discourse and interaction, a number of questions are addressed. These questions formed part of the original research proposal, and were based on personal experiences (see Chapter 4.2), as well as anecdotal evidence from other SLIs employed in the workplace setting. Firstly, I seek to determine how the role of the SLI is understood by all participants within the workplace domain, and how this impacts on the dynamics of everyday interaction, the norms of discourse and communication between deaf and hearing employees. Secondly, I intend to consider the extent to which SLIs influence the outcomes of discourse between deaf and hearing employees, where asymmetry is not only brought about by external variables, but is also accomplished interactionally, through the discourse itself. My focus is directed to the social and relational aspects of workplace interaction which enable employees to establish collegial relationships.

My aim is to generate a '*data-rich*' (Mason 2000: 220) or '*thick*' (Sarangi & Roberts 1999: 1-2) description of the interpreting process, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of what occurs in workplace dialogue where the SLI is an active participant. Through providing a fine-grained linguistic analysis of interpreted workplace interaction, based upon an ethnographic approach to data-collection, the study seeks to make connections between the tensions and struggles that take place on a micro level, to the wider social, political and ideological accounts that frame the interpreted event (Erikson 2004).

In examining their role in the workplace setting, the focus is on the SLI as an active third participant in the communicative event (Roy 1989; Wadensjö 1998; Metzger 1999). Research in the field of interpreting has demonstrated that an interactive or participatory stance is an essential requirement in order to allow interpreters to engage effectively in dialogue or community interpreting. The conflict experienced by SLIs employed in the workplace domain appears to stem directly from the clash between their conscious understanding of their role as an active and fully involved member of the interpreted interaction, and their unconscious, yet often firmly held belief, that they are an invisible and uninvolved participant. The tensions produced from this role conflict will be explored, taking into account the impact on all the participants in the interpreted event.

Ultimately I aim to demonstrate that authentic data of interpreted workplace discourse can contribute to our understanding of how the SLI impacts upon the interaction between deaf and hearing employees; to illustrate how humour and small talk function as aspects of the shared repertoire of a CofP; to examine the ways in which participants co-operate within multi-party talk to build and maintain a collaborative floor; and finally, to suggest ways in which practices can be changed and improved so as to ensure equality of access for deaf employees.

The data for this research were collected in three stages. The initial data consists of evidence of SLIs' experiences of workplace interpreting, gathered through the use of questionnaires, and practitioner journals, thus enabling the identification of issues pertinent to SLIs employed in this domain. Video evidence of interpreted workplace interaction formed the second stage of data collection. Finally, video playback interviews were conducted with the main participants (a deaf employee, two SLIs and a hearing employee) from one research site, in order to obtain their insights, observations and understanding of selected excerpts of video data.

1.4 Overview of Chapters

So far in this chapter I have outlined the origin of the study, highlighted the research questions and aims, and have briefly described the data upon which I intend to draw. This section will describe the thesis structure. In order to locate the research in context, **Chapter Two** reviews the literature I deem relevant to interpreting in

workplace settings, beginning with the principal themes in institutional and workplace discourse. The experiences of deaf people in employment are then considered, exploring the discrimination and marginalisation they frequently undergo in this domain. The review concludes with a discussion of the descriptions and definitions of the role of interpreters, and how these have developed. The implications of these role metaphors are discussed in relation to SLIs in workplace settings, with the focus directed to the ways in which SLIs manage collegial and collaborative talk such as small talk and humour.

Chapter Three describes the theoretical framework that has been applied throughout the study. Interactional approaches to language and social life are reviewed, with a Linguistic Ethnographic framework being applied to the analysis of the transcripts of the video data. Approaches to analysing turn-taking, overlapping talk, humour and small talk are considered in this chapter.

In **Chapter Four** I outline the data collection process. I present the various qualitative data collection methods, beginning with the questionnaires and practitioner journals. I then detail the collection of the video data. The settings, participants and the nature of the interpreted events are illustrated, together with details of the case study for the video playback interviews. In this chapter I address the challenges of recruiting participants, obtaining access to the research sites and the sensitive nature of conducting research with members of the deaf community and with SLIs. This chapter also highlights the difficulties posed by the videoing and transcription of multi-party, signed language interpreted interaction. I thus indicate one of the anticipated contributions which this thesis will make towards signed language interpreting research with regard to methodological issues.

Chapter Five details the data gathered from the questionnaires and practitioner journals, which have been thematically analysed. This is the first of two findings chapters and it explores the experiences of SLIs employed in the workplace domain. This chapter provides the background to the issues examined in **Chapter Six**, the second findings chapter, wherein the video data is analysed and discussed. The focus here is on three main aspects that emerged from the analysis of the video data, namely the ways in which instances of humour and small talk are interpreted, and how SLIs

manage the collaborative floor during team meetings. The final section describes the video playback interviews.

In **Chapter Seven** I review the findings from the data and discuss these in detail, drawing them together to create a detailed description of the role of the SLI in workplace interpreted discourse. I show that the SLI's presence, and the way in which they mediate the interaction between deaf and hearing employees, has considerable implications for both the outcomes of the discourse event and the relationship between the participants. I demonstrate that the SLI can play a vital role within a workplace CofP. Looking back to the research questions in Chapter One, and the theoretical discussions in Chapter Two, I discuss the implications in relation to the theory of signed language interpreting.

Finally, in **Chapter Eight**, the thesis is summarised, considering further some of the potential applications of the research. Having discussed the theoretical implications in the preceding chapter, this chapter focuses on the research methodology adopted for the research and the practical applications for some of the findings.

1.5 Summary

This chapter has provided background information relating to the origin of this study and has introduced the research questions. The aims of the study have been outlined and an overview of the thesis structure has been detailed. I have suggested that this study will contribute to knowledge not only in signed language interpreting studies and interpreting studies generally, but also in the sociolinguistic aspect of workplace studies.

Chapter Two: Interpreting in the Workplace

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a background to the study and will outline the main issues pertinent to the employment of SLIs in the workplace domain. Signed language interpreting is a complex and multifaceted process and the exploration of this process in the intricate domain that is the workplace means that the relevant literature is both wide-ranging and cross disciplinary. The linear structure necessitated by the format of this thesis is not the most helpful way of envisaging the position of the SLI within this broad framework. However, the points I make in this section will remain relevant to the key areas identified earlier in Chapter One, considering where the interaction takes place, the norms and practices inherent in that domain, and the primary parties engaged in the interpreted interaction.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. In order to place the current research in context I begin in **Section 2.2 Language, Culture and Interaction in the Workplace** by outlining a definition of the workplace, before going on to examine the workplace practices and norms as experienced by hearing people. This section will focus on the discourse of workplace meetings and the more social aspects of workplace interaction such as small talk and humour. The workplace is in the main constructed by and for the hearing majority, with hearing norms and conventions underpinning employee interaction. It is therefore essential to consider the practices and underlying rules which govern quotidian workplace interaction before considering the ways in which deaf people are regarded by society, and the barriers that these perspectives create.

Section 2.3 Deaf People at Work examines the history of deaf people relating to the workplace and highlights some of the changes which have led to their current status within the employment domain. The attitudes that society holds in relation to deaf people are considered and the issues of prejudice, stereotyping and oppression that can result from these well-entrenched beliefs are explored. The labour market barriers created by these perspectives are detailed. Finally, deaf people's access to

workplace interaction will be considered, particularly in relation to workplace meetings, small talk and humorous exchanges.

I conclude my review in **Section 2.4 The Role of the Signed Language Interpreter**. This section looks at the major themes, concepts and models which relate to spoken and signed language interpreting, and which I consider to be germane to the SLI's function in the workplace setting. The development of signed language interpreting as a profession is outlined, with dialogue interpreting highlighted as being most comparable to the SLI's role in the workplace domain. The role of the SLI as an active third participant in interpreted interaction is then contrasted with previous roles and role metaphors. Detailed attention is paid to the specific ways in which the SLI can influence the discourse event and the impact that they have on primary participants. The section ends with a review of the limited literature focusing on the SLIs' function in workplace setting. In **Section 2.5** I conclude with a summary of the issues that have been examined in this chapter.

2.2 Language, Culture and Interaction in the Workplace

Employment and workplaces have changed dramatically (Arnold et al. 1998; Sarangi & Roberts 1999). In many institutions life is organised with clockwork precision, work often being highly structured and repetitive, with employees trained to behave and react in specific ways (Morgan 1997). At the same time, demand for high quality work, competitiveness, cost reduction, temporary and short term contacts and limited opportunities for employment (Arnold et al. 1998; Turner et al. 2003) all add to the considerable pressure experienced by the employee today. Workplaces are also a domain where the knowledge of unspoken rules and the acquisition of insider knowledge is a vital tool for the employee who wishes to fit in and succeed in their job.

For many people work is an important and integral part of their lives, with a large part of adult life in the workplace spent engaging in communication (Koester 2004a). Successful communication with clients and colleagues can be '*crucial for the well-being of working people, as well as for the efficiency of their organisations and institutions*' (Holmes & Stubbe 2003:16).

Getting things done at work is a very active process, with people using a variety of complex and highly developed strategies for negotiating discourse (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). In the workplace, in addition to conveying or communicating information, language is used for a variety of tasks, ranging from giving instructions, disagreeing with and challenging colleagues, to sharing jokes, avoiding miscommunication and maintaining good collegial relations (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). SLIs are an integral part of the dynamic process of discourse negotiation between deaf and hearing employees and the issues raised in this section are deemed relevant to the ways in which SLIs function in the workplace.

2.2.1 Defining 'the workplace' and workplace discourse

Defining what exactly constitutes a workplace can be a challenge (Sarangi & Roberts 1999). For the purpose of this study, the workplace is outlined following Sarangi and Roberts' broad framework, as any organisational setting where people consider themselves to be at work, and where their institutional or professional identities are made relevant in some way to the work activities in which they are engaged (Drew & Heritage 1992).

Workplace discourse can occur across a wide variety of institutional settings and can take place between people in a variety of relationships and roles (see Koester 2006 for an excellent detailed overview of the research already undertaken in the area of institutional discourse studies). Workplace and professional talk can also be referred to as 'institutional talk', with institutional interaction occurring in both face-to-face settings and via the telephone (Drew & Heritage 1992). It can range from the relatively formal or structured in nature, such as team meetings, one-to-one supervisions, business discussions and training events, to the less formal and less organised.

In terms of institutional interaction Drew and Heritage (1992) draw a distinction between work- or task-orientated talk and the conversational talk that can occur within institutional settings. However, for the purpose of this review, institutional interaction will also encompass the less formal communication such as casual

conversations between co-workers, planning and making arrangements, decision-making, and socialising with other members of the workplace. Institutional discourse is characteristically a tension between institutional frames and socio-relational frames for talk, with small talk being inseparable from the more mainstream focus of workplace discourse (Coupland 2000).

Recent research has focused on the more informal aspects of office communication (Holmes 2000c; Coupland & Ylänne-McEwen 2000; Kuiper & Findall 2000; Holmes & Stubbe 2003) and indicates that workplace discourse can consist of both task-focused and relational talk (Koester 2006). It is the talk at the relational end of the scale - the social conversations, chit chat or small talk - that can blur the boundaries between casual conversation and institutional talk (Koester 2006). As discussed later in this section, more informal forms of talk can be vital to employees' integration and acceptance in the workplace, and the scope of institutional talk has therefore been widened to include this aspect. It is important to note that in the case of both formal and informal types of workplace discourse, the assessment of how important the talk is, and what it means for participants, is affected by how we understand the context in which the talk occurs (Coupland 2000). The issue of context is discussed in Chapter Three.

2.2.2 Characteristics of workplace discourse

Institutional talk can refer to interaction in a wide variety of workplace settings and it can be seen as being different from ordinary conversation in a number of ways. It is difficult to analyse workplace talk without paying attention to how the institution restricts or extends the range of what are considered 'normal' interactional possibilities, and the difference between institutional talk and everyday conversational norms is often only identified through explicit or implicit contrast with those norms (Drew & Heritage 1992; Coupland 2000).

Drew and Heritage (1992) identify three dimensions of interaction that distinguish institutional discourse from other types of talk (Koester 2006). The focus here is on the public face of the workplace (Sarangi & Roberts 1999), as in the more formal and

bounded encounters that occur in this domain (e.g. doctor-patient, social worker-client etc). In these types of encounters Drew and Heritage (1992) describe institutional talk as being goal orientated (relevant to the institution), with participants' contributions being bound by particular constraints, and set within inferential frameworks and procedures that are specific to institutional contexts. Some of the aspects of these three elements are discussed in the following sections, with particular attention being paid to discourse features such as turn-taking practices. Institutional talk is also considered different to casual discourse due to reasons of asymmetry (Coupland 2000), e.g. the power and status differentials between employees and therefore institutional roles will also be considered.

2.2.3 Meetings in workplace settings

This section will explore some relevant elements of workplace meetings, defining what constitutes a meeting and the challenges that can arise from this form of interaction. I will suggest that it is pertinent to the current study to consider workplace meetings as a CofP. Given that various researchers have demonstrated the importance of more informal discourse that can occur within institutions (Sarangi & Roberts 1999), attention will also be paid to the issues of small talk, casual conversation and relational talk (Koester 2006). The use of humour in the workplace domain will then be considered. Finally, the collegial nature of workplace talk will be highlighted.

The meeting as a discourse event appears to be under-researched in workplace studies (Marra 2007). Although prevalent and important as a form of institutional discourse, meetings remain '*as yet largely uncharted territory*', except when they are regarded as '*negotiations*', with intercultural⁴ studies of business transactions being rare (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1995: 532). The ways in which participants' ethnicity

⁴ Throughout this thesis the term 'intercultural communication' is used in line with Scollon and Scollon's (2001) distinction between cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Accordingly, intercultural communication is seen as study of the communicative practices occurring when members of different groups directly engage with each other, i.e. when they interact on a social level.

and associated cultural norms have the potential to influence the discourse patterns of meetings are therefore still relatively under-examined (Kell et al. 2007).

Meetings can be difficult to define in terms of a specific genre or label as they can have a variety of goals (Koester 2004a), but tend to be task-orientated and topic-centred in a much more formal sense than most conversation (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1995). According to Asmuß and Svennevig (2009) some features are crucial in defining meetings as organisational phenomena and communicative events. These can be grouped into three main categories: situational, institutional and interactional.

Firstly, there are the situational characteristics of meetings, i.e. the fact that meetings tend to be planned in advance, have a pre-issued agenda, can often take place in a specifically allocated space, and can include standard ‘props’ such as a table, whiteboard etc (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009). Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1995: 535-6) define a formal meeting as a *‘scheduled, structured encounter with a fixed agenda presided over by a nominal chair’*, with the meeting usually taking place in a purpose-built venue such as a conference room. The second category comprises of the participants’ institutional roles and the institutional problems or issues which the meeting focuses upon (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009). For example, the presence of a formal or informal chair distinguishes the meeting from most other forms of institutional talk. The final category relates to the ways in which talk and interaction is organised, particularly aspects such as turn-taking and topic progression (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009). Certain moves are the prerogative of the chair, who is the individual usually responsible for topic shifts, as well as coordinating and articulating decisions made during the meeting (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1995).

Holmes and Stubbe (2003) describe three categories of meetings; planning or prospective/ forward-orientated meeting, reporting or retrospective/ backward-orientated meeting and task-orientated or problem solving/ present-orientated meeting. However, many meetings in the workplace encompass actions such as making decisions (planning meeting), reporting and updating (reporting meeting) and collaborative problem solving (task-orientated meeting) within the same event. Indeed all of the meetings filmed for the current study comprise of different elements from each of the above categories.

A number of researchers (Boden 1994; Asmuß & Svennevig 2009) stress the pre-planned or scheduled nature of meetings and whilst these are undoubtedly features of meetings in many institutions, it also seems likely that in more informally structured organisations meetings are convened on an ad-hoc and impromptu basis, particularly if there is an urgent matter which needs discussion. Informal meetings tend to be more loosely planned and managed, with a flexible agenda and a chair who may well be nominated as the proceedings start (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1995). The venue is normally somewhere agreed by participants, e.g. an employee's office. Clearly, not all spontaneous encounters can be defined as meetings but according to Handford (2010: 61) if they have a '*clear work-related purpose and topic*' then they can be so categorised. Meetings that are not planned in advance can present additional challenges for both deaf employees and SLIs, and therefore should not be excluded from consideration. Informal meetings can also play an important role because '*they are used for a significant amount of decision making in organisations*' as well as the establishment of social relationships (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009: 10).

For the purpose of my analysis I have therefore defined a meeting as an occasion whereby work colleagues meet, either according to a pre-agreed schedule and agenda, or on a more informal ad-hoc basis, with their overt purpose being the discussion of issues relating to their field of employment. Clearly, within either category, there is nothing to prevent group members discussing issues outside of their field of employment, or engaging in small talk, arguments or casual conversation unrelated to work topics. Indeed, examples of this type of discourse will be examined later in this study (see Chapter Six). However, in the current study the overall purpose of participants coming together is work-focused.

Meetings can serve a number of purposes. For example, in-house meetings of an organisation or institution can provide opportunities for employees to share knowledge and discuss ideas and initiatives, leading in turn to the development of future plans and decisions regarding the organisation (Kangasharju & Nikko, 2009). All institutions are made up of '*shared habitual practices*' (Sarangi & Roberts 1999: 3) and therefore individuals in meetings will generally have an understanding of the activity in which they are participating, a frame or schema (see Chapter Three) which

they will draw on when making their contributions to the discourse. In employment settings individuals' conceptualisations will be based on their experience within a specific workplace, as well as a more generic conceptualisation of what constitutes a workplace meeting. Participants' linguistic choices will be influenced by their understanding of what they are 'doing' (Koester 2006). One way of gaining a deeper understanding of the perceptions that individuals hold in relation to workplace meetings or groups is to consider the notion of CofP. The following section will consider workplace meetings from this perspective, and will discuss how participants work collaboratively within the CofP to co-construct interaction.

2.2.4 The workplace meeting as a Community of Practice

Viewing the work groups which form meetings in workplace settings as a CofP can enable a deeper understanding of the ways in which the participants interact and the norms and conventions that they share. The concept of CofP can refer to groups of people who have a shared interest in a topic or problem and who collaborate over a period of time to address issues, share ideas and solve problems. CofPs can develop around the activities which group members engage in together, along with their shared objectives and attitudes (Holmes 2001). In more recent work Wenger and Snyder (2000) describe CofPs as groups of people who are informally bound together, responsible for organising themselves (including setting their own agendas and electing their own membership) and who can self-select to be a part of the group. Clearly, in many instances employees who meet regularly in the course of their work do not fully fall in line with this description. Nonetheless, workplace groups or team meetings have many features in common with the original concept of CofPs.

Wenger (1998: 73) states that there are three dimensions of 'practice' that need to be fulfilled in order to make up a CofP, these being mutual engagement, a joint negotiated enterprise and a shared repertoire. Mullany asserts that these components are clearly evident in business meetings, as participants *'mutually engage with one another in a jointly negotiated enterprise, determined by the meeting's agenda'* (2004: 22). Work groups often share particular goals and ways of interacting and can be considered *'an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement*

in an endeavor' (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464). Importantly in terms of the current study, they have established '*ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations*' which have developed out of their mutual endeavour (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464). Crucially, a CofP approach enables the focus to be directed to '*the ways in which individuals construct their membership in certain groups through their shared activities, including their language use*' (Schnurr 2008: 2).

Communities build through the repeated actions between the individuals that constitute them (Eckert 1993). Employees who work together on a regular basis build relationships and in doing so often take a great deal for granted, sharing common assumptions, a common reference system and the same jargon or '*system of verbal shortcuts*' (Holmes & Stubbe 2003: 2). Members of working groups can frequently develop distinct expectations about normative ways of interacting with each other, and of working together, creating '*a shared repertoire of linguistic norms*' on which they regularly draw (Schnurr 2008: 2). There are a number of characteristics which constitute a shared repertoire, including a shared discourse reflecting a certain world perspective, inside jokes and knowing humour (Wenger 1998). The linguistic norms in CofPs have been shown to encompass facets of workplace interaction such as humour (Holmes & Schnurr 2005), teasing (Schnurr 2008), politeness (Mullany 2004), gendered discourse (Mullany 2004; Holmes 2008) and small talk (Mullany 2006). Mullany (2004) also refers to the shared repertoires that can exist (in business meetings), listing as examples: acronyms for the structure of departments and divisions, positions within the company and product names, preferred patterns for conducting business and accepted nicknames for participants or for other people employed within the organisation.

A crucial element of becoming a member of a CofP involves learning, with individuals acquiring the information and experiences necessary to become a core member of the group (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999). An essential part of learning how to operate in a work group entails accessing '*largely tacit, distributed 'wisdom', rules of appropriateness, and taken for granted understandings of a highly group-specific nature*' (Turner 2007a: 58). A CofP therefore necessitates '*the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence*' (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999: 174), something which can

present a particular challenge for the deaf employee, for reasons that are discussed later in section 2.3. If meeting participants do not share the same interactional style (or are insufficiently flexible to adjust to the other's style) miscommunication or non-synchronous conversations are likely to occur (Roberts et al. 1992; Stubbe 1998). An inability to progress communication beyond a superficial level can result in the deaf employee being excluded from crucial insider knowledge (Turner 2007a). A lack of common ground (working on different assumptions, intercultural misunderstandings, different 'rules' about turn-taking) can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication, with the employee potentially being prevented from becoming a full member of a CofP.

To summarise, in considering workplace meetings as a CofP, we can see that work groups are likely to have a common aim and purpose, will have shared values and beliefs and can interact according to established norms and practices. This emphasis on the shared nature of much of the interaction that takes place in workplace meetings has particular importance in relation to the aspects of workplace discourse which will be discussed in the following sections. Shared background knowledge, experience and/or attitudes can contribute towards common ground, and can form an essential element for successful small talk (Holmes 2000c). If a work group functions according to a shared understanding of the norms and linguistic conventions dominant in the group, it can pose a barrier to those new to the group (e.g. the SLI) and to those from differing cultural, linguistic and or/ minority backgrounds (e.g. the deaf employee). The impact of this is made explicit later in this chapter when considering the role of the SLI in team meetings. The following section will go on to examine some of the shared norms and linguistic conventions that can exist within a CofP, and which can contribute towards members establishing and maintaining workplace collegiality.

2.2.5 Small talk at work

This section will address the more social aspects of workplace discourse, namely relational talk. Sociolinguistic and pragmatic skills are the result of years of mixing and working with other native language users who share the same culture. These skills can present real challenges to second language learners (Holmes 2000a), and

those from different cultures (Clyne 1994). Deaf employees, unable from an early age to access the sociolinguistic nuances in the same manner as their hearing peers have very little opportunity to develop their competence in this area. Problems managing the social and discourse aspects of talk can lead to an employee being viewed as unfriendly, moody or socially unskilled (Holmes 2000a), demonstrating that acquisition and appropriate use of these skills is highly desirable in order to succeed in the workplace. Examining more closely some of the shared norms and linguistic conventions enacted within regular team meetings, the focus in this section will be on the ways in which members of a CofP can work together collaboratively to foster a sense of collegiality and sustain good workplace relationships. In order to consider these aspects of workplace discourse I will begin by examining what is meant by relational talk, before moving on to look specifically at small talk.

It is important to note that not all communication that takes place *at* work is always *about* work (Koester 2004a). Whilst in institutional or workplace discourse participants are primarily concerned with getting things done and accomplishing workplace tasks, thus rendering the focus on transactional goals, they '*nevertheless also orient to relational concerns*' (Koester 2004b: 1405). In other words, workplace interaction does not solely relate to discourse focusing on the work or business of the institution, but can also encompass the more social aspects or interpersonal dimensions of workplace talk.

In addition to being concerned with the transfer of information, language also '*fulfils a social and interpersonal function*' (Koester 2004b: 1406). People who work together have relationships which extend beyond transactional business, with relational goals and relationship-building pervading '*all aspects of workplace interaction*' (Koester 2006: 53). The relationships that people have at work influence their interactions and those relationships are predominantly built through talk (Koester 2006). However, positing a dichotomy between transactional and relational talk represents an over-simplification of most communicative situations (Koester 2004b). Research suggests that it is not always possible cleanly to divide 'business talk' from 'small talk' (see Coupland 2000; Holmes 2000c). Traditional models of workplace talk which suggest that 'institutional talk' and 'ordinary conversation' can be neatly separated, do not adequately account for the nature of many office place interactions,

as data has shown that participants in workplace encounters simultaneously pursue transactional and relational goals (Holmes 2000c; McCarthy 2000; Koester 2004b). Even when participants focus on clear transactional goals there is evidence of relational episodes embedded within the transactional discourse (Koester 2006), with relational sequences and turns woven into the generic structure of the workplace task (Koester 2004b).

Holmes (2000c: 36) conceptualises small talk in terms of a continuum, with '*core business talk at one end and phatic communion at the other*'. Core business talk is differentiated in terms of its informative content, relevance and on-task focus, whereas phatic communion can be independent and irrelevant of workplace business. The boundaries that separate small talk from more task-orientated discourse can be difficult to identify (Holmes 2000c), as talk can '*shift and drift*' along this continuum, and in reality business talk and small talk are inextricably linked (Mullany 2006: 62).

Koester (2006) refers to small talk occurring within more business-focused talk as relational episodes, these being the short sequences of non-transactional talk, such as instances of small talk or office gossip, which can occur in the middle of transactional talk, temporarily interrupting the work-focussed interaction. Relational sequences or relational turns address some aspect of the task but are not essential for the accomplishment of the task. They can frequently consist of comments about the task, usually in the form of a positive evaluation or humorous remarks (Koester 2004b). Relational sequences have important relational functions linked to the immediate task and to the general working relationship between participants. Relational sequences and turns differ from relational episodes, with no actual switch from transactional to non-transactional talk, but rather remarks are made that are task-related but that do not contribute to getting the job done (Koester 2006).

The functions of relational sequences can be described as contributing to a positive working relationship by showing affiliation and solidarity and diffusing or avoiding awkward or argumentative situations (Koester 2004b). It appears that discourse participants can produce a relational turn at almost any point in a transactional conversation, provided that such turns can be linked to the task being performed (Koester 2004b). Shifting into a humorous frame is one way of doing this, with

relational sequences often involving joking and humour and this is explored in more detail in the following section, as well as in Chapter Three. Humour and laughter are typical elements of non-transactional talk and mark a clear frame shift away from transactional talk, providing obvious cues for other participants to follow (Koester 2004b). Individuals are frequently aware of the role of relational talk in their work, believing that small talk has functions such as humanising interaction, contributing to problem-solving and getting informal feedback from co-workers (Koester 2006).

In any examination of relational talk it is important to bear in mind that surface interactive cooperativeness does not automatically indicate that participants share a '*deeper-going cooperativeness*' in terms of joint goals and outcomes (Candlin 2000: xix). Below the smooth surface of co-constructed interaction deeper tensions and '*entrenched and often institutionalised disequilibriums of power*' (Candlin 2000: xix) can exist. As explored later in this section, aspects of discourse such as humorous exchanges can demonstrate a 'darker' side (Holmes & Marra 2002), with institutional hierarchical relationships being played out through a superficially friendly exchange.

Before moving onto looking at the ways in which this element of relational talk is used at work, I will outline a definition of small talk and summarise its distribution in the workplace. Often associated with unimportant, trivial feminine discourse (Mullany 2006), small talk is a relatively difficult term to define. It has been traditionally regarded as less important than other more goal driven talk, perceived as something that takes place on the periphery of the actual focus of the interaction (Coupland 2000; Holmes 2000c), with the emphasis on subject matter outside of the workplace (Koester 2006). It can range from enquiries about an individual's health, to more complex talk intertwined with business or task-orientated discourse. Forms of discourse such as 'gossip', 'chat' and 'time-out talk' can also be included under the small talk heading (Coupland 2000:1). However, small talk contributes in part to the interactional constitution of commercial and professional worlds of workplace discourse, making it clear that small talk cannot be easily dismissed as trivial and unimportant social chat, but is instead a crucial component of '*the talk at work complex*' (Coupland 2000: 6). The wide remit assigned to small talk therefore confirms Holmes and Stubbe's (2003) assertion that it fulfils a variety of multifaceted

functions in the workplace setting, including the vital role of contributing to workplace culture.

Part of the difficulty in defining what constitutes small talk can undoubtedly be attributed to what Fairclough (1992) refers to as the ‘conversationalisation’ of public discourse, with talk that has traditionally been seen as belonging to private spheres now infiltrating public spheres, confusing the distinctions between public and private worlds (Candlin 2000: xix). This in turn has implications for the power relationships between participants in institutional settings, with politeness strategies assuming potential covert and manipulative meanings.

In episodes of small talk, the content tends to be back-grounded, with the elements of social contact taking the foreground (Holmes 2000c). Nonetheless, it is important to note that even when ‘*nothing happens*’ within small talk encounters, there is still an immense amount of ‘*creative, collaborative meaning-making*’ taking place (Coupland 2000: 9).

Using small talk appropriately- ‘*getting the content, placing, amount and tone right*’- can be a crucial and complex aspect of achieving workplace goals (Holmes 2000a: 126). The often unwritten and unspoken rules governing the use of small talk and social chat in the workplace are absorbed through long-term exposure in a particular environment. Moving between core business talk and more social discourse is a subtle and highly developed skill (Holmes 2000c). The rules are not acquired through a formal learning process but are taken on board at a subconscious level, through observing and listening to other people. Small talk, as with many other forms of talk, is therefore subject to cultural variation and there are crucial clues contained within small talk that are often missed by people from different cultural backgrounds (Holmes 2000a). It is important to be able to contribute to social small talk, especially in the more overt contexts where it naturally occurs, such as tea breaks and meal times, as doing so signals that the employee is a member of the ‘work team’ (Holmes 2000a).

As with all exchanges within workplace discourse, knowing the context in which the talk is located allows a deeper understanding of the purpose, status and nature of the

interaction (Cicourel 1987). In terms of small talk, the meaning of the exchange can vary, depending on the hierarchical and personal relationships between participants, the timing of the exchange (e.g. at the beginning of a meeting or at the start or end of the working day) and the setting within which the discourse takes place. Consideration of where the small talk occurs is therefore important, as this can in turn impact on the meaning that participants assign to the discourse. Whilst small talk generally occurs during tea and lunch breaks, it can also happen before and after meetings and at different points throughout the working day (Holmes 2000c). These types of structured and ritual interactions can indicate the extent to which participants know each other, the depth and intimacy of their relationship and the frequency with which they meet (Koester 2006) and therefore cannot and should not be dismissed as trivial exchanges (Laver 1975).

As already briefly highlighted in the introduction to this section, small talk can serve a wide range of purposes in workplace discourse. Amongst its other uses, small talk can be: a way of negotiating relationships, employed as a politeness strategy, and demonstrate the distribution of power within relationships. These aspects will now be explored in more detail.

Small talk enables employees and employers to share and exchange information, build and maintain workplace or collegial relationships, and negotiate shifts between business talk and social interaction, thus providing the social oil necessary for asserting and maintaining interpersonal relationships (Holmes 2000c). It has been found to play an important role in the social cohesion and structure of multilingual workplaces (Clyne 1994), and learning to manage small talk is essential in enabling employees to construct, express, maintain and reinforce interpersonal relationships (Holmes 2000a). Small talk is also important for building team relationships, as listening to and responding to non- work related talk is part of the *'typically unobserved behind-the-scenes behaviours which foster group life and the development of 'team esprit de corps'* (Holmes & Schnurr 2005: 125-6). Small talk's elastic nature means that it can be used as a 'time-filler', expanded or contracted to fill silences or 'dead-time', e.g. the times where participants are waiting for a meeting to start or to resume, or to mark the boundaries between gaps or transitions in activities

(Holmes 2000c). It thus maintains engagement between participants, fulfilling a ‘*valuable, relationship-maintaining*’ social role (Holmes 2000a: 133).

From a politeness perspective, small talk can be viewed as part of the local conversational routines that make up the social fabric of people’s communities, with even the small talk that tends to be stigmatised as inconsequential (‘nattering’, ‘chewing the fat’ etc) thus taking on the role of cultural reproduction (Coupland 2000). Holmes (2000c: 48- 49) directly links small talk with politeness, orientated as it is to the addressee’s ‘*positive face needs*’, describing it as a core example of positively polite talk.

Holmes and Marra (2004) extend the politeness theme, arguing that in workplace settings small talk is part of relational practice. Relational practice (RP), a term associated with the work of Joyce Fletcher (1999), is described as the ‘*wide range of off-line, backstage or collaborative work that people do which goes largely unrecognised and unrewarded in the workplace*’ (Holmes & Marra 2004: 377). Given the focus of the current study on multi-party interaction and the collaborative nature of workplace talk, it is useful to consider RP in some detail here. Firstly, doing RP at work involves attending to workplace relationships (Holmes & Marra 2004). RP includes friendly, positive, or supportive verbal behaviour as well as ‘*linguistic strategies and devices which respect a person’s autonomy and wish to be unimpeded*’ (Holmes & Schnurr 2005: 125). The ways in which individuals express their orientation towards friendly and supportive behaviour (positive politeness in line with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) terms), or autonomy (negative politeness in Brown and Levinson’s terms), will vary according to different CofP and the interactions within a CofP (Holmes & Schnurr 2005). Examples of RP include workplace anecdotes, small talk (Holmes & Marra 2004) and humour in the workplace, elements which will be discussed later in this chapter. The element of RP deemed particularly relevant to the current study is that of ‘creating team’ (Fletcher 1999: 48). Creating team is a term used by Fletcher to discuss activities, such as small talk and humour (see Holmes & Marra 2004), which produce the ‘*background conditions in which group life (can) flourish*’ (1999: 74). Activities which develop the team esprit de corps, such as ‘*taking the time to listen and respond empathetically to non-work related information, creating opportunities for collaboration and cooperation*’ (Holmes & Schnurr 2005:

126), as well as those which facilitate productive interaction and that can defuse potentially confrontational situations (Holmes & Schnurr 2005: 126), are essential to collegiate interaction in the workplace setting.

Workplace small talk tends to indicate how well participants know each other, their status in relation to each other, their workload demands, and the norms of the organisational culture (Holmes 2000c). The relationship between individuals can influence the occurrence and regularity of small talk, with prior and close relationships increasing its frequency between co-workers (Koester 2004b). Small talk can both reflect and maintain power relationships. High status managers can use small talk to 'do collegiality' in contexts where they interact as equals (Holmes & Stubbe 2003), but can also use small talk to establish and maintain good relations with less powerful or subordinate employees. Small talk can also be employed manipulatively in relation to power. Those in positions of power can use small talk as acts of 'repressive' or 'coercive' discourse, using small talk to achieve organisational goals, whilst subordinates can engage in 'contestive' discourse (Holmes 2000c; Holmes & Stubbe 2003).

Exchanges between participants with asymmetrical power and status are contextualised differently to exchanges occurring between equals. Moving skilfully between business and small talk is a proficiency that those in positions of authority can use to their advantage. Those with higher status are generally recognised as having the right to bring episodes of small talk to an end (e.g. calling employees back to the focus of a meeting, indicating a need to move on to business related talk) and to determine just how much small talk is allowed at the beginning and the end of an interaction (Holmes 2000c). It is therefore important that subordinates recognise when their attempts to engage in or extend small talk are controlled by those in authority, as a failure to recognise these signals is likely to result in the employee being seen in a negative light (Holmes 2000c).

In institutional discourse settings, participants undertake a variety of professional roles, depending on their positions of power within the institution's hierarchical structure (Mullany 2006). This means that any surface displays of politeness should be considered carefully and should not always be viewed as a real demonstration of a

participant's commitment to a shared goal (Candlin 2000). Small talk can therefore be viewed as a way of disguising power relations (Mullany 2006). Less powerful participants can engage in subtly subversive politeness strategies in order to challenge or disrupt the decisions and problem solving processes that occur during meetings (Holmes & Stubbe 2003).

In summary, small talk can be seen to be a '*flexible, adaptable, compressible and expandable*' aspect of workplace discourse (Holmes & Stubbe 2003: 15), serving a wide range of functions, occurring at various points throughout the day and embedded across a wide range of workplace discourse events. The management of social talk is essential for enabling employees to fit in with their work colleagues as well as developing their abilities in managing power relations at work (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). The implications for deaf employees and for SLIs are discussed in section 2.4.

2.2.6 The use of humour in the workplace

As with small talk, humour is a valuable multifunctional resource in workplace interaction (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). Often perceived as '*austere, 'rational' and impersonal bureaucracies*', workplaces are in fact frequently '*characterised by multiple forms of humour*' (Collinson 2002: 269), with relational humour identified as being pervasive throughout workplace discourse (Holmes 2007). Instances of humour in organisations are rarely '*neutral, trivial or random*', but can play a vital role in establishing rapport between employees, colleagues and managers, as well as nurturing an environment of trust and involvement (Barsoux 1996: 500). Humour and comedy are '*pervasive, entrenched and highly meaningful aspects of human experience*' and are as relevant and significant in the work context as in any other interactional domain (Westwood & Rhodes 2007: 5). Humour can sometimes be regarded as being an inappropriate indulgence for employees to engage in (Barsoux 1996). However, research has demonstrated that humour is a frequent occurrence in workplace discourse, suggesting it is worthy of careful examination (Marra 2007).

The definition of humour is in itself a complex issue and has been extensively discussed (see Holmes 2000b and Plester 2003, 2007). Humour encompasses far more than 'joking' (Coates 2007) and different aspects of humour such as teasing and

laughter have all been studied in some detail (see for example Straehle 1993; Boxer & Cortés-Conde 1997; Schnurr 2008; Kangasharju & Nikko 2009). The current study will follow Holmes' (2000b) definition of 'successful' humour: that humorous utterances are ones identified by the analyst (based on paralinguistic, prosodic and discoursal clues) as being intended by the interlocutor to be amusing and perceived as amusing by at least some of the participants⁵.

Humour serves a variety of purposes in workplace settings, but before moving on to look at these in detail I want to specifically address the elements of laughter and teasing, as these aspects are particularly relevant to the current study. Laughter has been described as the contextualisation cue for humour '*par excellence*' (Kotthoff 2000: 64). Studies on laughter in workplace meetings usually treat laughter as an expression of humour, associating it with '*solidarity and positive affect*', contributing to constructing and maintaining good relations with colleagues (Kangasharju & Nikko 2009: 103). Humour researchers generally agree that participant laughter is the clearest indication that something is humorous (Eggins & Slade 1997). However, laughter can also serve a number of other purposes that are worth visiting here.

Kangasharju and Nikko's (2009) micro-level analysis of laughter during meeting interactions demonstrates that joint laughter occurs in conjunction with specific meeting activities: being utilised as a device to reduce the hierarchical asymmetry between participants and to release tension in challenging situations, smoothing the progress of communication in face-threatening or challenging situations, demonstrating cooperativeness and collegiality, encouraging the smooth progress of communication and contributing to improved task performance, which in turn can further the goals of the organisation.

Laughter is interpersonally cooperative as it acknowledges the communicative intent of the individual initiating the humorous exchange or joke (Davies 2003). Laughter initiated by the speaker can extend an offer of intimacy, with responsive laughter from

⁵ It should be noted that this definition refers to verbal humour. The need for a definition which encompasses the use of humour by deaf participants is highlighted in Chapter Eight.

the listener indicating that they are willing to affiliate (Eggins & Slade 1997). Laughter can thus seem to have more to do with how the participants relate to each other, rather than the accomplishment of a task (Koester 2004b).

Finally, as with much of the workplace discourse discussed in this chapter, context is crucial. Participants can often laugh at things that do not seem all that funny, suggesting that talk is funny due to its '*relationship to the social context*' (Eggins & Slade 1997: 157). In fact most workplace humour is '*inextricably context-bound*' (Holmes 2000b: 159), appearing hilarious to work-colleagues but somewhat obscure to outsiders. In other words it is a case of '*you had to be there*' (Kotthoff 2000: 71), with outsiders frequently failing to 'get' the joke. Accordingly, whilst humour undoubtedly builds group solidarity, an aspect explored in more detail later in this section, it also isolates outsiders. This insider/ outsider element has a bearing in terms of the deaf employee's potential to access humorous exchanges between colleagues, as well as the SLI's ability to adequately interpret said exchanges, and is examined later in this chapter (see section 2.5).

Teasing can encompass a broad range of playful interactions and is defined as any playful remark aimed at another person, including '*mock challenges, commands, and threats*', in addition to imitating and exaggerating someone's behaviour in a playful manner (Eder 1993: 17). Teasing behaviour is often indicated by cues such as prosodic features which include exaggerated intonation, stress and laughter as well as discourse features such as marked pronoun use, overlap and repetition (Straehle 1993).

Particularly useful in any consideration of teasing is Boxer and Cortés-Conde's (1997) description of teasing as running along a continuum of bonding to nipping and biting. Teasing directed at those present in the interaction has the potential to nip or bite, whilst teasing directed at the absent other has the potential to bond. Teasing is a language 'nip' that can '*signal and enhance speaker enjoyment and rapport*' but can also be '*closely bound to real antagonism*' (Straehle 1993: 211). As Schnurr (2008) states, 'nipping' is the most ambiguous term, positioned in the middle of the continuum it consists of a mixture of both 'biting' and 'bonding' elements.

Teasing is therefore ‘*an inherently ambiguous strategy*’ appearing on one hand to be a face-threatening act, whilst at the same time indicating that it should be seen as non-threatening (Schnurr 2008: 1127). This ambiguity means that teasing can create tension within the interaction, as participants are never entirely sure of the initiator’s intent- the playful nip can ‘*easily be mistaken for a hostile bite*’ (Strachle 1993: 211). Participants can use this to their advantage, drawing on the ambiguity and unclear boundaries in teasing, providing a ‘get-out’ clause should remarks be misinterpreted or taken in the wrong way.

As with most of the aspects of humour discussed in this section, participants’ engagement in and understanding of teasing will be dependent on the interactive framing of the event. The contextualisation cues employed by participants, such as intonation, laughter and other non-verbal features, are therefore highly important in distinguishing between biting, nipping and bonding teasing (Boxer & Cortés-Conde 1997).

Teasing is a ‘*valuable component of the linguistic repertoire negotiated among group members*’ (Schnurr 2008: 1125). According to Eggins and Slade (1997: 159) it can function as a way of conveying group values and norms, and can be a way of informing marginal or deviant group members about those norms. Being teased can be a test of group solidarity, as the marginalised participant must understand ‘*how to support a tease*’ or else risk increased marginalisation. Group members must also know how to engage in teasing behaviour (and be willing to do so) in order to prevent themselves being seen as outsiders.

Finally, teasing can be a highly collaborative activity, constructing peer relationships and peer knowledge, with participants building on each other’s talk (Eder 1993). It is clear that in a workplace context teasing is an important part of enabling employees to demonstrate their group membership. This may present a challenge to individuals from different cultural backgrounds, as the cues which signal teasing may not have the same meaning, resulting in potential for misunderstanding. When the teasing is filtered through the SLI, both deaf and hearing employees are reliant on the SLI rendering the interlocutor’s intent as accurately as possible and thus enabling them to engage in and extend teasing episodes.

Having examined some of the different elements of humour, I will now explore the ways in which humour can be utilised in the workplace setting (see Plester 2007 for an extensive review of humour at work), looking at humour as a politeness strategy, its use in constructing and maintaining workplace relationships, and the ways in which it is employed in workplace meetings.

In the workplace humour can be used as a flexible, adaptable and '*particularly effective politeness strategy*' especially in hierarchical contexts (Holmes & Stubbe 2003; Holmes & Schnurr 2005). It can function as a self-depreciation device to diffuse pressure, provide a strategy for softening face-threatening acts such as directives and criticisms, be used aggressively to repress by managers, and to contest and challenge authority by subordinates (Holmes & Stubbe 2003).

Joking can be classed as a positive politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson 1987), establishing common ground between participants and thus orientating towards solidarity and affiliation (Davies 2003). According to Holmes (1998b), between equals humour can attend to the positive face needs of participants, indicating friendliness and expressing and strengthening solidarity. Humour can also be used to protect the positive face needs of the interlocutor through the use of self-deprecatory or apologetic statements.

As a negative politeness strategy, humour can be used to hedge and soften the impact of face threatening acts such as directives, criticisms and insults and to defuse potential conflict between workers (Holmes & Schnurr 2005; Holmes 2006a). Where there is a power differential between participants, humour is often used to emphasise power relationships or to subtly control the behaviour of others (Holmes 1998b). When used by individuals in positions of power this can be seen as '*repressive discourse*' (Holmes 2000b: 175). Superiors can employ humour to disguise messages they suspect employees will not like, in effect sugaring the pill (Holmes 2000b; 1998b), and making the message somewhat more palatable (Collinson 2002). This concealment strategy can therefore be used by those in power to maintain authority and control, whilst giving the appearance of collegiality (Holmes 1998b; 2006a).

Humour can be used to negotiate and contest with people in positions of higher status (Holmes & Stubbe 2003), subverting the control imposed by superiors and challenging the power relations within their institutional structures (Holmes 1998b). Switches to humorous or joking frames can be indicative of attempts to reduce the asymmetry in workplace relationships (Koester 2004b). Humour provides an opportunity for subordinates to criticise their superiors, by mitigating and making light of the situation (Marra 2007). Humour can be used as a 'cover' for a remark or comment that might otherwise be seen as unacceptable in the context of the workplace, enabling subordinates to express opinions that might be socially unsafe or to cloak a criticism of a superior (Holmes 1998b). Serious intentions can therefore be disguised by what appear on the surface to be humorous comments, while jokes can masquerade as serious statements (Collinson 2002). Participants are thus protected from accusations when using humour, as humorous claims are deniable (Eggins & Slade 1997), and participants can profess non-serious intent (Mullany 2004). Criticisms, fears or frustrations can thus be communicated without employees being labelled a troublemaker or a whistle blower by superiors and colleagues (Barsoux 1996). The opportunity to criticise management in a socially acceptable way makes the negative communicative intent of the message less easy to challenge (Holmes 2000b; 2006a). Employees can create a shared group identity, releasing tension and pressure, without directly confronting and challenging the power structures and inequalities that are actually originally responsible for the frustration (Noon & Blyton 1997, cited in Collinson 2002).

Humour and relational talk can enable participants to deal with potentially difficult or awkward situations (Koester 2004b), or help them to '*adjust to aspects of work that they dislike or feel threatened by*' (Watson 2002: 363). One of the strengths of humour is that it enables participants to explore, through the use of other words, things which are '*difficult or taboo*' (Coates 2007: 32), with meaning expressed indirectly so as to protect the contributor's face and the face needs of other participants (Koester 2004b). Humour effectively forms a protective cordon around the issue that is being discussed, with the shift into play frame (discussed in detail in Chapter Three) temporarily suspending the rules of serious discussion (Barsoux 1996).

According to Holmes (2006b) participants can work together to create instances of humour jointly constructed or conjoint humour. Humour constructed jointly tends to occur in circumstances where people know each other well and can use this knowledge and association to build on each others' comments, with speakers sharing an orientation or addressing a common theme. Humour can therefore be both supportive and competitive in workplace discourse, with participants working together to co-construct collaborative humour sequences or alternatively, producing more independent competitive contributions to the floor. Supportive collaborative humour is a factor in creating group solidarity (Holmes 2006b), and generally occurs once interaction is underway. Davies (2003) states that collaborative joking interaction is arguably the most complex form of communication routinely engaged in.

In business or workplace settings the central role of humour is seen as one of expressing solidarity and creating a positive self image through the process of amusing an audience and illustrating a shared idea of what is funny (Rogerson-Revell 2007). Humour can be used to express and consolidate team spirit and cohesion with colleagues (Holmes & Stubbe 2003), and is a strategy for '*creating team*' within the workplace (Holmes & Schnurr 2005: 126). By fostering collegiality between employees, humour contributes to constructing and maintaining good relationships with co-workers (Holmes 2006b), creating and maintaining solidarity to engender a sense of belonging to a group (Holmes 2000c). In playful or humorous talk '*individual voices are less important than the jointly constructed talk*' (Coates 2007: 43), hence the effectiveness of humour as a means of creating solidarity. Evidence suggests that participants relish the 'choral talk' and are encouraged to make further humorous contributions (Coates 2007).

In workplace meetings humour contributes to the free flow of information, helping to put participants at ease, softening the impact of bad news and making the introduction of sensitive topics more comfortable (Rogerson-Revell 2007). Humour is part of the way that groups manage their relationships (LWP 2006). In formal contexts participants may shift to a play frame to defuse tension or to '*provide light relief from a boring agenda*' (Coates 2007: 33). Shifts in style can be a common feature of meetings, with humour being one of several interactive strategies used to mark shifts

towards greater informality (Rogerson-Revell 2007). Importantly, humour as a socio-pragmatic device is *'one component of the linguistic repertoire that distinguishes different CofPs'*, which means that the ways in which different working groups use humour will vary substantially (Schnurr 2008: 1126).

Finally, although it is a minor issue for this thesis, it is worth noting that not all studies support the view that humour is a source of social cohesion. Collinson (2002: 282) contests that humour can *'reflect and reinforce, articulate and highlight workplace divisions, tensions, conflicts, power asymmetries and inequalities'*, for example gender, ethnicity, class and disability. Humour can be perceived as a *'double-edged sword'* (Collinson 2002; Rogerson-Revell 2007), thus highlighting the ambiguity that exists in relation to this social practice. This ambiguity, along with the asymmetrical nature of many joking relations, can *'reinforce difficulties for subordinates and tensions in workplace relations'* (Collinson 2002: 283).

In this section I have described humour as an aspect of interaction which is highly multifunctional in workplace talk. Allowing participants to maintain good relationships with colleagues and foster collegiality, humorous talk is a form of play and as such it can only be achieved by close collaboration between speakers. This in turn results in the creation and maintenance of group solidarity (Coates 2007). Importantly, according to Eggins and Slade (1997: 167), humour connects the *'micro-interactive, interpersonal contexts of private life'* with the *'macro-social contexts of institutionalised public life'*. The ways in which individuals use and respond to humour enacts their *'positioning in the culture'* rather than solely representing their personal response to immediately present co-participants.

From the exploration of small talk and humour in the preceding sections it appears clear that instances of relational talk are interwoven and embedded into the fabric of everyday workplace interaction. The humorous aspect of workplace discourse, as with small talk, has implications for the ways in which deaf and hearing employees interact. Consequently, the ways in which SLIs manage these elements of workplace discourse will have a bearing on interaction between primary participants, with the SLI's role potentially impacting on integration and understanding between deaf and hearing employees.

2.2.7 Multi-party interaction and the collaborative floor

One of the defining features identified from the preceding discussion regarding small talk and humour is the collegial and collaborative nature of such interaction. This section will extend this aspect further, concentrating on the ways in which participants can work together in team meetings, thus building a collaborative floor. I will suggest that in team meetings participants to a large extent work cooperatively, building on each others' comments and contributions and using aspects of talk such as overlapping speech, simultaneous speech and supportive feedback signals to create richly patterned and highly contextualised interactive discourse. In illustrating this dimension of workplace talk, my aim is to make the reader aware of the challenges that this type of event can present to an SLI and thus to the deaf employee. This section begins by examining some of the features of turn-taking within dyadic or one-to-one interaction, before moving on to look at overlapping or simultaneous talk, feedback signals and the construction of the collaborative floor.

Turn-taking conventions are a fundamental and generic aspect of the organisation of interaction (Drew & Heritage 1992), as one of the basic interactional principles is that the roles of speaker and listener change (Roy 1989). Two or more people take turns at speaking, typically avoiding speaker overlap and overly long periods of silence (Yule 1985). Speaker change and the allocation of turns at speaking is not something that is automatically achieved but rather is '*always actively managed through talk*' (Gumperz 1992: 304). Observers of any face-to-face interaction can perceive that talk proceeds through a sequence of turns (Roy 1989), and it is therefore clear that participants need some basic management skills to enable them to integrate their performance with that of other speakers and listeners (Graddol et al. 1994). On the surface the skills involved in turn-taking appear to be effortless and habitual, but closer examination demonstrates that speakers and listeners exchange highly complex signals which steer their conversational behaviour (Graddol et al. 1994).

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) produced a seminal work on how turns are structured in conversation. They identified a number of aspects of turn-taking that

enabled participants to recognise when a speaker was about to hand over a turn, or when there might be an opportunity to take a turn. The mechanism that regulates turn-taking is a complex one, with participants combining discourse and syntactic knowledge to enable them to estimate when a turn will occur and then identifying non-verbal cues used by the speaker to identify turn-relevance places (Graddol et al. 1994). Both speakers and listeners are engaged in a complex process of transmitting and receiving signals which indicate the relinquishing, allocating and taking of turns.

Cues embedded in participant's speech are recognised by listeners as potential points of speaker change (see Sacks et al. 1974). Turn-yielding cues can include intonation, paralanguage e.g. stress or drawl on the final syllable, changes in pitch or loudness, body movements such as hand gesticulation, and the use of stereotyped expressions such as '*you know*' or '*but uh*' (Duncan 1972: 286- 287). The current speaker can also select the next speaker by including the appropriate language in their turn to indicate they are about to hand over the turn. Participants can directly name the next speaker or, when it is clear who is being referred to, can use the pronoun 'you' or just say 'you' without looking at the person (Lerner 1993: 224). Turn-yielding cues contribute to the prompt recognition of the end of a turn, thus enabling participants to co-ordinate their turn exchanges with precision (Graddol et al. 1994).

Listeners access various forms of knowledge to anticipate what type of utterance will occur next within a discourse event and identify when a speaker is potentially about to complete a turn (Graddol et al. 1994). Participants will draw upon previous experiences of speech events, as well as their grammatical understanding of language and knowledge of discourse structures, to enable them to predict what will follow on from one speaker's contribution. Participants can also be active in contributing to making turn-taking a smoother process by indicating their readiness to take a turn. This can be achieved in different ways, such as beginning to make short subdued sounds (often repeated) such as a cough, clearing the throat or *hm* (van Herreweghe 2005) whilst the speaker is still talking, as well as utilising body shifts and/ or facial expressions to convey that they have something to say (Yule 1985). Participants can also signal their intention to take a turn with small hand movements to catch the eye of the current speaker or chair (van Herreweghe 2005).

There are problems with the explanation of how speakers and listeners accomplish smooth turn exchanges however, as such discourse cues can only provide an estimation of a turn-ending and turn exchanges can occur within 50 milliseconds of the speaker finishing, leaving the next contributor with a very small window of opportunity to take over the turn (Graddol et al. 1994). Sacks et al. (1974) note that turn-taking systems operate ‘locally’ rather than ‘globally’, i.e. participants cannot agree turn allocation in advance, but that it is something which is continually negotiated at each point where there is potential for speaker change.

The ways in which turns are distributed throughout interaction will depend to some extent on the individuals who constitute a particular CofP. Turn-organisation is very sensitive to ‘*the distributions of expertise and experience among the participants*’ (Graddol et al. 1994: 168) and differs according to other cultural contexts (Mesthrie et al. 2000). Participants who can draw on mutual experiences or shared understanding on a particular subject may be able to ‘*sustain an extended dialogue*’ which can exclude other parties from the interaction (Graddol et al. 1994: 168). Although it is suggested that casual conversations between equals should see a ‘*fair shares for all*’ principle in operation, this principle has a number of vulnerabilities (Graddol et al. 1994: 168). Two or more participants can potentially collaborate, intentionally or unwittingly, to exclude other participants from taking turns. Less confident or hesitant participants can also lose their turns or be forced to withdraw their bid through an inability to sustain their interjection in the ‘*cut and thrust*’ of the exchange (Graddol et al. 1994: 169).

In some speech events the choice of the next speaker can be to some extent pre-determined by the nature of that event, for example, in court proceedings (Sacks et al. 1974; Graddol et al. 1994). In workplace meetings the role of the chairperson needs to be considered. In an institutional setting, where meeting participants are likely to have established hierarchical relationships (e.g. team manager and staff members), and where meetings are controlled to a greater or lesser extent by a chairperson, there is also the potential for discourse to be more regulated in terms of turn-taking and turn allocation (van Herreweghe 2002). Appointed or agreed chairs generally have the right and responsibility to manage the interaction between participants (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009). This will of course depend on the degree of control the chairperson

exerts over the group, with some meetings having a more structured turn-taking framework than others. Nonetheless, chairpersons have the power to '*partially pre-allocate turns*' (Sacks et al. 1974: 729) and can use their position to determine the rights of speakers within the meeting, whilst also exercising their right to speak first. The chairperson may request that speakers raise their hands to indicate that they wish to take a turn and can also keep a list (mental or otherwise) of who is due the next turn. This scenario constitutes the rarely realised ideal. Evidence suggests that even in what could be characterised as formal meetings, participants can take the floor without requesting through the chair and that overlapping speech occurs, with participants speaking simultaneously or completing each other's sentences (van Herreweghe 2005). Most meetings will consist of a mixture of self-selection by participants and turns allocated by the chair, with the degree of formality influencing this balance. The more informal the meeting the closer the management of talk will be to the norms of conversational turn-taking, with increased '*self-selection and next-turn allocation by the current speaker*' (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009: 14).

Sacks et al.'s (1974) analysis of turn-taking was based on the assumption that one person speaks at a time and that talk is fairly democratically organised. However it is clear that turn-taking is considerably more complicated than participants taking regular turns, even between two participants. When turn-taking occurs in events which contain multiple participants, some of whom are from a different culture to that of the majority, set in an institutional domain and mediated by the presence of an interpreter, then it is perhaps easy to understand the multifaceted nature of the interaction that the current study attempts to address.

So far I have discussed some of the general principles of turn-taking systems within a relatively orderly exchange between participants in a one-to-one English speaking scenario. The purpose has been to highlight some of the complexities that can exist in the ways in which participants take turns within interactional discourse, as this aspect of interaction has a profound impact on the SLI's ability to manage multi-party discourse. It has shown that both speakers and listeners utilise a number of linguistic features which enable them to interactively negotiate the exchange of turns within a discourse event. In doing so they will access a set of finely tuned and largely unconscious skills, skills which will differ according to an individual's gender,

ethnicity, cultural background etc. I will next briefly consider the purpose of feedback signals before moving onto explore what happens when overlapping or simultaneous speech occurs.

Verbal and non-verbal feedback signals often form part of participants' overlapping speech patterns and are an essential way in which participants can indicate that they are supportively engaged in interaction. In order to signal their active involvement in a conversation, participants are expected to provide regular and appropriate feedback, selected from a wide range of interactional devices (Stubbe 1998). Also referred to as back-channelling and minimal responses (Mesthrie et al. 2000), verbal feedback signals can include the formulaic utterances such as *mmhm*, *mmm*, *aha*, *yeah* and *I see*, produced by speakers during another speaker's turn (Delin 2000; Holmes 2006a). Stubbe (1998: 258) includes '*brief vocalisations such as laughter*', minimal responses such as those mentioned above, and other brief expressions of overt support or agreement. These verbal contributions are generally analysed as conversational support provided by listeners to demonstrate their involvement, rather than speaking turns in their own right (Mesthrie et al. 2000). Non-verbal feedback tokens can include head nods, facial expression and the direction of eye-gaze (Stubbe 1998: 258), and can be indicative of the degree to which listeners are engaged in the interaction. Listeners make complex choices about what feedback signals are appropriate, and the meaning of both verbal and non-verbal feedback is determined by the context in which it occurs, the assumptions participants make about it, and their individual goals and aims in the interactive event (Stubbe 1998).

Stubbe (1998: 259) states that interactive norms '*tend to be socially and culturally relative*', which adds to the complexity of participants' decisions and choices. Different cultures will utilise and perceive feedback signals in different ways. It is important to note that in intercultural communication assumptions cannot be made about the ways in which feedback signals are being used. There are a number of other variables to be taken into consideration such as the context of the situation and the gender of participants and therefore not all members of a particular ethnic or cultural group will use feedback in the same way. Verbal and non-verbal feedback is therefore a powerful and complex interactive resource which participants can utilise to subtly influence the topical development and the interactive structure of a

conversation ‘*while at the same time conveying a wide range of affective meanings*’ (Stubbe 1998: 258).

Having highlighted the importance of verbal and non-verbal feedback in interactive discourse I now wish to pay attention to overlapping talk. Whilst the basic rule in English speaking cultures is ‘*no gap, no overlap*’ (Delin 2000: 194), speakers frequently display behaviour which indicates that participants do not always follow the ‘one person at a time’ rule in terms of turn-taking in interaction. This is particularly apparent in multi-party dialogue, where speaker overlap can frequently occur.

It is not possible to attribute only one meaning to overlapping or simultaneous speech. The practice of overlapping, i.e. beginning to speak when someone else is already speaking, can appear the same on the surface but in reality can have varied meaning and effects (Tannen 1990). Research has suggested that overlapping speech or simultaneous speech is not always indicative of interruption (Roy 1996), but can be seen as evidence of talk as a collaborative activity (Sacks et al. 1974), or ‘*rapport talk*’ (Tannen 1990: 202). Whilst studies have predominantly examined collaborative talk between participants in informal settings, given Fairclough’s (1992) suggestion of the ‘*conversationalisation*’ of institutional talk, and Drew and Heritage’s (1992: 28) observations of ‘*conversational*’ or ‘*quasi-conversational*’ modes of turn-taking within institutional settings, I believe that parallels can be drawn with elements of workplace talk.

Brief overlaps between speakers can occur quite frequently in conversation (Graddol et al. 1994). Duncan (1972) differentiates between simultaneous *talk* and simultaneous *turns*, reinforcing that whilst speakers can overlap during interaction, these overlaps are not necessarily instances where the listener is claiming or competing for a turn. Some instances of overlap can be attributed to a participant incorrectly anticipating their opportunity to take a turn, whilst others are related to the speed with which self-selecting speakers can take the floor (Sacks et al. 1974). According to Sacks et al.’s model (1974) long sequences of overlapping speech are treated as ‘*errors or violations*’ which need repairing (Mesthrie et al. 2000: 198). Overlapping contributions can also be perceived as interruptions. However,

interruptions are not straightforward in terms of empirical evidencing, and have implications of '*conversational dominance on behalf of the perpetrator*' (Graddol et al. 1994).

Participants may talk along at the same time as another speaker as a means of providing support or to change the topic (Tannen 1990). Attempts to change topic do not necessarily mean that the participant producing the overlapping talk is trying to dominate the conversation, it can indicate that they wish to demonstrate they share the speaker's experience, thus functioning as a '*mutual revelation device*' (Tannen 1990: 295). Whilst overlapping talk can be indicative of and potentially lead to communication breakdown, in a collaborative floor it can entail '*a richer multi-layered texture to talk*' with speakers demonstrating their shared perspective on the topic under discussion (Coates 2007: 39), thus enabling participants to demonstrate how finely tuned they are to each other (Davies 2003). Turns can be jointly constructed between speakers and overlapping speech accompanied by supportive minimal responses can be indicative of cooperative talk (Stubbe 1998). Furthermore, overlapping speech can be a marker of in-group solidarity and involvement in the interaction, with minimal response verbal feedback and/ or cooperative overlaps being used as strategies for achieving the goal of conversational solidarity (Stubbe 1998).

Speakers can demonstrate what Tannen (1990) refers to as 'high-involvement' traits, i.e. they give priority to showing enthusiastic involvement in the interaction. Cooperative overlaps are a way in which participants can signal high involvement with or solidarity with a speaker by giving extended feedback (Stubbe 1998). Cooperative overlap covers a wide range of features, including '*brief interjections, sentence completions, echoes and repetitions, through to more extended segments of simultaneous speech*' (Stubbe 1998: 266-267), as well as paraphrases, comments, elaborations, questions and feedback on feedback. Cooperative overlaps can occur when all speakers are aligned to a high-involvement style and consequently there is no resentment of overlapping talk (Tannen 1990). Some longer stretches of verbal feedback signals can therefore function to cooperatively maintain or extend the current speaker's floor-holding, without threatening their hold on the floor and can confirm that speaker and listener broadly share a common frame of reference (Stubbe 1998).

Finally, I wish to draw attention to a concept briefly referred to in the preceding section, this being the ability of participants to hold the floor when engaged in interaction. The *conversational floor* is an abstract concept referring to the conversational space available to speakers during a discourse event. Floor, according to Edelsky (1993: 209), is defined as '*the acknowledged what's-going-on within a psychological time/ space*'. Edelsky (1993: 196) identifies two main types of floor; one being the '*usual orderly one-at-a-time- floor*' or singly developed floor, whilst the other is a more collaborative undertaking. This second type of floor, referred to as a collaboratively developed floor, comprises of apparent '*free-for-alls*', and where multiple participants can be described as being '*on the same wavelength*'.

Edelsky notes that in collaboratively developed floors, participants work together in contributing to ideas, suggestions and jokes. Coates (2007: 39) sees overlapping speech as the '*inevitable outcome of joint ownership of the conversational floor*'. Edelsky inferred that participants were tuned into each other's talk from the long overlapping stretches that were present in her data, with participants simultaneously developing the same idea or answering the same question. Importantly, in these stretches turns were not yielded but appeared to be a variation on a theme. Joint development of meaning and/or function was also noted whereby individuals contributed to the same idea.

Edelsky's work therefore differentiates between a single or singly developed floor (which operates along the lines of the Sacks et al. model, 1974) and a collaborative or collaboratively developed floor which has the potential to be open to all participants at the same time. The single floor tends to be observed in more business orientated, formal settings, whilst the collaborative floor is less formal, and can stray from the agenda, with the main goal being to maintain social relations. Holmes (2006b) differentiates between maximally collaboratively constructed floors and minimally collaborative constructed or competitive floors. In the former, participants engage in interaction producing tightly woven contributions to create a '*richly textured, cohesive and highly integrated floor*' (Holmes 2006b: 36). In minimally collaborative constructed or competitive floors, participants compete for the floor, using jointly

constructed humour and disruptive interruptions. These instances are closer to one-at-a-time talk as they are not characterised by overlap.

2.2.8 The cultural dimension

The final point I would like to make in this section relates to the cultural dimension of workplace communication. Deafness can be equated with ‘gender’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘disability’ or a series of other words which ‘*denote structured patterns of representation, inequality and power differentials*’ in society generally, but also in organisations and within work groups (Trowler & Turner 2002: 252). Accordingly, deaf participants can be less powerfully positioned than their hearing peers in all of these spheres. All of the aspects of discourse discussed thus far will be influenced by the cultural backgrounds of the participants. Research has demonstrated that cultural differences can impact considerably on participants’ understanding of what is happening within the discourse event (see Roberts et al. 1992; Brislin & Yoshida 1994; Clyne 1996; Spencer-Oatey 2000; Scollon & Scollon 2001).

Shared norms imply community, with the negotiation of those norms reaffirming and requiring community (Eckert 1993). Culture-specific norms and a lack of shared assumptions as to how a particular discourse event should proceed can result in communication breakdown, misunderstandings, and judgments regarding an individual’s ability (Roberts et al. 1992). A participant interpreting another’s behaviour according to their own norms and expectations may ‘*attribute meanings that were never intended by their interlocutor*’ (Stubbe 1998: 285). In addition, when each participant interprets what is happening during interaction by their own standards, value judgments are inevitable (Stubbe 1998).

Problems arising from culturally-specific behaviour can impact on intercultural discourse in a number of ways. Turn-taking works smoothly and comfortably when interlocutors share a similar style of speaking or are sufficiently flexible to meet the style of others (Roberts et al. 1992). Participants adhering to different turn-taking systems or conventions can thus be characterised as behaving rudely, for example if they cut in on another speaker (Yule 1985). Likewise, the fact that listener feedback is used and interpreted within a local context, with constant negotiations and

renegotiations as to the ‘appropriateness’ of such feedback occurring predominantly at a subconscious level, means that the potential for miscommunication increases where there are different cultural norms (Stubbe 1998). When groups ‘talk past’ each other, the results can range from irritation or confusion through to complete misunderstanding. This in turn can lead to the establishment of negative attitudes ‘*which especially disadvantage members of those groups with the least power*’ (Stubbe 1998: 286). Deaf participants, for reasons outlined in the following section, are almost always operating from a disadvantaged position in the workplace setting.

There are a number of difficulties that can arise when there are contrasting norms between a majority and minority cultural group. Miscommunication can occur, resulting in a negative effect on organisational outcomes and the ways in which the minority cultural group can progress at work (Kell et al. 2007). When one particular group is politically and culturally dominant in a society, their ways of conducting meetings will be perceived as ‘*normal and unmarked*’ (Kell et al 2007: 310). The overriding structure and processes of workplace meetings characteristically reflect the expectations and practices of the dominant culture, with the discourse patterns and language used in the meetings determined by the majority group. Where meeting norms are subtly altered to reflect those of the minority culture, members of the dominant majority group may view these differences as deficiencies, with any ‘*divergence from the norms of the dominant culture*’ perceived as a lack of management skills (Kell et al. 2007: 310).

Cultural differences in meeting styles could impact on employees from the minority group in a number of ways. The processes used in meetings by minority members and the outcomes of the meetings could be undervalued, with related organisational outcomes also being negatively affected. Furthermore, failure by individuals from the minority to correctly interpret what is happening could hinder or obstruct their progress at work and could lead to organisational goals being impeded (Kell et al. 2007).

In intercultural contexts therefore, there is clearly the possibility for different meanings to go unrecognised, with communication difficulties or breakdown being ascribed to ‘*interpersonal or intergroup differences in attitude or personality*’ (Stubbe

1998: 285). This can lead to subordinate groups being negatively evaluated or stereotyped (Stubbe 1998), and may result in subordinate groups adapting to the majority cultural norms, as failure to do so is likely to lead to miscommunication and being negatively judged (Fairclough 1989; Stubbe 1988). These findings have clear parallels with the experiences of minority deaf employees within hearing dominated workplace settings, particularly in relation to dominant norms.

2.2.9 Summary

This section has focused on the ways in which interaction takes place within the workplace setting. I have suggested that achieving workplace goals is a very active process, with participants using a wide variety of highly complex strategies for negotiating discourse. I have explored definitions of what constitutes a workplace or institution and have concentrated on workplace meetings, both as discourse events and as constituting a CofP. I have examined some of the elements of workplace meetings, highlighting the importance of collaborative and collegial interaction, before moving on to discuss small talk and occurrences of humour within the workplace domain.

I have demonstrated that in multi-party talk participants can work together to produce collaborative and cooperative discourse. I have suggested that individuals need to understand the turn-taking systems that underpin interaction in order to be able to participate fully. I have shown that overlapping talk can be evidence of individuals working together to create a collaborative floor. Finally, I have emphasised the fact that, as with all language use, the participants' cultural background and norms will impact on the way in which they interact. This can be due to cultural differences or may be attributed to varying conventions across diverse communities of practice. The less participants share in terms of cultural assumptions and their linguistic signalling, the greater the amount of language that is required to negotiate meaning (Roberts et al. 1992). In interpreted interaction between deaf and hearing participants the majority of the responsibility for this negotiation lies with the SLI. Section 2.4 will explore the SLI's role in this process, but first the deaf employee's perspective is outlined in section 2.3.

2.3 Deaf People at Work

'In an everyday world where it is taken for granted that most communication involves speaking and/ or listening, the activities of a deaf or hard-of hearing person may be substantially limited in the workplace' (Emerton et al. 1996: 52).

In order to place deaf people's employment experiences in context, this section begins with an outline of deaf people and the deaf community before moving on to look at some of the issues facing deaf people in the workplace environment.

2.3.1 Deaf people and the deaf community

Deaf people are not a homogenous group, but can range from those who were born deaf, to those who acquire a hearing loss later in life. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the group of profoundly deaf people who use BSL as their first or preferred language and who consider themselves members of the deaf community. In the UK it is believed that approximately 50,000 to 70,000 of deaf people use BSL, most of whom were either born deaf or who became deaf in their early childhood (Harris & Thornton 2005). These are people who by choice and experience can be seen as culturally deaf (Kyle & Pullen 1988), having attended deaf schools, meeting in recognisable deaf establishments and taking part in identifiable cultural events and social activities (Kyle and Pullen 1988; Ladd 2003). The use of signed forms of communication as a *'core value and a defining marker of identity and group solidarity'* is a key characteristic (McEntee-Atalianis 2006: 25). This, together with the identification of shared experiences and participation in group activities, form to some extent the foundations of deaf life (Trowler & Turner 2002).

The deaf community is diverse in its cultural, social and linguistic make-up and membership is not determined by audiological status (McEntee-Atalianis 2006: 25). Some individuals with a hearing loss will choose to associate with the hearing majority culture, whilst there are hearing individuals (people with deaf siblings, parents, friends or co-workers etc) who will feel that they have a deaf identity and belong to the deaf world (McEntee-Atalianis 2006: 25). The significant factor in determining who is a member of the deaf community appears to be *'attitudinal*

Deafness', whereby an individual defines him-or herself as belonging to the deaf community and is accepted as such by others in that community (Baker & Padden 1978). Within the deaf community, deafness is likely to be seen in a positive light, demonstrating that individuals belong to that community and culture, in strong contrast to the medical model of deafness as perceived by hearing people (Trowler & Turner 2002).

Society generally views deaf people through the lens of the medical model of disability, whereby the assumption is made that physical, sensory or mental differences produce a defective member of society (Kyle & Pullen 1988). The majority of hearing people still predominantly view deaf people as a 'disabled' group, rather than a cultural and linguistic minority demanding equal status (McEntee-Atalianis 2006). This cultural category of 'deafness', and its associated stigmatising label for persons who are deaf, was in the main created and sustained by interest groups made up of hearing people (Rose & Kriger 1995). This view is reinforced through the contact that deaf people have with hearing professionals, whereby need is translated into deficiency and the focus is on deviation rather than difference (Kyle & Pullen 1988). The definition of deafness by hearing people means that deaf people are not understood in the language and expressions rooted in their own experience, but are instead described and labelled by hearing professionals (Branson & Miller 1995). The result is that deaf people have been '*colonised, studied and described by outsiders*' (Branson & Miller 1995: 170).

2.3.2 Barriers to employment and the Disability Discrimination Act

In the UK, the population of disabled⁶ adults is estimated at 11 million, approximately one in five of the total adult population (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005). The estimated numbers of disabled people not engaged in paid work varies from 49 % (DEC 2004) to approximately 60 % (Barnes & Mercer 2005). In terms of deaf

⁶ Whilst there are arguments against profoundly deaf people being classed as disabled (Finklestein 1991; Harris 1995; Lane 1995), for the purposes of legislative and social policy they are categorised as such (Harris & Bamford 2001) and therefore the inclusion of literature relating to disabled people is deemed relevant.

people, the recent RNID report 'Opportunity blocked' (2006) shows that 63% of deaf and hard of hearing people are in employment (compared to 75% of the general population as a whole).

Disabled people in the workplace are generally afforded low status, with the main barriers in terms of achieving a fulfilling and satisfactory employment arising from '*inappropriate myths and stereotypes, environmental barriers, and limited access to assistive technology*' (Braddock & Bachelder 1994:1). They earn considerably less than their able-bodied peers, tend to have incomes below the poverty line and are more likely to take early retirement (Barnes & Mercer 2005). More likely to face widespread, multiple discrimination in the labour market (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005), disabled people experience a substantially poorer quality of life than their non-disabled peers (Barnes 1992).

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), passed in 1995, began the process of addressing many of the barriers and injustices faced by disabled people in society (Elliot 2007). In terms of employment, the DDA aims to address 'unreasonable' discrimination in the workplace, covering areas such as recruitment, promotion, training, working conditions and terms of employment (Barnes & Mercer 2005). The employment provisions of the Act places a duty on employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to physical features of premises or to employment arrangements, if either of these aspects place disabled employees at a substantial disadvantage (Thornton 2003).

For the purpose of the Act, disability is defined as '*a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities*' (Thornton 2003). This medical definition of disability, whereby the underlying conditions and functional limitations are highlighted, means that the emphasis is on the individual in terms of curative or rehabilitative solutions (Burchardt 2000; Barnes & Mercer 2005; Elliot 2007). This conflicts with the social model of disability, where the barriers created by society are given prominence (Oliver 1996), and the responsibility for ensuring access is placed firmly with society as a whole (Ladd 2003).

2.3.3 Access to work

In the UK, estimates suggest that under the DDA 1.4 million deaf people require adjustments to their workplace to allow them to work in a safe and efficient manner (Bradshaw 2002). Of this number, not all will be profoundly deaf, but will have some degree of hearing loss which results in communication difficulties. The Access to Work scheme (AtW), a government initiative introduced in 1994, provides support for employers and disabled employees (those meeting the DDA 1995 definition of disability), enabling disabled individuals to undertake work (Thornton 2003). AtW provides funding to address some of the additional costs that might be incurred through employing a disabled person, e.g. special aids and equipment in the workplace, adaptations to workplace premises and equipment, as well as support workers and communicator support for interviews (Thornton et al. 2001; Thornton 2003). This ‘human adaptation’ aspect includes signed language interpreters for deaf employees, and forms the majority of support provided to deaf people under this scheme. The deaf employee’s needs are assessed through AtW and they are then allocated a number of support hours.

In the UK, SLIs are therefore generally employed to work with deaf people who use BSL as their first or preferred language, in what are mainly hearing dominated workplace environments. Contracted on both a staff and freelance basis, SLIs can work in a wide variety of settings, ranging from offices, social services, and education, to factory floors. They interpret across a wide spectrum of interactions, including team meetings, formal and informal discussions, training events, supervisions, conferences and everyday social workplace interaction. The frequency of their work in this environment varies greatly, dependent upon the deaf employee’s requirements and their allocated AtW budget. SLIs can therefore be booked to interpret for a two hour meeting, once a month or may find themselves working with the same deaf client, seven hours per day, five days a week, over a number of years. If assigned to the deaf employee across the normal pattern of a working day, the SLI will usually be located in the same room as the deaf employee and will be expected to interpret as and when required.

There are a number of problems inherent in AtW provision. Procedures and paperwork are seen as being overly bureaucratic and unnecessary (Thornton et al. 2001; DWP 2008). Crucially, the nature of the AtW assessment process means that the deaf person and their needs are seen as the ‘problem’, which then requires addressing. This perspective results in the employers’ practices and workplace structures, which are potentially discriminatory, not being considered as contributing to the difficulties that deaf employees experience (Kyle & Dury 2004).

For most employers, the assumption is that AtW adequately addresses the issues of access to information and communication for deaf employees, but research suggests that this is probably not the case (Kyle & Dury 2004). This is further supported by the fact that the current shortage of BSL/ English interpreters (Brien et al. 2002) means that deaf employees are struggling to secure adequate interpreting services, despite being eligible for support under the scheme (Turner 2007a). If all deaf people were assessed under the AtW programme and allocated interpreter support, it would be impossible to match supply to demand (Kyle et al. 2005), with RNID (2006) statistics suggesting that one in five people who require an SLI at work do not have access to one.

2.3.4 Institutionalised audism

The exclusion of deaf and disabled people from employment opportunities is set within the wider social organisation of the labour market, which in turn is linked to the broader issues of access to education, information and transport, as well as cultural and media representations of disabled people (Barnes & Mercer 2005). Society’s negative perception of disability and how it ‘*deals with difference*’ (Kyle & Pullen 1998: 51) directly impacts on deaf peoples’ working lives. This section looks briefly at the social outcomes of stigma (Goffman 1963), before considering the issue of institutionalised audism.

‘Stigma’ is described as being an undesired difference, i.e. a trait possessed by an individual that obtrudes into social interaction, drawing attention away from other attributes they might possess (Goffman 1963). Predominantly a social construct, stigma is influenced and shaped not only by the broader cultural and historical

contexts, but also by situational meaning and situational factors (Dovidio et al. 2000). Individuals without stigma can hold a belief that those people with a stigma are not quite human, and accordingly can exercise discrimination as a result of that belief (Goffman 1963). This discrimination, albeit largely unconscious and unintended, reduces the life chances and opportunities of the stigmatised individual. As a result individuals are dehumanised, threatened, disliked and stereotyped (Dovidio et al. 2000), and can lack full acceptance in the view of dominant society (Oyserman & Swim 2001). Stigmatisation, then, can exact considerable costs at all levels, personally, interpersonally and socially (Dovidio et al. 2000).

The visibility of an individual's stigma is a crucial factor in how the stigmatised person is viewed by others (Goffman 1963). If the stigma disrupts and intrudes upon social interaction, all participants can experience levels of anxiety resulting in both stigmatised and non-stigmatised individuals trying to minimise the interaction or contact between them (Hbel et al. 2000). For profoundly deaf people, their 'stigma' is identified and made visible as soon as they begin to communicate, with the use of a signed language likely to be viewed as a stigmatising mark. The deaf employee's stigma is further marked by their deviance from the norm, i.e. they require an SLI to communicate. Difficulties in communication can lead to other assumptions being made about the deaf individual's ability, as other 'imperfections' are attributed as a result of the original 'fault' (Goffman 1963; Hbel et al. 2000). The intercultural elements of deaf/ hearing interaction undoubtedly bring into play hearing peoples' unconscious and automatic '*culturally specific inferential practices*' (Gumperz 1992: 302), with pejorative judgements being made about deaf peoples' contribution to the interaction. The combination of unequal power relations and cultural stigmatisation can result in judgements about the deaf employee's ability, based on a lack of shared linguistic knowledge. Thus, for deaf employees, questions are raised about their ability to perform their job, to socialise, be a part of a team etc. If communicative practices are stigmatised, then the continuing presence of the SLI to 'help' correct this deficiency may reinforce the attitude of hearing employees.

An understanding of the stigmatisation of deaf employees and the attitudes held by the hearing majority enables the examination of issues of oppression and institutionalised audism within the workplace. The combination of the stigma of

deafness, with the attempts by hearing people to discourage the use of a signed language and '*otherwise undermine Deaf people's linguistic and cultural integrity*', are strongly suggestive of oppression (Leonard et al. 2002: 5). Dominant groups can be reluctant to accept that their good intentions might be perceived by the minority group as anything other than what they intended. Their lack of understanding of how inequalities are formed and transformed in society, and of how the processes generating linguistic and cultural deprivation play a vital part in the reproduction of inequalities, prevents them from seeing the disabling nature of the environments in which they function (Branson & Miller 1995). Accordingly, the majority group in society is always uncomfortable, if not sometimes outraged, by the suggestion that they might be oppressors. However, the harsh truth is that as a minority group, deaf people have long suffered from oppression from the dominant hearing majority (Baker-Shenk 1985). Whilst not all oppressive behaviour is malicious in nature (Trowler & Turner 2002), the label of oppression cannot be rejected by the oppressor on the basis that they mean well (Kyle & Pullen 1988).

Thompson (1993: 61) referring to racism, states that it is '*built into the structure of society and its dominant institutions*', with the oppression and discrimination that is faced by people from ethnic minority groups not being a reflection of individual prejudice, but rather '*a reflection of discriminatory structures and practices*'. Through the consideration of deaf people as a linguistic and cultural minority parallels can be drawn with what Turner (2007a) refers to as institutionalised audism. The pervasive, and often unconscious, attitudes that are embedded in major institutions, together with the discrimination directed at deaf people due to their hearing status, constitute institutionalised audism (Turner et al. 2003). The application of this frame of reference allows the consideration of the frequently '*de-personalised but deceptively powerful oppression*' which deaf people routinely experience (Turner 2007a: 63), at the crux of which is the ignorance surrounding the language choices deaf people make (Turner et al. 2003).

Deaf people have always been represented as the 'other' (Ladd 2003; Taylor & Darby 2003), and consequently have been seen as needing 'their' problems sorted out for them. This attitude extends into the workplace, which is dominated by hearing norms and practices, and where lack of hearing is considered the defining aspect of the deaf employee's identity. Efforts to make the work domain accessible generally centre on

this status, with technological solutions providing the focus. Little, if any, consideration is given to making serious adjustments in terms of deaf peoples' linguistic minority status, and thus oppression and discrimination is perpetuated. There is a difference between creating equality of opportunity and equality of outcome (Rose & Kiger 1995), and the ideal of enabling a deaf employee to access the workplace on an equal basis to their hearing peers has yet to be matched by the required resources and attitudinal shift.

2.3.5 Deaf people and issues of power

Consideration of both stigma and institutionalised audism assists us to see the challenges deaf people face in making society aware of their needs. Many of the negative and stereotypical beliefs about deaf people are held by those in positions of power, e.g. employers, educationalists etc. (Rose & Kiger 1995). Deprived of economic and social resources, and in the main reliant on hearing advocates and professionals to communicate their needs (Kyle & Pullen 1988), deaf people have traditionally been unable to challenge the stereotypical views held by society and have thus been disadvantaged in terms of power. There are many different ways of defining power. This study adopts the social constructionist approach, whereby language is a crucial means of enacting power and, at the same time, is a vital element in the construction of social reality (Holmes & Stubbe 2003).

Deaf people live in a world where *'the operation of power is more stark and visible than is normally the case'* (Trowler & Turner 2002: 249). A minority group is defined as such specifically because it lacks power in relation to a dominant group (Rose & Kiger 1995). Hearing people have traditionally held very powerful positions in relation to deaf peoples' lives (Baynton 1996), beginning within family life (most deaf children are born into predominantly hearing families), continuing throughout deaf peoples' educational experiences (see Lane 1984, 1985; Branson & Miller 1995; Ladd 2003) and extending into their social worlds (Turner 2007a). Power relationships between deaf and hearing people are therefore heavily weighted by what has gone before and exist *'within a complex space subject to multiple forces'* (Trowler & Turner 2002: 231).

Branson & Miller (1995) describe power as a dynamic relationship, whereby one person's access to resources is controlled by another. Importantly, this control is not something exacted solely by individuals on a temporary basis, but is part of a wider structured relationship between categories of people. Power can therefore be seen as an ongoing process and one that contributes to the development of discriminatory processes, with certain physical conditions, behaviours and ideas being seen as superior to others (Branson & Miller 1995). It is vital to recognise that power is conveyed and enacted through experience. Deaf people are socialised into expecting that their roles in society will be subordinate to that of the hearing majority, with the result that they are deprived of the power they need to alter their situation across all levels, politically, socially or economically (Kyle & Pullen 1988). Society is 'politically loaded' with power unevenly distributed across the social order, resulting in individuals being subject to a variety of forces and constraints when attempting to locate themselves within that society (Taylor & Darby 2003). Whilst deafness can be a practical barrier to individuals participating in society and accessing services, information and interaction, in reality it is deaf peoples' marginalisation as a cultural and linguistic minority which presents the biggest hurdle.

Power is also wielded in deaf peoples' experience of the workplace, where communication rights can be withheld or suppressed (Turner et al. 2003). In the workplace environment, as Turner et al. (2003) highlight, information quite clearly is power. It is common for deaf employees to be 'the last to know', with hearing people having the control as to when information is passed on. 'I'll tell you later' is a phrase which is highly emotionally charged for deaf people, one which they have generally experienced throughout their childhood and education, and subsequently find themselves subjected to in their adult working life (see Turner et al. 2003; Turner 2007a).

Thus far I have discussed the deaf community as being diverse in its constitution, with membership not being determined by audiological status but rather by a number of other factors, including self-definition of belonging. I have made the point that within the deaf community deafness is likely to be perceived positively, in strong contrast to the beliefs held by the dominant hearing majority who generally adhere to a medical model of deafness. The relationship between deaf people and the dominant hearing

majority group has been examined, with the focus directed to stigmatisation, oppression, and the relatively powerless positioning of the deaf community. The following section will carry forward these concepts but locate them within the specific setting of the workplace, exploring some of the ways in which the workplace is constructed and maintained by the hearing majority, and how this can result in oppression and institutionalised audism for the deaf employee.

2.3.6 Deaf people and employment

Deaf people have become more visible in the workplace since the industrialisation of employment. At this time, no longer supported within an agricultural society, deaf people moved into manufacturing trades, as this was seen as an area where their disability did not affect their ability to be a productive workforce member. Examinations of deaf peoples' employment patterns conclude that in the past deaf people have traditionally been downwardly mobile, working in semi- and unskilled jobs, and have had little opportunity to achieve promotion (Allsop 1997; Kyle & Dury 2004).

Over the last twenty years the nature of deaf employment has noticeably changed (Kyle & Dury 2004), as more deaf people have begun to move into 'white-collar' professional occupations (Kyle et al. 2005). Deaf people are now working in a wide range of fields, from education and social services to information technology and local government (RNID 2006). However, Kyle and Dury (2004) could find little evidence of deaf people progressing into the upper levels of professional/ managerial groups in society. Figures from a recent AtW study also suggest that deaf users of the AtW programme are employed predominantly in non-manual, white collar and professional jobs (Thornton et al. 2001⁷). There are very few senior deaf professionals in the workplace (Bristoll 2008).

⁷ It is likely that deaf employees in these employment tiers will have a more easily evidenced need for, and access to, workplace support through AtW (compared with deaf people in manual trades). The limitations of these figures should be recognised when considering their true reflection of deaf peoples' status in the workplace domain.

Despite the shift towards more positive employment opportunities for deaf people, brought about in the main through improved access to education, changes in societal attitudes towards inclusion, and as the result of government initiatives (Kyle & Dury 2004), deaf people still face many barriers in workplace settings. It is important to note that the vast majority of deaf people work in environments with hearing colleagues or where work practices are designed for (and by) hearing people, and are constrained by their norms (Turner et al. 2002). The fact that the majority of workplaces are established, organised and maintained by hearing people means that the dominant norms of the workplace are hearing ones. Faced with linguistic barriers from birth to adulthood, deaf people are denied access to these conventions and have experienced decades of discrimination and marginalisation in the field of employment (Kyle & Pullen 1998; Kendall 1999; Valentine & Skelton 2003b).

A number of studies have evidenced that deaf people, although cognitively able, have traditionally experienced major problems in the workplace (Kendall 1999; Skelton & Valentine 2000; Young et al. 2000; Turner et al. 2003; Kyle & Dury 2004; Grant 2005; RNID 2006). These problems range from under-employment, to communication barriers, discrimination, isolation, exclusion from the workplace, lack of promotion and experience of negative effects on emotional and mental health. Deaf people have a lack of control across many areas of their lives, ranging from education, to healthcare, to within their home (Kyle et al. 2005), and it is reasonable to assume that this lack of control extends into the workplace domain.

Deaf peoples' workplace experiences reveal gaps between inclusive ideals and lived realities. Harris & Bamford (2001) report lack of awareness and flexibility in employers regarding expectations for deaf workers; employee reluctance to seek workplace support; inaccessible application procedures for requesting support; problems with knowledge about and the provision of work-related equipment; and an overall sense that provision remains service-led rather than needs-led. Employers appear to be failing to follow basic good employment practice (Grant 2005), with deaf employees not being afforded the same fundamental rights as their hearing peers.

2.3.7 Deaf people and workplace disadvantage

In terms of employment, Kendall (1999) summarises the problems that deaf people experience as being: linguistic disadvantage, identity disadvantage, educational and knowledge disadvantage, and finally representational and perceptual disadvantages. This last category has been outlined in the preceding sections, whereby societal attitudes to deaf and disabled people have been explored. The other categories are particularly pertinent to the current study, and are aspects used to illustrate the issues facing deaf people in the workplace.

Linguistic barriers- the implications for deaf employees

Communication is fundamental to deaf peoples' ability to achieve equality and inclusion in the workplace (Grant 2005). Linguistic disadvantage is therefore somewhat obvious, but has many different facets, each of which has far-reaching implications. Deaf people who use BSL are reliant on this communicative medium for both access to information and interpersonal communication and can therefore face considerable barriers in terms of their interaction at work, due to the fact that they do not share a communication mode with their hearing co-workers (Kyle & Dury 2004).

Through their use of BSL in the work environment the deaf employee is visibly failing to conform to the hearing norms of the workplace, which in turn challenges the linguistic skills of the hearing majority (Kendall 1999). Importantly, the 'problem' is seen to stem from the users of the minority language form (Montgomery & Laidlaw 1993; Isrealite et al. 2002, Turner 2007a), but in reality *deafness* itself is not a barrier to participating in employment, nor to interacting with other employees or accessing information (Kyle & Dury 2004). Rather, the difficulties arise because of deaf peoples' minority status and their different language and experience, resulting in them being '*marginalised by the factors that underpin their own community identity*' (Kyle et al. 2005: 7).

Linguistic barriers affect deaf peoples' awareness of workplace culture and their hearing colleagues' behavioural norms in that specific setting, creating a dual

deficiency of perception (Kyle 2001), characterised by each group's lack of mutual understanding about the needs and different life perspectives of each group. Deaf people are denied the opportunity to learn about workplace norms and practices in the same way as their hearing peers and are therefore less likely to have a full understanding of the complex rules, both formal and informal, that govern this domain. In the main, as in general contact with hearing people, deaf people are expected to adapt, modify and conform to hearing norms of interaction, with hearing people appearing to make little to no change to their communication (Kyle et al. 2005).

Deaf people have to contend with linguistic barriers in almost every aspect of their working life, ranging from situations such as formal meetings and training events, to snatched conversations in the hallway or discussions over tea breaks. Group situations such as staff meetings, training sessions and work-related social occasions create the most difficult workplace challenges for deaf people (Kyle et al. 2005; Punch et al. 2007). Accessing information in meetings presents particular difficulties (Turner 2007a), and is the source of immense frustration for deaf employees.

Social integration with colleagues can be particularly severely compromised (RNID 2006) and thus deaf employees frequently struggle to join in with the more social aspects of workplace discourse, such as small talk and humour, the implications of which have been discussed earlier in this chapter. The inability to 'overhear' or pick up information through casual and informal conversations (Lichtig et al. 2004), results in an incomplete picture of all the nuances and subtleties that make up communication in the work environment, and can lead to deaf and hard of hearing workers struggling to relate to their colleagues, thus feeling isolated and lonely in the workplace (Foster & MacLeod 2003; Kyle & Dury 2004; Punch et al. 2007).

Personal friendships at work are an important benefit of employment for most people (Punch et al. 2007), and small talk is an essential element in assisting employees to form relationships in the workplace (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). Building relationships at work is a challenge for anyone, especially when just starting out on their career, and communication difficulties add considerably to this challenge (Turner 2007a). The inability to share general life experiences, funny/ serious stories, social comment

and disclosure about their personal lives means that deaf employees are prevented from fully participating in office life (Grant 2005), resulting in their frequent exclusion from '*crucial insider knowledge*' (Trowler & Turner 2002: 243).

Humour plays an important role in workplace interaction and failing to understand a joke clearly marks you as an outsider (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). As discussed in section 2.2, most workplace humour requires insider understanding of the context in which it is located. This presents a considerable challenge to any new employee, but for a deaf employee the task is even more difficult. A universal phenomenon, humour is nonetheless culture-dependent and how, why and when it is used may vary between languages and cultures (Boxer & Cortés-Conde 1997; Rogerson-Revell 2007). Accordingly, a deaf employee's concept of what is humorous may differ considerably to that of their hearing colleague. Humour can be an essential element in establishing and cementing workplace relationships, with some co-workers establishing a customary joking relationship (Norrick 1993), and engaging in frequent banter (Koester 2004b). The difficulty for the deaf employee is that they are to some extent trapped in a vicious circle- they often struggle to make the initial basic connection with their colleagues, which in turn excludes them from engaging in relational talk and developing closer working bonds.

The communication barriers experienced by deaf employees can impede their ability to become a full member of the workplace, and to progress within their job. An employee who is attuned to the ethos and needs of the organisation for which they work will understand their role within the organisation, know what is expected of them and feel a part of the organisation (Mills & Murgatroyd 1991). However, this can only occur with access to the socialisation and training that allows employees to become part of the organisation, areas which deaf people often miss out on (see Grant 2005). Many important aspects of organisational socialisation take place outside of formal induction procedures, with access to tacit and shared knowledge and taken-for-granted understanding being essential (Trowler & Turner 2002). Deaf employees are therefore rarely, if ever, fully integrated and institutionalised in their particular workplace. Communication and social interaction difficulties also present problems in securing job promotion or career development (Turner 2007a; Bristoll 2008).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the impact of continually being marginalised and excluded within the workplace (see Grant 2005 on mental health issues for deaf employees). Overall, deaf people report negative emotions and feelings relating to their workplace experiences, such as frustration, dissatisfaction, loneliness and anger, mainly resulting from the communication barriers inherent within this setting (Kyle & Dury 2004), reflecting the experiences they have when interacting with hearing people generally (Young et al. 1998). Deaf employees report that they are '*always the last to know*' (Turner 2007a: 56), a statement that holds immense emotional weight when the overall life experience of deaf people is taken into account. It is unsurprising then that deaf employees experience stress and dissatisfaction in the workplace. Frequently the only deaf person within a company or organisation, deaf employees often have little choice but to confide in and offload to the SLI. This has implications for the relationship between the SLI, and between deaf and hearing employees, and is explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

Educational and knowledge disadvantage- an effective barrier to employment

Employment cannot be separated from the education process, indeed the two are inextricably bound together, and this has considerable implications for deaf people (Turner et al. 2003), whereby they frequently enter the workplace from a position of educational disadvantage (Turner 2007a)⁸. Accordingly, many deaf people may work alongside their hearing peers without having attained the same levels of training and qualification, and are thus unable to participate on an equal level to hearing colleagues (Lichtig et al. 2004).

Deaf people commonly have lower levels of literacy than their hearing peers (Kyle et al. 2005) and poor success in written English is often a deeply felt source of pain, embarrassment and shame, with its roots firmly placed in deaf peoples' educational experiences (Turner 2007a). This lack of literacy has a dramatic impact on deaf peoples' ability to manage in the workplace environment. Letters, memos, circulars

⁸ The history of deaf peoples' education and the effect that this has had on their social, economic and personal wellbeing is extensively documented (see Ladd 2003; McEntee-Atalianis 2006).

and emails are all part of everyday workplace correspondence. Essential information such as disciplinary procedures, rule books, organisational policies and procedures are all generally produced in English at a level that is mostly inaccessible for the deaf employee (Kyle & Dury 2004; Grant 2005). Company jargon and acronyms are also likely to present problems, due to the deaf employee's inability to *'tune in'* to these aspects of workplace talk (Grant 2005: 23). Given that one of the defining characteristics of a CofP is a common reference system or shared repertoire of linguistic norms, including using the same jargon or *'system of verbal shortcuts'* (Holmes & Stubbe 2003: 2) this can be a highly relevant aspect of workplace interaction. Additionally, written material forms an essential part of workplace meetings, with minutes, an agenda, reference materials etc. central to the structure of formal meetings (Asmuß & Svennevig 2009).

Unaware that spoken/written languages are second languages to many deaf people (Kendall 1999), work colleagues frequently make erroneous assumptions about a deaf employee's ability to access textual material as a 'fall-back' or alternative for face-to-face interaction (Turner 2007a). The struggle with information provided in a second language results in the deaf employee experiencing a working life where access is at best piecemeal and second hand, or in the worst case scenario, completely denied, therefore frequently operating at a considerable disadvantage across a wide range of workplace practices.

2.3.8 Summary

This section has discussed the literature in relation to deaf people and their access to the workplace, clearly demonstrating that they are frequently placed at a considerable disadvantage to their hearing peers. I have shown that deafness can be viewed positively by those who consider themselves members of the deaf community but that the dominant hearing majority tend to perceive deaf people as being disabled and thus stigmatised. The oppression of deaf people, resulting in part from institutionalised audism, has been discussed and further explored within the specific setting of the workplace.

The significant barriers that prevent profoundly deaf people from entering and participating fully in the world of work have been outlined, demonstrating that workplace is not configured to suit their needs. The barriers that exist, along with breakdowns in communication, a lack of understanding about different life-worlds and experiences of work all have a deleterious effect on the deaf employee's ability to become a full member of the workplace.

2.4 The Role of the Signed Language Interpreter

This section outlines the literature considered integral to this study, examining the major themes, concepts and models which have a bearing on the SLI's role and function in discourse and interaction, and which I consider germane to the SLI's position in the workplace setting. I begin by briefly charting the development of signed language interpreting as a profession (2.4.1), highlighting some of the issues that continue to resonate throughout current interpreter practice and behaviour. I then explore dialogue interpreting (2.4.2) as the most appropriate category in which to locate interpreting in workplace settings and the most comparable form of interpreting when considering the SLI's role in this domain. Following this I examine the role of the SLI as an active third participant in interpreted interaction and consider this in relation to previous roles and role metaphors linked to SLIs. The concept of the *designated interpreter* is outlined and I review the limited literature pertaining to the SLI's function and impact in the workplace setting. In section 2.4.4 I draw attention to issues of power inherent in the SLI's role. I then go on to examine the ways in which the SLI can influence and impact upon the discourse event (2.4.5), particularly in relation to workplace meetings as a CofP. This leads to 2.4.6, with a summary of the issues examined within this section.

2.4.1 The development of signed language interpreting as a profession

Interpreting between languages has long been a human activity (Cokely 1992; Moody 2007) and signed language interpreting, in various forms, has no doubt existed wherever hearing and deaf people have been required to communicate with each other. Unlike spoken language interpreting, signed language interpreting has not

developed as a result of the needs of diplomats and nations, but has emerged from the realisation that deaf people require the removal of communication barriers to enable them to achieve their full potential and interact equally within society (Frishberg 1990).

In the UK, recognition of the incompatibility of the provision of signed language interpreting as a part of other services for deaf people, such as social work services and education (Kyle & Woll 1985), led to the development of two registers of SLIs: the Council for Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP) register in 1980, and the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI) in 1981 (Scott-Gibson 1990). Prior to this, signed language interpreting had traditionally been provided by family members (including children of deaf adults), friends and neighbours on an ad hoc basis (Frishberg 1990; Cokely 1992). Professionals engaged in other roles with deaf people, such as priests, social workers and teachers also provided communication for members of the deaf community across a variety of settings (Kyle & Woll 1985). However, there was no distinction between someone 'helping out' (a neighbour, friend etc) and an interpreter (Frishberg 1990). Prior to the emergence of interpreting as a defined occupation, deaf individuals had *'all too often been preceded through life's doors by hearing people saying 'what he/she wants is''* (Tate & Turner 2001: 54-55).

Further legislative developments and the expansion of deaf people into the fields of education and work have led to the role of the interpreter becoming formalised (Frishberg 1990). In many countries signed language interpreting is now an independent, regulated profession, with a structured education system that leads to professional status. Community SLIs are finally beginning to be recognised as professionals by members of the public and by law (Moody 2007). In addition, there are practitioner associations which provide representation and strategic development (Stewart et al. 1998). Signed language interpreting now occurs across a wide range of social circumstances, from community and public service settings to conference, theatre and media work. SLIs are also seen as being vital in the fields of employment and education (Kyle et al. 2005).

As deaf people have moved into professions which require regular interaction with hearing colleagues, the need for a consistent interpreting service has also developed. SLIs, both in the UK and elsewhere, are therefore now working alongside deaf people engaged in professions such as teaching, law, social work, medicine and the arts (Napier et al. 2008). In the UK, SLIs are also interpreting in a wide range of white-collar office settings, such as housing support, administration, and the financial sector. In the UK, with an increase in deaf professionals, the introduction of the DDA and the provision of AtW, deaf people are asserting their rights to communication support across this variety of settings (Furby 2007). Although the notion of the deaf professional is still an emerging concept (Napier et al. 2008), changes that have led to more deaf people entering professional fields have also brought about a shift in the traditional roles played by deaf individuals and SLIs. Accordingly this has set in motion a change in the dynamics of the interaction between deaf professionals and SLIs (Kushalnagar & Rashid 2008), and this is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.4.2 Dialogue interpreting

Before going on to examine the roles and metaphors that have been applied to interpreters and the interpreting process, it is useful to locate signed language interpreting in the workplace domain within a specific interpreting constellation. Despite many similarities, the status of the SLI in the workplace setting has yet to be accorded similar recognition to that of spoken language interpreters working in the fields of business or diplomatic interpreting. The SLI's role in the workplace domain is differentiated from that of community or public interpreting by the highly technical nature of the work, the status of the deaf employee, the regular nature of the assignment, and the deaf professional's daily interactions with their hearing colleagues (Cook 1994). The highly interactive nature of the SLI's role in the workplace setting means they can at present be most closely aligned to the model of dialogue interpreting, a model traditionally seen as being more collaborative and engaged. Dialogue interpreting has many features that occur in workplace interpreting scenarios and this section explores the various components that constitute this constellation, drawing attention to the parallels with the relevant aspects of the SLI's role in the workplace domain.

Dialogue interpreting (DI), is a relatively new but identifiable field of study within interpreting research (Mason 2000). It can be very varied, occurring in a wide range of different settings, but shares a '*number of contextual constraints*' (Mason 2000: 215), which identify the encounter. The defining feature of DI is its intrinsically face-to-face interactive nature. The interpretation is usually two-way, with spontaneous speech and short turns at talk. The interpreter can, and does, control and edit the flow of information, acting as a 'gate-keeper' and thus has a significant impact on the way in which the exchange takes place (Mason 2000).

The term 'dialogue interpreting' reflects a move within interpreting research to view all interpreting contexts as having a shared interpersonal communicative structure, suggesting that all interpreted exchanges are at least triadic in nature and contain '*significant communicative shifts*' in the interpreter's embedded role (Inghilleri 2004: 72). The themes of triadic exchange and the interpreter as a fully involved participant, whose continually shifting involvement affects all other participants in the interpreted event, are illuminated later in this chapter.

2.4.3 Roles and role metaphors

Studies of intercultural interpretation, often involving well trained and experienced interpreters, have demonstrated that interpreters are influenced in their interpreting behaviour by situational constraints such as role conflict (see Anderson 1976), in-group loyalties, stress in a sensitive situation, awareness of the conflicting needs of different consumers, and perceptions of power and distance (Mason 1999). All of these can exert a powerful influence on the way in which the interpreter behaves and the decisions that they make. Some of these issues will now be explored in the following section.

As a profession, interpreting is relatively new, and interpreter practice is currently informed by a variety of models and metaphors to which interpreters are expected to adhere (Kale & Larson 1998). The focus of the current study is based on the concept, developed by several researchers through a body of research utilising sociolinguistic analysis (Roy 1989, 1993, 2000; Wadensjö 1992, 1998; Metzger 1995, 1999), of the

interpreter as an active and visible third participant in the interpreted event. These studies have demonstrated beyond doubt that interpreters of both spoken and signed languages can considerably influence the communication between participants and their interaction within the interpreted event. Other researchers have built on and further developed this concept (see for example Angelelli 2001, 2003; Sanheim 2003; Bélanger 2004; Pöllabauer 2007). However, in order to explore the SLI's role in the workplace setting, and how it affects workplace discourse and impacts on the ways in which deaf and hearing employees interact, I first need to examine 'what has gone before'. In other words, some discussion of the other models and metaphors relating to interpreting and to the interpreter's position in the discourse event is required in order to contextualise current thinking regarding their role. Understanding the complexities associated with the interpreter's task and the different role descriptions applied to it will lead to a deeper understanding of how communication takes place between minority and majority speakers (Angelelli 2003), as well as a greater awareness of the intricacies of the interpreting process.

Roy (1993) succinctly outlines the ways in which both practitioners and scholars have sought to describe the role of the interpreter. Other authors (see Napier & Cornes 2004; Moody 2007) have expanded on and further explored some of these metaphors as they relate to interpreting in a variety of domains. It is not my intention here to rehearse what has already been amply illustrated by these and other authors, but rather to select the relevant points from their work and relate them to the current study.

The following descriptors have been applied to interpreters: interpreters as helpers, interpreters as conduits, interpreters as communication-facilitators, and interpreters as bilingual, bicultural specialists (Roy 1993, citing Witter-Merithew 1986). Roy (1989: 87) states that in essence there are only two descriptors and that these hinge upon the distinction between '*extreme personal involvement*' and '*extreme to not-so-extreme non-involvement of the interpreter*'. The interpreters' role can therefore be said to exist on a continuum along this 'degree of involvement' scale. This is a useful way of categorising what can appear to be a confusing array of models, many of which are recognised as having elements which overlap (Stewart et al. 1998). For the purpose of the current study I deem it relevant to explore the metaphors and models at the two extremes of the scale, the concept of the **interpreter as 'helper'** being contrasted

with the **interpreter as conduit/machine**. I will then outline the concept of the interpreter as **active third participant** before concluding by looking at recent developments in **designated interpreting**.

The interpreter as helper

Due to the nature of the development of signed language interpreting (as outlined in section 2.4.1) interpreting has long been the remit of friends and family, their only view of themselves being that of ‘*helpers*’ (Roy 1993: 139), assisting deaf individuals to communicate with hearing people in a variety of settings. Before the 1960s, no distinction existed between a helper and an interpreter (Roy 1989: 88). Individuals engaged in this activity were highly involved participants, their perception of themselves being far from that of the neutral conduit (Moody 2007). Responsible for ‘*enabling communication in a situation of inherent inequality*’, between mainstream institutions and disadvantaged members of the deaf community, SLIs were unsurprisingly thrust into the helper role, with very little definition of where that help should begin and end (Pöchhacker & Shlesinger 2002: 339). In the ‘helper’ model of interpreting, SLIs recognise the disadvantage that deaf people can experience during interaction with hearing people, and act to intervene on their behalf (Baker-Shenk 1991). However, within this model, both in the past and in the present day, there is a tendency for the intervention to be of a paternalistic and controlling nature, with the SLI making decisions on behalf of the deaf individual. As a result deaf people can be disempowered, the assumption being that the deaf individual is unable to make decisions or to take care of their own affairs (Roy 1993).

The interpreter as invisible language conduit

An examination of the literature on both spoken and signed language interpreting reveals a wealth of terminology which casts the interpreter as a passive, invisible and uninvolved mechanistic language conduit. The conduit metaphor (Reddy 1993) relates to the ways in which the process of communication is conceptualised, with language functioning like a conduit through which thoughts are transferred from one person to another (see Wilcox & Shaffer 2005 for an elegant description of this metaphor). In terms of signed language interpreting, the notion of the SLI as a

conduit seems to have emerged during the early stages of professionalisation (Metzger 1999).

Roy attributes the origin of this model in part to practitioners themselves, with descriptions of their role variously referred to as a ‘bridge, ‘channel’, or ‘telephone’ (Roy 1993, 2000). The concept also derives from interpreting research, whereby the focus has been on the ‘*phenomena of language processing and transference of information*’ (Roy 2000: 102).

The language conduit model strongly influenced the field of signed language interpreting during the 1970s, suggesting that SLIs were immune to any factors falling outside of the actual receiving and conveying of a message (Stewart et al. 1998)⁹. The crucial point is that this model’s philosophical base is one where the SLI assumes no responsibility for the interaction taking place between participants, but rather that they take on a ‘robot-like’ role in the interpreted event (Stewart et al. 1998). The machine or conduit model was thus a response to the paternalistic ‘helper’ model, leading on from concerns regarding the disempowerment of deaf people and was seen as being clearly distinguishable from the paternalistic ‘*follow me through the door*’ approach (Tate & Turner 2001: 55).

The interpreter as neutral and uninvolved transmitter of messages stands in direct contrast to the original role of community interpreters prior to professionalisation. It emphasises that the interpreter will, all things being equal, convey messages between participants faithfully and accurately, without allowing emotions or personal feelings to influence that interpretation (Frishberg 1990). However, the fact that interaction between deaf and hearing participants rarely occurs from a position of equality (Baker-Shenk 1986) results in the SLI being positioned in an unrealistic frame, both from their own perception and that of other participants, and accounts for much of the conflict that can arise. The conduit or machine model presupposes that participants within the interaction are equal in terms of power and assumes that the SLI can ‘*avoid*

⁹ Whilst the term ‘machine model’ can be used to refer to the linguistic process of word-for-sign or sign-for-word machine style of transliteration, within the context of the current study I refer to Baker-Shenk’s (1986) original usage to describe the SLI’s role.

taking power, avoid taking a stand, and avoid influencing the outcome of the interaction' (Baker-Shenk 1991: 123). This model exposes the basic tendencies of the dominant class both to deny the reality of their power and to *'deny that power is part of what's going on in every situation'* (Baker-Shenk 1991: 124). It also teaches SLIs to disregard the historic and continuing power imbalance between deaf and hearing people, resulting in SLIs treating deaf and hearing participants as equals, thus perpetuating the power differential and maintaining the lack of control that deaf people have over their lives (Baker-Shenk 1991).

The notion that the SLI will always be expected to act as a machine-like conduit may now, as Turner (2007) asserts, been robustly challenged. Indeed, this is evidenced in the following section. However, the idea of the interpreter as a translating machine, neutral and invisible is one which still informs the understanding of both interpreters and service users (see Roy 1993; Dean & Pollard 2005; Moody 2007). I posit that this remains the case today, representing a source of conflict for SLIs generally, and a problem in the workplace setting specifically.

Interpreter as active third participant

Evidence now suggests that far from being an uninvolved and invisible non-person within the interpreted event, interpreters have a role in the *'negotiation, maintenance and/or manipulation of structures of participation'*, alongside the other interlocutors in the interpreted event (Inghilleri 2004: 73). The interpreter as active third participant, with *'the potential to influence both the direction and outcome of the event'* (Roy 1993: 151) has seen a late 20th century 'turn' towards a model of the interpreter as someone who is actively engaged in coordinating and negotiating meanings in triadic interaction (Mason 1999, 2000; Turner 2007b).

A number of researchers have contributed to the concept of the interpreter as an active and involved participant, each building upon and adding to our understanding of the interpreter's impact on the discourse event and the primary participants. Roy (1989)

has revealed the SLI's influence on turn-taking and has outlined the options available to an interpreter when managing participants' contribution overlap in a discourse event. Berk-Seligson (1990) was pivotal in arriving at a deeper understanding of the interpreter's role, revealing that interpreters were not uninvolved bystanders in courtroom proceedings but were frequently an integral part of the judicial process. Wadensjö (1992) has underscored the interpreter's role in re-expressing a message, as well as coordinating the communicative exchange. Metzger's (1999) examination of interpreter neutrality has contrasted the traditional view of the interpreter as conduit with what actually happens in real life situations. Her work has emphasised the fundamentally dual nature of interpreters, as both communicators of discourse and active participants within the discourse process (Pöchhacker 2004).

Stewart et al. (1998) suggest that all participants engaged in interpreted interaction are responsible for communication. Turner and Brown (2001: 157- 158) conclude that *'far from being a mere conduit'* the interpreter in fact participates directly in every interactional turn. Angelelli has demonstrated that the interpreter's visibility means their role goes beyond simply encoding and decoding other people's messages cross-linguistically to bridge a communication gap, but instead that they exercise *'agency within the interaction'* (Angelelli 2003: 13). Sanheim (2003) affirms Roy's (1989) findings regarding the interpreter's role in regulating turn-taking, concluding that the interpreter's choices about what gets interpreted can affect the outcome of the encounter. Many researchers have thus empirically demonstrated that the interpreter is inescapably a part of the system, and that they are *'a player'* within the interpreted event (Baker-Shenk 1991: 125). Bélanger (2004) has highlighted that the interpreter plays a significant role in the unfolding of the encounter as well as being partly responsible for its success. Finally, Takimoto (2009) has begun to explore the interpreter's role in multi-party talk, particularly in terms of participant footing shifts and the *'temporal organisation of talking and turn-taking'* (Takimoto 2009: 35).

More recently, suggestions have been put forward for collaborative and co-participatory models of interpreting (cf. Turner 2007b; Dickinson & Turner 2008), with a number of authors calling for a model of interpreting which opens up the interpreting process to the scrutiny and greater involvement of those engaged in the interpreted event (see for example Moody 2007). Turner (2005, 2007b) makes a

convincing argument for SLIs to work together with primary participants in an effort to make the interpreting process as transparent as possible. Meaning-making is viewed as a co-operative venture with the building, implementation and refining of a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities enabling both deaf and hearing consumers to have greater involvement and a sense of responsibility for the outcome and success of the discourse event (Turner 2007b). This is already happening in some instances, with deaf consumers and SLIs working as a team, agreeing and collaborating on strategies and methods of producing the best possible interpretation (see Napier et al. 2008).

The Designated Interpreter

Finally, particularly relevant to the current study is the concept of the designated interpreter. Introduced in the Deaf Professionals- Designated Interpreter volume (see Hauser et al. 2008), and expanded upon by a number of contributors, this model originates from Cook's (2004) perspective on what she terms 'diplomatic interpreting'. Despite the focus being clearly on the 'white collar' professional class of deaf employees in the United States there are many similarities and parallels with the SLI's role in workplace interpreting in the UK.

Hauser and Hauser (2008) outline a number of aspects of the designated interpreter's role which distinguish them from a non-designated interpreter. A primary factor is that they are a member of a professional team, rather than an outsider. Additionally, rather than being impartial or neutral, they are a dynamic and active participant in the deaf professional's environment. In this respect, the designated interpreter goes beyond the role of active third participant, taking an '*intense interest in and commitment to*' the deaf professional's work (Cook 2004: 58-59), and positively aligning themselves with the goals and aims of the deaf professional (Hauser & Hauser 2008). The conduit model therefore appears incompatible with the interpreter's role across a range of workplace scenarios, as many of the functions required of a designated interpreter are in conflict with this model.

The designated interpreter model is one which is highly relevant to the current study. Other literature pertaining to the role and impact of SLIs in the workplace domain is

somewhat sparse, both in the United States and in the UK. The unique relationship between the SLI and the deaf or hard of hearing professional has been explored by Kale and Larson (1998), who discuss issues ranging from interpreting skills to trust and confidentiality. Stewart et al. (1998: 119) briefly examine the role of the SLI within workplace and rehabilitation settings in the US and conclude that SLIs employed within this setting require '*flexibility, extensive education, and stamina*' in order to be fully effective. In the UK, issues concomitant with the employment field have been raised. Trowler and Turner (2002) explore the interaction in a hybrid deaf and hearing work group based within a university setting, with the rules and conventions guiding work group behaviour being particularly relevant. Hema (2003) briefly discusses some of the challenges facing the 'office' interpreter, and Furby (2007) highlights the challenges that informal and casual 'social' workplace interaction presents for SLIs, emphasising the importance of this type of interaction in ensuring that the deaf employee is fully included in the workplace.

Very high expectations are placed on SLIs employed in the workplace domain, particularly within the deaf professional-designated interpreter relationship, requiring them to be a multi-skilled, flexible and reflective individual. Oatman (2008: 173-174) lists extra-linguistic and extra-cultural skills, social and cultural acuity, together with sensitivity and empathy, as highly important aspects of '*the constellation of skills and talents that make up the designated interpreter role and position*'. Crucially, many authors seem to perceive that the responsibility for a successful working relationship and optimal communication lies not only with the deaf professional and the SLI, but also with the hearing participants in the interpreted interaction.

To conclude it appears that for the deaf employee, whose first or preferred language is a signed language, and who works in a predominantly hearing environment, access to an SLI can offer the best way for them to function on an equal footing with their hearing colleagues (Kurlander 2008). However, most employers and hearing employees have very little experience of working with SLIs and have minimal understanding of their role in the workplace setting (Kurlander 2008; Beaton & Hauser 2008). This lack of awareness adds to the complex nature of the SLI's position in this domain, where they are usually simultaneously operating between three cultures- deaf culture, hearing culture and that of the workplace (Campbell et al. 2008).

This section has reviewed the models and metaphors applied to interpreters and the interpreting process. The literature considered in this section has suggested that the model of the interpreter as an invisible language conduit is still one which underpins much interpreter behaviour and thinking. However, more recently it has been demonstrated that interpreters clearly have a role which extends far beyond that of language transfer, with research evidencing that they see themselves as aligning with participants within the event. Thus it is clear that the interpreter is an active third participant in the interpreted exchange, with responsibilities which include the relaying and co-ordination of discourse and participant interaction. I have suggested that this positioning of the interpreter as an engaged and involved participant is a source of conflict in relation to the entrenched and pervasive perception of their role as an invisible translating machine. I have introduced the idea of the interpreter as a collaborative participant in the interpreted event and the concept of the designated interpreter has been discussed. The next section will now highlight the powerful position of the SLI, stressing their gate-keeping capacity and the dilemma they face in mediating interaction between the dominant hearing majority and minority deaf community members.

2.4.4 Issues of power in interpreted interaction

Regardless of what model informs their interpreting practice, SLIs are, by the nature of their role as bilinguals mediating interaction between monolingual participants, in an extremely powerful position vis-à-vis deaf and hearing interaction. Language and power are so closely entwined that an interpreter cannot *'translate a single word, cannot even appear on the scene'* without communicating messages about group loyalty (Lane 1985: 1). Much of what the interpreter mediates between two cultures, explicitly and implicitly, is a struggle for power. SLIs have been demonstrated to be the decision-makers within the communicative event, making choices that influence and affect the outcomes of the interaction (Metzger 1999). Those choices *'confer communicative power to the interpreter'*, whether the SLI is or is not aware of it (Kushalnagar & Rashid 2008: 50), and *'whether they like it or not'* (Janzen & Korpinski 2005: 188).

The dilemma for SLIs is how to treat all parties as autonomous equals when one interlocutor is clearly disadvantaged (Karlin 2005). In virtually all interaction between deaf and hearing people, there will be an imbalance of power. Deaf people are using a minority language, and are interacting with individuals who use the language of a dominant, power holding majority (Scott-Gibson 1990). As described earlier in this chapter, the power relationship between deaf and hearing people is very complex, with deaf people being traditionally perceived as less intelligent and underachieving, compared to their hearing peers. This perception impacts widely on the deaf community, denigrating their self-worth, intelligence and their right to be different (Baker-Shenk 1985). SLIs therefore need to consider if they should intervene to ensure equality between the signed and spoken-language users, the minority and majority cultural members, or if respecting autonomy means that both parties should be treated equally, even if it means '*being complicit in disadvantaging the Deaf client*' (Karlin 2005:105)

The fact that deaf people are just beginning to move into positions of status and power in the workplace domain impacts considerably on the relationship between the SLI and the deaf employee, resulting in SLIs having to re-evaluate their relationships with deaf clients (Cook 1994). Deaf individuals have a long history of working with SLIs, however for the majority of such interactions the deaf person has been in a 'powerless' capacity, being a recipient of educational, health or other community services, rather than as a professional in their own right (Kushalnagar & Rashid 2008). Furthermore, in many community interpreting settings, the deaf person is the client and the hearing person is the professional, but within the workplace the deaf and hearing person can potentially be of relatively equal status.

The power differentials in the relationship between the SLI and deaf employees mean that the existing models of interpreting are insufficient for the situations in which SLIs find themselves, with the stereotypes which individuals can bring to the event influencing the relationship (Hauser & Hauser 2008). SLIs who have adopted a paternalistic or 'helper' model of interpreting will likely experience difficulties when faced with a deaf client, in a position of authority and power, who is clear about the way in which they want the SLI to work. Kushalnagar and Rashid (2008) state that the more deeply the SLI believes interpreting is a helping profession, the more likely

it is that paternalistic or dominating attitudes will result, thus directly affecting the working relationship. Some tension or discomfort is likely once deaf people are emancipated from the client role, as the change in the dynamics of the deaf individual/SLI relationship is likely to come up against beliefs held by the SLI, unconsciously or otherwise, that the deaf person should be in a subordinate role. This can lead to ‘*cognitive dissonance*’, whereby the SLI is in a state of psychological discomfort due to the conflict with their long term beliefs about deaf people (Kushalnagar & Rashid 2008: 50).

Interpreters will always need a degree of power as it enables them to achieve the conditions they need to work effectively (McIntire & Sanderson 1995). In providing a service they also necessarily ‘*exercise a certain control*’ (Wadensjö 1998: 68). However, in their role as gate-keeper in structuring the flow of discourse and imposing priorities on participants’ turn-taking behaviour (Pöchhacker 2004), as well as enabling the deaf participant to access essential elements of workplace talk (as outlined in the following sections), SLIs must clearly learn to recognise their power and use it in a responsible manner (Baker-Shenk 1991). This aspect will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

2.4.5 Interpreting in a Community of Practice

Thus far the various models which impinge on the SLI’s position in workplace interaction have been discussed, together with the gate-keeping aspect inherent in their role. Attention is now turned to the SLI’s interactional role in discourse, particularly in relation to workplace meetings. This section will examine some of the issues pertinent to SLIs engaged in the workplace domain, examining the extent to which the SLI can influence and impact upon workplace discourse, and addressing the degree to which their positioning as co-interlocutor affects the primary participants.

As has already been established earlier in this chapter, workplace meetings are complex events, often characterised by fast-flowing interaction, overlapping speech and instances of humorous interplay. I have suggested that consideration of workplace meetings as a CofP enables us to see these aspects of meeting talk as part of the shared repertoire of a particular group. This section will therefore examine

how SLIs manage multi-party talk, including the aspects of turn-taking and overlapping speech, before going on to consider the literature on how they also deal with the issues of face, politeness and collegiality, as enacted through primary participants' engagement in small talk and humorous exchanges.

Interpreting in multi-party interaction

The interpreter's bilingual status means that they are routinely engaged in situations where they are frequently the only participant who can understand everything that is said (or signed) and are therefore in '*a unique position from which to exercise a certain control*' (Wadensjö 1998: 105). In multi-party interpreting events the interpreter's functions can be drastically different compared with dialogue interpreting situations where there are only two primary interlocutors (Takimoto 2009).

To date there has been limited exploration of the SLI's role in multi-party interaction, such as workplace team meetings. Workplace meetings can be particularly challenging for SLIs and in many instances could be identified as what Dean and Pollard (2001) refer to as '*high demand/ low control situations*', which can result in a considerable amount of stress for the SLI. In workplaces where the deaf employee is in the minority, most of the challenges facing the SLI can be identified as originating from the dominant norms of the work setting.

Hearing norms

When the deaf individual is in the minority within an organisation or institutional setting, it is hearing discourse styles that are generally the norm (Trowler & Turner 2002; Gold Brunson et al. 2008), compounding the fact that deaf people always tend to be '*in a "one down" position*' every time they interact with hearing people (Baker-Shenk 1991). The assumption is generally that deaf people will adopt the behavioural norms of the hearing majority, with most hearing people having little awareness or respect of deaf norms (Baker-Shenk 1991). This underlying attitude impacts on the SLIs ability to interpret across a range of situations within the workplace setting.

Participants' adherence to hearing norms can be observed in the extent to which material presented in the deaf employee's second language, English, is embedded within workplace meetings. Not only is the written material largely inaccessible (see section 2.3.7) it is also very difficult for deaf individuals to refer to the material whilst watching the SLI. Ideally, time should be allowed for deaf participants to read the document which is being referred to before any discussion commences, but this sort of consideration is rarely offered. More often, deaf employees will be forced to choose between reading the document and missing out on the ensuing discussion, or watching the SLI and feeling somewhat adrift in the debate. These issues are addressed later in more detail in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Turn-taking

Evidence suggests that turn-taking presents particular difficulties for the SLI. The ways in which the SLI manages and controls turn-taking exchanges demonstrates that their sociolinguistic competence informs decisions as to who will be awarded the next turn (Roy 1989). SLIs sometimes need to take 'self-initiated turns' in order to manage the flow of communication, with turn exchanges occurring between the SLI and a primary participant (Roy 1989, 2000). These findings have been affirmed by other researchers (see Sanheim 2003), and reiterate that the SLI's choices about what gets interpreted can affect the outcome of the encounter. Previous explorations of the SLI's role have focused on situations where the turn-taking was relatively controlled, due in part to the hierarchical relationship between the participants (e.g. professor and student/ doctor and patient) and also because of the number of participants (see Roy 1989; Metzger 1995).

In workplace meetings the way in which the interaction unfolds is one of the factors contributing to the difficulties SLIs experience in multi-party discourse. In workplaces where participants know each other well, meetings can be characterised by fast-flowing and overlapping speech, underpinned by an assumption of shared understanding and background knowledge. The SLI's awareness and understanding of the social situation influences their on-going decision-making process, along with a range of factors such as knowledge of conversational styles, participant status and authority, and participant roles. Aware of the different rules of interaction that exist

within deaf and hearing cultures, SLIs are responsible for making decisions about which set of rules to adhere to (Baker-Shenk 1991). SLIs can exert control over who contributes and who doesn't within an interpreted event, including when participants wish to interrupt or interject when another individual holds the floor (Baker-Shenk 1991). Responsibility for informing the deaf employee about the nature of the discourse (e.g. that several speakers are talking at the same time), as well as the culturally appropriate moments to contribute or to interrupt, therefore generally falls to the SLI.

Some hearing participants will welcome the presence of the SLI, perceiving them as a way to legitimately enforce turn-taking (Gold Brunson 2008), recognising that such 'refereed time' can be beneficial to all participants (Goswell et al. 2008: 201). The enforcement of turn-taking can allow time for the SLI to complete their interpretation, thus enabling the deaf participant to engage in the interaction on a level playing field with their hearing peers (Hurwitz 2008). However, it can also inhibit the spontaneous ways in which people interact (Hurwitz 2008). Hearing employees can frequently require prompts to remind them about the need for turn-taking and extra time to allow for topics to be interpreted (Beaton & Hauser 2008). Furthermore, requests for meetings to be slowed down, in order for the SLI to perform effectively, can meet with resistance from hearing participants (Trowler & Turner 2002).

Campbell et al. (2008), state that successful interpreted communication will often depend more on the effectiveness of the chair, than on the primary participants or the SLI. If accustomed to working with an SLI, the chair of the meeting can sometimes use their presence as an excuse to insist that all participants adhere to good protocol during the event, i.e. asking individuals to speak one at a time, ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to contribute, and including sufficient breaks.

The norms of hearing team meetings directly impact on the SLI's ability to manage their interpreting lag time (Turner & Trowler 2002), affecting the processing of the incoming message and influencing the way in which they re-present the information in the target language. Interpretation lag can also affect the dynamics of the interaction in the meeting, resulting in some participants viewing it as an '*uncalled-*

for interruption', the management of which requires considerable sensitivity on behalf of the SLI (Campbell et al. 2008: 93).

Overlapping speech

In many workplace meetings, participants tend to speak at the same time and frequently talk over each other's contributions (Campbell et al. 2008; Gold Brunson et al. 2008; Beaton & Hauser 2008). In settings where the chair and other participants are unaccustomed to working with SLIs and deaf employees, there may be no recognition of the need for individuals to speak one at a time (Campbell et al. 2008). In some meetings, where members' contributory talk frequently overlaps and where participants talk across each other, the interpreting difficulties cannot be solved, as this way of behaving is '*their reality, their group dynamic*' (Gold Brunson et al. 2008: 190). In established CofPs, where this type of behaviour is the norm, the SLI will therefore almost always face an uphill struggle in managing the discourse event.

Overlapping speech between primary parties poses a considerable challenge to the interpreter's competence in translating and coordinating (Wadensjö 1998), as the SLI can only interpret for one person at a time and thus cannot manage overlap (van Herreweghe 2002). According to Roy (1993: 350) SLIs have four options available to them:

1. They can stop one or both participants. By halting the turn of one speaker, the SLI can thus allow the other speaker to continue.
2. They can momentarily ignore the overlapping speech of one of the participants, whilst retaining that segment of discourse in their memory and continuing to interpret the other participant. The 'held' portion of discourse can subsequently be produced immediately following the end of the other participant's turn.
3. They can ignore the overlapping discourse completely.
4. They can momentarily ignore the overlap, and, upon completing their interpretation of one participant, offer a turn to the other primary participant. Alternatively, they could indicate in some other way that a turn had been attempted.

Van Herreweghe (2002) puts forward a fifth strategy, suggesting that the SLI can choose to warn participants that overlapping talk is occurring and allow them to resolve the conflict. Whilst this option requires the SLI to intervene initially, responsibility for determining the issue is then handed over to the primary participants. Providing a condensed rendition appears to be another coping strategy where the temporal constraints of the meeting mean that the interpreter has to use this method to ensure that participants have at least some access to the information being discussed (Takimoto 2009). The interpreter can shift their footing from spokesperson to reporter when it is necessary to present a summary of multiple utterances made by participants. This summarised reporting of multiple renditions into one rendition appears to be a conscious choice. By shifting footing to become a narrator or storyteller, the interpreter thus embeds the actors in her rendition (Goffman 1981; Takimoto 2009: 39).

Interpreter-mediated events involving multiple participants, where there is potentially an overlap of more than one speaker at a time, present a greater challenge in terms of the SLI's discourse management (van Herreweghe 2002) and are likely to exclude or disadvantage deaf participants to a greater extent. Deaf participants are not only reliant on the SLI to provide them with information about the current speaker, they are also dependent on the SLI to initiate their turn or relay their own contribution. Evidence suggests that interpreters (particularly those in community settings) often do not have the opportunity to take up the options mentioned above as there are difficulties in interrupting the flow of the interaction (Wadensjö 1998).

Source attribution and eye-gaze

It is clear from the preceding discussion that multi-party interaction presents a challenge for SLIs, with some of the difficulties rooted in the ways in which hearing participants engage in turn-taking and overlapping talk. As identified in section 2.2.7, turn-taking in monolingual interaction is dependent on a mixture of explicit indications (e.g. the current speaker can select next speaker by naming them), and more subtle cues (e.g. through the use of eye-gaze, body shift and/ or vocal intonation), which enable participants to recognise that other interlocutors are offering or relinquishing a turn. Furthermore, in monolingual discourse, primary parties are

able to discern when a turn has been initiated and by whom (Metzger 1999). In spoken language interaction, participants can generally hear when someone begins to talk, and, depending on prior exposure to the speaker's voice, can identify who is speaking (Metzger 1999). In signed language interaction, deaf participants can initiate a turn by raising and extending their hand or hands out of rest position (van Herreweghe 2002). Eye-gaze is also used to signal that another person can take their turn or contribute to the meeting, once the participant's attention has been secured (van Herreweghe 2002; Metzger 1999). However, in interpreted interaction between deaf and hearing participants, turn-taking mechanisms follow a different pattern with the linguistic signals for turn-taking based in different modes (van Herreweghe 2002, 2005).

In signed language interpreted interaction, all discourse is effectively channelled through the SLI (Metzger 1999), predominantly restricting the deaf person's eye-gaze, with the result that they have very little control over the organisation of turn-taking and the allocation of the next turn (van Herreweghe 2002). Information about who is speaking is not '*inherently discourse bound*' as the SLI is able to relay the content of the speaker's contribution without necessarily indicating the source of the utterance (Metzger 1999: 153). Deaf participants, unable to hear the auditory signals which indicate who is initiating or relinquishing a turn, are therefore reliant on the SLI for this information, to ensure their place in the turn-taking process. Accordingly, deaf individuals can often struggle to get their point across or have their contribution heard at an appropriate point.

Metzger (1999) refers to the interpreter-generated utterances involved in the turn-taking process as summons and source attribution, with the SLI's contributions functioning in a way that allows the interpreted interaction to proceed in a similar manner to monolingual discourse. The most frequent form of source attribution in Metzger's study was a single indexical point in the direction of the speaker. Metzger's research showed that SLIs did not supply this information on a consistent basis, meaning that intrinsic to each utterance produced by the SLI was a question regarding the source of the contribution. In other words, there is the potential for the deaf participant to be unsure as to whether the interpreter is making her own comment or relaying that of another participant. This can clearly be seen as a source of

confusion for the deaf participant and one which is likely to be exacerbated by greater numbers involved in the discourse event. In order for participants to make sense of the interaction, it would appear that source attribution is a required component of the interpreting process (Metzger 1999). This is particularly the case where the interpreter is providing condensed or summarised renditions of contributions, with an indication as to who says what being essential (Takimoto 2009).

The SLI's ability to ensure the turn-taking process happens in a timely naturalistic manner, according to hearing norms, is further hampered by the time-lag inherent in the interpreting process. The delay means that the SLI is often still interpreting the contributions of the hearing participants at the point where the deaf participant indicates that they want to interject. When multi-party talk is fast and overlapping the SLI can find it hard to bring the deaf individual into the interaction in a smooth and appropriate manner. This can lead to the deaf individual's comments being voiced after the discussion has moved on, or in an abrupt fashion which makes the other participants uncomfortable, creating a '*time lag embarrassment*' (Napier et al. 2008: 36).

Power differentials

Deaf peoples' positioning in terms of the power relationships within meetings is also relevant to the degree to which the SLI can enable access and participation. Rogerson-Revell (2007) states that the conventionalised rights and functions held by participants means the distribution of power, status and roles within meetings can be perceived as being fixed and static, rather than as aspects of interaction which can be influenced by strategic language use. However, even in more formalised and regulated meetings, certain individuals can experience difficulties in getting heard during workplace interaction. The micro-climate created within face-to-face communicative exchanges can affect the positioning of participants in relation to each other (Cook-Gumperz & Messerman 1999). Participants who lack the resolution to stand their ground, who do not or cannot contribute as powerfully as others, or are for reasons such as regional, ethnic or gender variations in interactive style in a less credible position, can struggle to interact on an equal level with other group members (Rogerson-Revell 2007). Frequently in the minority in workplace settings, deaf

employees can experience relatively powerless positioning within workplace discourse. Whilst the SLI can address this power imbalance to some degree, their mere presence, for reasons discussed in this section, is insufficient to guarantee that the deaf employee will be able to participate in discussions and contribute in the same way as their hearing peers.

Interpreting humorous exchanges and small talk

Section 2.2.6 detailed the ways in which humour allows participants to maintain good relationships with colleagues and foster collegiality, with humorous talk requiring close collaboration between speakers in order to create and maintain group solidarity. The SLI therefore has an integral part to play in ensuring that both deaf and hearing employees can access the humorous interplay that can occur in workplace meetings, contributing to ensuring integration and understanding between deaf and hearing participants.

To date there has been very little attention paid to the ways in which interpreters manage humour and small talk. There is a dearth of literature on humour in interpreting (Pöchhaker & Pavlicek 2002), and there is certainly minimal investigation into the ways in which SLIs deal with humour within the context of the workplace. Translating humour can be a highly complex activity, and rendering an adequate interpretation under the conditions and constraints of simultaneous interpreting presents a particular challenge (Pöchhaker & Pavlicek 2002).

There are a number of factors which impinge on the SLIs' ability to interpret humorous exchanges, with humour and indirectness presenting difficulties for SLIs due to interactive issues (Tray 2005). In a humorous exchange, the SLI not only has to pick up on the cues provided by the deaf or hearing participant which alerts others to the fact that they are creating a 'play' frame, they also require some contextual knowledge of the event under discussion. Additionally, an understanding of the dynamics of the team and the existing relationships between individuals is highly beneficial. The SLI should have an awareness of the role of the deaf employee in each institutional setting, and how their role relates to other individuals within the CofP. For example: knowledge as to whether humour (teasing, sarcasm, swearing

etc.) is a particular characteristic of a specific CofP, if certain members of the CofP have a relationship whereby they regularly tease each other, if humour about, or teasing of, people in positions of power and authority within a CofP is acceptable/ established behaviour. An awareness of all these elements will inform the SLI's decision-making process and can enable them to recognise the humorous nature of the remark. Without this awareness, the SLI will have difficulty in reformulating the message into the target language, resulting in the potential for misunderstanding and loss of face (Tray 2005).

Humour can often entail a rapid-fire exchange of wit between participants, particularly in the case of a collaborative floor, where individuals can contribute to, and compete with, the previous interlocutor's utterance. The SLI has split seconds in which to undertake a highly complex process. Taking in the source message they then have to make sense of the meaning and analyse the message in order to identify the speaker/ signer's intent (Humphrey 1997). In doing so they must consider the schema and experiential frame brought by both deaf and hearing participants, and search for the appropriate cultural solution. Once this has been achieved the interpreter must proceed to make the appropriate choices to render the message in the target language, taking into account cultural differences, maintaining the communication dynamics and finally monitoring their interpretation for errors or required corrections (Humphrey 1997). The speed with which humorous exchanges occur further adds to complexity of the SLI's task.

The fact that humour is closely linked to a given socio-cultural community means that the basic challenge of translating humour consists in establishing the linkage between humour and socio-cultural knowledge in two linguistic communities (Pöchlaker & Pavlicek 2002). In the workplace setting, particularly in a fast flowing and highly interactive collaborative floor, the SLI has to make split second decisions about how they will accommodate the differing perspectives of the two cultural groups. The delicate nuances of humour can easily be lost in the process of translation (Kangasharju & Nikko 2009) and the need for interpreters to be bilingually competent in order to deal with humorous exchanges is clearly essential (Pöchlaker & Pavlicek 2002). However, with multiple participants, in a heavily contextualised setting, and working with the time-lag inherent in signed language interpreting, it is no wonder

that in interpreted humorous exchanges *'the Deaf person starts laughing just as everyone else settles down'* (Bristoll 2008: 26).

Humour can enable colleagues to bond, establishing common ground and reinforcing the similarities between participating individuals (Bristoll 2008). It seems likely that when deaf employees are unable to make this connection with their hearing peers, then the humorous exchanges can occur with the SLI, who becomes a kind of employee by proxy. Leeson and Foley-Cave (2007: 57) note the presence of humour between an SLI and deaf students as producing a relaxed working relationship, enabling them to share their bilingual status and produce *'light (linguistic) relief'*.

Finally in this section I would like to draw attention to the SLI's role in interpreting small talk and casual conversation. As identified in section 2.2, small talk is a crucial component of workplace discourse. The literature regarding the SLI's role and responsibilities in relation to this aspect of workplace interaction is minimal. A number of authors (Hauser & Hauser 2008; Clark & Finch 2008; Campbell et al. 2008; Oatman 2008) discuss in depth the role of the SLI in relation to interpreting social conversations within the work setting, although their focus is predominantly on work-related social events and casual conversations, rather than the type of small talk embedded within work-focused activities such as team meetings. Despite this there are a number of issues pertinent to the SLI's role in mediating this aspect of workplace interaction.

In the case of designated or diplomatic interpreting there appears to be an acceptance that SLIs can become the recipient of information that the deaf professional is unable to access, even to the extent of collecting information when the deaf professional is not present at events or during discussions (Cook 1994). Expectations that the SLI will relay or feed the deaf employee information when not strictly in interpreting mode (Kale & Larson 1998), acting as the deaf professional's 'ears' when the deaf professional is not in the room (Hauser & Hauser 2008), raise the prospect of the SLI assuming the role of spy (Cook 1994). Overheard conversations are undoubtedly important in enabling deaf employees be a part of networks and information loops (Campbell et al. 2008). The importance of interpreting small talk as part of the SLI's role cannot be minimised as it is essential to enabling a deaf employee to fully

socialise in the workplace (Hauser & Hauser 2008). Conversations that can seem *‘peripheral and even trivial for the interpreter’* can be just as important as more formal business-related discourse (Furby 2007: 9). However, with no real definition as to where the SLI’s job begins and ends, and no one correct answer to what their role should be (Kale & Larson 1998) the SLI’s involvement in this matter may be controversial.

2.4.6 Summary

This section has charted the development of signed language interpreting as a profession and has outlined the SLI’s move from community interpreter to designated workplace interpreter. I have focused on the ways in which SLIs can manage multi-party talk in the workplace setting, drawing attention to the challenges presented by collaborative and collegial talk, as well as some of the issues facing the SLI in interpreting small talk and humour in the workplace setting. Given the simultaneous nature of signed language interpreting and the heavy bias towards the dominant hearing norms of multi-party interaction, workplace meeting discourse appears to present considerable problems for the SLI, and by association, for the ways in which deaf employees can access the collaborative floor.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the three key areas pertinent to this study. I have shown that work is an important and integral part of an individual’s life experience and that the essential core of that experience centres upon communicative practices. Understanding of deaf people as a cultural and linguistic minority group has been contrasted with society’s perception of deaf people as disabled and stigmatised. The barrier this attitude presents in relation to their participation in the workplace has been explored. Finally, the role of the SLI in relation to interaction between deaf and hearing employees has been discussed with an emphasis placed on the powerful gate-keeping position which the SLI occupies in this domain.

Chapter Three: Exploring Interpreter-Mediated Workplace Interaction

The previous chapter has set the scene in terms of the background to the current study, outlining the three main areas crucial to enabling a clear understanding of the SLI's position within the workplace domain. This chapter will now examine the theoretical and methodological framework that has been applied to data collection and analysis of interpreted workplace interaction.

The framework is by necessity unique to this study. Not only has there been very little exploration of interpreting in the business or workplace domain, there has also been minimal examination of interpreter-mediated interaction in complex multi-party situations. Detailed analysis of the interpretation of humorous exchanges and small talk between deaf and hearing employees has been similarly neglected. The workplace is a highly structured environment, underpinned by largely tacit norms, and therefore I have sought to combine a number of approaches utilised in examining workplace talk, in particular workplace meetings, with established approaches to analysing interpreted interaction.

In some instances these two strands overlap, as a number of interpreting research studies have, as we shall see, already drawn extensively on concepts utilised in studies of non-interpreted workplace discourse. A useful way of conceptualising the framework is to visualise the device used by opticians when examining an individual's eyesight. A frame is provided for the individual to wear and the optician slots in different lenses, sometimes overlapping them, in order to bring clarity to the material being viewed. The aim here is to apply a variety of lenses to the data, drawn from different disciplinary fields, to bring into sharper focus the fine-grained aspects of what is occurring within the interpreted interactive event.

Whilst the concept of the interpreter as an active participant in meaning negotiation is now widely accepted amongst interpreting researchers using discourse-based approaches, further investigation is required into how cooperation between participants occurs in different contexts (Napier 2007). My analysis of interpreted

workplace discourse is heavily grounded in the work of Roy (1989), Wadensjö (1992), and Metzger (1995), all of whom have produced seminal work exploring the interactive nature of interpreted discourse. However, my study differs in a number of significant ways.

Firstly, the interpreted interaction is located within the workplace setting, a domain that is governed by specific rules and interactional practices. Whilst live, simultaneous interpreting is '*a negotiation of two different communication systems*', with responsibility for managing those systems resting mainly with the interpreter (Roy 1996: 40), research has also demonstrated that interpreting is also the negotiation of two (or more) cultures. In the workplace therefore, the SLI is not only tasked with managing different communication modes, but is also attempting to reconcile different cultural understandings of workplace culture and practices. It has thus been necessary to draw on the established methodology of researchers engaged in the study of workplace talk generally (e.g. Roberts et al. 1992; Gumperz 1992; Sarangi & Roberts 1999; Holmes 2006a; Koester 2004b, 2006), and specifically in relation to how humour and small talk is embedded in this setting (e.g. Holmes 2000b, 2000c, 2006b; Mullany 2004, 2006; Marra 2007; Schnurr 2008).

Secondly, a major difference is that previous studies have examined the impact of the interpreter on dyadic interaction. The current study explores interpreted mediated events where there are more than two participants, and where deaf participants are in the minority. In this chapter I will therefore suggest that it is appropriate to draw together the various strands from research of both interpreted interaction and workplace discourse studies, and to locate them within a linguistic ethnographic framework.

In **section 3.1 Taking a Linguistic Ethnographic Approach** I outline the case for applying a linguistic ethnographic framework to the data. The key aspects of linguistic ethnography are highlighted and their relevance to the current study delineated. I discuss the relevance of interactional sociolinguistics as a discourse analytical method in relation to interpreter-mediated workplace interaction. In **section 3.2 Frames and Footing** I draw out elements from the work of Erving

Goffman and relate these to interpreting research studies germane to the current study. Finally in **section 3.3** I summarise my methodological framework.

3.1 Taking a Linguistic Ethnographic Approach

'Linguistic ethnography is an orientation towards particular epistemological and methodological traditions in the study of social life' (Creese 2008: 232)

Linguistic ethnography (LE) is an emerging discipline in sociolinguistic research which draws upon a range of disciplinary and methodological traditions, including ethnography of communication, interactional sociolinguistics and conversation analysis (see Rampton et al. 2004 and Rampton 2007a, for an elucidatory description of the development of linguistic ethnography in the UK). LE brings together the tools used in linguistic and ethnographic analysis (Copland 2009), in order to probe in-depth the relationship between language and social life (Tusting & Maybin 2007).

LE exposes the difficulty in applying assumed and pre-determined categories to the complex ways in which language, culture, society, and cognition interact (Creese 2008). Referred to variously as a *'discursive'* (Rampton 2007a: 585), an *'intellectual'* (Blommaert 2007: 687) and an *'analytical'* (Wetherell 2007: 661) space, LE in the UK is in itself neither *'a paradigm, a cohesive 'school', nor some kind of definitive synthesis'*, but can be described as a meeting place where *'a number of established lines of research interact'* (Rampton 2007a: 585). Utilising LE as an umbrella term, individuals committed to ethnographic modes of enquiry can analytically focus on language and communication, drawing on specific approaches that meet their needs and interests (Rampton 2007c). Thus, approaches that have traditionally worked on different objects, for example with ethnography privileging culture and linguistics focusing on language, are brought together to investigate acts of communication in their context (Wetherell 2007).

The principles underpinning LE are perhaps best encapsulated by Rampton (2007a), who makes two crucial statements in relation to the beliefs of those ascribing to an LE approach. Firstly, the contexts for communication should be investigated rather than

assumed. In order to grasp the ways in which meaning is constructed and understood between participants '*within specific social relations, interactional histories and institutional regimes*' an ethnographic approach is required (Rampton 2007a: 585).

Secondly, that meaning is more than just the '*expression of ideas*', with '*biography, identifications, stance and nuance*' being extensively signalled in the linguistic and textual fine grain of discourse data (Rampton 2007a: 585). Close attention to the analysis of the internal organisation of verbal and other semiotic data is thus essential to '*understanding its significance and position in the world*' (Rampton 2007a: 585). LE therefore stresses that ethnography can be enhanced by the analytical frameworks provided by linguistics, whilst linguistics can gain from the '*processes of reflexive sensitivity required in ethnography*' (Creese 2008: 232).

As part of any investigation, researchers should examine ethnographically the manner in which meaning is shaped by those engaged in discourse, taking into account the influence of external and historical factors. However, they should also pay attention to what is revealed from the fine-grained analysis of texts, in order to identify the ways in which the data reveal the perspectives and stance of participants engaged in the interaction. Through this process linguistic ethnographers build on the knowledge base of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics in order to study '*the discursive patterns found in everyday interactions*', aiming to situate these in the '*dynamics of wider cultural settings*' (Wetherell 2007: 661). Indeed, as Tusting and Maybin (2007: 579) highlight, one of the important contributions of linguistic ethnography has been to '*draw out the patterned nature of language behaviours*', despite this being unclear to those involved. The ability of LE to do this, via a process of '*gaining analytic distance on familiar surroundings*' (Hammersley 2007: 689) is discussed in section 3.1.1.

LE offers researchers descriptive and analytical tools for exploring communication as it unfolds within social processes, encompassing the participants, the situation in which they are engaged and the '*institutions, networks and communities of practice*' wherein they are located (Rampton 2007c). LE also seeks to make connections between what is happening on the micro-level of interaction, and the '*meso and macro-levels of contextual and social structure*' (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 580).

Often not overtly visible to participants on a local level, and not always easily identifiable solely through the analysis of ethnographic or linguistic data, the connections to these broader structures have been addressed in different ways by researchers in the LE field (see Rampton et al. 2004; Sealey 2007; Scollon & Scollon 2007). Claims made on the basis of analysis of micro-interactional data can differ in nature from those made on the basis of broader social theories, and linking such claims together is *'by no means an obvious or automatic process'* (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 581). Some of the difficulties in making those connections are acknowledged later in this chapter, in section 3.1.4.

Combining ethnographic methods with detailed linguistic analysis is by no means a new approach. In terms of previous explorations of the interpreter's role within institutional settings a number have been ethnographic in nature, and have involved linguistic analysis of spoken or signed discourse (Hale 1997; Davidson 1998). Roy (1989), whose work contributes considerably to the current study, utilised a multi-disciplinary approach to her data analysis, drawing upon interactional sociolinguistics, conversation analysis, and Goffman's (1981) notions of social interaction conditions and participation frameworks. Wadensjö (1992) also combined an ethnographic approach to gathering audio-taped data of interpreted interaction in medical settings, with a linguistic analysis of the interpreted events, drawing on Goffman's (1961) role theory. Both of these studies have provided the inspiration for the framework for the current research project.

Moving away from the micro-level features of interaction, Inghilleri (2004) has attempted to demonstrate that interpreters in local interpreting contexts can contribute to the production or reproduction of the existent social order, looking at how the exchanges are socially and institutionally framed. This perspective takes the view that what happens at the surface level of interactions is more often than not a refracted micro representation of the social and political realities that are played out on a larger scale outside of the immediate discourse event (Inghilleri 2006: 57). That is, what happens within interpreted interaction is related to wider social constructs which participants (including interpreters) hold about that event, with the interpreter's performance being influenced by and enmeshed in larger social configurations of power and control (inside and outside of their profession).

I would assert that '*methodological flexibility*' (Koskinen 2008: 6) is required in order to fully detail the complex nature of interpreter-mediated workplace interaction. This makes the combination of an ethnographic approach, with its ability to allow for '*multiple sources of data, multiple methods of analysis and for multiple sites and time-frames*' (Koskinen 2008: 6), together with a detailed linguistic analysis of data, particularly suitable to the current study.

In the document that sets out the fundamental principles of LE (Rampton et al. 2004: 4), the authors characterise the relationship between linguistics and ethnography as '*tying ethnography down*' and '*opening linguistics up*'. Thus, the value of discourse analysis in ethnography is brought to the forefront (Creese 2008; Copland 2009). In the following sections I outline the key elements of ethnography and linguistics as applied to the current study.

3.1.1 Ethnography

Ethnography is a method of social research which, through an in-depth investigation into the cultural and social patterns of interaction, and a detailed examination of the values, beliefs and assumptions that underpin and account for such interaction, seeks to discover and capture what is happening in the lives of a particular group or community, or in a particular kind of institution, and how people within these settings make sense of their worlds (Roberts et al. 1992; Robson 2002). Ethnographic research methodology is based on fieldwork, participant observation, strange-making and contrastive observation (Scollon & Scollon 2001). Ethnographic methods include observation of workplace interactions, collecting documentary evidence, and interviews with practitioners. Both audio- and video-recording can be used, in conjunction with observation, in order to capture the finer details of the interaction.

Described as an '*open and experimental site in which people explore and try different ways of analysing language*' (Blommaert 2007: 687), ethnography emphasises the importance of observation and participation in speech situations, and assumes that an investigator will be either a long term observer of a communicative event, or an ongoing participant in an event. Research can occur across a wide variety of settings,

in effect, anywhere that people come into contact with people who are different from themselves, at sites where intercultural communication occurs (Scollon & Scollon 2001), thus making an ethnographic approach highly relevant for a study of interpreter-mediated interaction in the workplace.

Ethnography takes a very broad view of context, and stresses the importance of collecting information about the institutional context and the background knowledge of the participants (Cicourel 1987). An understanding of both the broader and local social and organisation conditions is crucial to the comprehension of what is happening within a communicative event, on linguistic and non-linguistic levels, even *'if we are dealing with single utterances'* (Cicourel 1987: 218). In other words, in order to fully understand the interaction being examined, the researcher must take into account the relationships between participants and the context within which the discourse event is located. Doing so enables them to more fully comprehend the shared implicit knowledge which often is left unsaid between participants (Cicourel 1981).

A certain amount of ethnographic research is necessary in order to have insight into the context in which the institutional interaction is taking place, to fully understand the institutional interaction, structures and workplace practices (Koester 2006). To understand a communicative event from the perspective of the participants it may be necessary to have access to the same background knowledge and assumptions as those participants (Cicourel 1987). Background knowledge that *'goes beyond overt lexical information'* always plays an essential role in how participants interpret what is happening in interaction (Gumperz 1999: 454). Ethnographers argue that by focusing solely on the verbal interactions, it is possible to miss vital background information that is relevant to how the sample of discourse is interpreted. Thus, ethnography can provide linguistics *'with a close reading of context not necessarily represented in some kinds of interactional analysis'* (Creese 2008: 232).

Cicourel (1987: 218) deems it virtually impossible to analyse meaning without drawing on the socio-cultural details that surround the event, stating that even brief exchanges can carry with them *'considerable cultural and interpersonal "baggage" for participants'*. These socio-cultural details are often attributable to long-standing

participant relationships - relationships that are often not known to the researcher. I felt therefore that an ethnographic approach would enable me to focus on the everyday situations in which SLIs were required to interpret, and would allow me to capture some of the fine detail of the complex social interaction occurring in these events. I was keen to combine the video-recording and observation of workplace interaction with playback interviews with main participants, thus establishing 'what was happening' from a variety of perspectives.

Ethnography attempts to '*capture and understand the meanings and dynamics in particular cultural settings*' (Rampton et al. 2004: 2). The ways in which people interact with each other reveals, creates and negotiates culture (Roy 2000). Ethnography thus seems particularly suited for the examination of interaction between deaf and hearing people. Additionally, ethnographic insights and detail are particularly useful for practitioners undertaking research in their field, as the data and resulting analysis are close to their experiences and understandings (Roberts & Campbell 2006: 19). The aim of the ethnographic approach to the current study is therefore to try and contextualise the interaction between primary parties.

Before moving on to consider the role of linguistics within LE, in particular the discourse analytical approach applied to the current study, I wish to highlight the role of the participant observer. The ethnography strand in LE means that the researcher is placed at the '*heart of the research*' (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 578). An ethnographic researcher tries to enter the 'life-worlds' of those individuals whose everyday practices are under observation (Rampton 2007c), an activity which necessitates achieving a degree of participation or insiderness.

In ethnography, the researcher is considered to be a participant observer if they are studying a situation in which they are already a legitimate participant, but take on an additional formal role, that of the researcher (Scollon & Scollon 2001). Thus, intrinsic to any ethnographic research is the notion that the researcher as participant-observer is part of what is happening, actively involved in the social action under study, and is sensitive to what their involvement means (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 578).

The researcher's presence will unavoidably impact on the practices being researched (Tusting & Maybin 2007). The degree to which the observer intrudes upon a natural event varies greatly according to the situation (Mason 2000). Precedents have already been set in terms of practitioner-researchers as participant observers - both Roy (1989) and Wadensjö (1992) were interpreters observing in events where their professional status was known to some or all of the participants. They might therefore legitimately be regarded by other participants as an in-group member (Mason 2000). However, no matter the credentials of the observer, they will always to some degree be subject to the observer's paradox (Mason 2000). The notion of 'observer's paradox', proposed by Labov (1972), highlights the ways in which the act of observation can itself contaminate the data being gathered, and is discussed further in Chapter Four, Section Two.

The active involvement of the ethnographic researcher and their subsequent effect on language practices is acknowledged as one of the tensions within LE. This is addressed to some extent by the implications of the researcher's direct involvement being explicitly acknowledged in the analytical process (Tusting & Maybin 2007). In order to balance the impact of the researcher's involvement in data collection, it is therefore vital to acknowledge and consider the effects of their position within the research and their presence as participant-observers, at all stages of the research process.

Cameron et al. (1992) state that researchers cannot help being '*socially located persons*', bringing with them their own biographies and subjectivities to every stage of the research process, influencing the questions they ask and how they try to find answers. In spite of this, the subjectivity of the observer should not be seen as a regrettable disturbance, but rather they should be viewed as one element in the human interactions that encompass the object under study. Research subjects should also be seen as '*active and reflexive beings*', who can bring insights into their situation and experiences, and who should be interacted with, rather than treated as inanimate objects (Cameron et al. 1992: 5). Consequently the researcher must balance the relative weight of their own perspectives with that of the participants when producing '*representations of the reality under study*' (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 579)

On that note, it is worth mentioning here the fact that in the UK, LE's base lies in applied linguistics, a discipline where individuals frequently embark on research somewhat later in life than students in other fields such as maths, psychology, sociology etc. (Rampton 2007a). Accordingly, these more 'mature' students are often motivated by practical interests and concerns, their impetus grounded in a bottom-up questioning of what general issues the description and analysis of their own experiences can help to clarify, rather than a pure fascination with academic theory by itself. For many, the move into linguistics and/ or ethnography is '*an attempt to find a way of adequately rendering quite extensive personal experience*', often prompted by the frustrations arising from the institutional processes they find themselves engaging with (Rampton 2007: 590a). This is certainly representative of my personal motivation in respect of the current study, and is an aspect explored in more detail in Chapter Four, Section Two Positioning the Practitioner- Researcher.

The attempt to open up and expose the processes in which the researcher has been engaged on a personal level (their institutional positioning) involves a shift from the '*inside moving outwards*' (Rampton 2007a: 590), in order to try and get '*analytic distance on what's close at hand*' (Rampton 2007a: 584). This is opposed to the more traditional efforts of trying to get familiar with the strange, and making a move from the outside inwards. In doing so, this goes some way to addressing one of the criticisms sometimes levelled at ethnographers, i.e. that their very participation in the research process affects their ability to produce impartial and unbiased position findings. The action of stepping back from what may be very familiar and taking a more detached analytical view about '*what is going on here*' (Rampton 2007b) is aided by the discourse analytical method employed by linguistic ethnographers.

3.1.2 Interactional sociolinguistics

Linguistic interaction is social interaction, and therefore studying the ways in which language is used is essential in enabling an understanding of how '*oppressive social relations are created and reproduced*' (Cameron et al. 1992: 4). Whilst linguistics is a massively contested field, there are a number of principles that most people affiliating with linguistics would accept (Rampton et al. 2004). Firstly, whilst language can change over time and varies across social groups, it is nonetheless

almost universal among humans. Secondly, there are structural patterns in the way in which people communicate. These patterns are relatively stable, recurrent and, to different degrees, socially shared and can be isolated and identified using reasonably well-established procedures. Thirdly, there are relatively well-established procedures and technical vocabularies for identifying and describing these patterns, which can make a valuable contribution to our understanding of *'the highly intricate processes involved when people talk, sign, read, write or otherwise communicate'* (Rampton et al. 2004: 3).

The discourse analytical method used in this study is based on an interactional sociolinguistics approach to the analysis of face-to-face conversation. This section will therefore highlight the aspects of the field considered relevant to the theoretical framework for the current study. One of the difficulties facing the researcher who wishes to examine the ways that people interact socially is how exactly to study and analyse the different features of a particular communicative event. In the current study the assumed model of communication is interactional, focusing on the communicative behaviour of all participants (Wadensjö 2001).

Defined as *'language in use'* (Roberts & Campbell 2006: 17), discourse can include both spoken and signed communication. Discourse analysis encompasses a variety of research activities with different types of data. It is also a field that is continually and rapidly developing to include research from many other academic disciplines, such as cognitive psychology and communication (Schiffren et al. 2001). A number of researchers have taken a more eclectic approach to discourse analysis, applying elements from one or more different models to their data (Stubbe et al. 2003).

Discourse analysis connects *'societal level knowledge, values and assumptions'* to the detailed ways in which participants interact (Roberts & Campbell 2006: 17). In workplace studies, conversation analysis (CA) (see Sacks et al. 1974), a method for the study of conversations, particularly focusing on turn design and the sequential structure of talk (Drew & Heritage 1992), has been dominant in analysing workplace talk (Koester 2006). However, whilst I will be drawing on CA techniques and tools for the analysis of the data, I have decided to apply an interactional sociolinguistic approach to the study and the reasons for this choice are outlined below.

Whilst a number of previous studies of signed language interpreted interaction have utilised a sociolinguistic approach (such as Roy 1989, 1996; Cokely 1992; Metzger 1995; Napier 2002, 2007), only Roy (1989) can be said to have incorporated interactional sociolinguistics in her work. None of these previous studies have looked at workplace interaction.

Pioneered by Gumperz (1982), and further developed by Tannen through various analyses of talk between different participants and across a range of settings (see Tannen 1984, 1986, 1994) interactional sociolinguistics (IS) has its roots in the ethnography of communication (Stubbe et al. 2003). However, it is an approach that also combines anthropology, sociology and linguistics, focusing on the relationship of these elements with language, culture and society (Roy 2000). Discourse analysis of either audio- or video-taped intercultural communicative events forms the bedrock of IS methodology (Tannen 2005). Detailed qualitative analysis is used to identify the inferencing procedures and signalling systems which speakers of varying backgrounds utilise to construct conversational meaning (Gavruseva 1995).

Interpreter-mediated intercultural exchanges are particularly complex in terms of examining the meaning that participants assign to the contributions of others. The interpreter '*faces both ways*', responding to what has been said (or signed) and as a '*receiver-orientated producer*' (Mason 2006a), whilst also acting as a 'gate-keeper' in terms of primary participants' access to cultural and linguistic norms. One element of the interpreter's task therefore is to make the necessary adjustments from one '*set of premises/ assumptions*' to the set required for communication in a different linguistic/cultural environment (Mason 2006a: 361). Close examination of the ways in which all primary participants utilise the '*nuts and bolts*' of language, i.e. '*pitch and amplitude; interactional patterns; pacing and pausing; the structuring, foregrounding or backgrounding of information*' (Tannen 2005), is consequently essential to understanding how the interpreter manages this aspect of their role.

IS looks at the contextualising work of those engaged in an interactive event and examines the ways in which context is both '*brought along and brought about*' in a situated encounter (Sarangi & Roberts 1999: 30). Seeking to bridge the gap between

approaches where communicative practices are considered to be shaped by ‘habitus’, reflecting wider macro-societal conditions, and a more constructionist approach whereby social worlds are seen as being shaped by our interaction, IS focuses on communicative practice as the ‘*real world site*’ where societal and interactive forces combine (Gumperz 1999: 454; Creese 2008). IS takes a talk-intrinsic view of context, but is also interested in the way in which participants interpret the discourse and what inferences they draw from that discourse (Koester 2006).

In seeking to make connections between ‘top down’ theoretical discourse practices which privilege ‘macro-societal conditions’ when accounting for communicative practices, and those approaches which take a ‘bottom-up’ social constructionist approach, IS differs from conversation analysis in its recognition of the effects of the wider socio-cultural context on interactions (Stubbe et al. 2003). The issue of context was discussed earlier in this chapter, and it is important to note that CA takes a different approach to context. CA argues that a broad, ‘external’ definition of context can cause problems because there are many wide-ranging aspects of context that can be considered to be relevant (see Koester 2006). However, as previously highlighted, I consider the issue of context to be intrinsic to the examination of interpreted workplace discourse and therefore, whilst I will utilise some elements of CA within my analysis, the current study draws primarily on IS.

Frequently concerned with intercultural encounters, IS examines the ways in which people from different social or ethnic backgrounds share (or do not share) inferential procedures, cultural assumptions and patterns of linguistic behaviour (Koester 2006; Creese 2008). Roberts et al. (1992) suggest IS as a useful tool for analysing discourse in research sites where encounters are characterised by status and power differentials between participants, such as interviews, meetings and encounters at work. This makes IS particularly suited to the current study, as the institutional nature of the workplace, the historical oppressive relationships between deaf and hearing people, and the unequal positioning of deaf people in employment (see Chapter Two), mean that there is considerable discrepancy in terms of power and status between participants.

As speakers, we have ways of conveying complex information to listeners about how we intend them to treat the messages we convey (Gumperz 1999). Meaning is not solely conveyed through the features of language, but is also determined by *'background expectations, prior knowledge of relationships, roles, cultural knowledge, and other social knowledge'* (Roy 2000: 13). To interpret meaning, listeners must not only attend to the information content of the message, but must also draw upon their background expectations or social knowledge to fully understand what is being said (Roy 2000).

IS utilises the micro-analytical techniques of CA in order to examine the fine-grained details of talk in interaction, but also aims to address some of the broader issues of the inferential frameworks operating within different social and cultural groups, adding a *'further dimension, linking surface-level phenomena to participants' goals and inferences'* (Koester 2006: 20). Whilst IS draws heavily on CA techniques in its microanalytic approach, an IS analyst will explicitly recognise the *'wider sociocultural context impacting on interactions'* (Stubbe et al. 2003: 358). In order to build on a CA approach, the analyst must orient towards the speakers and listeners engaged in the interaction, asking what those participants must know or do, so they might take part in conversations or *'create and sustain conversational involvement'* (Gumperz 1992: 306). This latter aspect, the creation and continuation of conversational engagement, is one that is likely to be particularly relevant to the current study, given its emphasis on the ways in which participants interact in workplace team meetings.

Contextualisation cues

In interaction, trying to identify speakers' goals can present a challenge for participants (Koester 2006). Contextualisation cues (Gumperz 1982, 1992) are used by speakers and listeners to signal and make inferences about communicative goals, and are a useful way of relating speaker's goals and intentions to surface discourse features (Koester 2006). Defined as *'any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions'* (Gumperz 1982: 131), contextualisation cues are present within the surface content of a message, and are the ways in which 'speakers' and 'listeners' use verbal and non-verbal signs *'to relate what is said at*

any one time and in any one place to knowledge acquired through past experience' (Gumperz 1992: 230). Cues can be signalled through any aspect of linguistic or paralinguistic behaviour, for example: prosody, lexical forms, choice of code or style etc (Koester 2006). These *'tiny linguistic features'* (Tannen 2005: 207) can play a large part in conveying meaning, and thus can be a highly essential component in negotiating relationships.

The local situation in which participants find themselves influences the ways in which they interpret what is happening within the discourse event, with both speakers and listeners drawing upon linguistic and extra-linguistic cues (Cicourel 1981). In addition, participants access their previously acquired knowledge of prosodic and para-linguistic cues (pitch, rhythm, register etc) in order to anticipate and interpret what is happening within the event. By screening for, and locating these cues, the listener can infer what type of speech activity they are involved in. They then combine their background knowledge together with emerging expectations, in order to predict what the speaker intends next (Cicourel 1981). In other words, contextualisation cues function to *'call up shared experiences of a community'*, in addition to acting as *'tracking devices in the moment by moment interpretation of utterances'* (Sarangi & Roberts 1999:30). Contextualisation cues are thus powerful means whereby participants can negotiate social identity and legitimise *'preferred styles of communicating'* in asymmetrical workplace interaction (Sarangi & Roberts 1999: 30).

These cues are for the most part *'automatically used and perceived but rarely consciously noted and almost never talked about directly'* (Roy 1989: 38). When engaged in conversation participants are continually, and mostly subconsciously, assessing what other people are saying. This multi-level process involves thinking about what other participants might mean, what will be said next and how that utterance might be responded to. Participants identify information from the vocabulary that people use, the level of formality at which they speak, the tone in their voice, pauses etc, and drawing on background knowledge, experience of roles/relationships, cultural knowledge and previous discourse events. Participant understanding of contextualisation cues is therefore based on expectations derived from prior experiences. If these expectations are not shared then communication can

break down and misunderstandings occur (Koester 2006). This has been evidenced in previous research into intercultural interaction. Clyne (1994), for example, has shown that communication breakdown can occur when speakers from different cultures fail to comprehend differences in turn-taking systems. Kell et al. (2007) have illustrated that the ways in which pauses and silences are managed can present problems between Māori and Pākehā speakers.

It is important to note that contextualisation cues can operate at different discourse levels. On a local level they are used by participants to make sense of what is happening in relation to individual speech acts. On a wider 'global' level, they guide interpretations of what 'activity' the participants are involved in (Gumperz 1992), thus converging with Goffman's (1974) notion of 'frame' (Gumperz 1992; Koester 2006). The concept of *frame* applies to the definition which participants give to the current social activity in which they are engaged, and is relevant to interpreter-mediated workplace discourse, where all primary participants may have conflicting frames, occurring across different levels of interaction. For example, deaf and hearing participants may not only frame a team meeting differently according to their prior experiences and cultural backgrounds, but they may also have a dissimilar understanding of an interpreted event and the role of the SLI. Additionally, there may be a disparate appreciation between participants of shifts from 'business' to social or play talk. The concept of frame is discussed in detail, together with the notion of footing, in section 3.2.

To conclude, IS provides a way of examining how participants from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds use the '*nuts and bolts*' of language (Tannen 2005: 206) when trying to get across their meaning, and comprehend the contributions of others. An IS approach to the data in the current study is particularly relevant, due to its central focus on contextualisation cues and the fact that the interaction under examination is intercultural in nature, taking place within an institutional setting characterised by imbalances in power and status between minority and majority participants.

Whilst the SLI holds considerable responsibility for mediating disparate understanding in interpreted interaction, there has been little in-depth attention paid to

their awareness and competency in managing issues such as framing and contextualisation within complex workplace multi-party discourse (see Chapter Two for an outline of the research undertaken in this area). Deaf and hearing participants engaged in interpreter-mediated workplace interaction are likely to hold diverse perceptions as to how the communicative event should proceed. Additionally, participants' lack of shared background, culture and experiences is liable to result in misunderstandings relating to contextualisation cues. In intercultural encounters, the customs and behaviours of the dominant group are often accepted as the norm; by examining the ways in which participants use and understand contextualisation cues, the '*systematic differences in the cultural assumptions and patterns of linguistic behaviour*' (Creese 2008: 231) can be teased out and identified. The combination of the detailed CA-influenced examination of interpreter-mediated interaction, together with the focus on diversity provided by the ethnographic sociolinguistic perspective of IS, thus provides a useful way of exploring the complex linguistic and social relationships between all primary participants.

3.1.3 Bringing together ethnography and linguistics

Finally, in this section it is important to address some of the acknowledged conflicts and tensions inherent within LE. As a relatively new analytical orientation, LE is under considerable debate. Accordingly, it is important to examine the rationale behind LE, and to '*ask questions about its nature and its relationship with other approaches*' (Hammersley 2007: 690).

One of the main challenges facing LE is the tension between certain linguistic traditions and ethnography (Creese 2008). Rampton (2007a) addresses this, stating that the basic differences between linguistics and ethnography can be dealt with in two different ways. If viewed as complementing each other through their differences, ethnography can be seen as '*humanising*' language study, embedding rich descriptions of '*how the language users of a given variety*' adapt their language to different situational purposes and contexts, thus preventing linguistics from becoming reductive or shallow (Rampton 2007a: 596). At the same time, linguistics can be seen as helping to '*avoid error and inaccuracy in cultural description*', producing '*ethnographies that are more subtle and detailed*' (Rampton 2007a: 596). If the

differences between ethnography and linguistics are accentuated, then the focus can be directed back to the researchers and their methods, forcing accountability for the ways in which the contradictions are dealt with (Rampton 2007a).

The degree of the ethnographic researcher's involvement and their effect on language practices has already been acknowledged as a potential source of tension earlier in this chapter. Tusting and Maybin (2007: 576) also highlight that whilst a dual focus of ethnographical and linguistic methods has the potential to produce rigorously grounded linguistic work which also addresses the complexities of social practice, there exist methodological tensions between '*a more 'closed' focus on linguistic text and a more 'open' sensitivity to context and the role of the researcher*'. That is, the very practice that LE purports to create, with ethnography '*opening up*' linguistics and linguistics '*tying down*' ethnography (Rampton et al. 2004), results in a number of conflicts. These tensions raise '*interesting questions*' about the selection and recording of what counts as data, the representative functions of the language, both for the researcher and the researched, and the researcher's own positionality in the research (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 576). Consequently the linguistic ethnographer needs to continually maintain a sense of balance in terms of the claims they make regarding the ethnographic and linguistic elements of their data. Context inescapably has an effect on what people say and do, but at the same time cannot be held accountable for everything that develops within an interactive discourse event. Therefore, whilst my ethnographic approach means that I will be taking into account the context of the interpreter-mediated event, I will be making a conscious effect to be constantly aware that context does not necessarily explain what I see in the data.

Tusting and Maybin (2007) state that one of LE's strengths may be its relatively broad stance in terms of its critical position, meaning that it can address a wide range of questions without bringing into play accusations of intrinsic bias, such as those that have been levelled at critical discourse analysis (e.g. Widdowson 2004). At the same time they highlight that this aspect of LE may also represent a weakness due to a lack of explicit articulation of a political position, with important questions about the social structures within which action takes place being '*assumed rather than examined*' (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 580).

3.1.4 Summary

LE encourages a rigorous analysis of data, allowing the ethnographic researcher to gain some distance from the involvement that is brought about by their status as a participant-observer. The combination of an ethnographic approach, whereby the researcher can draw on a variety of materials outside of the discourse event in order to contextualise the interaction between participants, together with detailed micro-analysis of linguistic data, should prove adequate to describe and explore interpreter-mediated interaction.

There have been recommendations for more ethnographic research into the field of interpreting (Mason 2000; Turner 2001), in order to contribute '*ever richer and more detailed descriptive and explanatory accounts*' of interpreting process and practice. In addition there have been calls for '*enhanced "close-up", thickly descriptive, ethnographic research*' (Turner 2005: 52) of interpreting practices in order to develop quality assurance in the field. Mason (2000) also recommends taking a more ethnographic approach, in order to encompass the socio-cultural and socio-textual norms of the event and move away from interpreters' errors and 'performance phenomena'.

Roy (2000) argues that in order for an analyst to truly make sense of what is happening in a social situation they must have an understanding of the event that to some degree matches that of the participants within the setting, and this assertion underpins my research. As a SLI who is employed within workplace settings, I felt that an ethnographic approach was particularly relevant to this study, as without some context in which to locate the interaction (e.g. the topic that people are discussing, their hierarchical relationship to each other, personal relationships etc.) it is particularly challenging to fully understand what is happening. In line with Wadensjö (2001: 186), I wanted to study interpreting '*as a linguistic and social phenomenon of human communication*', widening out the linguistic context beyond '*words and sentences in two languages*', and encompassing a broader social context than that of the individual interpreter.

The production of a detailed linguistic account of what actually occurs during an interpreter-mediated workplace exchange, together with an acknowledgment of the context of the event, should enable a more comprehensive understanding of what is taking place. If interpreters are pivotal players in '*social in local*' interpreting contexts, caught up in '*larger social configurations of power and control*' (Inghilleri 2006: 57), both inside and outside of their profession, then it should be possible to see some connections between the norms of their interpreting activity and the wider social and political contexts in which they occur. The importance placed on a detailed and thorough linguistic analysis of the video data of interpreted interaction, using the '*formal, structured tools of language description*', provides a perspective that is distanced from participants' '*situated knowledge and understandings*' (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 579), thus enabling an empirical strengthening of the theoretical claims of the research.

3.2 Frames and Footing

The previous sections have outlined the suitability of a LE framework in relation to the collection and analysis of interpreter-mediated interaction in workplace settings. I have emphasised the importance of ethnography, and argued the case for IS as a discourse analytical method in relation to communicative events characterised by asymmetrical power relationships and cultural differences, enabling a focus on the ways in which participants signal, understand and negotiate meaning within interpreter-mediated workplace interaction. The final 'lens' which I wish to apply to workplace discourse is a Goffmanian one, specifically the notions of *frame* and *footing*.

Berger (1986: xvii- xviii) states that one '*goes to Goffman for the truths of close-up human interaction*' and the current study draws extensively on a number of concepts developed by Goffman that enable the exploration of the interaction order. Goffman's work has informed a number of studies of institutional interaction. Bennert (1998) uses Goffman's notion of participation framework to examine the ways in which trainees and their co-workers in post-16 vocational training discursively negotiate workplace identities. Poncini (2003) explores the relationships between participants at multicultural business meetings through the concepts of frame

and participation framework. Bredmar and Linell (1999) examine how midwives balance and combine different framings in their discourse. Both spoken and signed language studies have also extensively mined Goffman's work in order to flesh out the interpreter's role in discourse events (see Roy 1989; Wadensjö 1998; Metzger 1999; Napier 2007; Kent & Potter 2005; Tray 2005; Takimoto & Koshiha 2009).

3.2.1 Interpreting and participation status

Before moving on to consider the notion of footing I will briefly outline the key elements of Goffman's speaker and hearer roles. In terms of the hearer (or recipient/listener), Goffman refers to their *participation status*, this being the relationship of any individual in respect to the person who is producing an utterance, i.e. the speaker (Goffman 1981). Here is made a distinction between ratified and un-ratified hearers. Ratified hearers are categorised as those who have official status within a social encounter and constitute those who are directly addressed recipients (addressees). In a two-party exchange, this is a relatively clear category, but it can be more complex in settings where there are three or more participants. For example, during a multi-party meeting, the speaker is likely to address all participants present at some point, thus affording them equal status. However, it is also probable that at some point one particular individual will be made the specific focus of the speaker's attention, reducing those not directly addressed to side-participants or *auditors*. Accordingly, ratified or official hearers must be further differentiated into 'addressed' and 'unaddressed' recipients.

Un-ratified participants are those that have access to the social encounter but are not present in an official capacity. This includes bystanders or over-hearers, i.e. those who are inadvertent, non-official listeners or eavesdroppers (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1995). Thus, in a situation where there are multiple participants, there may be a number of intended recipients (addressed and unaddressed) of an utterance, but there might also be hearers who are un-ratified participants.

The role of speaker can be realised through several distinct *production formats*, depending on whether the person speaks for his- or herself or on behalf of somebody else (Bennert 1998: 18). Goffman describes three roles which the speaker can

undertake: *animator*, *author* and *principal*, with speakers having the ability to fulfil one or all of these roles at any given time. The animator is the person producing the sound, the individual '*active in the role of utterance production*' (Goffman 1981: 144). The author is the person who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed and the way in which they are said. Finally, the principal is someone whose position is '*established by the words that are spoken*', an individual who is committed to what the words say and who is active in a particular role or social identity (Goffman 1981: 144). Through the adoption or assignment of particular discourse roles, participants implicitly make claims about '*their social positions and relationships*', whilst also reframing or redefining what activities they are engaging in (Bennert 1998: 19).

The speaker's relationship to utterances and addressees is clearly complex and notions about animator, author and principal can help us understand the alignments between the primary participants in a communicative event (Metzger 1999). The choices interpreters make as speakers and hearers '*make a significant difference to the progression and substance*' of the discourse (Wadensjö 1998: 279). Wadensjö (1992) further develops Goffman's participation framework model in order to examine the interpreter's role in interactive discourse, identifying various modes of listening or *reception* formats and suggests distinguishing between listening as a *responder*, as a *reporter* and as a *recapitulator*. Wadensjö (2004) notes that interpreters can be observed to shift between focusing on each of these three modes of listening. According to Wadensjö (2004), the responder mode (whereby participants expect or anticipate taking the discourse further by introducing their own content) is a position rarely adopted by interpreters, who predominately occupy the role of reporter (preparing to respond as animator of another's talk) or recapitulator (preparing to re-author the utterance of another participant).

One final aspect of participant status which relates to the interpreter, and which requires further consideration is that of Goffman's (1990) concept of a non-person. As outlined in the Chapter Two and in the preceding sections in this chapter, interpreters are not merely animators of other participant's talk, reproducing the source message word for word in another language (Amato 2007), but are active and engaged participants with an immense potential to control primary participants'

access to, and understanding of, the interactive event. Despite their pivotal role in coordinating dialogue and enabling primary participants to achieve shared understanding, interpreters are often treated as non-persons or non-participants in discourse events (Angermeyer 2005). Additionally, interpreters can also reinforce their invisibility and attempt to minimise their presence by adopting this status, either as a conscious strategy (e.g. to distance themselves from a participant's comment or to redirect focus to a participant rather than themselves), or as a sort of 'default' setting. This aspect of the interpreter's participation status can present problems, particularly in terms of their ability to fully engage in the interaction on an equal level with other primary parties.

Goffman's concept of a 'non-person' describes someone who is present in the interaction, but is not involved in the role of either performer or of audience. Stating that the role is similar to that of a servant, Goffman (1990: 152) delineates aspects of this status which resonate with the role of the interpreter: the non-person has an unscripted role within the interaction; servant-like roles carry with them '*uncertainty on both sides of the relationship as to what kind of intimacies are permissible*' in their presence. Wadensjö (1998: 19) notes that as a non-person the interpreter is afforded '*certain unique rights*' in a conversation, included or excluded by other participants or including/ excluding themselves from the interaction. Non-persons can avoid behaving according to the norms of the situation, refusing to acknowledge comments or utterances from others, even when directly addressed. Whilst this can in some circumstances mean that there is no '*redefinition of the situation*' (Wadensjö 1998: 66), such behaviour on the part of the interpreter will always impact on the interaction between participants in one way or another.

One option which appears to be a default setting for interpreters in certain situations is to shift to an animator's stance by adopting a purely machine-like or invisible role, effectively becoming a non-person, and attempting to minimise as far as possible any effect on the message that they are relaying (see Wadensjö 1992; Mason 2004). This has implications in both the short term (for participants engaged in that particular discourse event) and the long term (for participants in future interpreter-mediated discourse events), resulting in the role of the interpreter as an unengaged and invisible non-participant being effectively reinforced. The concept of the interpreter as a non-

person is closely related to the notion of the interpreter as an invisible language conduit (see section 2.4.3) and is therefore pertinent to the current study.

To conclude, an essential element of the interpreter's task lies in their on-going and constant assessment of how primary participants intend their utterances to be understood and by whom (Wadensjö 2002). The consideration of participation status is necessary for understanding the potential roles that the interpreter and other participants can assume during interactive discourse. The interpreter has a unique role in interaction, having to evaluate interlocutors' speakership and listenership, appraise how the parties relate to each other and to the activity in which they are engaged (Metzger 1999). Interpreters have a range of options open to them to manage the assumptions of participants, and can shift their footing to take on different participation status roles. The interpreter's own stance within the interaction also impacts on that of the primary participants. The following section will examine how participants can shift footing to take on different roles, and how these footing shifts can change the framing of the interaction.

3.2.2 The interpreter-mediated interaction frame

The notions of frame and footing are '*of particular interest for examining multiparty talk at work*' (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1995:12- 13). Additionally, they are essential in understanding how participants can shift from serious business talk to that of play. I will therefore elaborate on both concepts, in order to illustrate how they can be used to understand the complex interaction in interpreted workplace discourse.

The term *frame* as used by Goffman (1986: 13) is defined as an individual's understanding of what is happening in a given situation, the '*structure of experience individuals have at any moment of their social lives*'. A frame therefore allows participants to define what is going on, what the situation is and what roles are being assumed by themselves and other primary participants. In any discourse event, individuals rely on their expectations that '*particular sounds, words, objects, topics, ways of speaking, interaction structures, roles, situations and so on*' (Rampton 1995: 17) will combine with each other in relatively predictable ways. The only way in which we can make sense of the world is to see the connections between things in the

present and *'things we have experienced before or heard about'* (Tannen 1993a: 14). These expectations, based on experience and the assumptions drawn from experiential knowledge, enable us to understand the world in which we live and make up *'much of our everyday, commonsense knowledge of social reality'* (Rampton 1995: 17). Generally, people deal with talk and action falling outside of their normal expectations with relatively little difficulty, but occasionally their basic assumptions about the social world can be substantially challenged and undermined.

Whilst the current study uses the term *frame* as developed by Goffman, it is valid to note that there are other terms expressing similar concepts, such as 'schema' and 'scripts'. The meanings of these can differ according to the discipline of the theorist using the particular term. Tannen (1993a) discusses extensively the concepts of 'schema', 'scripts' and 'frames', highlighting the complexity of these terms and the ways in which they can be used (see also Metzger 1999 for an in-depth discussion on this point). However, Tannen (1993a: 16), following Ross (1975), refers generally to these concepts as *'structures of expectations'* in an attempt to un-complicate the issue, stating that individuals will organise their knowledge of the world based on their experiences of the world in a given culture (or combination of cultures). They will then utilise this knowledge to *'predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences'* (Tannen 1993a: 16). Tannen and Wallat (1993: 60) provide a useful differentiation between frame and schema, stating that whilst a frame is a participant's *'sense of what activity is being engaged in'*, a schema refers to participants' *'patterns of knowledge'* (Tannen & Wallat 1993: 60) with regard to their expectations about the world, people or things. Accordingly, a frame relates to the interactional aspect whilst a schema refers to an individual's knowledge structure (Takimoto & Koshiba 2009).

Frames are, as Tannen (1993a) emphasises, non-static, dynamic and interactional, based on participants' ongoing and frequent assessments of their own role and that of others, on a turn by turn level, throughout the discourse event. Frames are not themselves linguistic but rather are *'implied by or brought into play by the meanings of the discourse'* (Maley 2000: 254). However, frames are often marked through *'formal and functional elements of language'*, with participants using verbal and non-verbal markers to key other primary parties into a particular frame or set of

understandings about what is taking place, as well as *'framing social relationships among speakers'* (Coupland & Coupland 2000: 209).

Changes in frame can be signalled through what Goffman refers to as footing shifts. Goffman's notion of footing is related to frames because both involve the participants in a social activity. Footing is best conceptualised as a participant's *'alignment, or set, or stance, or posture, or projected self'* (Goffman 1981: 128) during a particular stretch of interaction. It describes a person's alignment (as speaker *and* hearer) in relation to an utterance produced by another primary participant. Footing thus addresses *'the reflexive and fluctuating character of frames, together with the moment-by-moment reassessments and realignments which participants may make in moving from one frame to another'* (Drew & Heritage 1992: 8-9). Changes in footing, indicated through the ways in which participants *'manage the production and reception of an utterance'*, therefore imply that a participant has shifted their alignment in relation to both themselves and other participants present (Goffman 1981: 128). Participants establish their relationships and alignments by responding to cues and adjusting their frames according to what happens within the interactive event (Napier 2007). Accordingly, change in footing is *'another way of talking about a change in our frame for events'* (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris 1995:12- 13).

Systematic verbal and non-verbal 'cues and markers' are used by participants to signal their footing in an interactive event (Wortham 1996). These markers can occur orally through the use of a switch of language, register or pitch or can be signalled by visual/ multimodal cues such as posture, eye gaze, facial expression and *'other displays of attention or involvement'* (Rampton 2007b: 1). Therefore, if there is a change of frame in interaction, signalled either linguistically or via visual multimodal cues, the participants must align themselves according to the new frame, thus resulting in a change in footing (Takimoto & Koshiba 2009).

Shifting to the play frame

The preceding discussion on the notions of frame and footing are firstly relevant to the current study in terms of the use of humour and small talk at work, as it examines how these elements are utilised within workplace CofPs, e.g. workplace teams. Shifts from serious to 'play talk' are heavily signalled via contextualisation cues. In

workplace teams, depending on the degree of shared experience and knowledge between participants and the extent to which deaf employees have parity with their hearing peers, there are likely to be differences in recognising and understanding those cues and the subsequent shifts in frame.

Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997) and Coates (2007) argue that conversational or situational humour involves the establishment of a 'play' frame, with a backdrop of inter-group knowledge. Once this frame is established, participants collaborate in the construction of talk, with shared laughter nurturing group solidarity. These arguments draw on Bateson's (1972) idea of a play frame, whereby participants can frame their talk as humorous by signalling their shift from serious talk to play talk. Utterances are marked as humorous through special contextualisation or framing procedures (Kotthoff 2000: 65). The creation of the play frame is fundamental, as the humour *'not only emerges in the situation itself but from the appropriate cues that make it a laughing matter'* (Boxer & Cortés-Conde 1997: 277). Straehle (1993: 214) notes that while contextualisation cues enable speakers to frame and interpret individual utterances as joking rather than serious, or teasing rather than hostile, these *'smaller frames are embedded in, and in fact, construct even larger ones'*. Humorous exchanges, such as the telling of a joke, enable participants to recall what is shared about their everyday practices, and the depth to which they share it, bringing to the surface the *'commonality that is implicit in our social life'* (Critchley 2007: 27).

Maintenance of a play frame is indicative of solidarity, as participants are collaborating in sustaining a play frame and a particular way of talking (Coates 2007). The collaboration required for the establishment of a play frame requires talk that is jointly constructed with a very strong sense of cooperation, and from the premise that the conversational floor is simultaneously open to all participants (Coates 2007, see also Edelsky 1993; Coates & Sutton-Spence 2001). Spontaneous conversational humour requires participants to draw on shared knowledge and in-group norms (Coates 2007). Engaging in joking or humorous exchanges requires a *'sensitive awareness of the process of interaction'* which enables the joker to quickly perceive the microcosmic shared context and culture to which they can refer (Davies 2003: 1369). The ability to participate in joking is important in the development of rapport,

with collaborative or 'joint' joking demonstrating just how well participants know each other (Davies 2003).

Participants must recognise that a play frame has been invoked and then choose to maintain it (Coates 2007). Play frames can be somewhat problematic due to the fact that they are less explicitly signalled compared to other forms of humour. Joke telling, for example, involves much clearer signalling on the part of the initiator, e.g. 'have you heard this one before', but in play frames meaning and intention can be less clear and thus can result in misunderstandings and/ or misfires (Boxer & Cortés-Conde 1997). If play talk is occurring between friends or in an established CofP where humour and teasing is part of the norm, then the lack of explicit signalling will not present a problem for the majority of participants. However, if a participant is not a full member of a CofP, or is from a different culture, then the signals may not be recognised.

In terms of humour, footing is a further essential theoretical formulation which attempts to account for the phenomenological shift that occurs at the point where the joke is initiated (Davies 2003). Following Goffman's (1981) definition of footing implies that the individual initiating the joke is taking a different stance toward the interaction, which other participants can then choose to take up or disregard. An individual's utterance will be understood by another participant as, for example, either 'joking' or 'arguing' dependent on the latter's sense of frame (Takimoto & Koshiba 2009). Any change in frame will result in a repositioning and realignment by participants to the shift, thus bringing about a change in footing (Takimoto & Koshiba 2009). Participants will therefore recognise that a frame has shifted, for example from serious business talk to that of a play frame, and will choose whether or not to adjust their footing or alignment along with this shift. A participant's ability to '*recognise what is happening and respond in some even rudimentary way*' is therefore very important (Davies 2003: 1368).

Humour is deeply embedded in the '*partially submerged structure of sociocultural knowledge in the form of schemas, associations, assumptions and presuppositions linked to discourse*' (Davies 2003: 1363). A humorous utterance establishes a frame, whilst at the same time triggering '*a carefully channeled process of inference*' which

must be worked out by the participant attuned to the contextualisation cues within that utterance (Davies 2003: 1364). Humour can be a very useful and powerful communication tool, but as with all forms of language, knowing when and how to use it appropriately is key. In order for participants to successfully participate in the construction of joking episodes they need to be able to grasp and then play with '*the principles of the joking frame*', demonstrating the finely tuned understanding they have of each other (Davies 2003: 1381).

Studies of humour have identified a range of cues or markers which indicate a shift into 'play mode' (Goffman 1974). Coates (2007) describes talk in a play frame as being characterised by features such as overlapping speech, the co-construction of utterances, repetition, laughter and metaphor. These features, often co-present in a given stretch of talk, seem to be essential elements of 'playing' conversationally. Hymes (1972) refers to a humorous 'key', which can be signalled by cues such as frequent laughter and a '*jokey tone*' (Eggins & Slade 1997: 158), as well as through the use of pathos and exaggeration (Kotthoff 2000). Contextual cues such as the speaker's tone of voice, sudden changes in pitch or rhythm, the preceding discourse, and paralinguistic cues such as the use of a laughing or smiling voice (Coates 2007) can all signal that a play frame is being invoked and that participants have recognised the shift.

Laughter plays a particularly important role in structuring playful talk as it marks participants' recognition of both the establishment of a play frame and its close (Coates 2007). Davies (2003: 1365) refers to the '*sardonic tone and deadpan delivery*' used by an interlocutor in her example of a humorous exchange. Eggins and Slade (1997) also draw attention to kinaesthetic cues such as a participant's change of facial expression or physical posture. Davies (2003) identifies the repetition of lexical, syntactic, prosodic and pragmatic dimensions of the discourse, as well as a rhythmic matching, as allowing for well-coordinated joint interaction. Repetition appears to be a particularly striking element of talk in a play frame, occurring at many levels: lexical, semantic, syntactic and thematic (Coates 2007). Repeating another's choice of words, for example, can be a powerful way of signalling acknowledgement (Davies 2003), and collaboration (Rogerson-Revell 2007), enabling the talk to move from a serious frame to a play frame in a '*very coherent and smooth way*' (Coates 2007: 43).

Full participation in engaging in joking or humorous exchanges with native language users clearly requires a high level of communicative competence together with the appropriate socio-cultural knowledge (Davies 2003). Furthermore, participants' recognition of the signals that cue them into the play frame often hinges on their contextual background information to the event (Barsoux 1996). In interpreter-mediated interaction, the SLI's understanding of, and participation in, the frames being invoked by participants, together with contextual knowledge in which to locate the exchange constitutes an essential element of their interpretation. As we shall see, this has implications for humorous exchanges in interpreted mediated interaction between deaf and hearing employees.

Interpreted-mediated discourse events

I would suggest that for many people, a discourse event which is mediated by an SLI is both a form of talk and action that challenges and subverts participants' expectations of what constitutes 'normal' reality, confronting on a number of levels the frame that they might hold for a particular discourse event. Metzger (1999: 88) states that '*the dynamic interplay of frames and schema can allow people to understand (or misunderstand) interactive events*' and it is therefore useful to examine how the primary participants in an interpreted event might frame the interaction, and how this is evidenced in their discourse. Previous accounts (Wadensjö 1992; Tate & Turner 2001; Moody 2007) have suggested that some of the conflict that can occur during interpreted interaction stem to some degree from participants' understanding of the situation in which they are involved, the norms of interpreting, and the roles of their co-participants. For example, Angermeyer (2005), in his study of court interpreters, highlights the importance of interpreters adjusting their translational output to meet the needs of participants, such as considering alternatives to the use of first-person translational norms. Angermeyer asserts that participant misunderstandings in interpreter-mediated interaction are frequently attributed to their lack of understanding of translational norms and that the interpreter's failure to take into account participant needs (such as identifying interlocutors and their participant roles) is rarely considered. A theoretical structure that enables the examination of participant expectations of an interpreted event can

reveal the different layers of understanding and interaction inherent in interpreted discourse, and can allow the consideration of the potentially mismatched frames and schema between hearing employees, deaf employees and SLIs.

In terms of interpreter-mediated discourse, research has demonstrated that interpreters shift their footing throughout discourse events, and for a variety of purposes. Kent and Potter (2005) expand on the issue of frame in relation to interpreters, stating that a mental frame defines the way in which an individual believes a task ‘should’ be done and include within that understanding: the order in which topics and speakers should occur, who should and should not be involved in the interaction, contributor entitlements, what topics are relevant and which are irrelevant and what kind of emotion is appropriate to the event. This elaboration in relation to the concept of frame is a useful one, as it allows us to begin to consider all of the aspects of the frame that primary parties bring to an interpreted team meeting within the workplace.

The frame for an interpreted encounter is embedded within other layers of framed activity (Metzger 1999), and an interpreted team meeting will consist of a number of layered and overlapping frames, with ‘smaller’ or more local frames located within broader frames (Takimoto & Koshiba 2009). At the centre of the interaction is what Takimoto and Koshiba (2009: 18) refer to the ‘*interpreter-mediated interaction frame*’. Depending on the experience of the primary parties they will all have varying expectations of what an interpreted meeting entails. Participants will therefore expect the meeting to have certain characteristics and will behave according to their expectations. Takimoto and Koshiba give interpreter-generated interruptions (e.g. for clarification or explanation of a word or concept) as one example of a characteristic of an interpreter-mediated meeting, whilst the interpreter’s position within turn-taking is given as another. They note that the number of participants increases the complexity of the overall interaction, which in turn presents the interpreter with difficulties interpreting all utterances accurately. As a consequence, the interpreter may have to manage the information by selecting what they consider requires to be interpreted. Their study demonstrates that participants can shift frames in order to respond to a lack of rendition from the interpreter, producing a new utterance of which the interpreter can provide a rendition, thus bringing the interpreter back into the ‘default frame’ of interpreter-mediated interaction.

The interpreter-mediated frame will be located within the frame of the team meeting, which is in turn sited in the wider frame of the particular organisation (e.g. social services, education department etc). All of these frames will have certain characteristics associated with them and participants' expectations and understanding of how these frames operate will be formed according to their past experiences. For example, if participants regularly attend team meetings where humorous exchanges form an integral part of the interaction between managers and subordinates, then they will be accustomed to adjusting their footing as the frames shift between serious and non-serious talk (such as teasing). The vital aspect here is that as these shifts in footing occur, be they between levels of formality or business-orientated and social talk, interpreters '*must also shift their footing in relation to everyone present*' (Kent & Potter 2005: 56).

3.2.3 Interpreters and footing shifts

Goffman's terminology provides a '*suitable framework for describing subtle shifts in the interpreter's footing*' (Angermeyer 2005: 206), i.e. the interpreter's adjustments in their relationship to the primary participants. The concept of footing has been well utilised within interpreting studies, and is extensively discussed by Wadensjö (1992) and Metzger (1995). With Roy's (1989) Ph.D. thesis establishing that the interpreter plays a highly interactive role in interpreted discourse, Wadensjö's (1992) research confirmed the interpreter's interactive stance within communicative events, revealing that they shift footing as they try to understand and manage the discourse event. Wadensjö (1998) identified interpreting as consisting of two main activities - translating and coordinating - and emphasised that in dialogue interpreting, the translating and coordinating aspects are '*simultaneously present, and the one does not exclude the other*' (Wadensjö 1998: 105). Wadensjö's work has therefore demonstrated that professional interpreters typically go beyond their normative role of 'just' translating, actively shaping the development and outcome of the mediated encounter (Pöchhacker & Schlesinger 2002: 340), and coordinating other participants' discourse.

Wadensjö (1992) describes two types of potential footing moves in terms of interpreter utterances, these being *renditions* and *non-renditions*. Renditions comprise interpreter utterances based on the talk of primary participants, the relaying function referred to above, i.e. the interpreter's translation of the message generated by another participant. If the interpreter chooses not to translate the utterance of a participant, this is referred to by Wadensjö as a *lack of rendition*. Interpreters can create their own utterances, independent from any of the other participants, referred to as *non-renditions*. The interpreter's coordination of the interaction between participants is accomplished through non-renditions and can be either text-orientated, e.g. requests for clarification, comments on the substance or form of prior utterances, or interaction-oriented, e.g. requests for participants to stop talking, requests to observe the turn-taking order. Interpreter utterances are therefore normally designed to solve a problem of translation and a problem of communication, thus bridging both a linguistic gap and a social gap in the interactive event (Wadensjö 1998).

Metzger's study also brings out the dual nature of the interpreter's role, highlighting their participation in addition to the relaying of discourse (Metzger 1999). Following Wadensjö (1992), Metzger (1995) also focussed on interpreter utterances that were non-renditions of either spoken or signed language. She identifies two different categories of interpreter footing shifts: *relayings* and *interactional management*. She further divides the interpreter's actions of relaying into main three categories:

1. source attribution (the interpreter's action of identifying the source of the utterance, most frequently consisting of a single indexical point in the direction of the originator)
2. explanations (e.g. interpreter utterances regarding information related to the event, or interpreter comments on why they have been directly addressed by a participant)
3. repetition (e.g. where the interpreter generates a repetition of an utterance produced by another primary participant, in order to ensure that communication happens effectively).

One of the most commonly produced relayings, source attribution, appears to be a '*required component*' of interpreted interaction (Metzger 1999: 106), as participants can struggle to make sense of an interaction when they are unclear as to who is

responsible for utterances. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, in meetings with multiple participants where contributions frequently overlap, it is difficult for the interpreter to attribute the source of the utterance. Therefore as a footing shift, source attribution is likely to be of particular interest in the current study, as previous research (see van Herreweghe 2002; Napier et al. 2008; Takimoto & Koshiba 2009) has demonstrated that this aspect presents a challenge in multi-party talk.

In terms of interactional management the interpreter's non-renditions can also be related to the structure of the interpreted encounter. For example, the interpreter's behaviour in introducing themselves to participants (*introductions*), their responses to questions directly addressed to them by other participants (*responses to questions*) and footing shifts arising from the physical environment of the setting (which Metzger terms *interference*). Metzger (1999: 167) notes that the function of many of the footings appears to be related to the interpreter's goal of '*providing access to the interaction while minimising participation in it*', which is at odds with their demonstrated active involvement in managing the interpreted event. This conflict was highlighted earlier with regards to the interpreter's *non-person* status.

Wadensjö (1992) and others (Roy 1989, Metzger 1995) have demonstrated that the interpreter is in fact an integral part of the interaction, with their actions and decisions crucially influencing and shaping the interpreted exchange. All of the participants involved in triadic face-to-face interpreted events will be constantly re-aligning themselves and re-evaluating their stance, in relation to each other's footing shifts. Other research into interpreter footing in interactive discourse has reaffirmed the work of Wadensjö and Metzger. Kent and Potter (2005: 56), using the notion of frame to examine the interpreter's role in intercultural interaction, state that there are occasions where the interpreter's relational shifts (or footing) can cause concern as they may be '*a signal for a potential relational problem between the Deaf and non-deaf interlocutors*'. In line with Metzger (1995), Kent and Potter suggest that interpreters shift footing when they are required to attend to, or even manage, a range of communication dynamics. They include the following as examples: task of participation (knowing how and when to interject), task of understanding (asking for clarification), task of accessibility (mediating linguistic processing time) and task of equality (managing the turn-taking process). Kent and Potter (2005: 57) state that

each of these practical actions requires a shift in footing, which in turn alters the *'relational alignments between everyone present'*. Shifts in footing can also be brought about as a result of the actions of other participants, e.g. if a primary party addresses the interpreter directly (Angermeyer 2005).

More recently, Takimoto (2009) and Takimoto and Koshiha (2009) have applied the concepts of both frame and footing to interpreted multi-party interaction. Takimoto (2009: 38) demonstrates that in multi-party meetings the interpreter's function can be drastically altered, with the interpreter reporting the utterances produced by participants across multiple turns as *'one rendition'*, changing their footing dramatically from spokesperson to narrator or storyteller. The complexity of multi-party interaction appears to result in the interpreter having to summarise the interaction between participants, a considerable divergence from their required functions in dialogue settings with two primary interlocutors. Given that the current study examines SLIs in workplace team meetings, this interpreter footing shift appears highly significant.

The footing of each of the primary participants, *'subject to constant renegotiation'* (Mason 1999: 152), clearly influences the interpreter's actions and status within the communicative event. The notion of footing, particularly the ways in which interpreters shift their stance in relation to the primary participants, is therefore a very pertinent aspect of the analytical framework of the current study, providing a *'perspective on wider context in which the interpreter interacts with other participants'* (Takimoto 2009: 42).

3.2.4 Summary

In this section I have outlined the issues of frame and footing, relating them to the SLI's role in workplace discourse. The concept of frame has been defined and has been discussed in relation to participants' understanding of the activity in which they are engaged. I have examined the notion of footing, and highlighted the ways in which the interpreter's pivotal involvement in discourse can be revealed through detailed observation of their footing shifts. In line with other researchers who have examined interpreted discourse I have posited looking beyond a *'simple Speaker/*

Interpreter/ Audience model' (Mason 2005: 32), to take into account all participants engaged in the interaction. I have shown that within an interpreted exchange the interpreter can take on a variety of roles, including that of a non-person, an active involved participant and a co-ordinator of the interaction.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined a number of the key concepts which constitute the methodological underpinnings for the current study. Located within an overarching LE framework, I have proposed that interpreted workplace discourse can be thoroughly explored through the combination of a detailed linguistic analysis with a contextual ethnographic approach, thus fulfilling Mason's (2006b: 117) call to '*fill the gap*' between a close discourse analytical focus on talk and the wider ethnographic study of interpreters as '*social beings*'. I have discussed the need for a micro-analytical approach to understanding workplace interaction in general and I have presented a number of studies which contribute to understanding the complex role of the interpreter in this specific arena. I have suggested that an IS approach, combined with Goffman's notions of frame and footing, should form a solid foundation for research into interpreted workplace interaction. I have demonstrated that the work of Roy (1989), Wadensjö (1992), and Metzger (1995), all of whom have utilised various aspects of these approaches, has established a template for applying this framework to interpreted interaction. There is a need for a deeper understanding of what motivates interpreter shifts in footing, as this could show some regularities of behaviour and co-occurrence of features within an interpreter-mediated communicative event (Mason 2000); a detailed examination of the interpreter's role and function in the workplace setting, applying the approach outlined in this chapter, should go some way to achieving this.

Chapter Four: Data Collection and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Where the previous chapter has discussed the methodological framework that has been applied to the current study, this chapter outlines the underpinning methodology for data collection and analysis. The aim is to enable the reader to have a clear understanding of the ways in which data was collected through the various stages of the study. I begin in section **4.2 Positioning the Practitioner-Researcher** by considering my place within the research process, reflecting on my connections with the interpreting profession, the deaf community and the participants within the various workplaces which agreed to take part in my study. In doing so I again draw on LE, reiterating the reflexive imperative underpinning the data collection process. The following three sections then reflect the stages of data collection. In section **4.3 Consulting with the Profession**, I outline the initial stages of the study wherein the views of SLIs regarding various aspects of workplace interpreting were sought through the use of questionnaires and practitioner journals. Section **4.4 Accessing the Workplace**, describes the process of gaining consent to film SLIs in the workplace, and provides a description of the five sites involved in the study. In section **4.5 Collecting Video-Recorded Data**, the gathering of workplace interpreted interaction is detailed, highlighting some of the problems inherent in this method. The structure of the video playback interviews conducted with the main participants from one of the workplaces is discussed. Section **4.6 Issues in Transcription** presents the process of transcribing the video data, describing the challenges posed in representing and analysing multi-party talk. The chapter is then summarised in Section **4.7**.

4.2 Positioning the Practitioner-Researcher

It feels appropriate to begin this section by reflecting briefly on the impetus for the current study. As already noted in Chapter Three, many practitioners within LE are motivated by issues arising from their own experience and from observations of tensions within their particular workplaces. The origins of my interest in workplace interpreting can be traced to a short exchange that took place between two employees,

one Monday morning. A simple enquiry from one co-worker to another- 'how was your weekend?'- seemed on the surface to be the type of small talk exchange that regularly occurs across a variety of workplaces, from factory floors to offices and major institutions. However, in this instance the exchange was between a deaf employee and a hearing employee, and I was the interpreter. As the deaf employee described in some detail the activities she had engaged in that particular weekend, I noted her hearing colleague's discomfort with the length of the reply. This was evidenced by attempts to end the conversation (e.g. shortening of replies, minimal feedback signals, displaying exclusionary body language, and focusing attention on the computer). Ultimately the deaf employee addressed me directly, remarking on what she perceived as her co-worker's rude behaviour. I felt highly uncomfortable and was aware of an urge to 'explain' my understanding of what constituted acceptable Monday morning 'small talk'. My subsequent reflection on this short interaction led me to consider the complexities of workplace discourse and the norms, both implicit and explicit, which underpin employee behaviour in this domain. It also led me to question the SLI's role in this setting, in respect of how the SLI can affect and influence the relationships between deaf and hearing employees.

These reflections thus led to the development of my study and have undoubtedly influenced my decision-making processes in the selection and analysis of the data. At a political level, the researcher's own interests, '*shaped by their particular life histories and positionings*', have a significant role to play in forming the areas and approach of research (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 580). The researcher's individual background and life history will influence the questions they ask and the manner in which they try to address their queries (Cameron et al. 1992). The nature of ethnographic methodology, whereby the researcher is immersed in the environment within which they are conducting their research, means that they inevitably form part of, and shape, the research that is being produced (Tusting & Maybin 2007). The process of doing ethnographic research entails '*living in a world of reflexivities*' whereby every aspect of the process of data collection and analysis '*entails interdependences between the researcher, participants and the texts they produce*' (Barwell 2003: 4-5). The interpretation of both the content and practice of interaction are '*contingent on the experience of the interpreter*' (Barwell 2003: 2), and thus examination of, and reflection upon, the researcher's personal history, professional

experience and relationship with the research participants allows the research findings to be viewed from differing perspectives. It also contributes to an understanding of the cultural lenses through which the researcher interprets their data, as well as enabling an appreciation of the *'truth claims'* made by the research (Tusting & Maybin 2007: 579). It is useful from the outset therefore to consider the issue of reflexivity, and to take into account the ways in which my particular social identity and background (Robson 2002) impacts on the research process, as this is an important factor across the current study, from the process of data collection through to analysis.

As a hearing person, from a hearing family, English is my first language. With a background in trade union activism, my first experience of BSL was as part of a customer services initiative whilst working for a government department. I subsequently worked as a CSW (Communication Support Worker) with deaf people in educational settings, before moving on to undertake a post-graduate BSL/ English Interpreting qualification, graduating in 2001. Having mixed with the deaf community on a predominantly social basis, my subsequent employment as a Welfare Rights Worker at a local deaf society regularly brought me into contact with other members of the deaf community. In terms of my interpreting career, I have from the outset been involved in 'Access to Work' or office based interpreting. I currently work as both a 'staff' SLI within a private company and as a community SLI within a team based at a local deaf society interpreting service.

My employment as a freelance interpreter and as a member of a community interpreting team has influenced my relationships with all participants in my study; deaf employees, SLIs and to a lesser extent, hearing employers and employees. Many deaf people who participated in the study know me as an interpreter, as a friend, a colleague, and as a researcher. Although I believe that I am not strictly an 'outsider' in terms of membership of the deaf community, I am neither a full member. There is undoubtedly a tension that exists due to my being part of the oppressive majority group, hearing people. However, my past involvement in campaigning for deaf people's access to benefits, together with my professional and social relationships with deaf colleagues has meant that I have established a considerable level of trust within the community. This has in turn enabled me to draw quite heavily on the

contacts and relationships with deaf people in my local area. Their positive response to my research requests can be attributed in some part to the trust that they had invested in me. In addition, during initial discussions and later interviews with deaf employees, I demonstrated a desire to contribute to a change in their work environment and this, together with a commitment to providing feedback of the findings and results of the study, is a possible motivating factor in their participation.

In terms of the hearing participants, I was already known, either personally or through professional involvement as an SLI, to the majority of workplaces I approached to be involved in the study. Many of the employers were aware of the difficulties experienced by their deaf employee, and were enthusiastic about the potential to make changes which could lead to improved working relationships. The discussion with employers centred on my commitment to provide information from the research which could contribute to a positive working relationship between deaf and hearing employees.

In participatory research models, where the aim is to gather a rich range of data whilst at the same time allowing for the possibility of producing positive and practical outcomes for both individuals and organisations, short term outcomes as well as longer term results are important in the feedback process, ensuring a more concrete visible return for the organisations investment in staff time and general goodwill (Stubbe 1998). The commitment that I made to share research findings, and to work with employees and employers to develop better working practices was, as already mentioned, a major factor in gaining the agreement of all participants. The importance of establishing an ongoing relationship with the participants, making sure that they are fully aware of what the research is, and are satisfied with the level of feedback that they will receive (Stubbe 1998), cannot be underestimated.

This is particularly relevant in regard to the deaf participants as historically they have been the subjects of research without benefiting from any insights into the research findings. Whilst this is also often true of other (non-deaf) research subjects (see for example Cameron, 1992, on the unequal distribution of knowledge), deaf peoples' lack of access to traditional research feedback methods constitutes in effect a double barrier. The commitment to provide feedback was a major undertaking, and one

which has long term implications outside of the scope of this study. However, it was considered to be an integral part of the research process and therefore worth the undertaking.

Finally in this section I wish to address the degree to which I was a participant-observer in the data collection process. Whilst not a participant in the truest sense of the word, in that I was not directly involved in the events selected for filming, I had nonetheless previously interpreted in all of the settings in which the data was collected. Consequently I had knowledge of both the participants and the domain, and I was also known to the participants in those settings, in my role as an SLI. I feel that my strong connections with the local deaf community, and my rapport with the SLIs from the local deaf society, meant that I was viewed as a participant-observer in the recorded events. My observations therefore have been on a par with that of a genuine participant-observer, in that I have been able to observe and understand the nuances and insider perspectives of the event. As Robson (2002: 328) notes, once the participants are aware that they are being observed '*the observer is inevitably, to some extent, a participant in the situation*', and there seems no doubt that I have been to some extent a participant in the processes I observed whilst collecting the video data.

The researcher's perception of the participants' aims and expectations are as essential as their actual observations (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz 1982). My inside knowledge and experiences of the events I observed whilst filming granted useful insights into the nature of the interaction between participants, and provided an additional tool with which to identify patterns in the data. However, it is important not to allow knowledge of the field to lead to assumptions about what might be seen in the data. My less direct involvement in the events under observation enabled this balance, giving me a slightly more objective view of what was taking place. This shift from the 'inside out' (see Chapter Three), through the use of linguistic analysis, can assist in exposing what is happening in familiar events, enabling the identification and isolation of participant behaviour in the interpreted event as '*strange*' (Scollon & Scollon 2001).

4.3 Consulting with the Profession

The study began by canvassing the views and experiences of SLIs employed in the workplace domain. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was derived in part from the research questions, and was designed to help achieve my research goals and contribute to answering these questions (Robson 2002). From my professional experience as an SLI, and as the result of informal discussions with interpreter colleagues, I had already identified certain issues as being significant to SLIs working in employment based settings. Anecdotal evidence from discussions on interpreter e-groups had also suggested some relevant topics for exploration. The aim of the questionnaire therefore was to ascertain whether the issues that I had identified were in fact issues that were directly relevant to this field of interpreting. Whilst the criticism often levelled at researchers developing ideas, and then testing those ideas through a questionnaire, is that they have already decided on what is important (May 2001), the use of other methods of data collection in this study, together with the researcher reflexivity, has contributed to contending with researcher bias.

4.3.1 Questionnaire administration

The decision to use a questionnaire as opposed to other methods of data collection (such as focus groups) meant that I could reach a relatively wide audience. The questionnaire was constructed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions and underwent a number of rewrites before being piloted. The pilot phase involved the questionnaire being distributed to eight interpreters based at Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service. Four completed questionnaires were returned, and based on comments and responses to the questionnaires the format was amended to make it clearer and more accessible.

The amended questionnaire was then distributed to a wider group of SLIs. An announcement outlining the research, and inviting SLIs to participate, was issued via interpreter e-groups, namely E-NEWSI, ASLI e-group, and the greyzone (Appendix B). The first e-group is accessible to any SLI who requests membership of the group, and is generally used to discuss issues relevant to SLIs based in the UK. The second e-group, ASLI (Association of Sign Language Interpreters), is specifically for members of the professional body of SLIs in the UK. Whilst there is often a similar discussion of issues across both e-groups (many SLIs are members of both e-groups),

with discussions sometimes overlapping the two groups, the ASLI e-group also discusses issues pertinent to the members of the professional body. The third e-group, the greyzone, is in effect a 'closed' e-group, being accessible to current and past students (and their tutors) on the Post Graduate Diploma in BSL/ English Interpreting course taught at the University of Central Lancashire. In selecting these e-groups as a vehicle for distributing the questionnaires I was able to reach a range of SLIs, at different levels of qualification, and at different stages of their careers. SLIs were asked to contact me by email to request a questionnaire. In addition to the e-group distribution, two batches of ten questionnaires were sent to the interpreting service at RAD (The Royal Association for Deaf People), and to Leicester Centre for Deaf People (now known as Action Deafness), who had previously agreed to take part in the research.

In deciding to distribute the questionnaire predominantly via the interpreter e-groups, I had to consider the nature and motivation of likely respondents. Both the E-NEWSLI and ASLI e-groups tend to attract contributors who have a keen and active interest in their profession. Those who post emails, views and comments on the e-group forums are generally more experienced and confident SLIs, meaning that newer and less self assured members might be reluctant to request a questionnaire. In addition, the fact that members of these groups were required to self-select in order to participate in the research meant that they were likely to have already formed some perceptions as to the challenges and difficulties in interpreting in the workplace domain. I was also aware that I could potentially exclude SLIs who did not engage within the various e-group forums. However, the distribution of questionnaires to two organisations outside of the e-group forums meant that I was able to include SLIs who might not respond to the e-group request.

Although there are no figures available as to the number of SLIs undertaking AtW type interpreting in the UK, drawing on my personal knowledge of the profession I believe that most SLIs will work in this domain at some point in their career. I therefore feel the questionnaire respondents are representative of SLIs in the UK. The nature of AtW assignments can result in less experienced SLIs undertaking work in this field. The fact that the SLI works with the same deaf employee on a regular basis means that this domain can be seen as a 'safe' and unchallenging environment for

trainee interpreters. I therefore feel that in terms of the spread of experience across the sample of self-selecting respondents, the type of work was likely to have resulted in responses from both experienced and less experienced SLIs.

4.3.2 Questionnaire response

In total 110 questionnaires were issued, with 57 questionnaires being returned. Given that one of the main arguments against the use of ‘postal’ questionnaires is the low response rate (Newell 1993; Robson 2002) this constituted a very satisfactory return, attributable to a number of reasons. Potential respondents to questionnaires are in no way obliged to take part in a study (Newell 1993), and therefore some degree of persuasion is required. In the current study the ‘persuasion’ was an indirect appeal to SLIs to become involved in a ‘*collaborative venture*’ (Hinds 2000: 44), encouraging them to use the opportunity to state their opinions, relate their experiences and contribute towards public or scientific knowledge (Sudman & Bradburn 1983). The fact that signed language interpreting is still an emerging profession (Scott-Gibson 1990) means that members are often keen to see it develop, with an interest in research that will contribute towards adding to the body of knowledge in this field. In addition, as outlined in Chapter Two, SLIs are also engaging more frequently in office based or workplace interpreting, resulting in challenges and difficulties that they have an interest in resolving. Given these factors it is likely that having requested a questionnaire, SLIs had already made a commitment (albeit quite possibly an unconscious one), to complete and return it.

In conclusion, the distribution of the questionnaire mainly through the medium of the internet meant that I was able to reach a wider audience, and achieve a degree of interactivity and personal contact that is more difficult to establish through postal distribution. The data from the questionnaires was analysed thematically and the results, together with the journal data, are discussed in Chapter Five. The questionnaire responses formed a source of secondary data, providing background support for the primary data, the video-recorded interpreted interaction.

4.3.3 Practitioner journals

At the end of the questionnaire SLIs were invited to participate further in the research by volunteering to keep a journal or diary of their workplace experiences over a three month period. The aim of this method of data collection was to gather as much information as possible about how SLIs interacted with deaf and hearing participants. A total of 40 SLIs agreed to keep a journal. Not all were questionnaire respondents, as some SLIs had made contact after hearing about the research in other ways.

Recommendations regarding diaries or journals generally suggest that the format should be fairly structured (Hinds 2000; Robson 2002). This is because diaries are usually kept over a set period of time, with the responsibility for completion placed firmly with the respondent. However, I decided to be fairly non-prescriptive with the format, asking participants to keep a 'reflective journal', thus allowing for a less structured approach (Robson 2002). This decision was partly linked to the timescale, as recording information that required answering a structured set of questions or points over a three month period would be very time consuming. A more important reason was that I also wanted to give SLIs the opportunity to comment about any issues they felt were pertinent to their workplace role, enabling them to deviate from the previous categories of questions that had been included in the questionnaire. Whilst there are concerns about collecting data via diary or journal keeping, in terms of the dangers of misreporting (Robson 2002), the fact that the reflective journals were not the sole method in the study meant that the issues raised could be balanced against the data obtained from the questionnaires, video and video playback interviews.

I issued a simple journal template with a guidance sheet (Appendix C), together with an example of a journal entry based on my own experience (Appendix D). I was aware that respondents could potentially see the sample journey entry I provided as being indicative of the type of issues I was looking for. I therefore stressed that this was only an example, and that SLIs had the freedom to write about whatever issues were important or relevant to them.

In total, 24 SLIs returned their journal entries. The material ranged from a brief reflective account of one interpreting assignment, to some in-depth accounts of a number of assignments occurring over the three month period. The journals were in

some cases very detailed and highly revealing, and whilst the wealth of rich data provided could be seen as one of the disadvantages of using this method (Hinds 2000; Robson 2002), it substantiated and consolidated many of the issues that had been raised in the questionnaire data. The journal data has been thematically analysed, following the categories established by the questionnaires, and the results are discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

4.4 Accessing the Workplace

Given the complex nature of the settings, the sensitive nature of some of the workplaces that I approached, and the potential for large numbers of participants, the practicalities of obtaining video evidence required thorough planning. Negotiating access to authentic interpreted interaction in the workplace was an extremely sensitive issue, and the concerns of all parties to the event had to be fully addressed. The collection of the video data was conducted in conjunction with Radfordshire interpreting service. The initial aim was to gather ten to fifteen authentic work-based scenarios of video-recorded interpreted interaction.

Throughout the process of collecting the video data, the issue of confidentiality was paramount. The challenge facing the researcher whose study involves the collection of video data is that of preserving participant anonymity (Heath & Luff 1993; Metzger 1999), as participants can be easily identified, making this a concern to all those taking part in the recording. Although none of my data was collected in highly sensitive settings (e.g. medical encounters) there were still many issues of confidentiality that had to be taken into account. Some of the organisations that agreed to allow me to film in their workplaces undertook work of a social services nature, whilst others were in the area of banking and finance. All participants were assured that the video data would only be viewed for transcription and analysis purposes, and would not be published in its original format. I confirmed that all place names would be altered, and that participants would be made anonymous. For some workplaces I gave the undertaking that prior to publication or use of potentially sensitive data I would seek their approval that it had been rendered sufficiently unspecified.

4.4.1 Recruiting deaf participants

Deaf participants were recruited by a series of face-to-face meetings at Radfordshire Deaf Society. These evening sessions were advertised by a poster displayed in the foyer of the Deaf Society (Appendix E). Individual letters (Appendix F) were also sent out to five deaf people whom I knew were in employment. Whilst this meant that some deaf participants were in effect ‘targeted’, or directly selected, I do not feel that this has had a detrimental effect on the study. There were no subconscious decisions driving my selection of deaf participants, as they were contacted purely due to their employment status, rather than on the premise that their particular situation could yield ‘interesting’ data.

Consideration was given to producing the invitations and information in BSL format, but the time factors and costs involved made this prohibitive. The decision not to provide a standard BSL version of the invitations and information about the project does raise questions in terms of accessibility for the deaf community. However, the face-to-face meetings conducted with all the potential deaf participants meant that I could make the aims and the practicalities of the research project clear and accessible. The direct contact also gave participants the opportunity to ask for clarification or further explanation, something that would not have been possible via an invite in BSL video format. Finally, conducting face-to-face meetings gave me an opportunity to engage with potential research participants in their first language, and to demonstrate my commitment to ensuring they understood the aims of the research.

I also took the opportunity of the face-to-face meeting to go through confidentiality and ethical considerations, and asked all participants to sign an expression of interest/consent form (Appendix G). Given the fact that the meetings were conducted in BSL, and that I provided an explanation of the issues regarding confidentiality and ethical considerations in the participant’s first language, I am confident that I made sure their consent¹⁰ was as informed as possible, and that their agreement to take part in the project was genuine.

¹⁰ BAAL’s (British Association for Applied Linguistics) ethical guidelines for applied linguistics research were adhered to, including informed participant consent. Participants were assured of

Some deaf participants canvassed for the project did not attend either meeting at the Deaf club so 'follow up' letters were issued. I undertook two home visits to deaf participants who were unable to attend the open evenings, and also visited one deaf employee in their workplace to outline the project. I feel that this demonstrates the extent to which I was regarded as a 'participant' observer, or as someone who was, in part, a community insider. My 'insider' status was a major advantage in securing agreements with a fairly wide range of participants, and was due in part to the trust that I had established with those participants, as well as my commitment to feed back the results of the study to all the stakeholders involved. Whilst all these arrangements were time consuming, especially for someone who is not a paid researcher, I felt that they had immeasurable benefit in establishing good faith, trust and personal commitment to the research project.

Only one deaf person, who originally agreed to take part, subsequently withdrew their consent. One other deaf person was very interested in the project, and was keen to be involved, but was undergoing sensitive negotiations in terms of their employment contract. After discussions with both the deaf client and their employer it was felt that it was not appropriate to include them in the research. At the end of the recruitment process I had therefore secured agreement from five deaf employees, from five different institutions, willing to take part in the research project.

4.4.2 Gaining access to the workplace

The research was carried out at five different workplaces. Once the individual deaf employees had consented to taking part in the study, I approached their employers, to engage them in the research process and to gain permission to film. A letter explaining the aims of the study, together with an outline of the research remit (Appendix H and I), was issued. This was followed by a telephone call to discuss any concerns that employers might have and to arrange a suitable time, date and scenario to record. This process was very time consuming, due to my own schedule and to the

anonymity and confidentiality, plus the right to withdraw from the study at any point during the process.

busy timetables of the employers involved. Telephone calls often had to be repeated if the client was out, or chased up if they failed to respond to messages. I was conscious throughout this process that a balance had to be struck between getting the employer to agree to allow access, and not making them feel under pressure to make that agreement. I had anticipated considerable resistance to my request and was therefore pleased that all the employers, bar one, agreed to take part in the study. I visited two of the companies to outline my research project, and this face-to-face approach enabled us to work through any concerns they had and issues that might arise. One of the employers subsequently agreed to be involved in the case study, where the main participants in the recorded interaction were interviewed regarding their experiences. The one employer who objected was undergoing sensitive employment negotiations with their deaf employee, and as already highlighted in this chapter, we mutually agreed that they would not be a suitable candidate for the study. The five workplaces have been assigned noms-de-plume in order to maintain anonymity as far as is possible and will be referred to as Livingwell, Radford City Social Services, Moneymaker PLC, Radford University and Radford Education Services.

4.4.3 Workplace profiles

In terms of providing some context for the video transcripts in Chapter Six it is necessary to give a brief outline of the five organisations involved in the research. **Livingwell**, a medium sized organisation providing independent supported living for people with physical and mental disabilities, was the setting for two of the team meetings filmed for the research. **Radford City Social Services** is a small, specialist deaf service team, based within the city centre and one of their regular team meetings was recorded for the project. **Moneymaker PLC**, a subsidiary of a large national banking organisation, and dealing with finance arrangements for major purchases, provided the opportunity to film both a one-to-one supervision meeting and a team meeting. **Radford University** is one of two large universities in Radfordshire, and team of learning support advisors based within the university kindly allowed me to video a two hour meeting. Finally, **Radford Education Services** was the setting for

another team meeting recorded for the study. All of these organisations were predominantly staffed by hearing people, with deaf employees in the minority.

4.4.4 Obtaining consent from signed language interpreters

All of the SLIs filmed during this project were employed by the interpreting service in Radfordshire. A letter was issued to potential participants (Appendix J) and I gave a presentation at the Deaf Society, outlining the scope of the project and describing the involvement that I would be seeking from SLIs. By thoroughly briefing the SLIs about the aims of the research, prior to commencing the video data collection, I sought to make them as open to the project as possible. I was conscious that my presence when filming the data was likely to have considerable impact on the SLIs involved. As a fellow SLI, I was able to understand both languages being used by the participants, and was therefore in a position to pass judgement on my colleagues' performance. Aware that some SLIs could feel under pressure to take part in the research (due to my positioning as a researcher and a fellow SLI) I reaffirmed their agreement prior to each recording, giving them the opportunity to withdraw should they wish to do so.

Much of the previous research on signed language interpreting has focussed on aspects of performance such as interpreter error and omissions (Roy 1989), and I made it clear to SLIs participating in the study that I was not seeking to apportion blame, or criticise their interpreting performance (i.e. the quality and accuracy of their sign production or voice-over). From my own experience I know that being filmed is an uncomfortable and potentially stressful process, and I therefore emphasised that my main focus would be on the ways in which the SLI's presence affected workplace interaction. It is difficult to truly identify the extent to which the SLIs felt coerced into participating in this study. There were undoubtedly power issues at play, despite my attempts to stress that they were under no obligation to consent to being filmed. At the end of the day it is very hard to say 'no' to a colleague. However I tried as far as possible to ensure that individuals did not feel 'guilt-tripped' into participating, and made it clear that they could withdraw should they wish to. This aspect has implications in terms of future studies of this nature, and is discussed in Chapter Eight.

Despite all of the preparatory work I have no doubt that my presence, as a researcher but also as a colleague, had an impact on the performance of the SLIs involved in the project. Whilst many SLIs have become accustomed to being video-taped, as part of their evidence collection for interpreting qualifications, the additional pressure of having a colleague present, directly observing their performance was clearly a stressful experience for some SLIs, and may have resulted in unnatural performances. For example, SLIs may have felt uncomfortable with seeking clarification from participants, feeling pressure to produce a 'perfect' interpretation. Alternatively, they may have 'over-performed' in an attempt to demonstrate their competence. I was aware of these factors prior to the collection of the video data, hence the importance of ensuring that SLIs both understood and felt comfortable with the aims behind the collection of the data. Additionally, the aspect of 'performance pressure' has been considered when viewing and analysing the video data.

4.5 Collecting Video-Recorded Data

The use of video is a necessary method in signed language interpreted discourse in order to capture the visual aspects of the data. Traditional, less invasive methods of data collection by participant-observers, such as discrete audio-taping equipment, are not available to researchers in this field. Many of the difficulties in collecting video data have already been described and acknowledged (Metzger 1995, 1999; Atherton et al. 2002). Clyne (1996) neatly summarises many of the challenges, highlighting the difficulties in carrying equipment, capturing data in less than ideal acoustic settings, dealing with classified information and the likelihood of participants opting out. The reality is that the video camera can be a challenge to data collection even before it is set up, switched on and focussed upon the interaction that the researcher wishes to record. Subsequently it is an additional element to be taken into account when undertaking ethnographic research in this area (Metzger 1999; Roy 2000; Richey 2003), as it poses additional problems to the naturalness of the data (Roush 2007).

I was aware that for some participants, the prospect of being filmed would be a daunting one. Delicate preparation and strict procedures need to be followed in order to protect peoples' rights and dignity, and to ensure that participants did not reject the

process (Finlay et al. 2008). I issued a letter to all participants, deaf and hearing, explaining the purpose of the research and allowing them the opportunity to opt out (Appendix K). No-one contacted me prior to filming to raise objections. In order to ascertain that all participants agreed on the day, I confirmed this with them on arrival at the research site. Again, whilst this is not without an element of researcher power-play (it is very difficult for participants to say 'no' when faced with a researcher carrying a video camera and tripod) I did establish, as far as possible, that consent had been given.

There were a number of procedures I undertook to try and minimise my presence and reassure the participants of the study, which I will briefly mention here. I used a video camera that was small enough to allow me to set up discreetly, and with the minimum of disturbance. I arrived at least half an hour early to assess the best place to position the camera and to set up my equipment. If the meeting was a team or group meeting, the chair usually introduced me and invited me to explain why I was there. In my explanation, I reiterated that it was not my intention to 'fault find' or identify potential bad practice. I also stressed the right of all participants to withdraw at any stage, and emphasised the confidential nature of the data collection.

I anticipated that I would have considerable difficulties in collecting naturally occurring workplace interaction. Convincing participants to allow me access to research sites, confidentiality, the discussion of sensitive issues, a natural dislike of being 'on camera' and the '*tension that exists in the deaf community over language issues and interpreters*' (Roy 1989:14) were all elements that had to be factored into the time scale for the research.

4.5.1 The impact of the presence of the camera and researcher

All of the video data is from 'real life' settings. I made the decision early on in the research process to try and collect video data of real life interaction. Other researchers (see Metzger 1995) have made use of pre-recorded video data, e.g. mock scenarios collected from interpreter education programmes. In the UK this would have presented problems in terms of gaining consent from the institutions providing the training, and the students engaged in the programme. Interpreting students are

already under considerable pressure in the university environment and would most likely not have agreed to their performance being scrutinised further. Additionally, the performance of interpreting students would also be likely to differ considerably from more experienced SLIs, working ‘in the field’, and the main reason for obtaining data from real life situations is that ‘live’ interpreted interaction is infinitely preferable to mock scenarios. In natural settings individuals are ‘*being themselves, saying what they actually say rather than what they think they would say*’ (Clyne 1996: 18), and live data thus reflects as far as possible the reality of everyday workplace encounters, where participants are performing their natural roles, as opposed to acting out a role assigned to them.

Once agreement had been reached to allow the filming to proceed, I had to consider the impact that the video camera and the researcher would have on the interaction. The presence of the researcher and video cameras can be inhibiting and intrusive, affecting interaction outcomes (Roy 1989, 2000; Wadensjö 1992; Metzger 1995; Clyne 1996). However, whilst video- or audio-recording equipment can prove disruptive, with participants referring to the equipment or the presence of the researcher, or alternatively altering their normal behaviour, this usually occurs at the beginning of sessions and is generally not sustained throughout the period of recording (Cicourel 1981). In the current study there were a number of occasions where my presence was referred to, both directly and indirectly. In one instance the deaf person asked if I would open the window when the room became somewhat warm during a team meeting. On another occasion the deaf participant turned to the camera when the session ended and gave me a questioning ‘thumbs up’, checking that I had got the evidence that I wanted. Hearing participants also acknowledged my presence.

Participants can sometimes feel as though they are under exam conditions, performing differently than they would do in a non-recorded interaction (Wadensjö 1998). Whilst the observer and camera can be disregarded to some degree by participants, it is difficult for them to ‘*not pay attention to the fact that they are under surveillance*’ (Wadensjö 1998: 95). The situation has already been made ‘foreign’ by the presence of the interpreter, who ‘*in a sense adds to the perception of surveillance, for the lay persons and professionals alike*’ (Wadensjö 1998: 95). In one of the team meetings

filmed for this study the participants, usually very lively and interactive, behaved in a very quiet and orderly manner during the first recording. A hearing participant commented on the difference, and attributed this to the presence of the researcher.

Opportunely, my presence was soon forgotten and the meeting resumed at its usual pace. I was also fortunate enough to be able to go back and film the same team on another occasion, and on this instance the meeting proceeded in a more or less 'normal' manner. However, the influence of the researcher and the setting on a participant's language choice is an 'unavoidable issue' in the collection of live video-taped data (Metzger 1999) and is a factor that has been considered during analysis.

4.5.2 Technological and practical issues

The use of video cameras can leave the researcher open to problems of a technical and human nature (Metzger 1999). The video camera I used was a new small digital camera with an 'unthreatening' appearance. This worked well as I was able to set up the equipment whilst remaining relatively unobtrusive. However, it did mean that I had concerns about my ability to capture sound sufficiently for data analysis purposes and I also had to compromise with regards to the number of participants that I could include 'in shot'. Ideally (see section 4.6), two cameras, or even possibly three, would have been better to capture all participants, but this would have added considerably to the theatrical and false air which can occur when video cameras are used. The physical intrusion of video- and audio-recording equipment can necessitate the manipulation of the space, lighting and sound in which the data is being recorded, resulting in a less than ideal situation (Metzger 1999). The prime consideration has to be that the deaf client and the SLI are positioned in such a way that they are afforded a clear view of each other. However, for the researcher it is equally importantly they get good sight of both participants, as fully capturing all aspects of the signed utterances is vital for accurate transcription (Metzger 1999). I was fortunate that in the majority of situations my requests were met with the minimum disruption for participants. However, this was frequently achieved at the expense of my own comfort. I was quite often perched on table tops, sat on the floor and, on one occasion, confined to the stationery cupboard. Ultimately, I had to bear in mind that in many discussions and negotiations with participants I had stressed that I would

have a minimum impact on their daily business. The methodology was designed so as to record data that was ‘*as close to normal workplace interaction as possible*’ (Kell et al. 2007: 312), and I feel that the positives of using only one camera outweighed the negatives in terms of ensuring quality data. This correlates with Metzger’s (1999) conclusion that this is in fact a more realistic solution to the difficulties this format presents.

Some of the issues outlined above became apparent during a pilot for the video data collection. This took place at a Deaf organisation, offering a good opportunity to test out the video camera in a ‘safe’ environment, and enabling me to become accustomed to setting up with equipment with the minimum of disturbance to the participants. An extremely useful process, it raised a number of practical issues for considering in the ensuing recordings. These included the location of plug sockets, the importance of charging battery packs, and the suitability of the built-in microphone to capture spoken data (as a result of the pilot an additional microphone was provided at future sessions). Practical issues aside, the pilot also allowed for reflection regarding the impact that my presence and the camera had on the interaction. The SLI spoke very quietly during his voice-over, and I was unsure if this was due to a reluctance of being overheard. Although I had sought permission from the SLI, he was in fact replacing the original candidate. Despite the fact that he had agreed to be filmed, I was aware that he was already under considerable stress due to the last minute rescheduling, to which my request would be adding pressure. This element of ‘subtle coercion’ was one that I had to bear in mind throughout the study, and has already been raised earlier in this chapter.

4.5.3 The video corpus

I was ultimately successful in securing agreement from a reasonably wide number of participants, resulting in a corpus of video material consisting of seven episodes of naturally occurring interpreted workplace interaction collected from five different institutions. The majority of the interaction consists of team meetings based within hearing dominated workplaces, with one sample of smaller group interaction (e.g. one-to-one supervision). At Livingwell I had the opportunity to film two different team meetings on different dates, whilst at Moneymaker I was able to film a team

meeting and a one-to-one supervision on the same date. The episodes range between 19 minutes to 54 minutes, and the number of participants per meeting varies in size from 3 to 10 (Appendix L). All of the meetings in my video data were pre-planned, chaired and had items on an agenda for discussion. The meetings can be characterised as semi-formal in nature. Characteristics such as the presence of a chairperson and a fixed agenda mark them as formal, whilst the somewhat casual conversational style and relatively unregulated turn-taking style mark them as informal (Kangasharju & Nikko 2009). The more formal the meeting, the greater the adherence to the conventionalised procedural and discursive resources of the meeting, resulting in less opportunities for participants to exert influence via the strategic use of resources such as *'interruptions, introducing topics, issuing directives, swearing or insulting others'* (Rogerson-Revell 2007: 9). Despite the fact that they were chaired and agenda-led, all of the meetings in the data set were more informal in conduct, with participants frequently engaging in overlapping talk, interruptions and humorous exchanges.

Employees participating in the meetings hold different roles and responsibilities within their workplace, meaning that there are differing hierarchical structures within the meeting. Whilst the majority of the meetings take place in public sector type settings (e.g. social services, education, supported living), one sample is from a more commercially driven institution. Although both genders are represented, a key feature of all of the meetings is that most of the participants are female, with male participants in the minority. Although gender issues are not a primary focus in this study, evidence suggests (Coates 2007) that overlapping talk and co-constructed utterances are more common in all-female talk than in all-male talk. This issue is highlighted in Chapter Eight as an aspect for future research.

In most of the samples the deaf employee is in the minority, with only one sample where there are three deaf individuals present. There are different SLIs (male and female) present across the array of samples. A range of social variables such as those outlined above is inevitable in data gathered from naturally occurring discourse, and can simultaneously constitute and complicate interactional analysis (Rogerson-Revell 2007). This clearly impacts on the ability to make generalisations in terms of *'cause'* and *'effect'*, although the ethnographic nature of the study means that in many

instances I am in possession of background knowledge of the settings and the participants engaged in the interaction. Nonetheless, the aim is to restrict interpretation of the data as far as possible to how participants behave '*within the local context of the meetings*' and how they '*react to the social activity constituted by ongoing talk*' (Rogerson-Revell 2007: 10).

Finally, due to the difficulties of collecting the video data, outlined earlier in this chapter, ultimately I had to accept a smaller sample than I would have liked under ideal circumstances. Subsequently I will need to be careful with regards to claims about the representative nature of the data, and as with Wadensjö (1998), stress the qualitative nature of the data I am exploring.

4.5.4 Video playback interviews

The final stage of data collection entailed interviewing the main participants from one particular workplace, Livingwell. Having filmed two team meetings at this site, I interviewed the two SLIs (Stuart and Sandra) who interpreted each meeting, the deaf employee (Derek) and the chair of the meeting (Alex). Both Stuart and Sandra are qualified BSL/ English interpreters (MRSLI), and have considerable experience of interpreting in a variety of community settings, including the workplace environment. Derek had worked for Livingwell for approximately five years at the time of the interview, most recently as a senior support worker. Alex was the manager of Livingwell, and had worked with Derek for approximately one year. Alex had learnt BSL at a rudimentary level some twelve years prior to working with Derek, and had encountered deaf people in his previous employment.

The framework and format for these sessions consisted of an individual semi-structured interview, where the participant was shown pre-selected video extracts of the interaction they had participated in, followed by a number of open-ended questions. This methodology was utilised by Roy (1989) who interviewed the three participants in her study for insights into their actions and their understanding as to what was taking place. In the current study, interviews with all participants were video-recorded so as to minimise note-taking during the discussion, and the interviews were subsequently transcribed. I selected between three to five excerpts

for each participant to view, each sample lasting between one to two minutes. These samples were selected on the basis that I had already identified them as containing sequences of overlapping talk, which presented difficulties for the SLIs and the deaf participant. I did not issue any particular instructions to the participants, but invited to make their own notes about anything they found to be interesting or that they felt was unusual. I stressed that the focus of the study was not to look at interpreter error, but that I was interested in what was happening within the interactive event as a whole. Nonetheless I was very conscious that one SLI found the viewing of the video extracts very uncomfortable and after the interview I reassured them that I had identified similar patterns (i.e. difficulties in managing overlapping talk between multiple participants) across all of the samples.

The questions following the video playback viewings were semi-structured in nature (Appendix M), enabling me to have a predetermined list of issues or questions (Robson 2002). However, it also allowed flexibility in terms of the order the questions were asked, and for the interviewee to expand on topics if they so wished (Denscombe 1998). This approach also gave me the option of changing the wording of the questions, adding clarifying explanations or omitting questions which seemed unnecessary or inappropriate (Robson 2002).

4.6 Issues in Transcription

This section addresses some of the issues and challenges that have arisen in the course of transcribing the video data collected for the current study. In addition to the seven samples of video data of naturally occurring workplace interaction, I video-recorded the interviews conducted with four of the main participants from one particular worksite (totalling just over one hour of video). Both data sets have been transcribed in different ways, and here I detail the reasoning underpinning my transcription methods.

Careful transcription of the detail occurring in interaction is an important methodological procedure (Wooffitt 2005). The process of transcribing requires the researcher to make constant decisions as to '*whether, how and what to transcribe*' (Eichmann 2008: 92). Different approaches to discourse analysis have developed

their own transcription systems in order to address specific research questions. As Stubbe et al. (2003) state, the research questions will inform the extent to which the data is represented on paper, with varying degrees and types of detail. Any transcription can only ever represent an approximate and partial rendition of the original recording and can never be a neutral or complete rendition of interactive discourse (Stubbe et al. 2003). The transcript will always reflect and emphasise '*what the transcriber thinks is relevant within the data*' (Metzger 1999: 44). Transcription processes are therefore inevitably selective, and will by necessity involve '*a certain amount of interpretation and analysis*' (Stubbe et al. 2003: 353). The way in which certain aspects of a slice of data are set out and represented in a transcript will influence the ways in which the researcher considers the data, what they discern from it and how they interpret it, as well as what elements are most readily taken into account (Stubbe et al. 2003).

4.6.1 Selection of data for transcription

Before describing the ways in which the video data has been transcribed it is first important to outline how the samples were selected for transcription. In the case of the video playback interviews with main participants the data was transcribed in its entirety. With the video of interpreted interaction, for reasons outlined below, it was necessary to select slices of interaction for further detailed analysis and it is this selection process which requires justification.

Early on in the current study I made the decision to transcribe the video data manually, without using any of the software options available. I believe that the complex mix of spoken and signed language data from my corpus would have presented considerable challenges in terms of the limitations of the current software¹¹, the technology used to both capture and analyse the data, and my ability (and

¹¹ With regards to signed language data, there are options such as SignStream, a (free) database tool designed to enable linguistic and computer vision research on signed languages. SignStream allows users to annotate video data segments, assigning detailed information (e.g. manual signs and non-manual behaviours such as head nods, head shakes, eye gaze, raised or lowered eyebrows etc.) to distinct fields in order to produce a fine-grained, multi-level transcription (see Neidle 2000, Neidle et al. 2001).

available time) to master the techniques necessary to undertake a computer-aided analysis. The fact that the majority of my data is from interpreted mixed (signed and spoken) multi-party interaction would demand a software system that could take both the spoken and signed elements into account. Secondly, for reasons outlined earlier, all of my data were collected using a single video camera. As a result it was not possible to train the camera face-on to one specific participant (i.e. the deaf employee or the SLI), as I had to settle for a perspective that would encompass as many of the participants as possible, but predominantly include the deaf individual and the SLI. The lack of multiple views of the deaf participant made the use of a system such as SignStream difficult. Additionally, there were my own limitations to be taken into account in terms of my ability to learn and utilise a software system and the demands that this would place on my IT resources. I therefore decided to code the data manually, viewing and re-viewing the video tapes a number of times, a process which enabled me to identify patterns within the interaction.

Analysing data at a 'local' level, i.e. the turn-by-turn organisation of talk, involves close, repeated listening to recordings, or as in the current study, listening to and viewing video tapes (Wadensjö 2001). These can reveal previously '*unnoted recurring features of the organisation of talk*' (Silverman 2000: 150). The complex nature of interaction and participant behaviour, with much of what takes place appearing on the surface rapid and mundane (Finlay et al. 2008), means that new aspects can often only become apparent after repeated viewings (Dobson et al. 2002) and so this was an essential part of the selection process.

In identifying patterns within the video data I was guided by Rampton's (2007d) recommendations for investigating interactional data, beginning by looking at the types of activity occurring in the interaction. The main focus was how the participants were interacting, whether they were doing what was expected of them and how they managed the relationships between them, thus enabling me to gain an '*initial orientation*' on what was happening (Rampton 2007d: 1). The selection of the data was therefore a somewhat organic process, i.e. I allowed the repeated viewings to naturally bring to the surface 'points of interest' where it appeared that the discourse process was not particularly smooth, or where the SLI's management of the interaction suggested potential moments of cultural mismatch or discord. The process

was also informed in part by my own experience of interpreting team meetings, as well as anecdotal evidence arising from discussions with colleagues. That is not to say that any of the video data excluded from analysis was ‘uninteresting’. Transcribing the whole data set would have undoubtedly revealed relevant interesting aspects of interpreted workplace interaction, but given the time needed to manually transcribe such mixed-modal data this was beyond my resources. I therefore decided to select two ‘patterns’ for more detailed analysis. The first, the way in which the SLI managed overlapping talk in team meetings, is based on my observation that this form of talk appeared particularly challenging for the SLI. Furthermore, the difficulties posed by the nature of the overlapping interaction suggested that the SLI’s management of the discourse could be potentially exclusionary to the disadvantage of the deaf employee, thus warranting further exploration. Additionally I was aware that this aspect of meeting talk was problematic, evidenced from personal experience, the literature, and from SLI’s responses in the questionnaire and journal data (see Chapter Five).

The second pattern identified and selected for analysis was based on the unexpected finding of the frequent re-occurrence of humorous exchanges and small talk *during* the workplace meetings. I was aware that small talk was a feature of workplace discourse and had for this reason included a question on this aspect in the SLI questionnaire. However, I had not anticipated the way in which humour, sometimes interwoven with small talk episodes, appears to be a consistent feature of workplace meetings. The importance of small talk and humour in establishing collegial workplace relationships, along with the cultural differences between deaf and hearing people, particularly relating to humour, and the gap in the literature regarding interpreting humorous episodes thus led me to select this aspect for further exploration.

In total, five hours and 46 minutes of video data were collected (see Appendix L). Of this, approximately 60 minutes have been transcribed at a surface level of rough working transcription. From the surface transcriptions, slices of interaction were then identified for more detailed transcription and analysis. These excerpts have been selected to illustrate some of the issues facing SLIs in the workplace domain and thus form the core of Chapter Six. I should emphasise here that the excerpts of video data

selected for inclusion are representative of the interaction occurring across all of the data set. Although, for reasons of practicality, I have only highlighted relatively few examples, there were instances of relational talk and humour, as well as overlapping talk, throughout the video data corpus. I analysed a number of other examples of instances of small talk, humour and collaborative floor from the data set, but it has been impossible to include them all in this thesis. The selected excerpts therefore describe what I have seen commonly occurring in the workplace meeting discourse data.

4.6.2 Decisions about transcription formats

There are various considerations which can inform the researcher's choices and decisions regarding the most appropriate way in which to transcribe the data. One of the over-riding arguments is that the transcript should serve the purpose of the research, and that it is sufficiently accessible for the reader to understand the point that is being made. The goal of all transcription is to produce a permanent written record of communicative events which allows for analysis and re-analysis (Hoiting & Slobin 2002). Transcriptions are not always 'user-friendly', and employing conventional writing where possible can enhance readability (Wadensjö 1998). The way in which certain aspects of a slice of data are set out and represented in a transcript will influence the ways in which the analyst thinks about it, what they can discern from the data and how they interpret it, as well as what elements are most readily taken into account (Stubbe et al. 2003). In addition, the transcription process is extremely time-consuming (Wadensjö 1998), and thus the researcher needs to achieve a balance between including adequate information and the time dedicated to transcription.

4.6.3 Transcribing signed language data

Transcription of signed language data is never easy (Metzger 1999). Due to the visual nature of signed language, with multiple articulators, including fingers, hands, arms, neck, and all the components engaged in facial expression (Metzger 1999), rendering an adequate description of a deaf interlocutor's contribution is always likely to be unsatisfactory from the researcher's perspective. Representing a deaf participant's

signed contribution in a written language format not only poses a practical challenge, but also brings to the forefront the question of the power imbalance between signed and spoken languages (Temple & Young 2004). BSL has endured '*centuries of denial*' that it is actually a language (Temple & Young 2004: 166). In rendering a deaf individual's contribution into a written English form the researcher not only runs the risk of losing some of the rich information inherent within the visual-gestural modality, but also potentially reinforces the suppression of the language. Whilst I cannot offer a solution to this dilemma it is important to acknowledge the fact that it exists. Nonetheless, the signed utterances require representation in a format which enables the reader to access this aspect of the interaction. Accordingly, the deaf participants' BSL contributions have been 'glossed', i.e. I have taken the main signs being produced and rendered their meaning as a gloss.

In BSL, meaning is not solely produced on the hands but is indicated in facial expression, head and body movement, eyebrow movement, mouth patterns etc. Role-shift, placement within the signing space and referencing is also used to indicate people, places and concepts. The speed and size of signing, together with the position and movement of the hands, also contain far more information than the representation of a word in English. A gloss of the BSL therefore runs the risk of making BSL appear simplistic and merely a signed production of English. To counter this I have, as far as possible, added information to indicate facial expressions, and head and body movements that contribute to the meaning of the signed message.

4.6.4 Transcript format and conventions

The challenge in the current study lies in the multi-party nature of the interaction requiring transcription. Metzger (1999: 44) recommends the use of a musical-score format for representing signed language interaction, thus allowing for '*the simultaneous and overlapping nature of interactive discourse*'. This is an essential element when considering transcription of signed language interaction, due to the simultaneous nature inherent in the interpreting process. Because SLIs are working between two modalities (signing and speaking), as well as two languages, their contributions will almost always overlap with that of the primary participants.

Representing participant overlap is also a prime consideration when attempting to adequately represent spoken language multi-party talk. Edelsky (1983), for example, discusses extensively the challenges in transcribing interaction within a collaborative floor. Following Coates (2007) the transcription format in the current study is produced in stave notation, allowing all participants' contributions to be read simultaneously, like instruments in a musical stave. Words or portions of words that appear vertically above or below any other word should be read as occurring at the same time as that word. Relevant non-verbal behaviour is recorded in the line above the transcription. My decision to use a musical-score style of transcription was heavily influenced by the work of Metzger. However, I have made some adaptations to this format in order to make it more accessible for the reader. Metzger (1999), for example, lists all participants in a particular stave, regardless of whether they have made a contribution during that section or not. In the case of my transcription, where some of the data is from team meetings comprising of five to eight participants, this would clearly be both unwieldy and potentially confusing. I have therefore only listed the participants contributing within each specific stave.

I have again deviated from Metzger in that I have represented participants by name (pseudonym) rather than by participant role. This is for a combination of reasons. On a practical level, the multi-party nature of the interaction being transcribed means that representing each participant according to their participant role could be potentially confusing. In one meeting for example, there are four senior support workers present. I could have referred to them as 'Senior Support 1' etc. but this brings me to the second reason for not using participant roles to identify interlocutors. Although Metzger argues that referring to individuals according to their participant status is not intended to dehumanise them, this is nonetheless an effect that is conveyed through this practice. This was made explicit when I presented a brief data extract to colleagues on the Ethnography, Language and Communication training course, with their feedback indicating that using roles to define participants as opposed to their name depersonalised the nature of the interaction that I was attempting to convey. Given that I am trying to represent the collegial and collaborative nature of workplace discourse, I feel it is important to make transcripts as naturalistic as possible within the recognised constraints. This is particularly true in the case of humour and small talk, where I feel the human element of the interaction would be lost if role status were the sole descriptor used. My approach to this aspect is in line with the majority

of the transcripts produced by Janet Holmes and the Language in the Workplace Project¹² team, although I am not aware if this was a conscious decision on their part. I of course recognise that the participants' roles and status are important to the interaction under investigation, and for this reason I have contextualised relationships in terms of role and responsibilities within the introduction to the transcripts.

As with Metzger (1999) I have not included myself as researcher in the transcriptions. I was present throughout all of the interpreted events filmed for the current study, operating the camera and observing the interaction. On a number of occasions I was addressed directly by both deaf and hearing participants involved in the meetings. However, none of the samples selected for analysis include my personal contributions and I have therefore not allowed a line within the staves for researcher utterances.

The choices I have made regarding transcription conventions for the notation of interactional features have been influenced by the nature of the languages requiring analysis (e.g. spoken and signed languages), and the focus of the current study (i.e. an examination of collaborative and collegial interaction). I have therefore drawn on the conventions used by Wadensjö (1998) and Napier (2002), as well as utilising conventions outlined by Vine et al. (2002) for the Language in the Workplace project (see Appendix N for full list).

It should be noted that the transcripts are not as fine-grained as those produced for a Conversation Analytical approach to discourse analysis. My transcript has not included detailed information about the length of pauses, or prosodic features such as intonation patterns, rhythm, word stresses etc. Detailed comprehensive transcriptions are valuable for their potential contribution to the discovery and documentation of various communication functions (Duncan 1972) and all features such as those outlined above add to the meaning of the interaction. Decisions to include or exclude certain aspects of spontaneous talk all have '*significant consequences for the ensuing analysis*' (Coates 1996: x). However, the selection of the transcription system is informed by the purposes of the research, and the specific features of the spoken discourse intended by the researcher for analysis (O'Connell & Kowal 1999),

¹² See <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/lwp/index.aspx> for information about LWP

therefore in line with Wadensjö (1998), my stance has been to only render features such as emphasis, laughter etc. when they are of importance to the current analysis.

4.6.5 Transcription of video playback interviews

The video playback interviews have been transcribed in a different format to that of the video excerpts from the workplace sites. The interviews were all recorded on video, although this was only strictly necessary in relation to the deaf participant, Derek. The interviews have been described in their entirety, but I have ‘tidied up’ the transcripts, i.e. I have not included all the *ums*, *ahhs* and repetitions inherent in natural speech. These aspects of discourse can undoubtedly ‘*perform delicate interactional tasks*’ (Wooffitt 2005), but as discussed in the previous section, decisions about transcription style have been driven by the purpose for which the data has been described. The decision to omit these items was based on the fact that I would not be using the transcripts for a discourse analytical purpose but rather to reproduce participant views and experiences (Arksey & Knight 1999).

4.7 Summary

This chapter has detailed the various methodological approaches employed in collecting data for the current study. The challenges in gaining access to authentic naturally occurring interpreted interaction have been opened up, drawing attention to the importance of gaining trust and rapport with research participants. This is of particular importance in relation to deaf participants, as there are a number of complexities that exist in research involving a community which has been traditionally oppressed by hearing people. These complexities have been explored through some of the tensions discussed in my positioning as a practitioner-researcher.

Having provided a detailed description of the data collection process the following chapters (Five and Six) draw on the research findings to illustrate the SLI’s role in the workplace setting. Chapter Five exemplifies the multifaceted nature of their position in workplace discourse, whilst in Chapter Six the SLI’s impact and influence on the interaction between deaf and hearing employees is explored.

Chapter Five: Thematic Analysis of Questionnaire Responses and Journal Data

5.1 Introduction

The first of two data chapters, Chapter Five consists of a thematic analysis of the responses to the questionnaire (Appendix A), and the journals (Appendix C and D). The themes that have emerged from the both data sources are complex, multifaceted and frequently intertwine and overlap. Many of the topics identified in the questionnaires, such as *'power dynamics, group dynamics, status, ownership, identification, self-suppression, over-reactions, prejudice'* (J10.2)¹³ are repeated in the journal entries. However, within the journals SLIs have had the opportunity to explore and expand upon the challenges they face in the workplace setting. The journals have thus enabled SLIs to identify *'how many unresolved and difficult issues run as constant undercurrents'* through their work, issues that despite being frequently addressed *'often remain unchanged (simply going underground a while, simply to resurface again!)*' (J10.2). This chapter therefore examines interpreting issues I have identified as relevant, focusing specifically on the workplace environment and culture (including small talk, office politics and jargon) and the SLI's role within this setting.

The chapter begins with section **5.2 Respondent Profiles**, which details the general background of the SLIs involved in this initial part of the study, drawing on responses to questions one to 11 in the questionnaire. I then move on to the thematic analysis of questions 12 to 22 inclusive, together with the journal data in sections **5.3 Workplace Environment, Norms and Culture** and **5.4 Boundaries and Role**.

5.2 Respondent Profiles

¹³ Journal data: the first number denotes the journal respondent and the second number their entry number (e.g. J33: 5). Questionnaire data: 'Q' indicates the questionnaire number, whilst 'qr' denotes the number allocated to questionnaire respondent (e.g. Q1: qr34).

The initial section of the questionnaire addressed the gender breakdown of the respondents, their age range, signed language and interpreting qualifications and their length of interpreting experience. In total, 57 questionnaires were completed and returned. Of those who reported their gender (one respondent did not complete this question) 42 respondents were female and 14 were male. Ten respondents were in the 'under 30 years' age bracket, and 45 were in the 'over 30 years' age bracket. Two respondents failed to complete this question. The majority of respondents (55) classed themselves as hearing, whilst one SLI stated that they were a hearing aid user. Again, one respondent did not answer this question. In reply to the question regarding qualification status, eight respondents were Members of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters (MRSLI), four were trainee interpreters and ten were junior trainee interpreters. Eight respondents identified themselves as Licensed ASLI¹⁴ members (20 respondents stated that they were both MRSLI and LASLI). Six respondents stated that their interpreting qualification was 'other' and one SLI failed to complete this question.

Most respondents (32) reported that they had been working in the field of signed language interpreting for more than five years, whilst 19 individuals had worked as SLIs for between two to five years. Six SLIs had been practicing for less than two years. Out of the 57 questionnaire respondents, 56 regularly interpreted in workplace settings. One interpreter indicated she was not currently undertaking this type of work but had done so previously. Fifty four SLIs had experience of working outside of the interpreting profession and three had only ever worked as SLIs. The majority of respondents believed that their previous work experience had subsequently informed their interpreting practice, and this is discussed in the following section.

As highlighted above, the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire were female. This was to be expected, as signed language interpreting is predominantly a female profession (Morgan 2008). Although gender is not the specific focus of the current study, its effect on interaction generally (see Tannen 1993b), on talk in the workplace setting (see Holmes 2006a), and on interpreted discourse specifically (see

¹⁴ A defunct term as ASLI no longer acts as a registration body for SLIs.

Morgan 2008), cannot be underestimated. In Chapter Eight this aspect is therefore recommended as a potential avenue for future research.

5.2.1 Previous work experience

Over 84% of SLIs felt that their previous work experience had informed their interpreting practice, ranging from practicalities such as how to answer telephones within an office setting, writing formal letters and taking part in team meetings, to more general issues such as the importance of confidentiality, the acquisition of ‘people skills’ and a wider knowledge of office politics and settings. For some SLIs, previous work experience with deaf people and deaf organisations had given them a *‘better insight into Deaf culture and what Deaf people need and want’* (Q8: qr6), as well as enabling them to gather information *‘about vital Deaf issues as well as be exposed to varieties of BSL’* (Q8: qr22).

Other SLIs had drawn on their experience of work and life outside of the interpreting field to inform their work in the office domain. They felt that *‘knowledge of different work environments, interactions and interpersonal politics’* (Q8: qr2) strengthened their *‘understanding of cultures and practices within the working environment’* (Q8: qr22), thus enabling them to appreciate that *‘office and team dynamics are vital to participation within the office culture and team work’* (Q8: qr37). Participation was defined as behaviour which included the subtle yet important aspects of working in office environments, such as small talk and banter. For example, one SLI stated that their previous work in a factory meant that they *‘understood some factory culture/banter’*, as well as the importance of being in on the joke and knowing *‘who was always teasing people etc’* (Q8:qr54). One respondent emphasised the *‘importance of awareness of office politics for any employee’* such as *‘etiquette in the office, how gossip and TV soaps chat binds stuff together’* (Q8: qr21). Another stated that *‘office politics play a big part in office work’*, emphasising that it was *‘important to be aware of the hierarchy involved within an office environment’* (Q8: qr8). These aspects of workplace norms and culture are now examined in more detail in the following section.

5.3 Workplace Environment, Norms and Culture

5.3.1 Managing workplace practices- team meetings

Meetings at work seem to present specific difficulties for SLIs, with 20 questionnaire respondents identifying this area as problematic. In team meetings where the majority of members are hearing, the issues range from poor chairing, jargon-laden content and lack of deaf awareness, to overlapping and simultaneous talk. The fact that in many instances *'workplace meetings are inherently bureaucratic'*, with power frequently based on *'someone's ability to be bureaucratic'* (Q21a&b: qr15), adds to the SLI's task of cultural mediation. This is particularly true when the deaf employee has a limited awareness both of the ways in which meetings are conducted, and of the power differential between participants.

SLIs are very aware that it is vital that the deaf client understands *'the dynamics of the team'* (J11.7), the ways in which the other employees interact, and the bonding and collusion that can occur (J11.7). The *'quick jokey comments, 'in- jokes' and asides'* are viewed as an essential part *'of making the Deaf person feel a part of the team'* (J36.4). However, the often complex nature of team meetings and group interaction can result in the SLI struggling to provide the deaf employee with the same level of access as their hearing peers. The barriers that contribute to this are varied. Some meetings are *'very chaotically organised and not properly chaired or structured'* (J37.1), whilst others are described as *'a nightmare'* with *'people talking over one another'* (Q21a&b: qr14).

Some organisations are portrayed as having *'a fast talking/ jargonistic/ disorganised style'* (Q21a&b: qr26). Whilst it is not a major focus in this thesis, it is worth noting that a number of SLIs cited jargon as being *'the hardest thing about this work'* (J31.4), requiring frequent interruptions to clarify or achieve *'real meaning'* (J14.3). One respondent highlighted the importance of knowing how people *'interact to develop a knowledge of jargon and slang used in their field of work'* (Q19a: qr20), perceiving this as something which SLIs should inform the deaf employee about. The SLI is often expected to have an inherent understanding of a particular workplace,

including specific jargon and technical terminology, as well as the ‘sign names’ attributed to different staff members. One SLI described how, during a team meeting, the supervisor asked staff how they were getting on with ‘*the Cogs and Dogs*’ (J14.5) which subsequently turned out to be an acronym for Company and Departmental Operational Guidelines. This neatly illustrates the sort of language which can be specific to a CofP and which can prove challenging to an SLI who is outside of the group. Technical language and jargon is obviously present in other domains, such as medical or legal interpreting, so the identification of this issue as a major hurdle in workplace interpreting suggests it compounds the difficulties which SLIs experience in this setting.

Overall, hearing participants seem to give very little consideration to the need for team meetings to be structured differently in order to enable the SLI to interpret effectively, and thus allow the deaf employee to access the meeting. It is assumed that the SLI will just interpret, no matter the conditions. In many situations the responsibility for managing the interaction in meetings seems to rest solely with the SLI. There is a clear indication that the hearing norms of team meetings, together with the time-lag inherent in the interpreting process, contribute to the SLI’s difficulties. One respondent identified that it was sometimes difficult for the deaf employee to participate ‘*due to hearing people’s culture and conventional norms and turn taking*’, as by the time ‘*the translation has finished then hearing people respond to the next question*’ (J13.3). This point was confirmed by another SLI, who commented that the hearing participants were in control of the meeting, and seemed to be unaware of any delay in the interpreting process for the deaf individual (J13.1). Accordingly the deaf employee ‘*would just be getting the last part of the discourse*’ when the hearing participants responded, thus making it difficult for them to interject or contribute (J13.1).

One SLI states that she tried to manage the deaf employee’s ‘*cutting in*’ by using ‘*culturally appropriate remarks such as ‘sorry to butt in’, ‘could I just say’, and ‘if I could just comment on that point/ comment’*’ (J16.2). The SLI felt that this strategy went some way to smoothing the interaction and resulted in ‘*both parties achieving their aims during the meeting*’ (J16.2).

For many deaf people, it seems as though this has always been the way that team meetings have been conducted, and in some cases there is a reluctance or lack of will to change this. One SLI reported that the deaf employee *'seemed content with the way things go in that meeting'* and that they were *'not prepared to say anything to improve the situation'* (J13.3). A recurring theme in the journals is the fact that, for many deaf people, the SLI is the only person in the workplace with whom they have the opportunity to communicate, to offload and express their feelings. In meetings this can mean that deaf employees are often effectively *'doing collegiality'* (see Holmes 2006) with the SLI, rather than with their hearing peers. One SLI commented that the deaf employee *'took no active part in the meeting'* and *'appeared bored and uninterested'*, preferring instead to interact directly with the SLI. They made comments that were *'in no way related to the meeting e.g. 'boring job...wouldn't give me an interpreter for the Christmas meal, no social life here'* (J14.3). The eye contact with the deaf employee, which forms an essential part of the interpreting process, means that it is *'easier to 'chat' to the Deaf participants as they cannot communicate with other hearing/ non-signers'* (J21.3).

The questionnaire and journal data demonstrate that the attitudes and awareness of other participants can make a considerable difference in respect of the extent to which the deaf employee can be included in the meeting. The use of clear, plain English, with lengthier gaps in the discourse to *'allow for checking, rephrasing, questioning, deliberating and commenting'* (J12.4), together with the willingness to check on understanding and allow for the deaf employee to contribute, can result in a much more satisfactory experience for all participants. If hearing staff members are *'open and willing to engage with the interpreting process'*, in order to ensure that the deaf employee is *'truly involved'*, then the SLI can feel as though they are an *'integral part of the meeting'* (J14.5).

5.3.2 Interpreting 'office chitchat' and informal conversations

As highlighted in Chapter Two, small talk, humour, and instances of less formal interaction can contribute considerably to deaf employees' integration into the workplace. From the questionnaire responses, 30 SLIs stated that they regularly interpreted informal conversations and 'chitchat'. Twenty five SLIs stated that they

sometimes did so, whilst one SLI stated that they never interpreted this type of interaction, due to the fact that the majority of the staff in their work environment could sign at a level that enabled casual conversation to take place without an SLI.

Viewed as being a form of cultural mediation, SLIs see the interpreting of non-transactional talk as being a way of making sure that the client can fully understand all the subtleties and trivia of everyday office life. This can range from interpreting *'pleasantries, e.g. hello, nice weekend etc'* (Q19a: qr35), to informing the deaf employee that *'when someone says did you have a good weekend that doesn't mean they want to know what you did from Friday evening until Monday morning etc!'* (Q19a: qr50). As noted in section 5.2.1, SLIs are very aware of the importance of informal office interactions, stating that they *'endeavour to interpret political/organisations issues and social conversations'*, as this provides access to the *'wider issues and promotes understanding and greater inclusion'* (Q18b: qr11). They also see it as being vital in enabling the deaf employee to *'fit in' socially with the hearing office* and to pick up on *'conversations in passing'* which inform about issues such as *'drinks or parties are being planned, someone's leaving etc... the vital bits of information about work that can be gleaned by overhearing other's conversations'* (Q18b: qr45).

SLIs indicated a variety of reasons for interpreting, or not interpreting, small talk, ranging from the practical (i.e. actually being able to hear the conversation), through to making decisions about what the deaf client would want interpreted. SLIs have *'a lot of power in this situation'* (Q22: qr18) and it is clear that they find this a challenging issue. Part of their difficulty lies in discerning what to include and what to omit, given that what might be pointless discussions or gossip to the SLI could be essential information for the deaf employee (J13.3, Q18b: qr22).

Some SLIs are taking their cue from the deaf employee as to whether they *'want to know the chit chat or would prefer to get on with work more'* (Q18b: qr15), with some deaf employees informing the SLI if *'they want to concentrate on their work'* as *'not getting involved in office 'chitchat' is an advantage of their deafness'* (Q18b: qr55). Other clients specify that they only want interrupting if the information is *'work related'* (Q18b: qr35). One respondent stated that *'if the chitchat is other*

peoples' -going on in the background etc- the Deaf client often lets me know she is not really interested and to not bother interpreting. I keep interpreting until she indicates this' (Q18b: qr7).

SLIs are employing a number of strategies to manage this aspect of workplace discourse, such as interpreting when the deaf employee happens to be looking up (Q18b: qr10), or when the information directly affects them 'e.g. sandwich lady arriving' (Q18b: qr35). Alternatively, when the deaf client is not concentrating too deeply on a task, SLIs are informing them of information that is '*particularly funny/ rude/ bitchy etc!*' (Q18b: qr34). These tactics, sometimes discussed and agreed with the deaf employee, (Q18b: qr10, Q18b: qr13) mean that the deaf person can then choose to '*join in, continue to 'earwig' or ignore and get on with their own work.'*' (Q18b: qr27).

In other instances SLIs are relying on their own thoughts, feelings and intuition as to what they should relay, ranging from what they feel relates to the deaf employee personally, i.e. '*work project/ interesting gossip that others would be picking up on'*' (Q18b: qr54), to anything that might be '*interesting (what I think is interesting!)*' (Q18b: qr10), or considered important '*i.e. a colleague is leaving or likely to be off work'*' (Q18b: qr55). One SLI states that they will feed in information if '*things are being talked about that affect office relations for some reason etc, or if the Deaf person would be very disadvantaged in not knowing information about someone'*' (Q18b: qr15). In short, this means that the SLI is in a very powerful position, effectively acting as gate-keeper for the deaf employee's access to formal and informal office conversations and background information. The SLI therefore has a crucial role in enabling deaf employees to access small talk and casual conversation, thus establishing and maintaining collegial relationships with their hearing peers.

In some situations the 'office chat' will take place between the SLI and their deaf client. One SLI commented that '*we do chat a lot...I try to pause regularly in case they need to get back to work'*' (Q21a&b: qr54). This interaction is often due to the fact that the SLI is the only person in the office environment with whom the deaf employee can converse in their first language. One respondent notes that deaf employees often seem glad to have '*someone to chat to'*' as they '*will tell you they feel*

isolated in their normal working day'. She commented that as an SLI she had to be careful that *'chatting' doesn't further isolate the Deaf person* (Q13: qr38). Again, this suggests that the SLI is in some instances a 'stand-in' for a work colleague, someone with whom the deaf employee can interact informally. As this SLI states *'I think the team see me as the Deaf person's colleague as we chat and laugh'* (Q13: qr54).

Two other contributions raise interesting issues linked to the SLI's role as a substitute employee in the workplace setting. One SLI states that some deaf clients will ask them to *'pass on bits later when they've finished what they are doing'* (Q18b: qr53), whilst another comments that they will inform the deaf client of any general office chat and/ or work related discussions that occur when the deaf person is out of the room (Q22: qr1). In another example, the SLI states that they usually try to let the deaf employee know of *'other conversations I have so that he is aware of background information etc which I think is important for him to know'* (J40.9). The request to 'pass on bits later' places an additional responsibility on the SLI and brings into question their role in this particular aspect of office interpreting. There are implications in terms of how this action might be perceived by hearing employees, as well as how it might affect the SLI's positioning and boundaries in the workplace setting. These issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

5.3.3 Interpreting humorous exchanges

The need for SLIs to interpret and elucidate instances of humour is also highlighted. One particular staff meeting is described as being the only opportunity for the workers to speak directly to managers, providing employees with the opportunity to *'swear and curse at managers and call them a bunch of liars, bluffers etc'*. This is recognised as being vital in enabling the deaf employee to *'recognise the tone and attitude of colleagues'* and understand that they are *'not the only one with a problem re managers'* (Q19a: qr6). Humour is seen as a cultural norm which SLIs feel is part of their role to mediate, and is perceived as essential in preventing misunderstandings when the deaf client is *'working in mixed hearing/ deaf office'* (Q19a: qr51).

The issue of teasing was highlighted, with one SLI stating that *'deaf people tease in a different way to hearing people'* (Q19a: qr51). Another respondent described a situation where the deaf employee was under the impression that other people in the office were making fun of her, seemingly unaware that other members of staff also got teased and that it was *'the way the office banter went on- this can be misunderstood quite often by Deaf people'* (Q19a: qr38). One SLI related an example where the deaf client was perceived as being sexist by their work colleague, because of light hearted comments about women drivers, stating *'he didn't realise that banter involving Irish or female...has to be used with caution.'* (Q19a: qr26).

5.3.4 Cultural mediation of workplace norms

A main theme identified by the questionnaire respondents, and expanded on within the journal data, was that of the SLI's responsibility for mediating and negotiating cultural issues. Cultural mediation clearly has a broad remit for SLIs employed in workplace settings, covering a wide range of behaviours and norms, such as those highlighted above, as well as *'the usual ways to start and end phone calls, indirect language used by English speakers, how people sometimes appear to be working but aren't'* and when these behaviours are *'acceptable'* or not (Q19a: qr20). Whilst trying to mediate what constitutes acceptable workplace behaviour is a challenge, other respondents identify wider deaf/ hearing cultural norms as requiring elucidation, as *'users can have a limited awareness of the various norms operating with Deaf and Hearing cultures as well as the interpreter's role'* (Q16: qr11).

Sixty six percent of SLIs felt that it was their responsibility to inform deaf clients about workplace culture and the workplace norms of hearing people, perceiving this to be part of their role as an 'office' interpreter. Twenty nine percent were either unsure or felt that they would only do so in certain situations, whilst only one respondent felt that it was not within their remit, stating that they were *'not there to teach about cultural/ work issues'* as there was *'line management/ supervision to deal with that'* (Q19b: qr45). Twenty one percent felt that this aspect of their interpreting was part of wider *'cultural mediation'* or *'interpreting culture'* (Q19b: qr57).

Discussions about cultural issues are described as going beyond the immediate workplace to *'hearing cultural norms'*, so that the SLI may *'explain humour or who a band is or explain radio programmes (e.g. The Archers, once!)*' with these discussions sometimes widening to *'include hearing people present'* (Q19a: qr27). As one SLI points out, deaf people live in a *'hearing dominated cultural world and need to have some understanding of the cultural norms'*, no matter what the domain (Q19b: qr15).

One respondent highlighted the potential outcomes of a deaf employee failing to understand hearing culture or work cultural norms, stating that an employee's *'constant complaining about trivialities and the consequent waste of the manager's time and patience'* was *'putting his job in jeopardy'* (J14.2). Another SLI commented on the possible detrimental impact on collegial relationships when the deaf employee was unaware that work colleagues did not necessarily have to like each other, but they *'just had to get on with their work and be civil to each other'* (J14.2). In a different example the respondent identified that *'even if a colleague does not like another colleague they would not consider 'face threatening acts' as they know they have to work alongside each other'* (Q16: qr8), indicating that this is something which some deaf employees seem unable to discern in the same way as their hearing peers.

Other examples include the SLI clueing the deaf employee into *'workplace atmosphere, arriving and sensing 'voice' moods and 'quietness''* (Q19a: qr28), as well as providing information about *'arriving at meetings on time'* and *'not interrupting people on the phone'* (Q19a: qr35). The importance of workplace relationships was emphasised by some respondents, who stated that they would inform the deaf employee that *'X has just had a paddy about the photocopier ink running out again'* and *'R has threatened to spit in her milk if anyone pinches it from the fridge again!'* (Q19a: qr42), as well as the fact that *'hearing people sometimes like to switch off completely at lunch break, don't want any conversation, even if they're sat right in front of you'* (Q19a: qr21). Information accessible to hearing employees (e.g. via casual conversations or more explicit workplace directives), but not to deaf employees, such as the fact that booking a holiday during working time

'may be frowned upon as 'non-work related' and may put them in a bad light' (Q19a: qr11), was also seen as important to pass on.

SLIs noted that the cultural mediation aspect of their role becomes easier with the background knowledge acquired from regular attendance in the same workplace, stating that this is *'very useful for noticing cross cultural issues that operate at subtle levels of interaction' (Q17c: qr20)*, enabling them to pick up on some of the almost indefinable qualities that constitute social interaction, both within the office environment and the interpreting process itself.

Emails and other written forms of communication were another area where some SLIs felt able to offer advice in terms of the correct language to use in the office environment, such as explaining that *'sometimes emails from hearing colleagues are indirectly asking for something to be done in a beating around the bush kind of way' (Q19a: qr7)*, and that *'certain language is used in English, e.g. on emails, formal business language'*, thus ensuring the deaf employee *'is aware of these "email etiquettes" so that they are replying with equal sincerity' (Q19a: qr22)*. Adjusting written English to follow hearing cultural norms was clearly perceived as an aspect of cultural mediation by some SLIs, who argued that this degree of advocacy could be seen as justifiable in making *'some compensation for deficiencies in Deaf educational provision' (J37.3)*. In these cases they stated they saw their role in this specific situation going beyond interpreter, to that of ally or advocate.

SLIs also identified the difficulties that deaf people have in accessing information and resources, all of which are in written English. They note that information in this format is *'of limited value' (J17.3)*, as well as commenting that there was little awareness or understanding of how *'practice and policies may be modified to accommodate someone with a particular cultural world view that uses a visual gestural language' (J17.3)*. One SLI described how employers failed to acknowledge a deaf employee's reliance on fax and email as opposed to the telephone, as well as not recognising her difficulties in accessing policies written in high-level English. She commented that *'because the office is entirely set up around hearing cultural needs and norms'* the deaf person could never be on a par with their hearing peers,

stating *'no amount of "cultural mediation" and careful phrasing can get around that'* (J37.3).

There appears to be the need for a strong relationship between the SLI and the deaf employee in order for certain topics to be broached. Some subjects were seen as ones which could be subtly introduced into the general conversation, with decisions about when this was most appropriate based on the SLI's knowledge of the deaf employee and the topic under discussion. One SLI expressed a reluctance to raise certain issues, feeling *'frightened to do so'* in case they appeared to be *'the controlling interpreter'* (Q19a: qr48). Other SLIs were sensitive to not offending or patronising the deaf employee (Q19b: qr14, Q19b: qr19), questioning their authority (J7.4), or appearing to be informing someone that *'their behaviour was inappropriate'* (J16.2). SLIs emphasised that it was important to address the issue in *'a sensitive, professional and appropriate way'* rather than *'all guns blazing!'* (Q19b: qr16, and that *'each assignment has to be judged on its own merits'* (Q19b: qr19). Crucially, the point was made that *'anything we pass on will be coloured by our own experiences'* and that it was *'sometimes important to question why we are doing it.'* (Q19b: qr53).

A number of SLIs highlighted the importance of the transfer of cultural information being a two-way process, stating that if it was necessary they *'would inform both Deaf and hearing clients about the differences'* (Q19b: qr25), and that part of their role is to *'build bridges between Deaf and hearing people'* (Q19b: qr10). Leading on from this point, only two SLIs commented on the issue that will be discussed later in Chapter Seven, i.e. that it might not always be appropriate to culturally mediate to a degree where neither deaf nor hearing people will realise the differences that exist between the two cultures. One respondent stated that sometimes *'Deaf and hearing can end up learning more about each other'* (Q19b: qr7) if cultural mediation is *not* undertaken by the SLI. Another SLI described part of her role as easing discomfort between deaf and hearing people, stating *'that's what we do- try and make things go smoothly, comfortably'* (J11.11). However she also identifies that in doing so SLIs sometimes make their job more difficult, covering 'cracks' in the communication process that it would be advantageous for both the deaf and hearing participants to be aware of.

5.4 Boundaries and Role

'Some Deaf clients want you to be involved in their work, some want work to be private...some Deaf clients would rather you be seen as an interpreter- not a colleague' (Q22: qr22)

Many of the problems, challenges and conflicts that SLIs face in the workplace domain appear to be rooted in the lack of clarity surrounding their role, both in general terms, and within this specific setting. Not only do deaf and hearing consumers have differing perspectives of the SLI's role, SLIs also appear unclear as to their position in the workplace domain. In teasing out the concerns for SLIs in this setting it has been difficult to separate out the issues of role and boundaries, but I have brought the issue of role clarity to the forefront, reasoning that once the SLI and the deaf and hearing employees have a clear understanding of the SLI's role within the workplace, it should be possible to negotiate and agree appropriate boundaries.

The issues surrounding the role of the SLI in this setting are complex, and the data only begins to scratch the surface. One SLI stated that *'the office interpreting scenario is a real can of worms... if I behave like an interpreter should, sometimes I'm not being very helpful'* (Q22: qr52). The key feature in this statement relates to the use of 'should' in relation to interpreter behaviour, an issue which is brought up again in Chapter Six. As the same respondent states, *'interpreters have 'fallen into' doing office support with no real guidance as to good practice'* (Q22: qr52), with the result that they are forced to fall back on their understanding of what they should be doing, derived in the main from a conduit perspective. The deeply embedded perspectives of the SLI's role, held by all participants in the interaction, ranging from the SLI as machine, to the invisible interpreter and the interpreter as bi-cultural, bi-lingual expert (see Chapter Two), underpin the more practical problems as to what tasks an SLI should or should not perform in the workplace domain.

5.4.1 The SLI's perception of their workplace role

In response to question 12, ‘How would **you** describe your role in this setting?’ the majority of SLIs (38) stated that they saw themselves as a signed language interpreter, whilst nine perceived their role as ‘interpreter/ PA’. Seven respondents described their role as ‘other’, citing a variety of examples such as ‘*communicator*’ (Q.13: qr1), ‘*Communication Support Worker/ Interpreter*’ (Q.13: qr41), ‘*Communication Support Officer*’ (Q.13: qr45) and ‘*translator*’ (Q.13: qr11). A number of respondents in this category made the point that they saw their role as being flexible, depending on the ‘*person, setting and event*’ (Q.13: qr21), performing their role ‘*differently with different clients*’ (Q.13: qr26). One SLI stated that their role differed according to the deaf employee’s ‘*language ability, familiarity with other staff, environment protocol and work needs*’ (Q.13: qr. 52).

5.4.2 Consumer perceptions of the interpreter’s role

‘The most destructive thing is lack of deaf awareness and respect for deaf person’
(Q21a&b: qr44)

As discussed in Chapter Two, lack of insight about deaf people and the cultural aspects of the deaf community is undeniably an immense barrier for deaf employees, which in turn has a direct effect on the SLI’s ability function effectively in the workplace domain. If hearing consumers do not fully appreciate the deaf employee’s needs, they are also unable to understand the SLI’s role in the workplace domain. One SLI stated that management’s lack of awareness led to role confusion and conflict, resulting in time being lost ‘*by having to explain what I am there for*’ (Q21a&b: qr23), whilst another commented that ignorance of her role, from both deaf and hearing consumers, had led to her employers asking her to perform tasks that she felt were outside of her remit (Q16: qr6).

SLIs report that hearing consumers tend to view the interpreter’s role predominantly as that of ‘*helper*’ (Q13: qr9, Q13: qr13, Q13: qr46) or ‘*support worker*’ (Q13: qr4, Q13: qr16, Q13: qr17). This is most likely derived from the medical perspective which informs mainstream society’s perception of deaf people (see Chapter Two). Two respondents refer directly to the fact that deaf people are seen as being in need of ‘*care*’ (Q13: qr47, Q13: qr56). One SLI states that they are often thought of as ‘*a*

Deaf person's 'carer' or 'social worker'”, with an impression of deaf people needing to be *'looked after'*, the assumption being that the SLI provides the *'look after' role* (Q13: qr56).

Many SLIs have recorded instances where they are treated purely as a resource, by both deaf and hearing clients. Some SLIs struggle with being defined solely in terms of their role. One respondent states that despite knowing the deaf client fairly well, they are still introduced as *'the interpreter'*, something which they find *'mildly insulting'* (Q22: qr10). Another SLI regrets that *'for some Deaf people, an interpreter is ultimately always an interpreter and never really an ordinary person in their lives'* (J11.18), an attitude which SLIs can find difficult to accept, particularly when they might consider themselves friends with the deaf employee.

In settings where there are a number of deaf employees, there can be a demand for the SLI to be utilised to the maximum. One SLI states that the deaf employee to whom she is contracted can be *'subject to quite a lot of pressure (though often subtle) to "lend me out" if I am not "in use" at the time'* (J10.6) and notes that the pressure comes from both hearing and deaf people. In one workplace deaf employees will *'let each other know when there is an interpreter in the building that can be made use of during the booked hours'* (J37.2), with the SLI being *'on call'* for the other deaf staff. SLIs are aware that it *'obviously makes sense for the stakeholders, practically and financially'* (J37.2), but it can be an uncomfortable arrangement for the SLI, as it gives them little control in terms of assessing their suitability for the assignment with the other staff members.

The *'lending out'* and *'borrowing'* theme is echoed by other journal respondents, as is the discomfort it causes for the SLI. One respondent, whose deaf client had given permission for another member of staff to *'borrow'* them *'for an hour or so without asking'* (J1.2) stated that given her good working and personal relationship with the client she was surprised that she wasn't asked about it beforehand. Another SLI, after being introduced as the *'Deaf person's interpreter- HIS interpreter'* describes this bringing back memories of *'when two Deaf people working in a team would tussle over whose interpreter I was on that day'* (J11.6). She notes that requests by the team

manager for the SLI to interpret elsewhere made the deaf staff feel as though *'their interpreter was being 'pinched''*.

One SLI stated that some deaf people view the interpreter as *'a piece of the office furniture, such as a fax machine'* (Q13: qr51). The objectification of SLIs and the *'lack of consideration that is given to the interpreters needs'* (J31.9), together with the expectations this can generate amongst deaf and hearing staff, undoubtedly causes feelings of considerable resentment amongst SLIs. The powerlessness they experience is certainly compounded by the fact that in many interpreting settings SLIs are used to have a degree of control and autonomy over their work, working conditions and clients. This shift in power between SLIs and deaf people and the implications thereof are discussed later in Chapter Seven.

5.4.3 Extreme interpreting- the interpreter/ PA hybrid

The terminology used to describe the role of the SLI in the workplace setting is indicative of the complexity of their work in this domain. One SLI commented that the deaf client *'often jokingly introduces me as their interpreter/ PA'* (J16.3). A discussion to clarify her role resulted in a realisation that the deaf client *'indeed thought that this was legitimately part of office based interpreting... it was actually a case of him misunderstanding my role'* (J16.3).

Another SLI describes her role as being *'one of the more extreme forms of office support'*, being required to *'behave more like a PA than an interpreter'*, and lists her range of duties as including *'sight translations, transcribing videos for subtitling, assisting with the timing of subtitles, correcting the client's written English, replying to letters/ emails/ sms messages from a signed description, drawing up documents in the appropriate English style from a signed description and researching'* (J31.6). Undertaking this range of duties can lead to SLIs feeling as though they are *'not acting ethically'* (J31.6), or that some of their behaviour and work practices are *'not defined by any training, role expectations etc'*. There is a clear indication that SLIs are being asked to *'perform tasks which go beyond the boundaries of interpreting'* (Q13: qr25). One respondent commented that what she does is *'not wrong, damaging, unethical etc- but it is not 'interpreting' either'* (J10.2). This undercurrent

of uncertainty and unease can create limitations, leading to the feeling that *'the freedom to develop a broader working relationship is undercut by panic of no framework to refer to when it goes awry (or threatens to)'* (J10.5).

5.4.4 Managing complex roles and conflict in the workplace

The lack of clarity surrounding their role is leading to SLIs struggling to project and maintain a clear sense of their own identity. SLIs employed as 'staff interpreters', with a dual role of employee and interpreter, appear to find this particularly challenging. SLIs frequently refer to a need to change 'hats' in order to clarify their position. Issues range from having difficulty in expressing views within the team, rather than being *'the mouthpiece of my Deaf colleague'* (Q16: qr45), and problems with other staff recognising when the SLI is *'acting in different capacities'* (J24.2), to *'constantly being asked questions'* (J2.2) regarding their office interpreting role. SLIs are sometimes expected to undertake an employee role for part of the day and then *'switch hats and interpret'* (J24.4) when the deaf client requires them.

SLIs do not consider this dual role as being particularly unprofessional, but indicate that they would be more comfortable if the roles were clearly split. All of these demands add an additional pressure to the tasks that SLIs have to undertake in this setting. They appear to be having to frequently change and shift roles, repositioning themselves within one interpreted event, sometimes being expected to *'glide from colleague to interpreter seamlessly'* (J20.5). As a result SLIs are experiencing confusion, reporting that they often feel forced by the circumstances to do things that are not *'truly'* (J10.1) in their role, making them uncomfortable with their lack of autonomy.

The ambiguity surrounding the SLI's role in the workplace impacts considerably on establishing and maintaining professional boundaries. Expectations can become raised, with the result that the SLI is seen as *'the panacea of all that the Deaf person needs to access the workplace'* (Q17d: qr48). In addition, clients can begin to depend on the SLI, which in turn brings assumptions that the SLI will *'go beyond boundaries of their profession'* (Q17d: qr3). This can include using the SLI to offload on to, asking for advice, requesting memory prompts about what happened in previous

meetings, and being asked to do the photocopying (Q17d: qr18, Q16: qr47, Q16: qr13). As one SLI indicates, the *'lack of formalised procedures for working with interpreters in this domain'* (Q16: qr11) adds to the confusion and misperception of the SLI's responsibilities.

The ways in which SLIs work with clients, together with the boundaries set by other SLIs, can influence the roles and boundaries of those who subsequently work in the same environment. As one SLI states, each deaf client has *'their own way of working with their interpreters'*, consequently what is difficult in one setting or office is *'fine in another'* (Q15: qr53). If boundaries become too blurred, this has implications for the next SLI who will not be *'aware of what is expected!'* (Q17d: qr38). SLIs are aware that by doing something that is not essentially part of their role, over time the potential is for such behaviour to become *'custom and practice'* (Q17d: qr12). This emphasises the need to establish boundaries, and for SLIs to make clear if any additional tasks are agreed as *'one offs or continual'* (Q16: qr22).

The shift in professional boundaries, and the changing relationships between SLIs and deaf employees, also demonstrates that over-familiarity leads to *'being helpful and inclining to take over situations'* (Q17b: qr26), in addition to having the potential to *'breed contempt (on both sides)'* (Q17d: qr24). Getting on too well with both deaf and hearing clients means that SLIs are sometimes concerned that their *'relationship as a colleague'* can influence their decisions (Q17b: qr25). As a result they struggle to *'maintain distance'*, and to stop themselves from *'offering advice'* (Q17d: qr13).

The dual nature of the SLI's role, i.e. that they are there to facilitate and enable communication for both deaf and hearing employees, appears under-recognised. One SLI states that *'people often regard you as the Deaf person's interpreter'* (Q16: qr40), affirming that it is difficult for individuals to *'take on board the bilateral nature of your job'* (Q16: qr40) and to understand that *'we're there to support both parties'* (Q13: qr48). Another respondent reinforces this point, stating some deaf people perceive her as *'my interpreter'*, whilst hearing employees see her as the deaf person's personal interpreter, i.e. *'their interpreter'* (Q13: qr21). This role as the *'deaf person's interpreter'* is further reinforced by the nature of the AtW assessment, where only deaf client's needs are under consideration, rather than the communication

requirements of the workforce as a whole being taken into account. This in turn strengthens the perception that the communication problem lies solely with the deaf employee, and that the SLI is therefore engaged exclusively to attend to this issue. Suggestions regarding potential ways of addressing this imbalance are discussed further in Chapters Seven and Eight.

5.4.5 Changing relationships- interpreter, colleague, ally or friend?

Many of the role and boundary problems facing SLIs in the workplace setting can be attributed to the confused, complex and constantly mutating relationships that exist with both deaf and hearing employees, mainly emerging from the regular presence of the SLI in this domain, but also linked to the connection that exists between SLIs and the deaf community. SLIs commented on the transition from interpreting work colleague to friend, stating that this can be *'fine as long as you don't have to interpret for them in a different setting where you need to be impartial, e.g. supervision'* (Q17d: qr35). The change in relationship also has an impact on issues of confidentiality, impartiality and ethics, making it *'more difficult to appear impartial'* (Q16: qr10), and to ensure that *'all employees are confident in interpreters'* (Q16: qr18).

Interpreting for deaf clients in both their professional and private lives can lead to SLIs being party to a great deal of information about certain individuals, which for some deaf people can be *'a big issue'*, due in part to *'a desire for privacy in what is a very small community'*, and also because *'knowledge is power'* (J11.17). Deaf professionals often choose to work with the same SLI, to ensure consistency, and also for personal compatibility, making it more likely that *'the Deaf professional and interpreter become friends to varying degrees'* (J11.18). However, working relationships which become friendships can lead to deaf clients being unable to see them as *'just a friend'* despite the SLI being *'clear when I meet them as a friend or when I am wearing my professional hat'* (J11.18).

The intense relationship that can develop between a deaf employee and an SLI can impact on the dynamics of the office or workplace environment in a number of ways. The fact that there is rarely anyone else in the workplace with whom the deaf

employee can communicate, and who can *'begin to understand the issues facing a Deaf person...seeing the undercurrents, the subsurface oppression'* (J11.8), can result in the deaf employee sharing their frustrations as well as everyday conversation with the SLI. One respondent stated that a deaf employee liked to chat to them, to have the company *'because no-one else signs'*, and *'because no-one else is using their language or because they are not approached by hearing people'* (J31.7). Whilst the lack of interaction between deaf employees and their hearing peers can lead to conversations taking place between the SLI and the deaf client, there is a risk that this makes it difficult for hearing employees to join in the conversation (Q15: qr54), thus leading to them feeling excluded (Q17d: qr35).

This direct interaction seems to be outside of what SLIs consider their role, but as this respondent notes *'I can't be completely cold because I am a human being and not a machine'*, with the codicil that it is *'important to gauge when this behaviour is inappropriate'* (J31.7). In the course of assisting a deaf client with their written English one SLI describes discussing *'how unhappy he is in his job, the pros/ cons for staying on or resigning'*, describing her role as *'friend/ sounding board'* (J11.8). She reflects that both parties are setting aside their roles *'in the absence of other people'*, no longer behaving as deaf client and SLI but *'simply person to person'*. This makes her feel *'a bit torn- but only briefly!'* and she concludes that SLIs are *'the people who are most aware of both cultures and so can be that source of information, that reality check'*. The same point is echoed by another SLI who states that in a hearing dominated environment SLIs are *'treated more as an ally or a colleague...to discuss issues with (a sounding board possibly)'* (Q22: qr53).

Responses from the data suggest that acting as a reality check for the deaf client, confirming if something can be attributed to hearing culture, or affirming that treatment is unfair and inappropriate, is a role that is being undertaken by SLIs, but it is a responsibility that sits uneasily with them. Extending the workplace relationship to one of friendship can lead to difficulties in sensitive situations, and one SLI, reflecting on interpreting a meeting regarding potential redundancy, questions whether interpreters should *'avoid anything other than superficial conversations with people they work with (Deaf or hearing)'* (J38.2).

The issue of neutrality is raised in respect of working on a regular basis with the same deaf client(s). SLIs seem unable to avoid getting caught up in office politics, thus taking sides and making allegiances, whether they want to or not. Examples illustrate concerns about getting *'embroiled in office conflicts'* (Q17d: qr30), or *'sucked into office politics and gossip'* (Q17b: qr2), as well as SLIs having to *'resist collusion/the invitation to collude'* (Q17d: qr21). In order to avoid getting drawn into work politics one respondent makes a *'conscious decision to 'turn off' eyes and ears and read a magazine'* (J11.7) recognising that it can *'subtly affect how they behave and indeed the affect of the interpreted message'* (J11.9). The crossing of personal and professional boundaries can clearly result in complexities, and therefore the implications of maintaining either a superficial or more personal relationship merit further consideration.

5.4.6 Relationships with hearing clients

Maintaining a 'conduit' role is acknowledged as being more difficult in office environments (J23.1), with SLIs feeling constrained by the role of the interpreter, and prevented from being part of the team (J36.5). SLIs feel unclear about their exact remit in the workplace, stating that they are *'working in an environment but not as an 'employee''* (Q16: qr16). Accordingly, relationships are completely different as the SLI is only there *'now and then'*, with the result that *'other employees don't know how to behave with you'* (Q16: qr16).

The consistent nature of workplace assignments can result in the SLI being treated as though they are members of staff *'which makes it a little difficult to behave as an interpreter should'* (Q17b: qr52). One respondent notes that it can be *'disruptive and even confusing for hearing colleagues when an unfamiliar interpreter arrives in 'their' working environment'* (Q17c: qr18), although the regular attendance of an SLI can go some way to reducing this. Another SLI states that other employees will *'talk to me as a hearing person and I can feel a part of things'* (Q21a&b: qr23), but also highlights that the deaf employee is not included in the same way. She notes that the resulting atmosphere can be uncomfortable as it is *'difficult not to respond to the other colleagues, particularly when the Deaf client is getting on with other work'*, and questions if she is *'stepping out of role by doing this'* (Q21a&b: qr23). However,

failing to acknowledge or talk to the hearing staff can have a marked impact on the workplace dynamics, with one SLI commenting that behaving '*strictly as an interpreter*' often makes hearing staff feel uncomfortable because it is '*not what people are used to in that environment...sometimes they feel compelled to try and befriend the interpreter*' (Q17d: qr52). Attempts to remain aloof from interacting with hearing employees can result in the SLI appearing '*stand-offish to other people who are making me feel welcome in their office*' (J36: 5), and there seems to be a need for '*a delicate balance to be struck between not being over familiar on other people's territory*', whilst remembering that as a regular fixture the SLI will be seen more as '*an individual than 'just' an interpreter*' (J36.5).

SLIs report that interaction with hearing employees is not always viewed positively by deaf clients. One deaf employee is described as objecting to an SLI 'chatting' to other hearing staff, citing potential conflict of interest as one of the reasons. The SLI comments that the deaf client does not '*like this behaviour from interpreters. They have one interpreter who regularly goes off to the coffee room and chats to the employees*'. The deaf employee is apparently upset by this but '*does not want to say anything*' (Q15: qr8). Likewise, another SLI identifies that deaf clients may feel that the SLI should be '*on their side*' or '*sympathetic to their cause*' but that she believes she is there '*to interpret for both clients*' and should '*reflect both parties equally in these types of situations*' (J6.9).

Overall, the balance of being 'friendly', but not over-familiar seems to present a particular challenge, as familiarity can lead to other employees trying '*to abuse your position as an interpreter by drawing you into the office politics*' (Q21a&b: qr55), whilst being seen as a member of the team can challenge the SLI's beliefs about neutrality and invisibility, resulting in them feeling '*awkward sometimes*' (Q22: qr4). Issues such as avoiding eye contact with hearing participants, in order to ensure the deaf employee is the focus in the interaction, can lead to hearing clients subsequently feeling excluded (J11.5). The SLI attributes this in part to people being unclear about the SLI's role, but adds that because SLIs are '*so busy thinking about Deaf culture, empowering Deaf people (on their side), ensuring communication, not taking over, not overstepping our boundaries*', that it can lead to them '*forgetting about hearing people and their needs/ culture in the triadic relationship*' (J11.5). She goes on to say

that by not responding, SLIs try to make the relationship a dyadic one, but notes that *'it is a triad and people struggle with ignoring the third person'*. This tension or dilemma of *'how much personal information to share; how friendly is it safe/ wise to get'* (Q16: qr34), highlights the SLI's unique role in this domain.

5.4.7 Developing relationships- trust, understanding and respect

Many SLIs work with the same deaf employee on a regular basis, with 35 of the questionnaire respondents stating they interpreted in the same setting at least once a week. This section concludes by examining some of the beneficial aspects of a regular working relationship. Many of the positive characteristics are very subtle in nature, and involve SLIs gaining a more fine-grained understanding of the primary participants' needs in this setting, as well as developing more open and rewarding relationships. The consistency of working with the same deaf and hearing clients means that SLIs can engage in a *'open, honest working relationship with deaf and hearing clients'* (Q17c: qr21), thus *'openly discussing hearing/ deaf ways of doing things'* (Q17c: qr21), which can lead to benefits such as a *'good personal relationship with client'* (Q17c: qr29). SLIs also report that a regular working relationship means they can begin to understand their client's world, gaining a deeper understanding of the deaf employee's *'perception of their work/ office'* (Q17c: qr27), which provides the SLI with a clearer picture of how to fit in. This is seen as beneficial in that it provides *'contextual background'* for the SLI (Q17b: qr45).

The continuity of working with the same client clearly allows SLIs to develop much better working relationships, with the result that *'where a good level of rapport and trust is achieved it becomes an invaluable learning and working situation'* (Q17c: qr20). Trust is seen as something which builds with familiarity, leading to a more *'seamless'* service (Q17c: qr42). A number of respondents described the development of *'an almost telepathic relationship'* (Q17c: qr17), with the *'ability to second guess what is about to be said/ signed'* (Q17c: qr45) and the skill of *'tuning in'* to the deaf employee's signing (Q17c: qr21).

5.4.8 Interpreters as gate-keepers

The issue of power has been raised in a number of SLI journals, in terms of the power held by hearing participants, deaf employees and also by SLIs. Some of the issues of power are overt, whilst others are more subtle and perhaps not directly seen by SLIs as power-related, especially in terms of their own powerful position in the communicative event. The power imbalance between deaf and hearing employees appears to present the most challenges, with one SLI commenting that the hardest part of interpreting is *'having to cope with the power relations between Deaf and hearing people'* (J37.1). Another respondent states that because the SLI and other participants in the workplace are hearing they can *'be seen to occupy a more powerful status in a number of ways and spoken English is the main vehicle for communication'* (J17.4). They describe this as creating a *'power imbalance within the interaction which may be uncomfortable for the Deaf person from a minority culture'* (J17.4)

The more subtle effect of the power held by SLIs in the workplace domain is illustrated throughout a number of examples. Some SLIs are struggling with accurately reflecting the tensions and emotions felt by the deaf employee. One SLI describes a supervision meeting where she is *'aware of tension and hostility from Deaf person to supervisor'* (J11.1), relating that at the end of the session the deaf client *'responds politely but with zero eye contact or facial expression'* to the supervisor's goodbye. The SLI recalls injecting more warmth into her voice-over than is merited, and questions whether this is her own preference for avoiding conflict. She remarks on previous research, suggesting that interpreters tend to select a milder form of register when interpreting, and wonders if SLIs also affect the *'dynamics, power relationships, social interaction'* in the same way. She concludes by describing SLIs as being *'like a sophisticated pressure valve where high pressure comes in and is reduced or low pressure comes in and is boosted- it all comes out pretty darn medium!'*

The SLI acting as a 'leveller out' of emotions and intent is evidenced by other respondents, with one SLI reporting that they are *'guilty of 'softening''* if they anticipate unintended offence (Q20b: qr26). Another describes feeling very

uncomfortable at times with the style in which a deaf employee wanted to interject in a particular situation, stating that she *'found this aggression hard to relay' (J37.1)* in her voice-over. Identifying that her reluctance to reflect the deaf employee's intent was not *'so much about saving interpreter face'*, as she was not worried about what the other participants thought of her, she notes that the deaf employee would not have welcomed her attempts to cool the situation by *'toning down'* the voice-over. All of these examples demonstrate the powerful impact the SLI's decisions can have on the interaction, decisions which may have many ramifications for both deaf and hearing employees.

5.4.9 Visibility of the interpreter and the interpreting process

The final section in this chapter examines the visibility of both the SLI and the interpreting process within the workplace domain. The SLI's presence is described as already drawing *'enough attention to the fact that somebody in the office is Deaf' (J31.2)*, and SLIs are conscious of potentially standing out like a 'sore thumb', thus bringing attention to the deaf person (Q17d: qr52). This is recognised as something that hearing employees do not have to deal with (J31.2, Q17d: qr52), or even consider. In one example, where poor acoustics, heavy accents and jargon presented a particular challenge, the SLI records that the deaf person had *'stipulated beforehand that he didn't want us to interrupt at all- just to try our best' (J24.3)*. This insistence on minimising their impact on the interaction left the SLIs virtually unable to do their job. Another SLI describes how she felt obliged to work an intense and full day, with the minimum of breaks, as the deaf client wanted to make a good impression on some new people at her workplace. She comments that the deaf employee *'would be horrified if I was to do anything that might suggest that her deafness gets in the way of her work' (J31.2)*.

Both the deaf person's access needs and the SLI's professional and personal requirements seem to be perceived as an inconvenience, and it is of significant interest that admitting to basic human needs such as having a break, feeling tired or feeling over-stretched, is viewed as behaving in an unprofessional manner. It is not clear where this belief originates from: whether it is something that is inherent in interpreter

training, or an unspoken rule of workplace interpreting. The relative newness of the domain, with so few established rules and norms, means that in some circumstances SLIs appear to be imposing their own.

The interpreter as non-person correlates with SLIs striving to make both themselves and the interpreting process as invisible as possible. Something as simple as the SLI effecting their introduction at the beginning of a meeting can cause conflict, with one SLI commenting that *'some organisations do not want the interpreters to name themselves in the introductions'* but preferred them to *'remain as though they were not there'* (J6.6). However, paradoxically, actions central to the SLI's professional performance, such as seeking clarification, result in the SLI, and by association the deaf employee, becoming more visible. As one SLI comments, *'by the time you have asked people to repeat things a number of times...the feeling of colleagues getting to know each other is no longer there'* with the SLI being brought to the *'forefront of the conversation'* (J2.1). From the responses in the questionnaires and journals it seems that interpreter invisibility is not only an impossibility, but can prove to be a barrier to genuine full communication. Despite this, the concept of the neutral, uninvolved and invisible interpreter seems to persist as a mythical ideal for all participants and this is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

5.5 Conclusion

This first findings chapter has presented the combined data from the questionnaires and practitioner journals, illustrating some of the issues identified by SLIs as relevant to their practice within the workplace domain. The background of respondents was profiled in Section 5.2 and the relevance of their past employment experience discussed. The usefulness of having a general understanding of workplace norms and culture was highlighted, as well as a wider awareness of knowledge of office politics and the hierarchical relationships that exist in such settings.

Section 5.3 examined the workplace norms and culture which SLIs felt affected their interpreting performance in this domain. Respondents' awareness of the challenges presented by multi-party workplace talk was reflected, highlighting the issues of turn-taking and the dominance of hearing norms within a CofP. The importance of

interpreting non-transactional discourse such as small talk and humorous exchanges was recognised. The depth and breadth of cultural mediation was also discussed in this section, with the majority of respondents feeling some responsibility for informing deaf employees about workplace norms and culture.

SLIs' insights into their complex role in the workplace domain were outlined in section 5.4, with the lack of clarity regarding their role demonstrated as leading to confusion around boundaries and responsibilities. Role confusion and the misconceptions that still persist in terms of the conduit model of interpreting seem to be the root cause of many of the issues relating to boundaries, with an apparently fundamental conflict arising between being an SLI and a human being.

The regular nature of workplace assignments were also seen as influential in relation to the boundaries between the SLI and deaf and hearing clients. The intense relationship between the deaf employee and the SLI was perceived to affect the dynamics of the workplace environment. Frequently the only person in the workplace sharing the deaf client's language and having some understanding of their culture, SLIs have considerable insight in to the oppression that deaf people can experience in this domain. Accordingly, the deaf client can see the SLI as an ally, as someone who can empathise with their situation.

The data suggests that regular working relationships with the same deaf client can result in the SLI becoming more than a colleague, moving into the realm of surrogate employee, confidant, sounding board, and often friend. The SLI's intimate involvement in the deaf employee's work, and in some instances, personal life, can result in a degree of familiarity which leads to boundaries becoming exceedingly blurred. This in turn has implications for deaf individual's access to, and integration with, their hearing peers, with the potential to further alienate the deaf employee from their hearing colleagues. This aspect therefore needs further consideration and is discussed in Chapter Seven.

To conclude, the questionnaire provided a starting point for SLIs to consider their role in the workplace, and to highlight potentially challenging and demanding aspects of their work. The journal entries allowed SLIs the space to reflect upon the source of

some of the problems they identified. There are a number of issues that were highlighted in the questionnaire and journal data which have been excluded from this chapter due to practical reasons. This does not mean that the excluded data is any less relevant than the issues that have been discussed above. The issue of telephone interpreting was raised by a number of respondents and clearly presents a huge challenge for SLIs working in this domain. There were also a number of interesting responses to the question regarding the SLIs reflection of the deaf employee's character or 'personality' in their interpretation. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore these issues here. The volume of data accumulated from the questionnaire responses and journals could be attributed in part to my inexperience as a researcher, and thus 'casting my net too wide' at the beginning of the project. However, it is also indicative of the wealth of experience that SLIs have in interpreting within this domain and their concerns over the issues and challenges that they encounter on a daily basis. These issues will warrant further exploration outside of this thesis and are discussed in Chapter Eight under areas for future research.

This chapter has described a number of significant findings but has not explained their importance or explored in any real depth their meaning for primary participants engaged in interpreted workplace discourse. The following chapter (Chapter Six) will examine the results from the transcribed excerpts of the video-recorded sessions collected from the workplaces engaged in this study. The implications from the findings chapters will then be discussed in Chapter Seven, relating both chapters to the reviewed literature and highlighting the contribution that this study makes to both interpreting and workplace research.

Chapter Six: Workplace Discourse- the Impact and the Influence of the SLI

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two I outlined the case for the SLI as an engaged and active participant in interpreted discourse. Certain aspects of the SLI's interactive role were highlighted, with attention being drawn to the ways in which the SLI manages turn-taking and overlapping talk. I suggested that whilst theoretically our understanding of the interpreter's role has moved on from the invisible language conduit model towards that of a more collaborative and participatory discourse co-coordinator, the former still persists on the practical local level, thus influencing the behaviour of all primary participants. SLIs' responses in the preceding chapter emphasise the complexity of their role in this domain and evidence that the concept of the interpreter as a non-involved and invisible translating machine is a common perception amongst primary participants.

Chapter Two also highlighted the problems caused by multi-party talk in workplace meetings, exploring how participants create and maintain a collaborative floor. In addition, the use of small talk and humour in workplace settings was examined. I proposed that access to these elements of workplace discourse is essential in enabling the deaf employee to fully integrate into the employment domain and to bond with their hearing peers. Chapter Five has demonstrated the challenges posed by multi-party talk and the importance of ensuring that the deaf employee is informed of, and engaged in, aspects of workplace culture such as small talk, banter and humorous exchanges.

In this chapter I will analyse sequences of transcribed interpreter-mediated workplace discourse, with contextualised transcripts of video-recorded interaction in workplace meetings used to demonstrate how the flow of communication between deaf and hearing participants is affected by the presence and actions of the SLI. In addition to the excerpts of interpreted workplace interaction, the views of the main participants

are explored. The aim therefore is to develop a ‘thick’ (Sarangi & Roberts 1999: 1-2) description of the SLI’s role in workplace settings, as referred to in Chapter One.

The primary focus of the selected data samples is meeting talk, an aspect of workplace interaction that can build on, exploit, construct and maintain collegiality (Holmes & Stubbe 2003). In the following sections, selected extracts are used to demonstrate how SLIs can alter, change and disrupt the ways in which deaf and hearing employees interact, thus influencing the tone, direction and outcome of the communicative event. In each example I have provided information regarding the setting and participants in order to contextualise the discourse events, thus enabling a deeper understanding of the status of participants and the type of discourse event under examination.

The chapter begins with **Section 6.2 The SLI’s Role in Small Talk and Humorous Exchanges**. The samples have been chosen to illustrate the use of small talk and humorous exchanges within a CofP. I examine two examples of small talk occurring prior to the formal business of a meeting, as well as five episodes of workplace humour occurring during interpreted team meetings. In **Section 6.3 Managing the Collaborative Floor** I use a number of examples to highlight the difficulty that multi-party talk poses to the SLI, particularly in relation to source attribution. Finally, in **Section 6.4 Interpreted Workplace Interaction- Participant Interviews**, the views of the main participants, gathered during video playback interviews, are outlined. The main points from the video data are then summarised in **Section 6.5** before moving on to the discussion in Chapter Seven.

6.2 The SLI’s Role in Small Talk and Humorous Exchanges

In this section I offer a sociolinguistic analysis of sequences of small talk and humour, including teasing, occurring during workplace meetings. The importance of small talk in the workplace has been outlined in Chapter Two (see section 2.2), clearly demonstrating that these *‘unplanned, informal interactions among coworkers’* (Emerton et al. 1996: 47) can be vital to ensuring that employees are integrated into the workplace. However, informal, casual conversations and asides occurring between colleagues can be particularly difficult for the deaf employee to access

(Kendall 1999; Bristoll 2008). One of the most challenging forms of small talk for SLIs is possibly that of jokes and humorous banter (Bristoll 2008). In intercultural communication humorous exchanges can require careful handling (Rogerson-Revell 2007), calling for the SLI to utilise their awareness and understanding of the differing norms in both deaf and hearing culture. The examples outlined in this section therefore illustrate some of the complexities in interpreting the more informal and casual discourse events embedded within workplace meeting discourse.

6.2.1 *Pretty sandals*

The following example is taken from the beginning of a team meeting at Radford Educational Services. The formal business of meeting has not yet started and team members are waiting for the chairperson (Mary) to bring in refreshments. There are eight participants in total, three of whom are deaf. The SLI is Sonya, a registered qualified interpreter with considerable interpreting experience, who has previously interpreted in Radford Educational Services meetings. Only one of the team members is male. All of the team members know each other relatively well, having worked together on a regular basis and the discourse can be characterised as what Clyne (1994) describes as collaborative, with a light-hearted atmosphere. The exchange begins just as Mary returns with tea and coffee.

Excerpt 1: *Pretty Sandals*¹⁵

Time Frame: 00: 00- 49: 23 (seconds)

1-----
Jane: I like your sandals Janice they're pretty
Janice: they're last years
2-----
Jane: nice
Janice: I did buy some new ones for this year
[SA, MP] [MP, head back, facial expression]
Sonya: *LIKE THEIR SHOES ME OH LAST YEAR BOUGHT NEW THIS YEAR*

¹⁵ For transcription conventions used in all excerpts see Appendix N.

3-----

Janice: they were bloomin expensive

Sonya: *EXPENSIVE*

4-----

[everybody looks at Janice's sandals]

Mary: like

Sonya: *LIKE*

5-----

Jane: I bet she's bloomin expensive

Sonya: *HOW MUCH MEANS CLARIFY*

6-----

Jane: how much?

Sonya: *HOW MUCH*

7-----

Janice: fifty

Sonya: *SAID FIFTY POUNDS*

8-----

Jack: no:o:o:o

Jane: that's not bad

Sonya: *NOT BAD*

9-----

[directed to interpreter? not voiced]

Sally: FIFTY?

Jack: fifty what? P?

Sonya: *FIFTY P?*

10-----

Jane: pounds!

Sonya: *FIFTY POUNDS*

[puts her head on the table]

Janice:

Jack: you're joking

11-----

[multi-channel sign]

Sonya: *'V' JOKING*

Jane: no:o

Janice: no:0

12-----

Jane: gaw, that's alright

Jack: you're nuts Janice

Sonya: *MAD*

13-----

Jane: get real

Janice: [sits back up, nodding and looking at her sandals]

 [looking at Janice's sandals]

Jack: fifty quid for a pair of—

Sonya: [multi-channel sign]

FIFTY POUNDS SANDALS 'V'

14-----

 [quietly]

Janice: no (x) these cost ten so over the two years

Sonya: *TEN POUNDS MEANS TEN POUNDS*

15-----

Sonya: *PLUS TEN POUNDS TWO YEARS*

Janice: that's fine

 [unintelligible background comment]

Jane: that's fine God I think you should have a third pair

16-----

 [indicates Jane as speaker]

Sonya: *FINE THIRD HAVE BARGAIN*

Janice: they're either really trendy or they're old ladies sandals

17-----

 [indicates Janice as speaker]

Sonya: *MEANS EITHER NEW FASHIONABLE*

 [laughs quietly]

Janice: I'm not sure which but I've decided they must be really trendy hehe

18-----

Sonya: *OLD LADY SANDALS NOT SURE*

Mary: okay everybody

The entire discussion regarding Janice's sandals and their worth takes less than 50 seconds, and this excerpt serves to demonstrate just how complex and multifunctional a brief episode of small talk can be. The exchange functions as small talk on a number of levels. It clearly comes into the category of small talk or non-transactional discourse (Koester 2006) in that it is a discussion entirely unrelated to either the meeting in which the participants are engaged or the nature of their work. Occurring at the beginning of a workplace meeting, it enables participants to ease into the main business of the day, thus creating a boundary between social interaction and the more formal purpose of the meeting. The episode also fills the time whilst participants are waiting for the meeting to start and for Mary to distribute the refreshments, maintaining the relationships and engagement between participants (Holmes 2000a).

The favourable comment on the appearance of a colleague by Jane in Stave 1 '**I like your sandals Janice, they're pretty**', is a prime example of a speech act which takes notice of and attends to Janice's '*interests, wants, needs, goods*' (Brown & Levinson 1987: 102). This is in line with Holmes' (2000c) assertion that small talk is a core example of positively polite talk. Paying compliments is one of the most obvious ways of expressing positive politeness, and functions as '*social lubricant*', creating and maintaining relationships and rapport, thus making bonds of solidarity between the speaker and addressee (Holmes 1998a: 101). Jane's compliment can be viewed as an expression of unity with Janice as she is engaging in a positive politeness strategy.

As we saw in Chapter Two, small talk can be an essential element in building team relationships and fostering group life (Holmes & Schnurr 2005). The extent of the repartee between participants in this example enables them to show affiliation and solidarity, with the female members of the team supporting Janice's expenditure on footwear. The exchange potentially contributes to a positive working relationship in that it allows the team members to comfortably tease each other. The episode also fits in with the characteristics constituting the shared repertoire as described by Wenger in relation to a CofP. The exchange is a shared discourse which reflects a certain world perspective, and contains inside jokes and knowing humour (Wenger 1998). The

facets of humour and teasing, together with gendered discourse, can be identified as the linguistic norms of a CofP.

The excerpt, as well as being an example of small talk, also clearly comes across as a humorous exchange. The relationships between the participants allows for some very blunt teasing, with Jack's comment in Stave 12, '**you're nuts Janice**', and Jane's challenging response of '**get real!**' in Stave 13. Humour is also present in Janice's gentle sending up of herself in Stave 16, with reference to '**old ladies sandals**'. As highlighted in Chapter Two, there are a variety of ways in which humour can be used in the workplace, including jointly constructed or conjoint humour (Holmes 2006b). Humour constructed jointly tends to occur in circumstances where people know each other well, and can use this knowledge and association to build on each other's comments, with speakers sharing an orientation or addressing a common theme (Holmes 2006b). Conjoint humour can be further differentiated into supportive and contestive categories, with supportive contributions adding to, elaborating on or strengthening what others have said, whilst contestive humour challenges, disagrees with or undermines previous contributions (Holmes 2006b). In the above excerpt, the interaction that occurs between Staves 8 to 13, involving Jack, Janice and Jane, illustrates an example of both conjoint and contestive humour. The teasing between the team members, particularly amongst these three participants, suggests that they know each other well and they are part of a team which meets on a regular basis.

Whilst there are no overt references to gender in this excerpt, the issue of gender can be teased out from the way in which the male and female team members interact, conforming to gender stereotypes. Clothes and appearance are topics stereotypically associated with women (Holmes 2006a). Male and female participants assume stereotypical roles, with the women in the team confirming the value of a good pair of sandals and Jack expressing disbelief that anyone would pay '**fifty quid for a pair of—**' (Stave 13). Jack's expression '**nooo**' in Stave 8 is highly exaggerated, again indicating disbelief, and could be viewed as 'display', i.e. he is conforming to a male stereotype and acting the part for the benefit of the female members of the team. Although the same '**noo**' is used by the female team members in Stave 11, their response is less exaggerated and from their tone they appear to be dismissive of Jack's '**you're joking**' comment. Gender stereotypes can contribute to discourse in a variety

of different ways, some subtle and understated, others emphatic and fore-grounded, but *'they are omnipresent and always available to make a contribution to socio-pragmatic meaning'* (Holmes 2006a: 4).

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to the extent to which Mary joins in the exchange. Apart from her comment of **'like'** in Stave 4, she does not take a major part in the teasing and banter between participants. Her lack of engagement may have been due to the fact that she entered the room just as the exchange began, but it could also be attributed to her position as both chair and a senior manager in the department. Importantly, it is Mary who brings the episode to an end in Stave 18, with **'okay everybody'**, indicating that the team should move onto the formal business of the meeting. In doing so she fulfils her role as chair and demonstrates her hierarchical positioning within the institution. As highlighted in Chapter Two, individuals with higher status usually have the right to bring episodes of small talk to an end and to refocus employees' attention to the purpose of the meeting. By stating **'okay everybody'** Mary has emphasised that sufficient time has been allowed in the discussion of Janice's sandals and that talk needs to move on to core business.

Given this episode's relation to contributing to team cohesiveness, it is clearly important that the deaf participants have access to what on the surface appears a trivial exchange. Whilst Sonya does manage to convey most of the comments, the speed at which the exchange occurs and the number of participants means that some of the elements which contribute to the humorous aspect are lost. The main difficulty appears to stem from a lack of speaker attribution, with the only real indication that the discourse comprises of comments from different speakers occurring the beginning of the exchange (see Stave 2).

In Stave 2, Sonya begins her interpretation by indicating that someone likes 'their' shoes. Her mouth-pattern is 'their' and her direction is very general- she does not indicate Janice directly. However, two of the deaf participants, Louise and Sally have glanced in the direction of Janice and Jane and may have been aware of the origin of the comments (the third deaf participant, Erica, is reading at this point). As Sonya completes the sign **'SHOES'** she produces an **'OH'** mouth-pattern and leans back. This appears to indicate a shift in speaker, and she moves on to produce **'LAST**

YEAR BOUGHT NEW THIS YEAR' as an interpretation of Janice's response to Jane. Throughout the rest of the interpretation there is no indication of speaker change.

Due to the lack of source attribution of the different team members' comments the deaf participants would have had a very limited understanding of the teasing humour present in this example. Sonya's rendition would have appeared as a monologue, which would have been confusing in the least. In addition, some contributions were omitted entirely, for example Jack's '**nooo**' response in Stave 8, Jane and Janice's '**noo**' in Stave 12, and Jane's '**gaw, that's alright**' in Stave 12. These omissions, together with the lack of speaker attribution, considerably reduce the teasing effect of the exchange (see Staves 11-12).

The lack of opportunity to contribute to and access this exchange meant that the deaf employees were excluded from full participation in the episode of small talk, which in turn has the potential to impact on their collegial relationships with the other members of the CofP. The lack of source attribution would also have impacted on the building of the collaborative floor. This aspect of the discourse event and the deaf participants' engagement in the collaborative nature of the exchange is discussed in section 6.3 of this chapter.

6.2.2 That's my catchphrase

The second example of small talk is drawn from the beginning of one-to-one supervision meeting between a deaf employee (Danielle) and her line manager (Harriet). The meeting is being interpreted by Stuart. Harriet and Stuart are already seated when Danielle enters the room and as she sits down she makes a signed comment, indicating that she has recently been to Skegness.

Excerpt 2: That's my catchphrase

1-----
[indicates self]
Danielle: ME SKEGNESS

[rising inflection]

Stuart: *skegness*

2-----

Stuart: *WOW*

Danielle: BRIGHT

3-----

Stuart: *nice*

Danielle: RELAX

4-----

Stuart: *LOVELY*
lovely

Harriet: she keeps saying Skegness but I am sure she had a lovely time

5-----

Stuart: *SAY -S- NICE TIME GOOD TIME GOOD?*

Danielle: [shrugs, MP 'alright']

6-----

[laughs]

Stuart: *aww its alright*

Danielle: [laughs]
[all laugh] [smile voice, casual, not really bothered tone]

Harriet: that's one of your favourite phrases, oh, it's okay, it's alright

7-----

[quote marks, smiles, leans back, head tilts to side, exaggerated MP, RS]

Stuart: *ALWAYS SAY OK ALRIGHT*

Danielle: C-P GOOD OK MY CATCHPHRASE

8-----

[laughs]

Stuart: *that's my catchphrase that is*

[nods] [light laughter in voice]

Harriet: it is

9-----

[laughs]

Stuart: *RIGHT YES*

[slightly more formal tone, serious facial expression, hand gesture]

Harriet: everything alright upstairs?

[stops laughing, eyebrows raise]

Stuart: *UPSTAIRS ALRIGHT GOING ALRIGHT*

Danielle: YES FINISHED

In line with the first example in 6.2.1, this excerpt can clearly be identified as an episode of small talk. It occurs before the formal meeting begins and serves as phatic communion, i.e. the ritualised relational talk (Koester 2006) which can take place in the opening and closing phases of an encounter. Danielle initiates the exchange and Stuart voices over Danielle's '**ME SKEGNESS**' as '**Skegness**' in Stave 1, before going on to make the comments '**WOW**' (signed), '**nice**' (voiced), and '**LOVELY**'/'**lovely**' (simultaneously signed and voiced) in direct response to Danielle's comments about the weather (bright sunshine, in Stave 2) and managing to relax (Stave 3).

In Staves 1 to 3 the interaction appears to be directly between Stuart and Danielle. Although Stuart interprets Danielle's comment, stating '**skegness**', he then shifts footing, responding directly to her with '**WOW**', a self-generated utterance. This qualifies as a non-rendition as Harriet has not made a response to Danielle's statement about her holiday location. In Stave 2, Danielle responds to Stuart's comment with '**BRIGHT**', alluding to the sunshine and Stuart again responds directly in Stave 3, but using his voice and saying '**nice**'. Danielle's comment '**RELAX**' in Stave 3 is not voiced by Stuart, but in Stave 4 he chooses to again respond directly, simultaneously signing and voicing '**LOVELY/ lovely**'. Although Stuart has voiced some comments which Harriet would have been able to access, apart from '**skegness**' his comments are not interpretations of Danielle's utterances. It is not until Stave 4 that Harriet joins the interaction, picking up on the comment of '**skegness**' and stating that she was sure Danielle '**had a lovely time**'.

Up to this point the sample appears to be relatively straightforward small talk prior to the formal business of the meeting, the one-to-one supervision. It is in Stave 6 that we can see a move towards a play frame in the exchange, with Harriet teasing Danielle with '**that's one of your favourite phrases 'oh it's okay it's alright'**'. The shift is indicated by the tone of voice and the accompanying light laughter or 'smiling voice'. Stuart manages this element relatively successfully, combining a

number of features in his rendition of Harriet's comment. His interpretation, '**ALWAYS SAY OK ALRIGHT**', is accompanied by a smiling facial expression throughout. Stuart also marks his rendition of Harriet's comment in 'quote marks', leaning back and tilting his head to one side, and producing an exaggerated 'alright' mouth pattern. At the end of his interpretation Stuart briefly uses role-shift to convey that he is 'being' Danielle, disengaging eye contact and looking to the side. The combination of these non-manual features thus cue Danielle into the teasing frame and in Stave 7 she responds by stating that '**alright**' is her '**catchphrase**'. Danielle's repetition of Stuart's use of OK in Stave 7, and Stuart's laughter at the end of his voice-over of '**that's my catchphrase that is**' (Stave 8) further extend the play frame. This laughter is echoed in Stave 8 by Harriet, who also repeats '**is**', thus sustaining the teasing.

At the end of this extract, in Staves 9 and 10, the frame moves back to work-related discourse. As in example 6.2.1, it is the individual with higher status in the interaction who brings the focus back to the more formal business of the meeting, with Harriet asking '**everything alright upstairs?**'. She marks the shift with a more serious tone of voice and facial expression. This is in turn reflected by Stuart in his interpretation of her query, which he renders with a 'straight' face and without any trace of the laughter which had been threaded through the teasing episode.

This episode demonstrates that the relationship between Danielle and her line manager is a relatively well-established one, as both appear comfortable with the teasing that occurs during the exchange. Harriet refers to Danielle's past behaviour in relation to her response to questions. The interaction offers Harriet and Danielle an opportunity for social chit-chat prior to moving to the purpose of the meeting, and allows Harriet to demonstrate concern and interest in Danielle's life outside of work. Harriet was able to join in the discussion about Danielle's holiday, suggesting that Stuart's direct interaction with Danielle did not interfere too greatly. However, had Stuart remained in his footing as interpreter and chosen to voice-over Danielle's utterances as, for example, '*it was lovely and sunny and I really managed to relax*', then Harriet would have been able to glean more information about Danielle's holiday. Accordingly, the small talk exchange may have been extended with the holiday being discussed in more detail.

These two examples have illustrated some of the ways in which SLIs can impact on small talk interaction between deaf and hearing employees. As can be seen from both examples, humour is often present in this form of workplace discourse and I now want to go on to explore this aspect of interpreted interaction in more detail.

6.2.3 Do you want to hear the panic alarm?

This example is taken from a team meeting at Livingwell. There are five participants, with Derek the sole deaf member of the team. The meeting is chaired by Alex and is interpreted by Stuart. Members of this group have known each other for some time, with team meetings of this nature occurring on a fortnightly basis. They have developed a set of shared discursive and behavioural norms (Schnurr 2008), including the extent to which all members of the group can engage in banter and humorous exchanges. These meetings are characterised by frequent episodes of teasing and are generally of a highly interactive nature, with group members talking over each other and competing for turns.

The company provides supported living services for adults with learning disabilities and additional physical disabilities. One of the tenants has recently been displaying challenging behaviour of a physical nature, resulting in a panic alarm being fitted in the staff room of the complex where he lives. The alarm emits a loud high pitched sound. Most of the staff and tenants within the complex are profoundly deaf, so the alarm, which is solely audible in nature (with no visual display), is predominantly to alert any hearing staff to a potential problem.

Prior to the example outlined below there has been a discussion about the usefulness of the alarm system and how the hearing staff will react, as well as a fairly lengthy explanation from the team manager as to why it has been installed. This has been delivered in a very serious tone and all the responses from the deaf and hearing team members, mainly consisting of feedback signals such as head nods and ‘mmhmm’, have matched the serious nature of the discussion. In Stave 1, the transcript begins with Alex, the chairperson, moving on to the next item on the agenda.

Excerpt 3: Do you want to hear the panic alarm?

1-----

Alex: it its could be a difficult morning so

Jason: Yep

2-----

Alex: we just need to be extra careful really

Stuart: *DIFFICULT CAREFUL AWARE ALL OF US LET KNOW*

3-----

Alex: we've also got to

Derek: YOU WANT

4-----

Alex: sorry?

Stuart: *GO AHEAD*

[laughs]

Derek: WANT TEST PULL WANT HEAR? YOU?

5-----

Derek: [extended laughter]

[all participants laugh]

Stuart: *yeah err so shall we test the err panic alarm*

Alex: [sardonic, mock exasperated tone]
again?

6-----

Stuart: *AGAIN HEADACHE*

[looks around, innocent facial expression]

Derek: WANT TRY ME PULL

7-----

Stuart: *y' know I'd like to try it...see what happens*

[innocent facial expression][contorts face] [shrugs] [laughs]

Derek: WHAT? EARS HURT OH DEAF PUT BACK IN

8-----

Stuart: *it doesn't affect deaf people so*

9-----

Alex: the other thing we've looked at is Michael's windows just to update people

In Stave 3, as Alex is beginning a new sentence, Derek begins to sign, asking **'YOU WANT'**. The other team members, including Alex, can see that Derek has made a contribution and so in Stave 4, Alex responds with **'sorry'**, even before Stuart has had the opportunity to voice Derek's comment. Stuart interprets Alex's **'sorry'** as an indication for Derek to 'go ahead' and the floor is then open to Derek to ask the hearing team members if they would like him to test the panic alarm, concluding his request with laughter.

In Stave 5, Stuart voices this over as **'yeah err so shall we test the err panic alarm'**, which is delivered in a somewhat monotone voice. However, as Stuart is producing the voiced comment, Derek is continuing to laugh, and at the end of Stuart's interpreted contribution, all team members have joined in.

Alex responds as this laughter dies down, with **'again'**, which Stuart interprets in Stave 6 as **'AGAIN'** but adding **'HEADACHE'**. Derek then goes on to sign **'WANT TRY ME PULL'** and follows this with a 'comedy' rendition of looking very innocent, wondering what all the fuss is about. In Stave 7, Stuart voices this as **'y' know I'd like to try it see what happens'**, whilst Derek is completing a 'mimed' version of pulling the alarm cord out, unleashing the sound on the hearing staff, and then replacing it to enquire what the problem was (**WHAT?** in Stave 7). He continues with this enactment, with **'EARS HURT OH DEAF PUT BACK IN'**. Again, this is all accessible to the hearing participants, enabling them to get the gist of Derek's contribution. As the laughter begins to ebb and fade out Stuart (Stave 8) adds **'it doesn't affect deaf people so'** and in Stave 9, Alex brings the humorous frame to an end, moving back to business and initiating a discussion regarding another tenant.

This example begins with a shift of frame from that of a serious discussion, where staff safety is at issue, to that of teasing the hearing staff team members about the new alarm system. As discussed in Chapter Two, in spoken discourse the shift from serious or business talk to 'play frame' is signalled through a variety of contextual clues including laughter, the speaker's tone of voice, sudden changes in pitch or rhythm, the preceding discourse and paralinguistic cues such as the use of a laughing or smiling voice (Coates 2007). Davies (2003) identifies the repetition of lexical, syntactic, prosodic and pragmatic dimensions of the discourse, in addition to rhythmic

matching, as elements which allow for well-coordinated joint interaction. In this example most of the signalling originates with Derek's laughter, beginning in Stave 4 and extended in Stave 5. Laughter is an important contextual cue that participants are engaging in a play frame, often occurring at the point that the play frame is invoked. All participants join in with the laughter at the end of Stuart's translated comment, demonstrating their *'togetherness'* with colleagues, thus sustaining the play frame (Coates 2007: 47).

In Stave 5, Alex appears to run with the change of frame, saying **'again'** in a somewhat sardonic, mock exasperated tone, which Stuart renders by adding **'HEADACHE'** to the sign of **'AGAIN'**, emphasising the humour. The play frame appears to become less sustainable in Staves 8 and 9. Derek's contribution, indicating that he wants to inflict the noise on the hearing staff and his apparent lack of concern, would have been reasonably clear to the hearing participants. However, the finer nuances of meaning appear to have been missed, possibly resulting in the 'quieter', ebbing laughter. Stuart's voice-over, coming at the end of the 'mime' in Stave 9, is very factual. The visual nature of Derek's display may have influenced Stuart's decision to render a fairly literal interpretation with **'it doesn't affect deaf people so'** as he may have considered that anything else would have 'over-egged the pudding'. However, it should be noted that after Stuart's contribution Alex brings the meeting back to a formal 'business' frame, without any rejoinder to Derek's teasing.

In this example Derek could be said to be teasing the hearing participants in the meeting about the 'agony' that results from setting off the panic alarm, something which, as a profoundly deaf person, he is immune to. In doing so he portrays his lack of hearing (traditionally perceived by hearing people as a negative quality- see Chapter Two, section 2.4) as an advantage that he has over the hearing members of the team.

Humour at one's own expense is not always indicative of a weak sense of self-respect (as maintained by psychologists) but can sometimes demonstrate a very specific sense of self-respect (Kotthoff 2000). As discussed in Chapter Two, humour can be used to build a community and promote group solidarity as well as being used by an oppressed group to poke fun at its oppressors (Tray 2005). Derek's use of humour in

relation to his deafness suggests that he is reinforcing his deaf identity in this instance, positioning himself in the role of ‘outsider’, as he is the only person in the team who is unaffected by the sound of the panic alarm.

Deaf humour can often be based on deaf peoples’ shared experience, especially in the case of miscommunication with hearing people and the oppression that deaf people have faced in their contact with the hearing world (Sutton-Spence & Woll 1998). Personal experience and anecdotal evidence from SLIs supports the view that deaf people often use sound, and the effects of sound, as a way of teasing hearing people. In terms of Boxer and Cortés-Conde’s (1997) teasing continuum of bonding to nipping and biting this example could sit somewhere on the nipping-biting aspect of continuum. Given the relationship of the participants as an established team, with some deaf awareness, it is more likely to represent a gentle humorous nip rather than a more aggressive nibble or bite. The teasing could also be considered to be directed at hearing people outside of the meeting, as the ‘absent other’, and could function as a bonding activity with the more deaf aware participants in the interaction (e.g. Alex and Stuart).

Given that successful humour requires joint construction, with complex interaction taking place between the person making the humorous contribution and those receiving it (Holmes & Hay 1997) a more detailed and explicit interpretation from Stuart may have resulted in a less abrupt shift into serious talk. For example, an interpretation of *‘Ooh, well, that’s one of the benefits of being deaf you know’* or *‘you hearing people, always so sensitive to noise’* may have offered the hearing employees the opportunity to extend the play frame, to collaborate in *‘playing together’* (Coates 2007: 31) and thus respond to the ‘gentle nip’. This example demonstrates the impact that the SLI can have on humorous exchanges, whereby their understanding of the shifts from serious to play frame and the context in which the humour is being played out is crucial to the success of the interaction. However, the responsibility for the success or failure of humorous exchanges does not lie solely with the SLI. Participants engaging in joking or humorous exchanges need a *‘sensitive awareness of the process of interaction which allows quick perception of a mutual focus of attention and shared context...a shared culture in a microcosm that the joker may then refer to’* (Davies 2003: 1369). In this case the teasing episode was based on a

lack of shared culture and the hearing participants may simply have felt unable to fully appreciate Derek's humorous play on their audiological and cultural differences.

6.2.4 I'll bring my cricket helmet

This extract is drawn from the same data set as the excerpt outlined above and provides an example of the use of humour in relation to a sensitive and challenging work topic. In formal contexts such as the workplace, interactants may switch to a play frame in order to defuse tension (Coates 2007). Humour and laughter can also provide relief from tension, enabling the release of repressed emotions such as anger or frustration (Rogerson-Revell 2007).

In this example Derek is commenting on a preceding discussion regarding a tenant's dissatisfaction with the way their finances have been allocated to them by staff members. The tenant has previously displayed challenging behaviour and although a new system has been negotiated and agreed between the tenant and the staff team, there is still apprehension about what might occur when the tenant collects their money the following week. The situation is a relatively serious one, as it concerns the safety of staff members.

In Staves 1 and 2 Derek indicates that they will try out the suggested new system, and that whilst the tenant has signed to agree the new procedures, they will need to wait and see what happens. In Stave 3 he shifts to a joking or play frame, commenting that he will be prepared for confrontation with a cricket helmet and mask, and indicating that he has these items at home so will bring them to work the following week.

Excerpt 4: Cricket helmet

1-----

[Body shift side to side, head nod]

Derek: WELL SIGNED YES NEXT WEEK SEE WHAT

Stuart: *but you know we'll*

2-----

[Body shift backwards, facial expression 'careful']

Derek: AGAIN GIVE MONEY PACKET

Stuart: *see what it's like on next week*

3-----

[laughs]

Derek: HELMET ON

Stuart: [laughs]

4-----

Derek: FACE GUARD CRICKET HELMET

[coughs] [delivered in 'flat' voice]

Stuart: *put head guard on (.) just in case things get out of hand*

5-----

Derek: HOME HAVE BRING IT

Stuart: *so I've got one at home I'll bring it for safety reasons*

Alex: the other thing we're doing

Derek's shift to a play frame in Stave 3 sees a change in his footing, moving from a serious discussion about how to manage a potentially volatile situation, into a humorous mode, conveying his uncertainty over the tenant's satisfaction with new arrangements. The shift is marked by laughter, from both Derek and Stuart, potentially inviting the other team members to extend the humorous frame and to join in the play on 'arming' themselves for a confrontation. However, no other team member joins in the play frame and in Stave 5 Alex brings the discussion back to the agenda, with '**the other thing we're doing**'.

In this example Stuart provides an interpretation that is relatively faithful to Derek's rendition. However, it was delivered with a somewhat monotone or flat intonation, containing little of the humorous intent suggested in Derek's visual delivery. Derek's contribution would have been reasonably transparent to the rest of the team, even without Stuart's voice-over. An activity like a business meeting can be framed as a professional event but can subsequently be reframed to one of play by a humorous remark from a participant (Tray 2005). We can see that Derek has made the shift from serious business or 'work' frame to a play frame however Stuart appears not to

have reframed the event to the same degree. This in turn has impacted on the other participants, who need to recognise the change in frames in order to understand and appreciate the humour.

Any speaker or signer constructs his or her message with a particular goal in mind, and shapes the text to accomplish that goal, aimed at a specific audience (Humphrey 1997). In this instance Derek's message and intended shift into play frame is being filtered through the SLI rather than being received directly by the intended recipient/s. In order for the hearing team members to understand that Derek is changing frames from a professional event to a humorous play, Stuart has to cue the hearing participants into the shift, using contextualisation cues that are in themselves highly culturally specific (Gumperz 1997; Tray 2005). Apart from Stuart's laugh in Stave 3, there is very little to signal that Derek is making quite a detailed and elaborate play regarding preparations for a possible confrontation the following week. Not only does this deprive the hearing audience of the opportunity to appreciate the extent of the humour, but it also detracts from the potential underlying seriousness of the message, i.e. Derek's concern for staff safety in relation to this particular tenant.

One of the strengths of humour is that it allows participants to explore, in new ways and by using other words, things which might be difficult or taboo (Coates 2007), which may have been Derek's intent. The tenant in question has a long history of challenging behaviour, about which Derek has previously expressed frustration. By making the shift from serious to play frame, Derek provided an opportunity for participants to '*reduce the tension connected to a problematic topic*' (Kangasharju & Nikko 2009: 111). However, the other participants did not engage to extend the frame and in fact the topic is changed quite abruptly by Alex, who moves the discussion on.

6.2.5 It's not fair!

This example is taken from a team meeting at Radford University, consisting of learning advisors for social work students who attend a course at the university. There are ten participants in total, including one SLI, Sandra. The deaf participant, Dawn, has some residual hearing and uses hearing aids in addition to the support provided by an SLI. The chair of the meeting, Alan, and another participant, Mike,

are the only male team members. Alan is the head of the department and programme leader. The meeting is characterised by a great deal of banter and teasing between the team members, much of it initiated by Alan. Alan's approach throughout the meeting is to address the issues under discussion in a jokey or light-hearted manner, using subtle vocal clues to suggest his lack of seriousness, whilst maintaining a 'straight' face.

The meeting has been underway for approximately ten minutes and immediately prior to the transcript, Alan, the chair of the meeting, has moved on to the formal agenda, stating that there is '*a nice simple question to begin with*'. He has also teased Mike, who has arrived late and is still eating his lunch, by suggesting he empties his mouth. Other members of the team have laughed at Alan's teasing of Mike and as the example begins in Stave 1, Alan explains that the simple question that he has referred to is '**how many hours constitute a placement day**' for students.

Excerpt 5: It's not fair

1-----

Alan: how many hours constitute a placement day

Sandra: [waiting for Dawn to make eye contact as she is looking at the agenda]

2-----

Alan: this this is something that came up (.) at a stakeholders meeting last week

Peter: right (.) seven (.) seven

Sandra: *HOW MANY HOURS PLACEMENT ONE DAY*

3-----

Alan: what we're trying to ensure

Bella: aah the reason I asked it is because one of my students

[looks at Bella, indicates speaker]

Sandra: *SEVEN HOURS SEVEN HOURS* *WHY ASK*

4-----

Bella: was compl- who does complain about a lot of all sorts of things

[wry tone, very subtle smile]

Alan: surely not

Sandra: *ONE STUDENT (.) COMPLAIN LOTS COMPLAIN DIFFERENT*

5-----

[laughs] [complaining voice, dramatic emphasis]

Bella: but she was saying it's not fair

Alan: because I've only done

[pauses, looks at Alan]

Sandra: *DIFFERENT ISSUES HERSELF SAY NOT FAIR*

6-----

Alan: I do nine hours a day and she does twenty

Bella: I'm well she said she said

Sandra: *I NINE HOURS OTHER TWENTY*

7-----

Bella: she said I'm here nine to five and she said and other people are finishing at three

Alan: yeah

Mandy: yeah

Sandra: *I HERE NINE TO FIVE OTHER FINISH THREE*

8-----

Bella: and I said well I'm sorry about that but you'd better get used to it

Sandra: *ME NOT FAIR FEEL FINISH FIVE SORRY MUST USED TOUGH*

9-----

Bella: because you'll work a lot longer hours than that when you're qualified

[smile] [shrugs shoulders] [smile]

Sandra: *WORKING MORE QUALIFY ANYWAY DOESN'T MATTER USED*

10-----

[general laughter]

Mandy: you should have said if you qualify

Alan: go shopping whilst you've got the chance

[eyebrows raised, eyes wide]

Sandra: *I-F BECOME QUALIFIED SAY I-F DEFINITE*

11-----

Bella: yes but I must admit I was aware that on one of my other

Sandra: *KNOW OTHER STUDENT BEFORE*

12-----

Bella: student's previous placements it was at like a day centre

Sandra:

OTHER DAY CENTRE PLACEMENT

13-----

Bella: and they they did finish about half three

Sandra: *FINISH HALF THREE*

In Stave 1, Dawn is still looking at the agenda and so Sandra waits for her to make eye contact before interpreting Alan and Mike's comments. In Stave 4 Alan makes the comment '**surely not**' in response to Bella's explanation as to why they need to know how many hours make up a placement day, and his wry tone and subtle smile accompanying this comment shifts the discussion into a play frame.

In Stave 5 both Bella and Alan extend the play frame, Bella signalling this with a complaining voice and emphasising the '**it's not fair**' statement, and Alan through his shift into 'becoming' Bella's complaining student stating '**because I've only done**'. Alan concludes his impression of the moaning student with '**I do nine hours a day and she does twenty**'.

In Stave 8, Sandra repeats the '**NOT FAIR**' originating from Bella in Stave 5, possibly as a way of emphasising the student's feelings on the matter, before moving onto rendering Bella's comment of '**I said well I'm sorry about that but you'd better get used to it**' as '**SORRY MUST USED TOUGH**'. Sandra's decision to use the sign '**TOUGH**', whilst not specifically a word used by Bella, does reflect Bella's intent at this point, implying that the student just has to accept the situation. In Stave 9 Sandra's smile and shoulder shrug are cues that Bella's comments are intended as humorous. In Stave 10 Mandy offers the comment '**you should have said if you qualify**', with her emphasis on the 'if' indicating that she has joined the play frame and this encourages Alan to extend his humorous take on the exchange with '**go shopping whilst you've got the chance**'. Finally, in Staves 11 to 13 Bella brings the humorous exchange back to a more serious discussion of the issue, shifting from the play frame to a more work focused frame, stating in effect that there was some validity to the student's complaint.

Sandra's interpretation of the discussion manages to convey some of the humorous interplay between participants. However, her difficulties in attributing the overlapping comments building the humorous interplay meant that Dawn would have been unable to appreciate the full effect of the richness and humour of the exchange. Dawn has some residual hearing, but in a team setting with multiple members, where there is overlapping speech and background laughter, it is unlikely that she would have been able to differentiate between speaker shifts and hence would have been reliant on Sandra for these cues. Dawn would have been aware that there was an element of joking occurring, signalled by Sandra's smile at certain points, and by the laughter from other team members. However, from Dawn's perspective, the interaction between Staves 4 and 12 would have appeared as a humorous monologue from Bella. This is discussed in more detail in section 6.5.1, where this excerpt is examined from the angle of the collaborative floor.

6.2.6 Take it like a man

This is a second excerpt taken from the Radford University team meeting. Immediately preceding this example, participants have been discussing the problems caused by their work emails not being responded to in a timely fashion, and have suggested that the university is failing to set a good example. The learning advisors have commented that they always impress on their students the need to respond promptly to requests for information, but that they are unable to model this behaviour themselves in replying to students' queries, due to a lack of response from the university. The sample begins in Stave 1, with Mandy, a learning advisor, suggesting that a similar approach would not be acceptable in the nursing profession.

Excerpt 6: Take it like a man

Time Frame: 37.31-37.58

1-----

Mandy: I mean I've been a nurse and that wouldn't do for a patient

Sandra: *BEEN NURSE SELF* *CAN'T PATIENT*

2-----

Mandy: if you thought their drip was running out and you thought

Sandra: MEANS LOOK SEE DRIP DRIP

3-----

Mandy: oh well I'll come back to that in a week

[‘don't care' facial expression]

Sandra: ONE WEEK LEAVE NOT BOTHER LEAVE

Alan: [laughs- guffaw] [other participants laugh]

Dawn: [smiles]

4-----

Mandy: you'd be in real trouble

Sandra: TERRIBLE CAN'T LATER

5-----

[laughs] [other participants laugh]

Unknown: you'd be dead

Sandra: CAN'T THINK ONE WEEK LATER IGNORE

6-----

Alan: I feel I feel like I'm taking a lot of crap on behalf of everyone

Mandy: I'm serious

[looks at Alan] [directed outwards] [points at Alan] [directed at self- roleshift]

Sandra: FEEL CRITICISED CRITICISED

7-----

Mandy: oh yes

Alan: I'm not quite sure how best to deal with it

[leans back]

Sandra: NOW DON'T KNOW HOW SOLVE PROBLEM

8-----

Mandy: yes (.) yes (.) well I don't know

[quiet, serious voice] [participants laugh]

Bella: I should take it like a man

[gestures, head tilt, sits forward]

Sandra: NEED BECOME MAN STRONG COME ON

9-----

[laughs]

Mandy:

[general background laughter]

Alan: I've trained for it I've got my shin pads on

[lip pattern 'shin pads']

Sandra: *TRAINED* *SHINS*

10-----

Alan: I've got a box in the car (xxx)

Sandra: *SAFETY CLOTHES*

11-----

Mandy: no we're not getting at you personally

Alan: no (.) no

Sandra: *NO NO NOT CRITICISE PERSON*

12-----

Mandy: we're getting at the system

Alan: I'm thinking (.) I'm thinking how do we deal with this?

Sandra: *THIS UNIVERSITY*

In this example, Mandy, a learning advisor, is making a serious point about the problem with delayed or non-existent responses to emails. In Stave 3 Alan indicates that he finds her analogy with a nurse neglecting a patient to be funny by laughing, and in Stave 5 the shift into play frame is confirmed by Mike adding the comment **'they'd be dead'** and laughing. Other participants laugh at this comment. However, in Staves 6 and 7 Alan takes a more serious tone in addressing Mandy's point, stating that he feels as though he is **'taking a lot of crap on behalf of everyone'** and that he is **'not quite sure how best to deal with it'**. This leads Bella (Stave 8) to shift the framing of the exchange back to a playful one with a challenge to Alan, stating **'I should take it like a man'**. This is delivered in a 'dead-pan' tone but there is laughter from the other team members indicating that it has been perceived as humorous. Sandra clearly picks up on Bella's joking intent as she emphasises her signed rendition of **'NEED BECOME MAN STRONG COME ON'** with a beckoning gesture, sitting forward and tilting her head to one side.

However, the fact that she does not indicate the change of speaker at this juncture means that the actual teasing element between Bella and Alan would have likely been missed by Dawn (see section 6.5 for further discussion on lack of source attribution). In Staves 9 and 10 Alan extends the play frame, indicating that he is strong enough to take on the challenge, referring to shin pads and a cricket box. Finally, in Staves 11

and 12, Mandy brings the play frame to a close, emphasising that their comments are not a criticism of Alan but are directed at the university system.

This example shows how subordinate employees can use humour to raise a serious issue and criticise management. Mandy's use of the patient and nurse metaphor in Staves 1 to 4 is clearly perceived as a criticism by Alan who replies using first person in Staves 6 and 7 with '**I feel**' and '**I'm not quite sure**'. In Stave 8 Bella distances her suggestion of take it like a man by stating '**I should take it like a man**', rather than '**you should take it like a man**'. This move potentially softens the criticism directed towards Alan as a representative of management. Alan then shifts back to the humorous frame by drawing on the cricketing imagery in Staves 9 and 10. In Staves 11 and 12 Mandy tries to emphasise the non-personal nature of the criticism with her comment about the university system.

The complex interplay within this example is illustrative of both the participants' understanding of the hierarchical relationships within the team and how subordinates can work together to use humour as a challenge or criticism. It therefore has important implications in terms of the deaf employee's access. As indicated at the beginning of this excerpt, the exchange between team members happened very quickly, lasting just 30 seconds. Participants were working together to create a collaborative floor (Edelsky 1993) and the talk was characterised by richly textured and cohesive interaction, characterised with overlapping supportive turns and feedback signals. The speed of the interaction meant that it was very difficult for Sandra, already working with the time-lag inherent in signed language interpreting, to keep pace with the fast-flowing exchange. As a result, speaker changes were not attributed and this contributed to the loss of meaning in the event. The time-constraints also meant that her renditions of the teasing element of the discourse were compressed, adding to Dawn's inability to fully appreciate the humorous interplay between participants.

Whilst Dawn produced a smile in Stave 8, it is not clear if this was a response to Sandra's rendition of '**ONE WEEK LEAVE NOT BOTHER LEAVE**' and her facial expression which conveyed some of Mandy's tone, or if she was responding to the visual stimuli of other participants laughing and smiling. It is also possible that

Dawn was cued in to the humour of the exchange from the audible signal of Alan's fairly explosive laugh. In Stave 8, where the speaker shifts from Mandy to Bella there is no indication of the source of the comment '**I should take it like a man**', meaning that the impact of this statement and the fact it creates a shift back to a humorous frame is not conveyed to Dawn.

When Alan begins to use the cricketing imagery in Staves 9 and 10, Sandra is struggling to keep up with the fast flowing and lively exchange and renders this as '**TRAIN SHINS**' and '**SAFETY CLOTHES**'. The hearing team members would have been able to see the 'funny side' of Alan's comments, and could have formed a mental image of him gearing up to field off any attacks from staff. The reduced rendition provided by Sandra, together with the lack of attribution of speaker change from Bella to Alan, would result in Dawn having limited access to the play frame created by Alan, thus being unable to grasp the rich imagery being constructed. The factors which contributed to Sandra's difficulty in interpreting this complex exchange would have led to Dawn having a more superficial understanding of the interaction between participants and the subtleties of the humour employed by interlocutors, compared to that of her hearing peers. The impact and potential outcome of this lack of access will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

6.2.7 Have we spelt Sarah-Anne's name right?

The final example in this section is from a regular weekly team meeting at Radford City Social Services. There are five hearing team members, one deaf employee (Doreen) and the SLI on this occasion is Sandra. The meeting is characterised by overlapping talk and lively interaction between the hearing participants. The team members are going through the minutes of the previous meeting and have reached page 5, when a discussion begins about the correct spelling of a colleague's name. In this excerpt Doreen successfully accesses the humour of the exchange and the following section will look at some of the factors contributing towards that success.

In Stave 1 Lorraine, the team manager, refers the other team members to page 5. Sandra waits for Doreen to look up from the minutes before clarifying the page number and then indicates the speaker (Stave 2). At this point Andrea, the

administrative worker and note-taker for the meeting, asks if Sarah-Anne's name has been spelt incorrectly.

Excerpt 7: Have we spelt Sarah-Anne's name right?

Time Frame: 24.30- 25.19

1-----

Lorraine: page five

[waits for Doreen to look up from minutes]

Sandra: *PAGE*

2-----

[indicates Lorraine]

Sandra: *PAGE FIVE ANYTHING RAISE*

Andrea: have we spelt Sarah-Anne's name right there?

Lorraine: no (.) is it wrong?

3-----

['naughty' facial expression]

Sandra: *S-A-R-A-H A-N-N WRONG MISTAKE*

Marie: it's wrong on the minut:e:s

[holds eye contact with Sandra]

Doreen:

4-----

[head turn to side]

Sandra: *SPELLING NAME WRONG*

[smile voice]

Lorraine: mmmm yeah (.) space

[glances at minutes]

Doreen:

5-----

Sandra: *WRONG MINUTES*

Marie: and an 'e' no 'e'

[indicates minutes, nods, smiles]

Doreen:

6-----

[leaves space]

Sandra: *HAVE SPACE S-A-R-A-H (.) A-N-N*

Lorraine: no there is an 'e'

Marie: oh there is an 'e'

[nods]

Doreen:

Mary: Yeah

7-----

Marie: there isn't an 'e' written on here

Sandra: *HAVE 'E' NO 'E' THERE*

Lorraine: oh there is on mine

Mary: there is on mine

8-----

[leans back] [smiles, emphasises final 'E' with lifted hands and stress on index finger]

Sandra: *S-A-R-A-H A-N-N-E*

[smiles]

Doreen:

Marie: page five?

9-----

Sandra: *PAGE FIVE*

Lorraine: no page fou:r

10-----

[head shake, LP 'no'] ['trouble' facial expression]

Sandra: *PAGE FOUR*

[participant laughter]

Marie: aaah its spelt two different ways then

11-----

Sandra: *TWO DIFFERENT WAYS PAGE FOUR PAGE FIVE*

[laughter]

Lorraine: oh no

Marie: because mine's spelt without an 'e'

12-----

Lorraine: oh dear

Sandra: *DIFFERENT*

[looks at minutes, nods and smiles]

Doreen:

13-----

Mary: did you see the email?

Sandra: *NO 'E'*

[holds eye contact with Sandra, smiles]

Doreen:

14-----

Mary: did you send it?

[indicates Lorraine]

Sandra: *SEE EMAIL*

Lorraine: I sent it yeah

15-----

Lorraine: if only that's all they had to worry about!

[laughs]

Marie: I know!

Sandra: *ONE ONE THING EMAIL WORRY*

16-----

Lorraine: if I was you Marie I'd get back to her and say well everyone puts an A

[indicates Marie]

Sandra: *YOU REALLY BACK*

17-----

[high-pitched, reporting, whining voice]

Lorraine: in my name can I send an email out to everybody

Sandra: *EVERYONE 'A' MY NAME*

18-----

[laughs]

Marie: to everybody yeah

[laughs]

Doreen:

Sandra: *WANT EMAIL EVERYBODY LET KNOW NOT 'A' OFF*

19-----

[emphasised signing style, raised eyebrows, exasperated facial expression]

Sandra: *M-A-R-I-E THAT'S IT*

[quiet 'listing' voice]

Marie: anything else page five

This example demonstrates the way in which humour can be used by team members to foster a sense of collegiality. Sarah-Anne (not a member of this meeting) has complained about her name being spelt wrongly in the past. The fact that it has been spelt incorrectly (in two different ways in the minutes) is a source of amusement to team members, signalled through the use of smile voice by Lorraine in Stave 4 and the joint laughter (Staves 10 and 14). Although not represented in the transcript, various team members also smiled during this exchange. The 'mock-horror' expressed over what they all implicitly acknowledge as a trivial issue, enables the team to bond whilst at the same time highlighting that there are more important things for them as a social work team. The sense of team solidarity is created by using humour against an absent other, thus enabling team members a safe outlet of their feelings. The expression of humour also serves to lighten what can be a dull task of checking the previous minutes.

This exchange presents a number of challenges for Sandra. The humour is centred on written English and the misspelling of a colleague's name, something which is quite difficult to convey in signed language. Sandra is helped by the written material to which Doreen can refer, providing a visual example of the item under discussion. However, the written minutes can also hamper the interaction as Doreen is unable to watch the SLI and look at the minutes (as evidenced in Staves 1 and 2). Additionally, Doreen has good English language skills and Sandra would have been aware of this, due to their prior working relationship. This knowledge may have influenced the way in which Sandra dealt with the interaction.

The exchange of comments between employees regarding the incorrect spelling was very quick (lasting under one minute) with a rapid change of speakers. Although Sandra did not attribute the source of all the comments (speaker change occurs 20

times in this excerpt), she was able to indicate the change of speaker in Staves 2, 14 and 16). This would have given Doreen some impression of multi-party talk, albeit not a full picture of the overlapping nature of the exchange.

Despite all of the challenges this exchange presented to Sandra, it could be considered a relatively successful interpretation in terms of conveying the tone and humour of the interaction. This is evidenced by the responses from Doreen in Staves 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13 and 18 which include smiles, head nods and references to the minutes. One element which appears to have contributed to the SLI's success in conveying the humour in this exchange is her use of non-manual features and the way in which she exaggerates certain signs. In Staves 3 and 10 for example, Sandra uses a combination of non-manual features to convey 'naughty' and 'trouble'. She raises her eyebrows, widens her eyes and purses her lips, turning her head to one side in a subtle negative gesture. In Stave 19, as the exchange is coming to a close, Sandra reflects the interaction between Lorraine and Marie through a combination of raised eyebrows and an 'exasperated' facial expression. She also emphasises the final movement in the sign '**THAT'S IT**' which acts to convey the participant's perception of the triviality of the issue.

In Stave 8 Sandra also uses a combination of non-manual features, body shift and emphasis to render the implicit petty nature of the discussion about whether there is or isn't an 'e' on Sarah-Anne's name. As she finger-spells '**S-A-R-A-H A-N-N-E**' she leans back, smiles and exaggerates the final E, elevating her hands within her signing space and holding the letter indicated on her hand.

All of the features utilised by Sandra appear to have contributed to enabling Doreen to access the rich interaction between the team members, and to perceive the essence of the humorous exchange. Sandra was not able to convey all of the elements which demonstrate the construction of a collaborative floor, mainly due to the speed at which participants exchanged turns and their overlapping speech (see for example Staves 7 and 18 where participants echo each other's comments). However, her use of non-manual features and emphatic exaggerated signing resulted in the humour and underlying message being conveyed, thus enabling Doreen to take part the interaction.

6.2.8 Summary

This section has illustrated the important role which small talk and humorous interaction can play in workplace meetings, and has detailed the extent to which the SLI contributes to both deaf and hearing employees' access to these elements of workplace discourse. It has demonstrated that deaf employees can potentially be excluded from both small talk and humorous exchanges between colleagues, which in turn impacts on the extent to which they can form collegial relationships. The use of humour was a common thread across all of the workplace meetings collected in the course of this research study and seems to form an essential element of workplace interaction. As this area of workplace discourse has previously been neglected within both spoken and signed language interpreting studies, there is clearly a need for further detailed empirical studies and this will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

6.3 Managing the Collaborative Floor

This section examines the way in which the SLI manages interaction in multi-party talk, with the focus being directed towards the collaborative floor. As discussed in Chapter Two, it is important for primary participants to know the source of an utterance or contribution during interpreted discourse. It is particularly important for deaf participants, who are unable to locate speakers by their spoken contribution. As with Metzger (1995) and van Herreweghe (2002) the data in my study confirmed that SLIs frequently fail to attribute the source of contributions during interpreted discourse. In multi-party talk, the speed of the discourse and the overlapping nature of the interaction, an element of the collaborative floor, appear to impede the SLI's ability to indicate changes of speaker. This has implications not only for the deaf employee's ability to fully participate in the meeting, but also has a wider impact in terms of their membership of the CofP and their understanding of collegial relationships. In this section I will therefore use a number of excerpts to illustrate the presence and absence of source attribution and how this impacts on the interpreted discourse. Some of the excerpts are re-presented from the above sections.

6.3.1 *It's not fair!*

This example, from the learning advisors team meeting at Radford University, has previously been used to evidence the ways in which participants can shift between a play frame and a more serious mode of talk (see section 6.2.5). The focus here is on the collaborative and collegial nature of the talk and the challenges this presents to Sandra, the SLI. As the excerpt begins in Stave 1, Alan raises the issue ‘**how many hours constitute a placement day**’ for students.

Excerpt 5, Staves 1-3

- 1-----
- Alan:** how many hours constitute a placement day
- Sandra:** [waiting for Dawn to make eye contact as she is looking at the agenda]
- 2-----
- Alan:** this this is something that came up (.) at a stakeholders meeting last week
- Peter:** right (.) seven (.) seven
- Sandra:** *HOW MANY HOURS PLACEMENT ONE DAY*
- 3-----
- Alan:** what we're trying to ensure
- Bella:** aah the reason I asked it is because one of my students
[looks at Bella, indicates speaker]
- Sandra:** *SEVEN HOURS SEVEN HOURS* *WHY ASK*

In Stave 2 Sandra begins her interpretation of Alan's initial comment, signing ‘**HOW MANY HOURS PLACEMENT ONE DAY**’. In Stave 3 we can see that Sandra omits Alan's explanation from Stave 2 in its entirety. Sandra would have been impeded by the fact that Dawn had only just looked up from the agenda and so she had little choice but to begin with the topic of the discussion, Alan's initial comment of ‘**how many hours constitute a placement day**’. In the same stave, Peter provides a feedback signal of ‘**right**’ in Alan's brief pause, before stating ‘**seven, seven**’ in response to Alan's question. Sandra interprets Peter's overlapping statements of ‘**seven, seven**’, however she does not reference him as the source of the comments, but rather subsumes them into her interpretation which began with Alan in Stave 2.

In Stave 3, when Bella states ‘**aah the reason I asked it is because one of my students**’, overlapping with Alan’s continuing explanation of the agenda item, Sandra looks at Bella and indicates the change of speaker.

Excerpt 5, Staves 4-7

4-----

Bella: was compl- who does complain about a lot of all sorts of things
[wry tone, very subtle smile]

Alan: surely not

Sandra: *ONE STUDENT (.) COMPLAIN LOTS COMPLAIN DIFFERENT*

5-----

[laughs] [complaining voice, dramatic emphasis]
Bella: but she was saying it’s not fair

Alan: because I’ve only done
[pauses, looks at Alan]

Sandra: *DIFFERENT ISSUES HERSELF SAY NOT FAIR*

6-----

Alan: I do nine hours a day and she does twenty

Bella: I’m well she said she said

Sandra: *I NINE HOURS OTHER TWENTY*

7-----

Bella: she said I’m here nine to five and she said and other people are finishing at three

Alan: yeah

Mandy: yeah

Sandra: *I HERE NINE TO FIVE OTHER FINISH THREE*

In Stave 4, Sandra continues to provide an interpretation of Bella’s account of her complaining student, but Alan’s wry ‘**surely not**’ is omitted. In Stave 5 Bella and Alan’s speech again overlaps, with Alan taking the floor from Bella by ‘becoming’ Bella’s complaining student stating ‘**because I’ve only done**’. Sandra looks at Alan but continues to render Bella’s ‘it’s not fair’ comment and in Stave 6, as Alan concludes his impression of the moaning student with ‘**I do nine hours a day and she does twenty**’ Sandra does not indicate a change of speaker. Whilst her pause and look at Alan may have indicated that he was making a comment, there is no clear indication that Sandra’s rendition of ‘**I NINE HOURS OTHER TWENTY**’ is attributable to him and in Stave 7, where Bella picks up the thread about the

complaining student back up, there is no indication of speaker change. For the hearing participants this exchange is an example of speakers building on each other's contributions, however due to the lack of source attribution, Dawn will have potentially perceived it as being a monologue from Bella.

In Stave 7 Alan and Mandy's supportive turns are omitted. Their comments of 'yeah' and 'yeah' demonstrate that they also appreciate the problem to which Bella is referring, possibly having had similar complaints from students. Additionally, the repetitive nature of the feedback signals indicates a collaborative floor. There is no change of speaker indicated in Stave 10, where Mandy offers the comment 'you should have said if you qualify' and so again Dawn is likely to have the impression that Sandra's rendition of 'I-F BECOME QUALIFIED SAY I-F DEFINITE' is still part of Bella's commentary. In the same stave, Alan's overlapping humorous contribution of 'go shopping whilst you've got the chance' is completely omitted.

Excerpt 5, Staves 10- 13

10-----
[general laughter]
Mandy: you should have said if you qualify
Alan: go shopping whilst you've got the chance
[eyebrows raised, eyes wide]
Sandra: *I-F BECOME QUALIFIED SAY I-F DEFINITE*

11-----
Bella: yes but I must admit I was aware that on one of my other
Sandra: *KNOW OTHER STUDENT BEFORE*

12-----
Bella: student's previous placements it was at like a day centre
Sandra: *OTHER DAY CENTRE PLACEMENT*

13-----
Bella: and they they did finish about half three
Sandra: *FINISH HALF THREE*

In Stave 11 where Bella takes a turn following on from Mandy and Alan, there is again no change of speaker attributed, thus reinforcing Dawn's impression that Bella

had been contributing continuously from at least Stave 7. The effect of the lack of speaker change attribution throughout this excerpt reduces Dawn's understanding of the complexity of the interaction. Not only will she be largely unaware of the humorous nature of the exchange but she will also be oblivious to the extent to which her colleagues contribute to the collaborative floor.

6.3.2 *Take it like a man*

This example, previously presented in section 6.2, is here used to illustrate both the presence and absence of source attribution in interpreted multi-party workplace discourse and how this impacts on the collaborative floor.

Excerpt 6, Staves 3-6

3-----

Mandy: oh well I'll come back to that in a week
[‘don't care' facial expression]

Sandra: *ONE WEEK LEAVE NOT BOTHER LEAVE*

Alan: [laughs- guffaw] [other participants laugh]

Dawn: [smiles]

4-----

Mandy: you'd be in real trouble

Sandra: *TERRIBLE CAN'T LATER*

5-----

[laughs] [other participants laugh]

Mike: you'd be dead

Sandra: *CAN'T THINK ONE WEEK LATER IGNORE*

6-----

Alan: I feel (.) I feel like I'm taking a lot of crap on behalf of everyone

Mandy: I'm serious
[looks at Alan] [directed outwards] [points at Alan] [directed at self- RS]

Sandra: *FEEL CRITICISE CRITICISE*

In Stave 5 the speaker changes from Mandy to Mike, who prefaces his comment 'you'd be dead' with laughter. Sandra omits this comment entirely, most likely

because she is still processing Mandy's utterance about not leaving a patient unattended. The change of speaker is then attributed in Stave 6, where Sandra directs her eye gaze to Alan when he comments he is **'taking a lot of crap'**. Mandy's comment of **'I'm serious'** is not interpreted by Sandra, who renders Alan's comment as **'FEEL CRITICISE'**. She further reinforces the change of speaker by the direction of the sign 'criticise', which is initially directed outwards towards Alan, and she emphasises him as the source of the comment by pointing in his direction. She then uses role-shift to 'become' Alan and directs 'criticise' towards herself.

Thereafter, in Staves 7 to 12, after Mandy's statement about nurses not being able to neglect their patients, the contributions from Alan and Mandy latch and overlap. None of Mandy's feedback agreement tokens are rendered by Sandra. For Dawn, the complex interplay between Mandy, Alex and Bella would have been reduced to an apparent monologue from Alan.

Excerpt 6, Staves 7-12

7-----

Mandy: oh yes

Alan: I'm not quite sure how best to deal with it

[leans back]

Sandra: *NOW DON'T KNOW HOW SOLVE PROBLEM*

8-----

Mandy: yes (.) yes (.) well I don't know

[quiet, serious voice] [participants laugh]

Bella: I should take it like a man

[gestures, head tilt, sits forward]

Sandra: *NEED BECOME MAN STRONG COME ON*

9-----

Mandy: [laughs]

[general background laughter]

Alan: I've trained for it I've got my shin pads on

[lip pattern 'shin pads']

Sandra: *TRAINED*

SHINS

10-----

Alan: I've got a box in the car (xxx)

Sandra: *SAFETY CLOTHES*

11-----

Mandy: no we're not getting at you personally

Alan: no (.) no

Sandra: *NO NO NOT CRITICISE PERSON*

12-----

Mandy: we're getting at the system

Alan: I'm thinking (.) I'm thinking how do we deal with this?

Sandra: *THIS UNIVERSITY*

Crucially, this lack of source attribution to indicate change of speakers would have left Dawn unsure as to the origin of the comment in Stave 8, where Bella suggests that Alan should take the criticism '**like a man**'. The switch back to Alan in Stave 8 is also omitted. A back translation of Sandra's signed contribution could be roughly rendered as a statement originating with Alan along the lines of '**I'm not sure how to solve this problem, I need to tackle the issue like a man, I've trained for it, just need to get my shin pads on and get my box from the car**'. This clearly alters the meaning of the interaction, as in Stave 8, Bella has used humour to soften a fairly bold challenge for Alan to address the problem of late responses to emails sent by the learning advisors.

The omission of the feedback signals being uttered by Mandy in Staves 7 and 8 means that Dawn may have been unaware that Mandy is potentially trying to soften the criticism being directed at management by the learning advisors by demonstrating her awareness of the difficulties raised by Alan. This softer, more conciliatory approach contrasts with Bella's statement '**I should take it like a man**', and is evidenced again in Staves 11 and 12 where Mandy states that '**we're not getting at you personally, we're getting at the system**'. Again, in the final segment of this excerpt there is no indication that the speaker has changed from Alan to Mandy, and so the subtle aspects of this exchange and the collaborative nature of the talk would have not been fully accessible to Dawn.

6.3.3 *Pretty Sandals*

This excerpt, presented in section 6.2 as an example of an episode of humorous small talk, also serves to illustrate how participants can work the collaborative floor (Edelsky 1993; Coates 1996; Holmes 2006b). When the floor is open to all participants simultaneously they can work together to produce a '*maximally collaboratively constructed shared floor*' (Holmes 2006b: 36), creating richly textured and cohesive interaction, with overlapping supportive turns and completion of each other's turns.

Evidence of a collaborative floor can be seen between Staves 11 and 18, with two examples of overlapping speech from Jane and Janice, who say '**noo**' and '**that's fine**', almost simultaneously, and in the supportive turns from Jane in Staves 12 and 15. The difficulty facing Sonya throughout this exchange is how she can adequately convey the overlapping and collaborative nature of the interaction. As can be seen from the transcript, she did not render either Jack's '**nooo**' in Stave 8, Jane and Janice's overlapping '**noo**' in Stave 11 or their joint overlapping '**that's fine**' in Stave 15. Accordingly the deaf participants would not have gained the same impression of the exchange as their hearing peers. This could potentially impact on their relationship with hearing colleagues, both in the meeting and in the workplace generally, and is therefore an aspect which requires further attention

It is interesting to note that Sally's contribution '**FIFTY?**' in Stave 12 was not voiced by Sonya. From viewing the video and being present during the interaction I suspect that the comment was directed at the SLI rather than to the group as a whole, which led to her decision not to voice-over. The speed of the interaction also meant that Sonya was producing an interpretation akin to a commentary on the rapid exchange, making it virtually impossible to voice the comment given her processing load. However, had the comment been voiced, Sally would have been an active participant in the collaborative floor.

6.3.4 *Do you want to say something?*

Thus far in this section, all of the samples evidencing the issues of overlapping talk and turn-taking have been drawn from episodes where participants have been engaging in small talk or humorous exchanges. It is important to recognise that in more business-orientated talk the SLI is also presented with problems in terms of enabling the deaf employee to take turns and access the collaborative floor. Across all of the data there was evidence of overlapping talk and collaborative interaction taking place in work-focused talk, as well as in instances of small talk and humorous exchanges, and this is illustrated in the following excerpt.

Sample 6.3.4 is from a team meeting at Livingwell. It is a regular meeting for senior support workers and team managers and there are eight participants in the meeting, only one of whom, Derek, is deaf. There is one SLI (Sandra) present. The meeting has been underway for approximately twenty minutes and the majority of that time has consisted of a presentation by a visiting speech therapist (Mary). Prior to the point at which this excerpt begins, Mary has been speaking about making material more accessible for tenants. She has held the floor for the majority of the time, but Alex, the chair of the meeting, has been providing verbal feedback signals in the form of ‘mmm, mmm’ and has interjected with contributions to Mary’s comments on at least three occasions. Overlapping and latching talk for has occurred between Mary and Alex for approximately one and a half minutes. Throughout their exchange Derek has been indicating that he wishes to contribute to the discussion, signalling this in a variety of ways; by raising his index finger, directing eye contact to the chair, and also indicating to Sandra, the SLI, appearing to express his frustration over his lack of success in interjecting.

Excerpt 8: Do you want to say something?

1-----

Mary: something so they know
[Indicates to take turn, finger briefly lifted from nose]

Derek:

Sandra: *NEED WITH PICTURES NEED KNOW*

Alex: themselves and those can be

2-----

[speaker change not indicated]

Sandra: *BECAUSE THEMSELF UNDERSTAND*

Alex: laminated or those could be y'know

Mary: yeah

3-----

Sandra: *CAN BE 'L' SHEET*

Alex: yeah (xxx) in a way that they can

Mary: yeah that's it

4-----

Alex: hold onto

Mary: so these things

[Indicates to Derek, questioning look, addressing directly]

Sandra: *SAY SOMETHING? YOU?*

5-----

Sandra: (xxx) *erm*

In Stave 1, the sample begins with the Mary, the speech therapist, who is continuing a point about the use of pictures and symbols to support tenants with learning difficulties. She states that the tenants need something in a visual format '**so they know**' and in Staves 1 and 2 Alex finishes Mary's sentence with '**themselves and those can be laminated or those could be y'know**'. In Stave 2 Mary provides verbal feedback, affirming Alex's statement by saying '**yeah**' and in Stave 3 she does this again, stating '**yeah that's it**' alongside Alex's '**yeah (xxx) in a way that they can**'. This appears to have the effect of keeping her in the collaborative floor, as in Stave 4 when Alex finishes his comment with '**hold on to**' Mary takes up her turn again by stating '**so these things**'.

The talk in this example is purely work-focused, but is still characterised by overlapping talk, verbal feedback signals and a quick exchange of turns. The talk leading up to the transcribed sample and within the excerpt itself was predominantly between Mary and Alex. Their turn-taking and latching comments may be attributable to their status within the meeting, i.e. with Mary as the invited guest

speaker and Alex's position as chair of the meeting. The collaborative nature of their talk appears to exclude Derek from interjecting, despite his attempts at indicating that he wishes to do so. At the point where this sample begins, Derek's gesture in Stave 1 is at least his seventh attempt to break into the discussion. The seating arrangements in the meeting were such that Alex had a clear view of Derek in his sight-line. Derek's gestures to take a turn would certainly have been visible to other members of the team. However, none of the hearing participants interject on Derek's behalf, and it is not until Stave 4 that Sandra, shifting her footing and addressing Derek directly, signs '**SAY SOMETHING? YOU?**' (do you want to say something?). In so doing she produces what Wadensjö (1992) refers to as a non-rendition (see Chapter Three), i.e. an interpreter-generated utterance that is not a translation of a spoken or signed contribution from primary participants. Immediately after, in Stave 5, she produces an interjectory '*erm*' which breaks the interaction between Mary and Alex, and enables Derek to take a turn and get his point across.

In terms of source attribution, we can see that Sandra fails to attribute the change of speaker from Mary to Alex between Staves 1 and 2. Whilst this does not impact greatly on the content of the message, it does mean that Derek would have been unaware that Mary and Alex were producing their talk collaboratively, thus affecting his understanding of the collegial nature of the interaction. The lack of source attribution may also have impeded Derek's ability to take a turn, as he would not have been aware that the comments were being made by different speakers. The verbal feedback from Mary was omitted on both occasions.

Finally, it is worth noting here that Sandra's contribution of '**SAY SOMETHING? YOU?**' is produced in BSL and her comment is thus temporarily concealed from the other primary participants. It is unlikely that any of the hearing participants would have been aware of Sandra's footing shift or her comment to Derek, inviting him to take a turn. As discussed in Chapter Two the modality and simultaneous nature of signed language interpreting enables the interplay between the SLI and the deaf consumer to take place on a much more subtle level than in spoken language interpreting, with the result that hearing consumers can be oblivious to the extent to which the SLI coordinates and controls the interaction.

6.3.5 Summary

To summarise, this section has illustrated the various ways in which the SLI can impact on interactive discourse and the degree to which deaf participants can access multi-party talk. It has shown that in established teams, coming together as a CoFP, discourse can be highly collaborative in nature. This impacts considerably on the SLI's ability to accurately attribute the source of utterances, and can result in contributions from multiple speakers rendered as a single utterance. This in turn can affect the deaf employee's understanding, not only of the content of the discourse but also in terms of the collegial relationships between their hearing peers.

6.4 Interpreted Workplace Interaction- Participant Interviews

The final section in this chapter details the interviews with research participants. The interviews were conducted with two SLIs (Stuart and Sandra), one deaf employee (Derek) and a hearing team manager (Alex). These individuals had participated in the two team meetings filmed at Livingwell research site, with Stuart interpreting in one meeting and Sandra in the other. Each participant was interviewed separately and the interviews were conducted in BSL and spoken English, according to the language preference of the individual. The participants were each given the opportunity to view samples of video data from the research project and feed back their observations on the interpreted interaction.

In **6.4.1 The role of the interpreter in workplace in discourse** participants' understanding of the SLI's role within the workplace domain is explored. The importance of relaying non-transactional discourse is discussed in **6.4.2 Perceptions of small talk**. Finally, in **6.4.3 Managing multi-party talk**, participants relate their experiences of multi-party interaction and the challenges it presents. The video playback interview data is then summarised in **6.4.4**.

6.4.1 The role of the interpreter in workplace discourse

All participants were asked if they could describe their general understanding of the SLI's role. Derek related a very practical description, listing help with

communicating with hearing staff and accessing materials in written English. He stated that he really needed an SLI to give him a *'better understanding of what's going on'*, noting that *'if there's no interpreter then communication frequently fails or breaks down'*. Derek identified that some of the written policies for his workplace were particularly problematic, especially in terms of the jargon used, and indicated that he really struggled with this aspect.

Sandra (SLI) stated that whilst the translation aspect of her role was obvious, she was also there *'to facilitate'*, and to give some awareness of the *'cultural stuff'* to people who had never met a deaf person before. Stuart (SLI) described his role as primarily one of communication facilitation between deaf and hearing people, adding that his goal was to *'try and make it as understandable as possible...on both sides'*.

Alex's view of the SLI's role demonstrated an awareness that it extended beyond that of a language conduit, mentioning SLIs as *'not purely translating what we're saying, word for word, verbatim'*. He stated that SLIs often made the discourse more accessible, *'ensuring that the deaf person has an understanding of what's being said'*. Alex summed up the SLI's role as trying to capture *'the bigger picture of communication'*, including the *'mood or the context'*, essentially believing they had to work *'very hard to open that communication beyond just the pure translation of 'he said, she said''*.

Both Alex and Stuart commented on an instance in the video data where Stuart prompted Alex to inform Derek about a discussion which had taken place whilst Derek was out of the room. Stuart said that he felt that Derek needed the information, as he was *'part of the team'* and *'because everyone else may have been aware of it'*, thus prompting his suggestion to Alex to *'fill Derek in about the situation'*. Stuart stated that he felt comfortable with doing this as his regular work with the organisation had established rapport.

Alex highlighted the potential dilemma this might pose for an SLI, as they had a very difficult role working out when and where to intervene. However, he welcomed this proactive stance, commenting that he saw it as an *'extended role'* of the SLI. Nonetheless, the decision gave Stuart some discomfort, as he commented that his decision to prompt Alex was a *'bit dicey in terms of Code of Ethics'*, reflecting on his

impartiality. Alex pointed out that he could have potentially been placed in the awkward situation, had he not wanted to share the information with Derek, but he felt that Stuart had '*made a judgment of who we are and how we share information*'.

6.4.2 Perceptions of small talk

Although the issue of small talk was not explicitly addressed in the interviews, the more informal aspects of workplace discourse were raised as an issue by participants during general discussions about Derek's access. Alex, for example, displayed a deeper awareness of the significance of talk that was not specifically work-related, stating that whilst he felt Derek could access the '*essence of the information*', he would miss out on '*a load of the subtleties*'.

Stuart highlighted the issue of the SLI making decisions about what information they should include and what they should omit when they were unable to keep up with the interaction. He stated that meetings were sometimes '*filled with gossip*' and that decisions had to be made about '*how important is that to the deaf person*'. He questioned whether it was '*culturally appropriate for deaf peoples' needs*' to know every detail under discussion, and that SLIs had to decide '*what's appropriate and what's not*'.

The underlying message appears to be that SLIs consider it appropriate to privilege the work-related content or business talk in their decision-making process. This is evidenced in a response from Sandra, who stated that it depended on the topic of conversation. She differentiated between '*waffle*', such as '*I went to Tescos last night*', and information related to Derek's role. Sandra felt that she prioritised the work-related information, but qualified this by saying '*it's probably not right, I probably shouldn't*'.

Whilst not referring to small talk explicitly, Derek raised the issue of hearing team members starting on one topic and then appearing to '*go off into a different story*'. Sandra had also noted a tendency for hearing team members to side-track from what she considered to be the main focus of discussions. Derek stated that when discussions went '*way off track*' the SLI would ask him if it's something that he

wanted interpreting, and that he would tell the SLI to stop if it *'wasn't worth it'*. Derek would ask the SLI to tell him when the topic changed again, and then they could resume their interpretation.

Given the importance of small talk in relation to a CofP, and in allowing employees to establish and maintain collegial relationships, the role of the SLI in interpreting this aspect of workplace discourse clearly needs further investigation and it is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

6.4.3 Managing multi-party talk

All of the interviewees noted the challenges created by multi-party talk in workplace meetings. Sandra and Stuart commented on the ways in which the cultural norms of team meetings impacted on the interpreting process. They both referred to the team meetings as being 'hearing dominated' and identified that this was an element that added to the complexity of their role. Stuart felt that the team's cultural norms- *'mainly hearing norms'*- added to the complexity of managing multi-party talk, identifying it as an aspect which *'puts deaf people at a disadvantage'*.

Derek commented on the lack of organised structure in terms of turn-taking and his frustration over this issue. He stated that hearing participants all *'speak really fast and at the same time'*, frequently *'just pitching right in'* without putting their hands up to indicate they wanted a turn, and without waiting for other people to stop speaking. Alex commented that as a hearing member of the team even he found it *'very full on at times'*. Whilst Alex stated that he thought the chairing was something the team had *'got better at'*, he did not make any reference to the chairperson potentially taking responsibility for managing communication so as to minimise any overlapping talk.

Derek felt the speed of the exchange produced difficulties for the SLI, as they struggled to cope with hearing participants *'just chipping in'*, and this had a detrimental impact on his ability to take a turn during meetings. Whilst he would indicate he wanted to contribute and wait for other people to finish, someone else would jump in, resulting in his having to *'wait and wait and then indicate again and*

then finally get a turn'. When I asked him how this made him feel, with a heavy sigh Derek said that much of his time was spent working out *'what they talking about, who said that, who said this'*.

Stuart and Sandra both commented on the issue of turn-taking and the speed of the discourse in workplace meetings. Sandra felt she should manage the issue by telling people to talk one at a time, but that she expected participants to *'know better because they use interpreters all the time, and they've been told many times before'*. When asked if she perceived part of her role as exerting some control over the interaction, Sandra stated that she did in some situations, particularly when participants were unaware of *'how hard it is sometimes for interpreters, because maybe they haven't used an interpreter before'*. She also felt that it was appropriate to notify the deaf employee if they didn't realise that the hearing participants were engaging in overlapping talk.

Derek stated that despite explaining the difficulties presented by overlapping talk, and reminding hearing participants to indicate if they wanted to take turns, nothing changed. The sense of Derek having to continually raise this issue is born out in the comments he made towards the end of the interview. He stated he had told people *'many many times'* to follow a more orderly turn-taking process but changes were merely short-term, as they quickly reverted to their usual style.

Sandra mentioned the lack of control that she felt in multi-party talk, attributing her reluctance to interrupt and slow things down as stemming from a desire not to *'miss something important'*, or omit something that someone had said. She highlighted the conflict between wanting to say something, or to interject with the deaf employee's comments, but at the same time being driven to continue to interpret the incoming spoken English source message. This conflict is evidenced by Sandra's use of the word 'should', which is prominent in discussions regarding performance and role.

*'I guess in one of the clips I didn't do it where I probably **should** have done it where people were talking at the same time'*

*'you know I remember I wanted to kinda voice over what he was saying, but then I **should** have, I dunno, I **should** have just gone in there and gone for it really'*

*'I think Derek was looking to see who was talking himself and it would have...I **should've** probably said, or kinda pointed to who was saying some...'*

Stuart identified that hearing participants' speed in turn-taking led to problems in indicating the source of utterances. In some instances he was unable to give any indication as to speaker change, whilst in others it was *'a quick point and then get on with trying to keep the flow of the meeting'*. Again there is a feeling from the SLI responses that the flow of the meeting should not be interrupted. Stuart stated that the *'hearing dominated'* nature of the meeting almost compelled him to work *'in conduit'*, commenting that *'it's coming in, it's going out, it's coming in, it's going out... it makes the job a lot harder'*.

Alex made a number of observations regarding Derek's ability to access the meeting and to fully engage on a level with his hearing peers. In one specific video excerpt he felt that Derek's access was *'limited, very limited'*, with Derek *'just trying to keep up basically, he was just sort of having a barrage of information'*. He noted that the ways in which the meetings were conducted added to the SLI's difficulty of ensuring Derek's inclusion. Alex stated *'the speed and intensity'* of the discourse meant that the SLI could only *'keep up with what's being said'*. He felt this resulted in a loss of things such as the *'wider language, and tone of the meeting'*, as well as the *'stuff going on in the corner...is everybody agreeing or not'*.

Alex felt the video excerpts highlighted what he had *'already known and been concerned about, that Derek misses out on so much more of it'*. He noted that in one excerpt, with rapid interplay between speakers and a lot of overlapping talk, Sandra appeared to have little opportunity to indicate speaker change. Alex observed that whilst Sandra tried to *'bring everybody in'* the resulting interpretation was likely to be *'one continuous dialogue'*. He questioned how this would have been perceived by Derek and how much use it would have been.

Sandra commented that *'at one point it just looked like one person was saying a load of stuff but it was loads of different people chipping in'*. She noted that whilst she generally employed a number of strategies to indicate the change of speakers, such as pointing, using directional eye-gaze or naming the speaker, in this particular instance she was focussed solely on the incoming message, with the result that her interpretation *'just looked like one person saying it all'*.

Derek, also referring to this excerpt, was aware of the challenges this style of discourse in team meetings posed for the SLIs, stating that the SLI really needed to inform him about speaker change but observing *'they can't do that when everyone is talking fast and at the same time'*. I asked Derek if he was able to pick up what was being discussed or if he felt he missed information. Whilst he could follow what was happening to some degree, there were times when he felt unsure about things. In these instances he said he would generally try to work it out himself and *'tell the interpreter to carry on'*.

Stuart believed enabling the deaf employee to participate fully in workplace meeting talk necessitated a collaborative effort, with the responsibility jointly shared between the SLI and the other participants. He felt that that the hearing participants needed to be more *'culturally aware of turn-taking'*, understanding that deaf people may want to contribute and allowing that time for that to happen. This perception of mutual effort was reinforced by Alex who commented that he saw the SLIs as definitely *'part of the team'*, adding that getting to know the SLIs better aided this process.

On a positive note, Alex stated that he felt that the SLI's presence in team meetings sometimes had a beneficial affect, slowing down the speed of interaction and making people (himself included) *'think before they speak'*. Alex also recognised the importance of the SLI's role in conveying the tone and mood of the discourse, stating that it was *'interesting to see that quite often that's not interpreted'*. In one instance, where Stuart accurately reflected Alex's indecision over an issue, Alex noted that *'Derek knew that I was mulling things over which I think is brilliant'*.

Alex observed that deaf participants rarely have the opportunity to ‘switch off’ during discussions and to tune out information in the same way as their hearing peers. There were limited opportunities for the deaf person to *‘just sit back and just take some time out of a meeting’*, which most hearing participants did at some point. He identified this was very difficult for Derek who would have to *‘make a decision as to whether he wants that information’*, thus almost obliged to keep his focus on the SLI. Derek also emphasised the extent to which deaf people have to concentrate during this type of interaction. He describes having to continually scan the faces of other participants, as well as watching the current speaker and waiting for them to finish so that he might take his turn. The impression that deaf employees have to work a lot harder than their hearing peers, just to grasp the essentials of the interaction, is one that emerges from both Derek and Alex’s comments and is a powerful statement regarding deaf peoples’ access to workplace discourse. The implications of this are discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Finally in this section it is worth noting that paperwork, frequently an essential part of workplace meetings, was identified as a problem for the deaf employee. Hearing employees can read and refer to minutes, handouts and other written material whilst still attending to the spoken discourse. Their ability to take in information via visual and audio channels means that they do not lose information when asked to refer to written resources. If the deaf employee has to look at written material their eye contact is broken with the SLI and this disengagement results in information being missed. Alex referred to this in one of the excerpts he viewed, stating that there was a *‘delay with written material’* due to the fact that that *‘obviously only one medium of communication can go on at a time’*. He noted that paperwork used in *‘any shape or form...just floors that, the verbal communication, just stops it dead’*.

Sandra said that she would often wait for the deaf person to look up from the paperwork, whilst reminding the hearing participants to wait, but felt that *‘they should be more aware of the fact that the deaf person cannot read and watch an interpreter at the same time’*. Sandra felt that the deaf person could be responsible for reminding hearing participants, that they could *‘raise their hand and say, can’t do two things at once’*, but added that this would depend to some degree on the deaf employee’s confidence to interject. One strategy utilised by Sandra was to sometimes *‘hold the*

information and pick out the main points’ or alternatively inform the deaf person that the hearing participants were having a conversation, thus offering them the choice of accessing the information or continuing to read.

6.4.4 Summary

In summary, all participants interviewed in the video playback sessions demonstrated an awareness of the challenges facing SLIs and the degree to which deaf employees can access workplace discourse. The SLIs highlighted that they struggled with multi-party talk, and with decisions about the aspects of informal workplace discourse deemed most relevant to the deaf employee. Ultimately, the over-riding ‘hearing’ norms of the workplace were seen as particularly pertinent, as they impeded the deaf employee’s full access to workplace interaction.

6.5 Conclusion

This second findings chapter has presented a number of excerpts from the video data, along with video playback interviews with participants from Livingwell. Section 6.2 presented data which illustrated the SLI’s role in small talk and humorous exchanges. Findings from the data in this section suggest that small talk and humorous interaction form an essential part of workplace meetings, and have important implications for the deaf employee’s membership of a CofP. Humour and small talk was seen to be contributory to group life and to fostering and maintaining collegiality between employees. The SLI’s role in interpreting these aspects of workplace interaction is crucial in ensuring both deaf and hearing employees can access these elements of workplace discourse.

Section 6.3 presented data which demonstrated the collaborative nature of multi-party talk. The difficulties facing the SLI were outlined, and their role in enabling deaf participants to adequately access interactive discourse was discussed. The data showed that the complex nature of this type of workplace interaction presents a number of challenges for the SLI, with their ability to adequately attribute the source of utterances being severely impeded by rapid turn-taking and overlapping talk. This

in turn impacts on the deaf employee's ability to access the interaction on the same level as their hearing peers.

Section 6.4 reported the findings from the video playback interviews with the main participants in the meetings at the Livingwell research site. The cultural norms of hearing people were perceived as being dominant in the workplace setting, which in turn impacted on the interpreting process and added to the complexity of the SLI's role. Understanding of the SLI's role was discussed with participants, demonstrating they saw the SLI's function as going beyond that of translating language. The findings demonstrated that all participants were aware of the difficulties posed by workplace meeting discourse. The issue of more informal workplace discourse was addressed, alongside the challenges that this presented. The responses from the interviewees highlighted the complex nature of multi-party talk and its exclusionary impact on the deaf employee.

This findings chapter has described the SLI's role in workplace discourse but has not explained in depth the significance or implications of the findings. In the next chapter I offer a discussion of the findings from both Chapters Five and Six, relating them to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. I will emphasise the contribution that this research makes to signed language interpreting theory and practice, before going on to explore the wider implications in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Seven: A Discussion of the SLI's Role in a Workplace Community of Practice

7.1 Introduction

So far in this thesis the case has been made for the SLI as an active and engaged participant in the interpreting process. The ensuing discussion therefore pivots around the degree to which SLIs can be, and should be, involved in workplace discourse, and the outcomes and impact of their engagement. Evidence from the two data chapters has suggested that the SLI has an extremely influential role in the workplace. Their presence in multi-party workplace meetings impacts on the interaction between deaf and hearing employees across a number of levels, including primary participants' equal access to the discourse event, and their ability to engage fully in the collaborative and collegial elements of workplace talk.

I will now discuss in-depth the analysis of the video data whilst also drawing upon the data from the questionnaires, journals and video playback interviews in order to contextualise the issues arising from episodes of interpreter-mediated workplace interaction. In so doing the aim is to answer the questions raised at the beginning of the study, relating the findings to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. My original research questions sought to determine how primary participants in the workplace domain perceive the role of the SLI and in what ways their understanding impacts on the dynamics, norms of discourse and everyday interaction between deaf and hearing employees. Additionally, my intention was to consider the extent to which SLIs influence the outcomes of interaction between deaf and hearing employees by generating a detailed description of the interpreting process. This chapter will therefore address these two main issues.

Section **7.2 Interpreting within a Community of Practice** focuses on the shared linguistic repertoires and collegial relationships inherent in a CofP and considers the challenges these aspects of workplace interaction can present to the SLI. The complexities of interpreting multi-party discourse are discussed, highlighting the dominant norms intrinsic to workplace meetings.

Section 7.3 **The SLI's Role in Workplace Settings** looks at the ways in which SLIs can develop their practice and extend their role. I consider how normative expectations of the SLI's role impact on their interpreting performance and how the understanding of primary participants positions the SLI within workplace interaction. I also discuss the ways in which workplace meeting practices reinforce the dominant hearing norms of workplace culture. I conclude the chapter in **Section 7.4** before moving on to Chapter Eight wherein the summary of the thesis and recommendations for future research are presented.

7.2 Interpreting within a Community of Practice

In Chapter Two I suggested that it was appropriate to consider workplace meetings from the perspective of a CofP. Consisting of a group of people, with a shared interest in a topic or problem, collaborating over a period of time to address issues, sharing ideas and solving problems, group members were shown to have a shared repertoire (Holmes 2001). This includes the use of jargon and acronyms, preferred or established ways of conducting business, patterns of linguistic politeness such as small talk (Mullany 2003, 2006), as well as the use of inside jokes and knowing humour (Wenger 1998). All of these elements contribute to the difficulties the SLI can experience when interpreting multi-party discourse. This section therefore begins with a discussion of the ways in which the complexity of workplace meetings can impact on the SLI's interpreting performance and the consequences for primary participants' access to the discourse event.

7.2.1 Managing multi-party collaborative interaction

The earlier research reviewed for the purposes of the current study demonstrated that there is a gap in the area of discourse analytical research on the ways in which SLIs function in settings with multiple participants. In terms of prior explorations of interpreted interaction the majority of studies have analysed data from a dialogic event, where the participants have almost always consisted of two monolingual parties and an SLI (see Roy 1989; Metzger 1995). Rarely has multi-party interpreted interaction, with five participants or more, been explored in any depth.

The data from both of the findings chapters brings to the forefront the challenge posed by multi-party meetings, suggesting that SLIs struggle to manage the interaction in these workplace events. Initially signposted in Chapter Five, where respondents referred to a number of difficulties in interpreting workplace meetings, the evidence from the video data demonstrated that SLIs struggle to adequately indicate changes in speakers, particularly when participants produce a collaborative floor. This was subsequently reinforced by comments from participants in the video playback interviews.

As we saw in Chapter Two, hearing norms are prevalent in workplace settings, with the practices of the hearing majority underpinning most aspects of workplace interaction. Deaf employees are, as in other areas of their lives, expected to conform to these norms, with little expectation that hearing people will make adjustments to their communicative practices. This section will therefore discuss the ways in which hearing norms impact on the SLI's performance, focusing specifically on turn-taking but also making reference to the reliance on written materials during team meetings.

Evidence from both of the data chapters confirms that the hearing norms of workplace meetings contribute to the SLI's difficulty in ensuring that the deaf participant can access the interaction, with turn-taking conventions identified as being particularly problematic. Lack of awareness of the SLI's lag time, together with the fact that the meetings are controlled by hearing people, leads to the SLI being unable to attribute all speaker contributions. In the video playback interviews both SLIs, Sandra and Stuart, emphasised this aspect of meeting talk, highlighting the fact that participants' contributions frequently overlap. The difficulties posed by participants' overlapping speech and a lack of structured turn-taking were reiterated by the deaf participant, Derek, who recognised the need for the SLI to inform him of speaker change and their frequent inability to do so.

The problem presented by un-attributed speaker change and overlapping speech has already been documented; in both signed and spoken language-interpreted discourse (see van Herreweghe 2002 and Takimoto 2009 respectively). What has not been explored in detail is the SLI's privileging of the norms of the dominant language, and

how this impacts on the minority participant's access to the discourse. My analysis demonstrates that deaf participants are clearly disadvantaged when meetings are conducted according to hearing norms. Episodes of overlapping or closely latching talk formed a frequent pattern across all of the data collected from team meetings. The highly interactive nature of many of the meetings, where participants' turns and contributions overlap, resulted in the SLI being unable to adequately indicate changes of speakers or attribute the comments to the originator. As a consequence the SLI has little choice but to render multiple contributions as a 'monologue', consisting of an amalgamation of different speakers' comments. This is not the 'fault' of the SLI, but is simply an outcome of a meeting where the majority of participants are conforming to hearing norms. However, the implications for the deaf employee are considerable.

The SLI's inability to adequately manage multi-party talk means that the deaf employee is likely to have a very unclear and vague understanding of what is actually taking place within the interaction. The lack of source attribution can not only result in the deaf employee being unsure or unaware of who is responsible for a particular comment, but can also mean that they are oblivious to the degree to which participants are collaborating within the interaction. They will also be unaware of the origins of any disagreements between participants, an aspect of interaction which can be just as significant as collaboration and agreement. Eckert (1993: 39) for example states that disagreement is '*an important way of getting norms onto the table*'. As a result of the SLI's difficulties in conveying the interplay between participants the deaf employee's access to the nuances of the relationships between the members of a CofP is severely restricted, and they will almost certainly be unable to pick up on the norms of the group.

Chapter Six has evidenced that participants can work together in meetings to produce a collaborative floor, affirming much of what has been detailed in Chapter Two. As we have seen, discourse meaning can be jointly developed or constructed by individuals contributing to the same idea or topic, building on each other's contributions (Edelsky1993), with high-involvement speakers making comments that overlap in order to show support and participation. My analysis suggests that an outcome of the SLI's inability to deliver a richly textured representation of what is

happening within multi-party talk is that the deaf employee is less able to interject and fully participate in the collaborative nature of workplace discourse.

The difficulty facing the SLI in this type of exchange is how they can adequately convey the overlapping and collaborative nature of the interaction. Omissions of contributions and supportive feedback signals can result in deaf participants not having the same impression of the exchange as their hearing peers. Lack of opportunity to interject and contribute to the collaborative floor could also lead to deaf employees being perceived as disinterested or unsupportive. For example, in excerpt 6.3.3 'Pretty sandals', Sally's signed contribution of 'FIFTY?' (Stave 12) was not voiced by Sonya. Had the comment been rendered into spoken English by the SLI, the deaf participant would have been able to join in the collaborative floor, adding her support to colleagues' teasing of another employee and her sandals. The lack of opportunity to appreciate and contribute to the collaborative floor could potentially impact on the deaf participant's relationship with their hearing colleagues, both during the meeting, and in the workplace generally.

It is important for the SLI to reflect these aspects of the interaction so that the deaf employee can access the subtle interplay between participants, thus gaining an understanding of the allegiances and relationships within the CofP. The impact of the SLI's amalgamation of two or more speaker's contributions into a monologue clearly has the potential to seriously influence participants' understanding of the discourse event. Takimoto's (2009) study suggests that for the spoken language interpreter this process is a conscious one, with the interpreter making an active decision to shift their footing into a reporting or summarising role. However, in the case of the SLI, the process appears to be forced upon them by the demands of the multi-party discourse, rather than a conscious strategy choice.

Evidence from both data chapters suggests that SLIs are reluctant to interrupt the 'flow' of interaction between hearing participants, whether this is to seek clarification when they do not understand a word or concept, or to interject in order to enable the deaf participant to take their turn and contribute to the meeting. This behaviour not only privileges hearing norms within a CofP, it also reinforces the SLI's invisibility. This in turn contributes to the hearing participants' perception of the conduit nature of

the interpreting role, and maintains the status quo of the dominant hearing norms of the interaction. In order for this imbalance to be addressed all participants will need to make changes to their behaviour and this is discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight.

Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992: 473) highlight the fact that in a CofP, dominant community members consider their own distinctive properties unremarkable, perceiving them as the norm. Subordinate members are seen at best as different, if not explicitly as deficient, and are disadvantaged because the attribution of difference is non-reciprocal, with social practices and institutions favouring '*the interests of "normal" participants*'. Evidence suggests that deaf employees are in the main viewed as deficient and accordingly their norms will be perceived as aberrant. If SLIs are to stand any chance of improving the quality of access they provide for deaf participants during multi-party discourse a shift in the norms underpinning this type of discourse event is undoubtedly required.

Finally in this section I wish to draw attention to the use of written material in workplace meetings. Frequently forming a vital part of the meeting process, the use of such material is one of the ways in which adherence to hearing norms can be observed in workplace interaction. As noted in Chapter Two, it is virtually impossible for deaf employees to reference written material whilst watching the SLI. If the deaf employee breaks eye contact with the SLI to pay attention to written material they cannot follow the ongoing discussion. This may seem on the surface a somewhat trivial matter but hearing people very rarely understand the issue correctly identified by Alex in his video playback interview, i.e. that only one medium of communication can occur at a time. Requiring deaf employees to make reference to written material during the course of a meeting effectively terminates their participation in the interaction. Strategies for managing the interruption in communication seem, in the main, to be perceived as the responsibility of the SLI. The SLI can remind hearing participants to suspend their discussion whilst the deaf employee reads the material, or alternatively can elect to 'hold' information from the discussion to relay at a later stage. The SLI can also notify the deaf individual that the hearing people are continuing their discussion, thus giving them the option of reminding hearing participants of their inability to simultaneously read and watch the SLI, or of deciding to ignore the ensuing conversation. All of these strategies require

the SLI's intervention, when in reality this responsibility could potentially be shared and managed by all participants.

7.2.2 Accessing small talk- a gateway to collegiality

Membership of a CofP is dependent on individuals having access to the shared repertoire within that group. Chapter Two has emphasised that acquisition of the sociolinguistic competence necessary to operate within a CofP is a highly challenging task for the deaf employee. The SLI clearly plays a pivotal role in enabling the deaf employee to gain membership of a CofP and the following two sections consider the ways in which this can be achieved. I begin by discussing the ways in which the SLI impacts on the use of small talk and humorous exchanges in workplace meetings, and conclude with a brief consideration of the challenges presented by the use of jargon and in-house language by the members of the CofP.

Previous research into the SLI's role has been on more formal aspects of discourse, rather than on elements which tend to be regarded as inconsequential or at least secondary to the main purpose of the discourse event. As discussed extensively in Chapter Two, small talk is a multifunctional device in workplace discourse, contributing considerably to workplace culture, and forming part of the shared repertoire of a CofP. Accordingly, if a deaf employee wants to fit into their workplace, and become a member of a CofP on an equal level with their hearing peers, the SLI will have a vital role in enabling their access to this aspect of workplace interaction.

In Chapter Five I have evidenced SLIs' awareness of the importance of deaf employees having access to the less formal aspects of workplace discourse, thus enabling them to engage with their peers at a level beyond simply discussing issues pertaining to their work. SLIs have demonstrated that the interpreting of small talk is for them a form of cultural mediation, and as such is an essential way of ensuring the deaf employee can understand the subtleties and trivia which form a part of most peoples' everyday work life. The exchange of pleasantries, discussions about weekend activities, social conversations, and passing on information are all seen as

providing the deaf employee with access to the wider aspects of the workplace, thus enabling greater inclusion.

The demands of work schedules and time constraints mean that SLIs cannot interpret every item of spoken interaction within the office environment, but there appears to be very little discussion with clients as to what information they would like access to, and when. From my own experience, SLIs also rarely discuss these decisions amongst themselves. As shown in Chapter Two, the SLI is in a very powerful position, effectively acting as gate-keeper for the deaf client's access to formal and informal office conversations and background information. The challenge for the SLI appears to be in balancing the deaf employee's need to focus on their work whilst also making them aware of casual office discussions, an act which places the SLI in control of the deaf individual's access to information.

The SLI's difficulty with this aspect of workplace discourse is fore-grounded in meeting talk, where they are often forced to prioritise what information they can interpret. When the demands of the interpreting event are such that choices have to be made between interpreting 'gossip' or 'business-focused' information, SLIs tend to privilege the latter, as evidenced in section 6.2.4. The SLI therefore has the dilemma of deciding what is really important to the deaf individual, aptly illustrating the considerable power inherent in their role. Decisions about privileging work-related information over 'waffle' or gossip do not appear to be based on any particular criteria. As stated in Chapter Six, it would be highly pertinent to explore with deaf employees their understanding of the value of small talk and what they consider worthy of interpretation. Given that Bristoll (2008: 24) has demonstrated that some deaf employees fail to see the value of small talk for creating relationships with their hearing peers, dismissing non-work related talk as '*inconsequential stuff*', there is undoubtedly a need for a wider awareness of its importance to and for deaf participants.

As shown in Chapter Six, the exchange of small talk can often occur before the start of the formal business of the day. The two examples show the importance of small talk in allowing employees to ease into the more business-focused aspects of workplace interaction. In each instance primary participants can exchange non-business related information, thus demonstrating an interest in the affairs of their

fellow employees. Additionally, the exchanges allow the participants to bond with each other. In the first example, the small talk in relation to Janice's sandals and the teasing that ensues is clearly a contributory factor in the bonding and cohesiveness of the team. The SLI, Sonya, managed to relay the majority of the exchange to the deaf employees but as noted in the preceding chapter, she was unable to attribute the source of most of the contributions, resulting in the full impact of the teasing element of the small talk being considerably diluted.

Sonya's decision not to interpret Sally's question of 'FIFTY?' is discussed in the following section in terms of Sally's access to the collaborative floor, but it is worth noting here that this omission excluded Sally from the general exchange of comments relating to Janice's sandals. This lack of the deaf employee's 'voice' in the exchange could potentially impact on collegial relationships, possibly being perceived by the hearing employees as a lack of interest or engagement.

In the case of Danielle and Harriet in the second example of small talk, Harriet demonstrates an established relationship with Danielle, evidenced through her degree of comfort in teasing Danielle and her awareness of Danielle's past behaviour. The exchange allows Danielle and Harriet to reinforce their collegial bond, through the teasing elements of the discourse and the interest that Harriet shows in Danielle's holiday. However, in this example Harriet's access to the interaction is somewhat impeded by the exchange mainly taking place between Danielle and Stuart. In this excerpt it appears that Danielle, by addressing her remark about Skegness to both Stuart and Harriet, positions Stuart in the role of surrogate employee or colleague. Stuart's response to this footing shift resulted in Harriet not being party to the full discussion regarding Danielle's holiday.

There are a number of possible explanations as to both Danielle and Stuart's behaviour. Whilst it is important not to generalise from one example, I feel that this episode demonstrates to some degree the complex relationship between the SLI and the deaf employee, and how this relationship can impact on the interpreted event. Stuart had interpreted in this particular workplace on a number of occasions and is well-known to Danielle. She may therefore have felt comfortable including him in her initial comment about her holiday. Additionally, Stuart may have felt equally

comfortable in responding on a personal level. Indeed, his responses could be seen as ‘humanising’ his role, recognising and acknowledging his presence. Had Stuart responded purely as an SLI and relayed the comments between Danielle and Harriet with no direct personal involvement, Danielle may have felt he was ignoring her. However, Stuart’s responses meant that his role in this exchange was somewhat unclear, with Harriet only having access to some of Danielle’s comments and their small talk exchange was therefore curtailed to some degree.

The key point in both of these examples is that SLIs must be keenly aware of the reasoning behind their footing choices and shifts, having an in-depth understanding of the impact of their decisions, not only on participants’ understanding of the content of the interaction but also in terms of the ways in which participants can relate to each other.

An aspect of interpreting informal workplace discourse highlighted in Chapter Five, and discussed by a number of authors (see Hauser & Hauser 2008) is that of the SLI passing on small talk, gossip or informal discussions, overheard when the deaf individual is either not present or is attending to other matters. Overheard conversations can enable deaf employees ‘*to stay secure within their networks and to remain in the loop of information*’ (Campbell et al. 2008: 95). SLIs can act as the deaf employee’s ‘ears’ (Hauser & Hauser 2008), even to the extent of collecting information when the deaf professional is not present (Cook 1994; Kale & Larson 1998). Given the issues of inequality between deaf and hearing employees, as highlighted in Chapter Two, it is likely that SLIs are undertaking this role in an attempt to ‘level the playing field’; passing on information allows the deaf employee to ‘fit into’ the workplace. However, the SLI’s role in this matter may be controversial.

Little attention appears to have been paid to the perspective of the hearing participants or co-workers in this situation. Whilst the case for holding and relaying information discussed in the deaf employee’s presence is understandable (i.e. when the deaf person is working on their computer and is oblivious to a discussion), the argument for the SLI doing so when the deaf person is absent is somewhat more tenuous. The fact that deaf employees are seriously disadvantaged in terms of accessing

information and interaction within the workplace is indisputable (Kendall 1999; Trowler & Turner 2002). However, it is questionable as to whether it is within the remit of the SLI's role to 'level the playing field' to this extent. SLI's are sensitive to how their actions might be perceived by hearing employees and consideration is thus required as to how workplace dynamics might be altered should SLIs accept responsibility for relaying conversations taking place in the deaf employee's absence. The passing on of information could lead to discord with hearing employees and could call into question the SLI's impartiality.

This aspect of workplace interpreting increases in complexity when the SLI is a 'staff' interpreter. SLIs in the dual role of member of staff *and* interpreter have access to a wide range of private information, and must constantly assess where they gained specific information from and the role they were in at the time (Kale & Larson 1998). Whilst requests for SLIs to understand the deaf employee's 'agendas' and pass on potentially relevant information might not directly be regarded as spying or eavesdropping (Campbell et al. 2008), it is difficult to see how the SLI can draw the line. I would suggest that requiring SLIs to act as the deaf employee's 'ears' further muddies the waters when SLIs are trying to keep firm boundaries in terms of role and confidentiality. In effect the SLI could become a surrogate employee, interacting with the hearing staff, collecting and absorbing information, and then passing this on to their deaf colleague. Questions need to be asked regarding this aspect of the workplace SLI's role, including: at what point does 'passing on information' shift over into 'gossiping', how does the SLI decide what information is relevant or not, and how does the relaying of information affect the hearing employee's right to confidentiality.

The allocation of this 'eavesdropping' task to the SLI also means that they have the majority of the responsibility of ensuring access and equality to general office talk, thus alleviating the hearing employees of any accountability in the process of inclusion. The skill in this case, as in all decision-making SLIs undertake in the course of their work, is in understanding the outcomes of their decisions or choices and the ability to justify those decisions relevant to the context (Baker-Shenk 1991; Goswell et al. 2008). SLIs make many decisions as part of their routine interpreting process, however it is often the case that such decisions are not adequately reflected

upon, and are rarely discussed beforehand with deaf or hearing participants. Given the potential for 'grey' areas within the domain of workplace interpreting, it would seem that discussions with both deaf and hearing employees are essential for establishing responsibilities and roles. Furthermore, a sense of *collaborative* working should be determined, rather than fostering and encouraging the perception that the onus lies solely with the SLI.

Finally, it is important to note the seemingly trivial nature of the examples of small talk evidenced in Chapters Five and Six. Issues which might seem petty, irrelevant, or simply unimportant in the overall scheme of an employee's everyday work are nonetheless part of the unspoken and unwritten workplace routines. Failure to comply- not taking a turn at making coffee, going to the shop and not asking if anyone wants anything, not bringing in birthday cakes- can mark the deaf person as an 'outsider'. This in turn could contribute to deaf employees failing to 'fit in' or bond with their colleagues. On the surface, a discussion about a colleague's new sandals or an employee's most recent holiday might seem inconsequential, but as the literature and data has emphasised, there are important implications inherent in the exchange of small talk between colleagues. Deaf employees therefore need access to these seemingly insignificant exchanges in order to understand the relationships between colleagues and to become members of their particular CofP.

If deaf employees are to truly integrate in to the workplace, and become a member of a CofP on a level with their hearing peers, a shift needs to occur across a number of fronts. Firstly, SLIs need sufficient understanding of the value and importance of small talk in order to inform their decision-making process when choosing what to include and what to omit in workplace interaction. Secondly, deaf employees require an awareness of the crucial function of small talk in enabling them to form bonds and relationships with their hearing colleagues. This would enable meaningful discussion between the SLI and the deaf client, and would inform the SLI's decision-making process. Finally, hearing employees need to comprehend the difficulties deaf employees face in trying to access this aspect of informal workplace discourse, what Alex in his interview refers to as the more 'subtle elements' that constitute workplace interaction. This knowledge, alongside an awareness of the importance of small talk

in fostering a sense of team, collegiality and belonging, would allow them to understand the consequences of the deaf employee's exclusion.

7.2.3 Interpreting humorous exchanges

The preceding discussion has focused on the importance of small talk in the workplace domain, emphasising the SLI's vital role in ensuring deaf employees can access this aspect of workplace discourse. This section will focus on another element of the shared repertoire of a CofP, namely humour. An investigation of humour has the potential to reveal interesting insights into the ways in which employees interact with each other, particularly in terms of how they construct, maintain and negotiate workplace relationships and collegiality. I suggest that the SLI's interpretation of humorous exchanges is essential not only in enabling deaf and hearing employees to understand each other's culture, but also in allowing deaf participants to appreciate the collaborative use of humour within a CofP.

As evidenced in Chapter Five, SLIs view the interpreting of humorous exchanges as a vital part of their role as cultural mediators, believing it assists in preventing misunderstandings in mixed deaf/ hearing environments. Clarification about issues of teasing or banter can enable deaf employees to understand the norm within a particular workplace or work group. SLIs also recognised differences between deaf and hearing peoples' use of humour, with deaf employees not always being aware of the need to censor their humorous remarks. Importantly, SLIs understood that the deaf employee requires access to all aspects of workplace meeting talk, including the quick humorous comments and 'in-jokes', so as to ensure they feel *'part of the team'* (J36.4).

Chapter Six affirms much of what other researchers have observed in terms of humorous collaborative and cooperative interaction between colleagues. The extent to which workplace exchanges can be characterised by humour was one of the unexpected findings from the video data, but it is clearly an aspect of workplace discourse in which the SLI plays an important role. This section will therefore discuss three issues. Firstly, the need for SLIs to recognise the contextualisation cues which participants utilise to signal a shift into a play frame. Secondly, that humour

can be an important strategy to address difficult topics, or to challenge those in authority. Finally, the vital role the SLI can play in enabling participants to collaborate in humorous exchanges is examined, emphasising their contribution towards the deaf employee's access to the linguistic norms of a CofP.

Recognising the play frame

Chapter Two highlighted the potential for participants to shift into a play frame, and the need for them to collaborate to sustain the frame. In order for a play frame to be successful in interpreted interaction, I suggest that it is essential that the SLI is in tune with the collaborative effort made by primary participants.

As I have shown in Chapter Six, to be part of the co-operative process of maintaining the play frame, SLIs must be able to recognise and utilise the contextual cues employed by primary participants, both deaf and hearing, to signal moves from serious work talk to play, and back again. As members of the majority hearing culture, most SLIs should be aware of, and be able to recognise contextual clues that hearing participants invoke to signal a change to a play frame. However, there is very little research on the appropriate ways in which to translate these cues into a signed language, so as to alert deaf participants to a shift of frame. Likewise, there has to date been minimal exploration of how to appropriately render the features of humorous utterances, produced in a signed language, into spoken language in order to cue hearing participants into the frame shift.

In the examples of humour from Chapter Six (6.2.3 and 6.2.4) I have suggested that the SLI's interpretation of the deaf participant's humorous utterances may have led to the hearing individuals failing to fully appreciate the shift into a play frame, resulting in the discourse resorting swiftly back to work-focused interaction. This could be attributed to the SLI's lack of awareness of the need to make subtle cultural adjustments from the visuality of the signed language into the spoken language, thus leading to the deaf person's humorous interjections either 'falling flat' or being unsustainable past the initial utterance. It is difficult to generalise beyond these two samples, as the data set does not contain any other examples where a deaf participant has the opportunity to make a humorous comment, and in both of the transcribed

excerpts it is the same SLI producing the interpretation. Clearly, further examination of this aspect is required, across a range of settings and with a variety of SLI's providing the interpretation. However, in the two instances outlined in this study it would appear a more detailed interpretation, reflecting the finer nuances of the deaf employee's humorous intent, could have led to greater participation on the part of the hearing employees, thus enabling the extension of the play frame. This could have in turn cemented the deaf employee's position within the CofP.

In some instances the SLI, whilst undoubtedly recognising the cues that indicate a shift into a play frame, simply does not have sufficient time to convey them. As shown in example 6.2.6 (Take it like a man) Alan's comment 'surely not', in Stave 4, is accompanied by a wry tone and subtle smile, indicating the frame shift. This comment was omitted, which meant that the deaf employee would have not been cued into the humorous play frame at the same time as her hearing peers. The fact that the SLI is often not in a position to see the facial expressions of the individual making the humorous comment in spoken language can further complicate the matter. They are frequently solely reliant on tone of voice, and thus can potentially miss out on the subtle visual cues which can accompany humorous remarks, especially dry or sarcastic humour.

As we saw in Chapter Two, spontaneous humour is situation-specific, arising from a particular set of circumstances. Effectively you often 'have to have been there', or be a group insider, in order to understand the joke. Outsiders may find the humour opaque or simply not funny (Kotthoff 2000). An additional barrier to the SLI's engagement in the play frame is their position as an outsider in humorous exchanges, whereby they frequently have to try and decipher the subtle meanings inherent in the interaction. Spontaneous humour can often be dependent on understated signals such as '*a particular tone of voice, a carefully chosen word, an incongruous look or gesture*' (Barsoux 1996: 500), which cue participants into the fact that a humorous or play frame is being invoked. Participants' recognition of these signals frequently hinges on their contextual background information to the event. Unless the SLI interprets for a workplace CofP on a regular basis, they are unlikely to be able to tune into the subtleties necessary to enable them to fully understand the complex interaction and the shifts in frame.

An additional factor to take into consideration is that of the relationships between the deaf and hearing participants. I would suggest that collaborative humorous interaction must be underpinned by some background knowledge of the co-participants and a reasonable degree of trust. Evoking a play frame brings with it a risk or threat to one's face and individuals are unlikely to make the shift from serious talk to play talk if the result will be embarrassment or loss of face. Deaf employees will rarely have had the opportunity to develop relationships with their hearing colleagues to a sufficient depth that allows them to engage in humorous exchanges. Additionally, the fact that the deaf employee is often the only deaf individual within a particular workplace might result in them being more reluctant to initiate a move to a play frame and thus risk loss of face. For the deaf employee there is often the extra worry and pressure to 'get it right' in a hearing environment – especially since they may have had the experience of 'getting it wrong' all the time at home or at school. Thus the SLI has an essential role to play, enabling access to humorous interaction so that the deaf employee might in turn feel confident enough to initiate or contribute to this aspect of a shared repertoire.

In Chapter Six I noted that the factual nature of Stuart's voice-over in example 6.2.3 may have been a decision based on the explicitly visual nature of Derek's humorous play. The factors involved in the SLI's decision-making cannot be lightly dismissed. As the person 'on the spot', with split-second decisions to make about how to interpret primary participants' utterances, the SLI must draw on a number of elements to inform their interpretation. The fact that Derek's contribution was almost mime-like in its rendition may have influenced Stuart's decision to render a fairly literal interpretation with 'it doesn't affect deaf people so', as might Stuart's awareness that several members of the team had some skills in BSL. As is the case throughout this study, the intent here is not to criticise any one particular SLI, but rather to describe what has happened and look at 'what might have been'. This enables the consideration of alternative ways of working with primary participants, to ensure that as far as possible, all experience a successful interpreted event.

As shown in Chapter Two, elements such as overlapping speech, the co-construction of utterances, repetition, laughter and the use of metaphor are deemed essential

components of ‘playing’ conversationally (Coates 2007). When interpreting discourse events where humour is frequently employed by participants, SLIs therefore need to consider which elements to include in their interpretation, so as to fully participate in, and accurately reflect the creation and maintenance of the play frame.

Humour as strategy

Laughing together can provide employees with an opportunity to address problematic or conflicting situations or to manage difficult face-threatening issues (Kangasharju & Nikko 2009). People often joke about the things that worry them the most (Watson 2002), with humorous remarks often serving to crystallise a sentiment privately harboured by others (Barsoux 1996). As shown in Chapter Two, joking can be utilised by participants as a strategy to express underlying frustrations or anxieties, without appearing to directly criticise, and this has been evidenced in a number of examples in Chapter Six. In examples 6.2.3 ‘Do you want to hear the panic alarm’ and 6.2.4 ‘I’ll bring my cricket helmet’ potentially sensitive or troubling issues are dealt with in a humorous manner. In example 6.2.4, in Derek’s joke about bringing his cricket helmet to work to manage a tenant’s potentially challenging behaviour, we can see a serious message being communicated via humorous play. Derek was therefore utilising humour to express genuine concerns about how his team would cope with the behaviour of the tenant. Had the play frame been sustained, it might have enabled participants to share the joke and laugh together, allowing them to further explore the issues lying beneath the surface of the humorous utterance.

We have seen in Chapter Two that humour is a useful tool for interactants wishing to raise a serious issue, without seeming challenging or contentious (see Collinson 2002; Mullany 2004), providing a way of communicating criticism without being labelled a troublemaker (Barsoux 1996). This is illustrated in 6.2.6 Take it like a man where team members raise the issue of management not replying promptly to work emails, demonstrating how subordinate employees can employ humour to highlight a serious issue and criticise management. Despite the humorous nature of the exchange there are clearly serious concerns under discussion, and genuine frustrations being expressed by employees. In this particular instance, the richly textured nature of the interaction, with overlapping supportive turns and feedback signals, presented a

considerable challenge for Sandra. She was unable to attribute changes in speakers and could not interpret all of the comments from primary participants, with the likely outcome that Dawn was not able to fully grasp the subtleties in the humorous exchange, and the ways in which team members were confronting Alan.

If the constraints of workplace meetings are such that SLIs are regularly unable to adequately render these brief but highly important exchanges, then the deaf employee will undoubtedly be unable to appreciate the complex nature of relationships between colleagues. They will also find it difficult to pick up on the subtle strategies which their hearing peers employ to contest and challenge management decisions or practices. Mockery of individuals and practices can lead to changes in behaviour and procedures (Watson 2002), and so it is important that SLIs are aware of this aspect of humour and are able to reflect it accurately when used by either deaf or hearing employees.

Humour as a collaborative enterprise

An essential consideration in interpreting humorous exchanges is the collaborative nature of much of the humour that occurs in the workplace, and its role within a CoFP. Examples 6.2.6 (Take it like a man) and 6.2.7 (Have we spelt Sarah-Anne's name right?) from Chapter Six illustrate the collaborative nature of the play frame and also highlight the difficulties that such exchanges pose for SLIs. In humorous talk participants appear to relish the 'choral nature' of the overlapping exchanges and this in turn encourages them to contribute further to the interaction (Coates 2007). This particular aspect of humour is a challenge to the SLI. Whilst overlapping speech presents minimal difficulties in comprehension for the hearing participants (indeed, it is often the norm in workplace meeting talk), the deaf employee, reliant on the SLI for access to the interaction, is undoubtedly disadvantaged. The SLI's difficulty in keeping up with the fast flowing exchanges, lachings and overlaps means that what should be inclusive and collegial talk becomes to some extent exclusionary.

This is illustrated in example 6.2.5 (It's not fair!) where the SLI struggles to convey the overlapping comments produced by participants to build joint verbal play regarding the complaining student. My analysis shows that the practical difficulties which led to the omission of Alan's comment in Stave 4, the lack of interpretation of

Alan and Mandy's supportive overlapping feedback signals of 'yeah' in Stave 7, together with overlapping comments generally not being attributed to specific participants, all resulted in the deaf employee being excluded from the full choral and collaborative effect of the exchange. This exclusion is compounded by the fact that the deaf employee's attention, apart from limited peripheral vision and brief glances to other participants, is concentrated on the SLI. Hearing people can take their cue from other participants' faces, eye gaze and body language as to whether they are being humorous. They can also assess how participants react to humorous comments directed at them. The deaf employee, however, is reliant almost exclusively on the SLI for this information and are therefore rarely privy to the facial expressions and body language of the other participants.

Collaborative humorous talk within a CofP therefore presents a number of challenges for the SLI, suggesting that changes in practice are required in order to ensure that deaf and hearing employees can participate fully in this aspect of meeting talk. Potential solutions to this are discussed in Chapter Eight.

7.2.4 Jargon and in-house language

Whilst the issues of small talk and humour are the focus of this thesis, it is worth noting the use of workplace jargon or the 'in-house' language, as many SLIs cited jargon and technical language as being one of the main challenges inherent in this domain. However, if we consider this aspect of workplace discourse from the perspective of a CofP, I suggest that it may not be the jargon or acronyms per se which present a problem, but rather the SLI's lack of access to the shared repertoire available to other participants.

Organisation or company specific language will always create difficulties for the SLI, and knowledge of the jargon and acronyms used by a particular workplace can therefore assist in their interpretation. Nonetheless, it may be equally important for SLIs to have a deeper understanding of the relationships within the CofP and how members utilise their shared repertoire. By this I not only mean how individuals relate to each other, but how they relate to the objects or topics under discussion- the way in which language is used within that particular CofP. The literal meaning of a

specific piece of jargon may actually be less important than what it signifies to a certain work group. For instance, in the situation described in Chapter Five, where the acronym ‘Cogs and Dogs’ (Company and Departmental Operational Guidelines) was used, the deaf employee needed to be aware of this, not because of its actual meaning, but because ‘Cogs and Dogs’ is part of the linguistic repertoire of the group and as such its usage demonstrated belonging.

SLIs rarely have the opportunity to reflect on the reasons underlying the complexity of workplace interaction, a lack of reflective practice which may lead them to attribute the source of difficulty to jargon and technical language. In reality, SLIs require a more holistic awareness of the norms and patterns of interaction of the CofP in which they are operating. If SLIs can position themselves on a level equivalent to that of a member of the CofP, this would have the dual benefit of enabling them to manage the interaction more successfully, whilst also allowing the deaf employee to gain a foothold in the CofP.

7.2.5 Summary

This section has demonstrated that the shared repertoires which form an integral part of a CofP can present a considerable challenge to the SLI. The preferred or established ways of behaviour within a particular work group can create difficulties in interpreting multi-party talk. Jargon, technical language and agreed ‘verbal shortcuts’ can be difficult to interpret in any setting, but within a CofP the ways in which the language is used and what it means to participants creates an additional layer of complexity. The fact that individuals tend to develop and regulate their linguistic repertoire through contact with language utilised by those with whom they speak on a regular basis (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992) means that the deaf employee is largely excluded from sharing the repertoire. The SLI needs to be sensitive to this aspect of a CofP and must take it into consideration when interpreting group interaction.

I have suggested that small talk and humour are two important components of a shared repertoire, essential for ensuring that group members can bond and form collegial relationships. Collaboration in humorous talk displays the extent to which

participants are *'finely tuned'* to each other' (Davies 2003: 1362), and unless the SLI strives to match this 'fine tuning' there is likely to be some degree of dissonance within the collaborative interaction. Greater consideration therefore needs to be given as to how these elements of workplace discourse are managed by the SLI.

7.3 The SLI's Role in Workplace Settings

So far in this chapter I have discussed the effects of the SLI's presence on interpreted interaction between deaf and hearing employees, highlighting the complexity as discussed in Chapter Two and evidenced in Chapters Five and Six. This section will examine in more detail the SLI's role in the workplace, highlighting three areas relevant to the SLI's position in this domain. I begin by looking at the SLI's adherence to the invisible conduit norm and the problem this presents, exploring the potential shift that is required in relation to their role. The need for a clearer understanding of what is meant by cultural mediation is also discussed. I then suggest that all participants need to reframe their understanding of interpreted workplace discourse, so as to ensure that deaf employees can fully participate as members of a CofP.

7.3.1 Re-envisaging models, roles and relationships

Establishing some degree of clarity regarding the SLI's role in the workplace seems imperative, as it appears to be at the root of many of the issues facing SLIs in this setting. The conflict seems to stem from what SLIs feel they 'should' be doing and what the workplace role actually demands of them. The fact that the workplace domain is a relatively new field of interpreting for SLIs means that they have little choice but to rely on models that inform their interpreting practice generally, i.e. those derived predominantly from a conduit perspective. The conflicting views about what exactly the SLI's role should be impacts upon just how far the boundaries of the role can be pushed.

From the findings in Chapters Five and Six, and the limited research on workplace interpreting outlined in Chapter Two, it is apparent that attempting to adhere to a machine-like model of interpreting, or to minimise their visibility in the workplace,

creates a number of difficulties for the SLI. This is clearly demonstrated in my analysis by the SLI's inability to attribute speaker utterances during multi-party interaction. As evidenced in Chapters Two and Five, SLIs in this setting are required to be very flexible in terms of their visibility, role and boundaries. This presents them with the paradoxical challenge of trying to be as *'unobtrusive'* or *'invisible'* as possible, frequently in the *'most 'visible' situations'* (Oatman 2008: 168), required to enable communication whilst minimising the attention drawn to themselves and the deaf consumer (Kale & Larson 1998).

SLIs working in this domain have suggested a shared communicative approach is necessary, alongside being more open and assertive about their own needs. They clearly recognise that the *'Invisi-terp thing'* (J11.12) is almost an impossibility in a regular workplace assignment, and what is needed is more along the lines of the 'Open Process Model' where the SLI engages the deaf client in the process of interpreting, making visible the decision-making processes and challenges inherent in the interpreting task (Moody 2007). Whilst the SLI's responsibility to do likewise for the hearing client is not alluded to in Moody's description of this model, reference is made to *all* stakeholders sharing, participating in and influencing the interpreting process, so one assumes that the intention is to make things more visible for all participants in the interpreted event.

Achieving any of these changes will necessitate open and honest discussions with all participants in workplace settings. Frequent dialogue and discussions between SLIs and deaf people will be required (Kale & Larson 1998), with both parties working together to resolve *'uncomfortable moments'* which may occur whilst interpreting in the workplace domain (Campbell et al. 2008: 103). Revising our understanding of what professionalism means in terms of the relationship between deaf employees and SLIs is essential. The emphasis is on the role and function of the SLI being a malleable one that is constantly negotiated between all primary participants (Kale & Larson 1998). SLIs working in this domain also have to take on board, and constantly reflect on, the power differential in this specific setting. As more deaf people move into positions of status and authority, the power dynamics between SLIs and deaf clients will alter considerably and models of interpreting must evolve and change to reflect this shift.

The SLI's efforts to minimise their presence can impact considerably on their relationship with hearing employees. The SLI can be perceived as aloof and stand-offish, particularly when no explanation has been given for their behaviour. Data from Chapter Five suggests that hearing participants currently have a limited understanding of the SLI's role in the workplace domain and are subsequently unsure as to the professional boundaries associated with that role. It appears therefore that SLIs need to explore ways of presenting a 'front' that is acceptable to both the hearing and deaf client, effectively being friendly but not too friendly.

Additionally, hearing participants must be engaged in any discussion regarding the SLI's position in a particular workplace or CofP. If we accept that team meetings can constitute a CofP, then rather than presenting a front which can be deemed aloof and unsociable, SLIs need to be skilled at building and maintaining relationships with other staff within the workplace. Establishing bonds and connections with hearing members of staff will enable the SLI to be perceived, to some extent, as a member of the community. For the SLI the difficulty lies in forming relationships whilst keeping in place the professional boundaries necessary for them to undertake their interpreting role. They need to strike a delicate balance of maintaining their role whilst sustaining a positive relationship with the deaf individual's peers. This may necessitate educating hearing work colleagues about the boundaries of their role, and developing appropriate relationships with the deaf employee's co-workers (Hauser & Hauser 2008).

As part of the process of establishing and clarifying the SLI's responsibilities in the workplace domain, further attention needs to be directed to what is meant by cultural mediation. The data in Chapter Five evidenced the uncertainty that SLIs experience in relation to this issue. This is aptly illustrated through the consideration of a common workplace interpreting task, that of translating a letter from BSL to written English. This simple request can raise many decision points for the SLI: should they allow the deaf employee to write the letter with the content unaltered, but simply adjust the grammar; should they point out the etiquette of such a letter and the implications if it remains as originally worded; should they keep quiet and allow the deaf employee to experience the outcome of forwarding a letter that was inappropriately worded. In the workplace setting SLIs face these dilemmas on a daily

basis, and the term ‘cultural mediator’ does not provide enough guidance, reassurance or clarity in many of the situations in which they find themselves.

Additionally, SLIs have highlighted the fact that it might not always be appropriate to culturally mediate to a degree which conceals the differences which exist between deaf and hearing culture. This issue would benefit from a frank and open discussion between SLIs and primary participants, exposing the difference between the cultures, and generating a debate as to the extent of the SLI’s mediator role. It would be useful for the SLI and beneficial for all primary participants if this aspect of workplace interpreting was examined in more detail, using examples from authentic data, and allowing for practitioner reflection. SLIs would thus have more contextual information to feed into their decision-making process. This in turn would enable them to consider the appropriateness of either smoothing over the cracks in the communication process and facilitating effective communication, or exposing the gaps to the view of primary participants, so that deaf and hearing employees might learn more about each other.

7.3.2 Framing and reframing team meetings as interpreted interaction

Data from both findings chapters suggest that team meetings in workplace settings continue to be conducted according to hearing norms, with all participants (including the SLI) failing to fully frame the meetings as interpreted interaction. As my analysis shows there seems to be a belief that the SLI should keep up with the flow of the interaction and not interrupt. Accordingly, interpreted team meetings are rarely a true triadic exchange. There is very little accommodation made by the hearing participants to allow for the presence of a deaf employee and an SLI. Thus, the event generally proceeds in accordance with the norms of the hearing majority, the SLI having to manage as best they can, and the deaf employee frequently reduced to an observer rather than a true participant. To some extent, the interpreting process appears to be happening under the surface of the main interaction of the meeting (as indicated earlier in section 6.3.4).

In established CofPs, where highly interactive discourse styles and embedded shared linguistic repertoires are standard, the SLI will almost always face an uphill struggle

to manage the discourse event. It is therefore essential that both deaf and hearing participants have a well-grounded awareness that they are engaged in something different to the norm, i.e. that they reframe their understanding of the interpreted event. The key to improving deaf employees' access to multi-party meetings appears to lie in all participants reaching a deeper understanding about the type of interaction in which they are engaged. There are however, a number of actions that the SLI can consider to better manage the discourse event and these are discussed below.

It is difficult to identify if the compulsion to fall in line with the dominant hearing norm is imposed internally by the SLI, or is an external factor originating from the hearing participants- or if it is a combination of the expectations and behaviour of *all* participants. However, SLIs who refrain from interrupting or requesting changes in participant behaviour reinforce the perception that multi-party interaction can be conducted according to the majority hearing norms. Discourse events involving an SLI need to be explicitly framed as interpreted interaction from the outset, with this framing sustained throughout. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is by the SLI being more visible in the interpreted event. SLIs need to consider overcoming their reluctance to intervene, and should look at participating more overtly in the interaction. Their interruptions and requests for clarification could act as prompts or linguistic signals, thus reminding other primary parties that they are engaged in interpreted communicative discourse. If SLIs continue to suppress their needs, or if their requests are disregarded by primary participants, then they will struggle to adequately manage interaction in multi-party dialogue. This will in turn perpetuate the hearing participant's perception that no adjustments are required to accommodate the SLI or the deaf individual.

If SLIs make themselves more visible in the interpreted event they will also raise the profile of the deaf participant within the CofP and enable them to participate in the collaborative floor. SLIs should consider producing verbal supportive feedback responses on behalf of the deaf employee. As discussed in Chapter Two and demonstrated in section 6.3.4, verbal feedback signals can enable participants to keep a foot in the collaborative floor, thus allowing them to take a turn when the opportunity arises. If adopted as a strategy by the SLI this would serve the dual purpose of reminding the hearing participants that the deaf individual is an active part

of the discourse event, as well ratifying or contributing to the talk of other participants, without threatening the current speaker's hold on the floor (Zimmerman & West 1975; Stubbe 1998). Additionally, it could allow the SLI to interject on behalf of the deaf employee and to take turns more smoothly, as hearing participants will be more aware of their presence.

Balance seems to be the elusive quality that the SLI needs to achieve. Finding a way which does not interfere too much with the natural and unstructured conduct of meetings, yet still allows the deaf participant to seamlessly slot into the discussion, requires discussion with all participants prior to the event, and inevitably, a delicate balancing act on behalf of the SLI. The evidence suggests that currently deaf employees have to work a lot harder than their hearing peers, just to grasp the essentials of the interaction. This is a powerful illustration of deaf peoples' access to workplace discourse and is indicative of the change that needs to occur within this setting.

7.3.3 Summary

This section has discussed the SLI's positioning within collaborative workplace discourse, highlighting their impact on the relationships and understanding between the primary participants. I have demonstrated that the deeply embedded perspectives of the SLI's role, held by all participants in the interaction, underpin the more practical problems as to what tasks the SLI should, or should not, perform in the workplace domain. The SLI's conflict, generated by the clash between notions of neutral machine-like language conduits and active third participants (Roy 1993; Metzger 1999), has been highlighted. This conflict extends into the extent to which SLIs make themselves visible in interpreted interaction. I have suggested that in order to work effectively with primary participants SLIs must have a more concrete presence in the interpreted event. Sharing the floor by working *with* other people will enable them to bring about '*a genuinely triadic communicative event*' (Turner 2007b: 184).

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn together the findings of Chapters Five and Six, reviewing the data in relation to the original research questions and the literature in Chapter Two. I have discussed the ways in which the SLI impacts upon the interaction between deaf and hearing employees in multi-party discourse, highlighting the complexity of the SLI's role within a workplace CoP. I have evidenced the richly contextualised interactive patterns that exist in multi-party talk, and the subtle moves which participants make to construct meaning. The SLI's difficulties in managing multi-party talk have been outlined, and some of the factors contributing to these difficulties explored. I have demonstrated that there are a number of elements inherent in workplace meetings, and in multi-party talk in particular, which are beyond the SLI's control and which contribute to their difficulty in ensuring that deaf employees can access workplace interaction on a level with their hearing peers. Finally, I have discussed the SLI's role in the workplace domain.

In the concluding chapter that follows I will summarise the thesis and suggest a number of ways in which SLIs and primary participants within the workplace setting can work collaboratively to address some of the challenges inherent in this domain. Implications of the research are considered in relation to the field of interpreting and to workplace discourse and the limitations of the current study are discussed. Finally, I put forward a number of suggestions for future research.

Chapter Eight: Summary and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of the current study in respect of the SLI's impact on interpreted interaction between deaf and hearing employees. In section **8.2 Summary of the Thesis** I review the research and consider the extent to which the research aims were met. Section **8.3 Implications for Interpreting in Workplace Settings** considers some of the ways in which participants can bring about improvements in interpreted multi-party talk and collaborative interaction. In section **8.4 Contributions and Reflections** I contemplate the contribution the research has made to signed language interpreting theory, to the methodology for investigating interpreter-mediated discourse events and to the field of linguistic research of workplace interaction. Recommendations for future research are suggested in section **8.5**. The chapter is drawn to a close in section **8.6**.

8.2 Summary of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the SLI's positioning within workplace discourse, and to determine how their presence influences and affects the interaction and relationships between deaf and hearing employees. As stated in Chapter One, and reiterated in Chapter Seven, the principal aim of the study was to describe in detail the interaction between primary participants during interpreted workplace discourse. In Chapter One the complex nature of workplace interpreting was introduced through the reproduction of a posting from an on-line interpreter discussion group, neatly encapsulating some of the challenges facing the SLI in this domain. I stated that I intended to look at three key areas in the thesis, namely the domain in which the interaction was taking place, the norms and practices governing and informing the interaction, and the participants engaged in the communicative event. These three areas formed the focus of Chapter Two, where I explored in detail the nature of institutional discourse, the move of deaf people into white-collar employment settings, and the role of the SLI in workplace interaction.

Chapter Three outlined the theoretical framework underpinning the collection and analysis of data for the study. I argued the case for applying an LE framework to the research, stating that a contextualising, ethnographically-sensitive approach to data collection, combined with a detailed linguistic analysis of video data, enabled the construction of a thorough description of interpreted interaction.

In Chapter Four, data collection was detailed, describing the various stages in the research process and the activities undertaken. Qualitative data were generated through a variety of methods, beginning with questionnaire responses and practitioner journals, and concluding with collection of video data and the video playback interviews. The challenge of recruiting participants and gaining access to the research sites was highlighted. I examined my positioning within the research process, vis-à-vis the participants, emphasising the complex nature of my relationship within the deaf community. This chapter also discussed the difficulties inherent in collecting video data of multi-party interpreted interaction, and in the subsequent transcription of the data.

Chapters Five and Six presented the findings of the research. Chapter Five outlined the experiences of SLIs in the workplace domain, describing their role and function in this setting. A number of issues were highlighted, including the demands of interpreting workplace meeting interaction, and the complex relationship between the SLI and primary participants. This provided the background to Chapter Six, the second of the two findings chapters, where selected extracts of video data were analysed. Chapter Six focused on the SLI's function within a workplace CofP, paying particular attention to the ways in which SLIs manage multi-party interaction and their impact on the shared repertoire of the CofP. In the final section of Chapter Six participants offered their thoughts and reflections on selected excerpts of video data.

Finally, Chapter Seven discussed the results from the findings chapters, reflecting upon the issues raised in Chapter Two and reviewing the data in light of the original research questions. I demonstrated that the SLI has a vital role to play within a workplace CofP, particularly in enabling the deaf participant to access the shared repertoire in the work group. The SLI's impact on small talk and humorous exchanges between deaf and hearing employees was discussed, as well as the

difficulties posed by multi-party talk. The SLI's role in the workplace domain was examined, highlighting the complex nature of their relationship with both deaf and hearing employees.

8.3 Implications for Interpreting in Workplace Settings

This section will look at the implications of the research and its potential application to signed language interpreting in the workplace domain. In section **8.3.1 Negotiating small talk and humour** I make suggestions for improving the SLI's management of this aspect of workplace discourse. The findings from the research are not just of academic interest, they also have practical implications for the success of deaf and hearing communication in the workplace, and therefore in section **8.3.2 Interpreting multi-party meetings- strategies for change** I put forward recommendations for the practice of workplace interpreting. Section **8.3.3** focuses specifically on the benefits of training and awareness for SLIs and primary participants. In section **8.3.4 Informing national policy**, consideration is given to wider scope of change required to effect practical shifts in the ways in which deaf employees are supported in the workplace. Finally, section **8.3.5** summarises the potential applications of the research.

8.3.1 Negotiating small talk and humour

In Chapter Seven I raised the issue of the SLI acting as gate-keeper to deaf employees' access to small talk and informal workplace discourse. Further exploration is required as to the extent to which SLIs relay small talk to the deaf employee, with discussions taking place as to what is appropriate and when. Deaf employees need to be made aware of the value and importance of small talk, particularly in terms of its role in creating and maintaining collegial relationships, so as to aid their decisions about which aspects of informal talk they would like access to.

Consideration also needs to be given to the SLI's role in passing on information gained from overheard conversations when the deaf employee is not present. If agreed between all primary parties, this could potentially be a positive move to ensure

that the deaf employee is aware of developments within their workplace. However, there are also negative connotations, with the onus for communication attributed solely to the SLI, and the possibility of boundaries becoming too blurred and flexible.

Given that humour has a vital role to play in workplace discourse there is undoubtedly the need for SLIs to interpret and illuminate humorous exchanges between employees. This will enable deaf and hearing employees to develop and strengthen collegial relationships within a CoFP, as well as allowing deaf employees to understand the use of humour in challenging authority. This will entail the SLI having a deeper understanding of the role of humour in workplace discourse, and ways of achieving this are discussed in section **8.3.3**.

8.3.2 Repositioning the workplace interpreter

The implications of the findings suggest that SLIs employed in the workplace domain need to re-envisage their position in the interpreted event, conceptualising their role as a collaborative member of a CoFP. By framing their participation in multi-party meetings as a collegial one, SLIs will be able to pay attention to some of the subtle undercurrents that are essential to enabling deaf and hearing employees engage in meaningful interaction.

I suggest that by focusing solely on their role as interpreter, SLIs can limit the scope of undertakings within the communicative event. It can encourage other participants to believe that responsibility for successful communication is not something to be shared, but is exclusively the remit of the SLI. As the findings have demonstrated, the SLI cannot be held entirely accountable for enabling the deaf employee to access the collaborative and collegial aspects of workplace communication. Rather, *all* participants need to take on some responsibility for ensuring equality of interaction. The focus needs to be directed away from the SLI and their 'role', and more attention paid to their *position* within the interaction, considering the specific time and place, and taking into account what is happening and with whom. This should be seen as a continually shifting and changing positioning, which requires all participants to frame and reframe their understanding of what is happening, on a moment by moment basis.

A growing category of deaf professionals will require a corresponding emergence of interpreters who '*appropriately respond to their needs*' (Cook 2004: 73). To match the requirements of deaf people in the employment domain SLIs will need to move towards a different model of interpreting. This has been raised by various authors in relation to the designated interpreter role (Hauser & Hauser 2008), and SLIs working with deaf and hearing employees in the UK could draw on these experiences to develop their position in the workplace setting.

The move to establish a positive working relationship with hearing employees is a shift in the ways in which SLIs have traditionally worked, and will require some considerable preparation and negotiation with all involved. It is a sensitive task as the deaf employee may require reassurance that the SLI will be able to maintain confidentiality and professionalism. SLIs will need to demonstrate the boundaries of their role without making hearing employees feel uncomfortable or ill at ease, and the skills of diplomacy, sensitivity and tact will thus form an essential part of the workplace interpreter's toolkit.

As noted in Chapter Five, the fact that the SLI is required to facilitate and enable communication for deaf *and* hearing employees is under-recognised. The focus is predominantly on the SLI as '*the Deaf person's interpreter*' (Q16: qr40), an impression reinforced through the nature of the provision of SLIs through AtW. SLIs can themselves find it difficult to fully accept that they are there for both deaf and hearing clients. Many interpreter training programs stress the inequality that deaf people face in hearing dominated environments, and highlight the fact that the SLI is there in part to address that inequity and imbalance. Accordingly, SLIs often focus their attention solely on the deaf client, with the result that the hearing client's needs are neglected. Addressing this bias may encourage hearing participants to appreciate more fully their role within the communicative process.

The unique nature of workplace interpreting, where the SLI is in frequent contact with the same individuals, means that different relationships are established, and this is likely to increase the risk of personal and professional boundaries being crossed. SLIs will need to examine more closely the relationships they develop with both deaf and hearing colleagues, and constantly reflect on the potential impact on their role and

boundaries. Evidence suggests that the SLI is at times viewed by all primary parties as a colleague, and whilst this can have a positive effect in terms of the SLI's position within a CofP, it can also call into question the SLI's allegiances and loyalties. One aspect of this will be to ensure that any bond formed with the deaf employee is not to the detriment of collegial relationships with their hearing peers.

Finally, SLIs should consider whether they are suitable for the type of work that office or AtW interpreting entails. As one journal respondent notes, the business world can be harsh, and she questions how common ground can be established between '*language/ people focused interpreters*' and '*task/ objective driven people*' (JJ8.1). The appropriate qualities for designated interpreters have been cited as the ability to maintain boundaries, openness to becoming part of a team, the skill of behaving in a social and collegiate way with the deaf employee's work peers and the aptitude for putting the deaf person's needs before their own (Hauser & Hauser 2008), along with an adaptable or flexible attitude (Campbell et al. 2008). Whilst not all of these qualities might be deemed essential, it does seem likely that interpreting in workplace settings requires a certain mindset, and that not all SLIs are appropriate for work in this field (Hauser & Hauser 2008).

8.3.3 Interpreting multi-party meetings- strategies for change

This section takes as its starting point the view that it is a legitimate part of the SLI's professionalism to assist all primary participants to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of what is happening in the interpreted event (Turner 2007b). In other words the SLI has some responsibility to open up and make transparent the complex process in which they are engaged. In relation to workplace interpreting, an essential element of this entails engaging with primary participants to discuss the difficulties presented by multi-party talk, and to look at ways of making it more accessible for deaf employees. This section will therefore consider strategies which can be undertaken by *all* participants engaged in interpreted workplace discourse. A collaborative approach to addressing the issues is assumed, rather than intimating that the responsibility lies solely with the SLI.

Developing relationships

A number of suggestions for improving working practices for SLIs were made by interpreters completing the reflective journals. These included the need for Deaf Awareness and Interpreter Awareness training packages, better preparation for workplace assignments (e.g. the provision of glossaries of terms and jargon) and more open and honest discussions with both deaf and hearing clients. The latter issue has been highlighted by a number of authors (see Hauser et al. 2008), emphasising the importance for deaf and hearing employees and SLIs to discuss clearly and openly how they want to work together. An open dialogue about interpreting issues affecting either party will enable the SLI and deaf employee to exchange ideas about possible solutions to problems that arise, and will allow for deaf perspectives, insights and tactics in addressing these challenges (Oatman 2008). This discussion must continue even after the relationship has been established, with SLIs and deaf individuals continuously negotiating and renegotiating the ways in which they work together (Hauser & Hauser 2008).

As Napier et al. (2008) state, the increase in deaf people moving in to more professional roles will see a shift in their working relationship with SLIs. A more pro-active approach needs to be taken by deaf employees, who can assume more responsibility for determining the most effective way of working with SLIs. This can be assisted by deaf people gaining a greater understanding of the interpreting process and profession. An essential element of this process is the degree of comfort and trust the SLI and the deaf employee have in raising issues with each other, something which can develop over the course of a regular working relationship. Training is required on how to work together, to promote positive interaction and to develop better relationships between deaf employees and SLIs (Kushalnagar & Rashid 2008; Napier et al. 2008). This would assist the deaf employee to move from being a recipient of interpreting services to someone who can work *with* the SLI.

Managing interaction within a CofP

The difficulties of interpreting discourse within a CofP have been highlighted in Chapter Six and discussed in some detail earlier in Chapter Seven. Many of the problems arise from the collaborative nature of the discourse, characterised by

overlapping and supportive turns, feedback signals and un-regulated turn-taking. Alternative strategies have been put forward to manage some of these aspects of workplace meeting interaction. In the case of overlapping talk Campbell et al. (2008) add to the strategies already outlined by Roy (1993) and van Herreweghe (2002), suggesting that the SLI may be required to remember what happened and relay information after the event. However, this places further responsibilities on the SLI and also assumes that they will be able to accurately store information about participant contributions whilst engaged in the task of language processing and cultural mediation. Takimoto (2009) has highlighted the interpreter's footing shift to reporting or summarising mode, and this appears a potential way forward for SLIs. The findings in Chapter Six suggest that the SLI, when faced with overlapping talk, tends to subsume participant comments into a single, un-attributed monologue. Rather than adopting this practice as a reactive strategy, one way of managing the talk may be to make a conscious, proactive decision to shift into reporting mode, and provide the deaf employee with a condensed narrative of what is being discussed and between whom.

Campbell et al. (2008) have suggested that the SLI should note participants' facial expressions (e.g. rolling of eyes), body language and phatics (e.g. sighing at comments made by another participant) during the meeting, and relay this information to the deaf individual after the event. Information about participants engaging in asides or whispered conversations would also be very useful to the deaf employee. Whilst all of this detail would undoubtedly improve the deaf employee's appreciation of the relationships and interaction between members of the CofP, it adds to the demands already placed on the SLI. In a workplace meeting consisting of multiple participants, given the complexity of the interpreting task and the pressure that the SLI will already be under, this idea seems somewhat unrealistic.

One of the ways in which the demands upon the SLI could be reduced and the deaf employee's access to the meeting improved, would be if two SLIs were assigned to 'co-work' the meeting. This would enable the SLIs to work as a team, with the 'off-duty' SLI able to take responsibility for different aspects of the interaction. These could include using phatics and feedback signals to register the deaf employee's presence in the collaborative floor, taking responsibility for the timing of the deaf

employee's interjections, and relaying some of the peripheral information regarding facial expressions, side-discussions etc. However, issues of budgetary concerns, together with a lack of awareness amongst those controlling the financial aspects of the deaf employee's support needs, mean that the workplace SLI rarely has the luxury of a co-worker. Making changes to this aspect of workplace interpreting will require a shift in terms of government policy and funding.

Ensuring that the same SLI is booked for an assignment can undoubtedly contribute to the success of the interpreted team meeting. The regularity of the booking enables them to gain background knowledge of what is being discussed, awareness of technical or institution-specific jargon, and develop familiarity with the participants involved in the meeting (Campbell et al. 2008; Beaton & Hauser 2008). The SLI can utilise this background knowledge to begin to position themselves as a member of the CofP. This will in turn assist them in exercising judgment in their decision-making processes, e.g. prioritising a particular individual when meeting participants all speak at once (Campbell et al. 2008: 93).

Whilst many of the strategies explored above could prove useful to SLIs and deaf employees in workplace meetings, there is nonetheless a need for further discussion about the role of hearing participants in ensuring that the interpreted event is a successful one. At present there seems to be little understanding from the hearing employees that changes are required in their behaviour. As one journal respondent notes, even relatively simple changes, such as remembering '*to turn take, give the Deaf client time to read any handouts*' and to '*face the Deaf person when they are talking to them (without covering their mouths)*' (J6.6), can enable SLIs to ultimately produce a better interpretation, and thus enhance the experience for both deaf and hearing employees. Discussions which lead to these simple changes could thus prove fruitful.

8.3.4 Training and education

As discussed in the preceding section all participants will need to make changes to the ways in which they communicate, in order to improve deaf peoples' access to workplace interaction, and to enable them to participate in a CofP on a level with their

hearing peers. It is unlikely that these changes will come about without raising the levels of awareness of the SLI's function in the workplace domain and the provision of specific training. This section makes a number of recommendations for training and awareness in relation to SLIs, as well as for deaf and hearing employees.

Training for interpreters

As more SLIs move into the employment domain it is essential that strategies for interpreting in this specialised setting, and developing relationships with deaf employees are '*realised, analysed and taught*' (Hauser & Hauser 2008: 20), thus enabling deaf employees and SLIs to achieve optimal conditions for successful communication. Given that this research has demonstrated the additional complexities and challenges that multi-party interaction can present to SLIs, embedding an awareness of the issues in existing interpreter training programmes would be highly beneficial.

The skills required for workplace interpreting, as with dialogue interpreting, have more to do with the dynamics of interpersonal interaction than with '*content processing*' (Pöchhacker 2004: 186). SLIs need a thorough understanding of the interactional dynamics that underpin events such as team meetings, located as they are in such highly contextualised and culturally bound settings. Workplace interpreting therefore needs to be taught in interpreter training programs. Interpreter education needs to move beyond mock situations which expose trainees to single-speaker events, to include multi-party events where techniques for the complexities of turn-taking, source allocation, hierarchies, fluidity of positionality and roles, and the realities of real life human interaction can be observed and learnt (Kale & Larson 1998).

Training regarding the management of, and participation in, interactive discourse, is essential for SLIs in this field, particularly in relation to understanding the purpose of humour and small talk in the workplace domain. Role-plays and simulations of interpreting scenarios (see van Herreweghe 2005), a key method for developing interpreting and discourse management skills '*sensitive to the purpose of the interaction and the constraints of a particular communicative context*' (Pöchhacker

2004: 187), could be utilised in training interpreters to manage multi-party interaction. Other skills also need to be taught, including how to cue deaf employees into the emotional climate of the meeting, passing on information about the speaker's tone and mood, and other factors that contribute to the communication event (Kale & Larson 1998).

SLIs need to develop their *'interactive skills in interpersonal dialogue'*, utilising *'contextualised decision-making'* (Pöchhacker 2004: 186- 187). This should be underpinned by a sound theoretical foundation, and preferably developed in situations which simulate as closely as possible real-life scenarios, thus enabling SLIs to broaden their expertise and develop their repertoire in this domain. Efforts should be made to involve consumers from existing and prospective user institutions in the simulated scenarios and role-plays, as this will contribute to raising consumer understanding of interpreter-mediated encounters, and reinforce the authentic nature of the scenario to the interpreting students (Pöchhacker 2004; Metzger 2000).

Although I have emphasised the need for SLIs to have a thorough grounding in the interactional dynamics of multi-party workplace discourse, the linguistic aspects of the SLI's role should not be neglected. Tray (2005) identifies the lack of formal education available in ASL as a potential problem for ASL/English interpreters, a situation we see echoed for BSL/English interpreters. SLI education programs in the UK rarely include the depth and breadth of material that equips practitioners to deal with the types of issues that have been described in the preceding chapters, leaving them struggling when they strive to accurately manage such complex interaction. Advanced language study should therefore be seen as essential in providing SLIs with the tools and knowledge to collaboratively manage interpreted events such as team meetings, or to successfully create the frames necessary for humorous exchanges. To achieve this, SLIs must have the appropriate level of communicative competence to enable them to recognise the contextualisation cues produced by the speaker or signer.

BSL/ English interpreter training programs need to ensure that students have an in-depth grasp of the subtleties and complexities in their first language, as well as in their second. Turn-taking and managing overlapping talk during multi-party meetings has been shown to present particular problems for SLIs and therefore close analysis of

culturally appropriate turn-taking behaviours in both BSL and English will enable SLIs to better inform their practice. A deeper understanding of the rules and norms underpinning workplace meetings, together with an awareness of the norms of turn-taking will allow the SLI to manage the communicative event more successfully.

The use of humour and small talk in the workplace should form a core module in any interpreter training. This should include an awareness of how deaf and hearing people use humour, and the appropriate cues in each culture which enable participants to recognise a shift to a humorous frame. A well-grounded appreciation of the importance of small-talk and humour in workplace interaction will help SLIs to better understand what is happening within the discourse event and equip them with the tools necessary for informed decision-making. The complexity of many interpreted interactions, informed by aspects of role, intention, attitude, and, most importantly *'the degree of shared sociocultural (general, technical, contextual) knowledge'*, mean that each instance of humour will be a unique occurrence (Pöchhaker & Pavlicek 2002: 398). Accordingly, there can be no prescriptive strategies for specifying when to *'recreate, substitute, explain or omit a joke, an ironic remark or a pun'* (Pöchhaker & Pavlicek 2002: 398). Instead the interpreter will have to make strategic choices and decisions based on the *'functional characteristics of the meeting, the specifics of the situation, and the processing conditions typical of the simultaneous mode'* (Pöchhaker & Pavlicek 2002: 398). These complex decision-making skills will need practice and the opportunity for SLIs to reflect on their decisions and choices.

Training should not be restricted solely to those entering the profession but could also be provided to those already working in the field. SLIs engaged in workplace interpreting should be open to providing training sessions, something that is described by Beaton & Hauser (2008: 222) as *'a form of community and professional service'*. Training, such as workshops focusing on the challenges that can arise in this setting, would enhance the awareness of the interpreting profession and benefit the relationship between SLIs and deaf employees (Beaton & Hauser 2008). This form of training could be offered through existing providers such as ASLI, or as discrete events tailored to the needs of a particular workplace or organisation.

Training for primary participants

Deaf employees undoubtedly have a huge part to play in improving the service they receive in the workplace, but will require a much deeper understanding of the SLI's role, and of the interpreting process, to achieve this. Deaf employees need to understand that the neutral conduit model is rarely applicable in the workplace environment (see Hauser & Hauser 2008). In the UK, deaf people seldom have the opportunity to learn about current theories and concepts applied to interpreting, and are hardly ever offered training on how to work with an SLI, the assumption being that they will have assimilated this information purely by default of being deaf. However, deaf people are often as much in need of information about how best to work with an SLI as hearing people are, and this is an area which needs promoting.

The inclusion and socialisation of deaf employees is not solely dependent on the accommodations made by deaf individuals, but is equally dependent on changes made by other people in the workplace (Bain et al. 2004). The essential ingredients for a successful relationship between SLIs and all participants within the workplace setting must therefore include the acceptance of joint responsibility for communication, an atmosphere of trust and openness, and a commitment to achieving equality of access for the deaf employee. Optimising socialisation for deaf individuals will require a shift in values and meanings ascribed to deafness and hearing loss (Bain et al. 2004). In some situations a change in long-established behaviours will be necessary, which will require the cooperation and engagement of hearing employees. In terms of the more informal aspects of workplace discourse change might be particularly difficult to effect, requiring alterations to the informal relationships and communication patterns, as well as the redefinition of the norms of the situation and the values of the group (Emerton et al. 1996). Any such dramatic shift would require an understanding of why change is necessary and therefore training and awareness for hearing employees is an essential component of the process.

8.3.5 Informing national policy

Changes have to be initiated and implemented at policy level in order for significant differences to be made in terms of deaf peoples' access to workplace interaction via an SLI. Many of the practical changes suggested in the preceding section will be

unachievable without a shift in the ways in which interpreting services are provided through the AtW scheme.

Recognition is needed at a national and governmental level of deaf peoples' right to demand a service that suits their needs, and which enables and empowers them to work alongside their hearing peers. If deaf employees are prevented from getting their needs met, through either a lack of understanding about what constitutes an adequate service, or through insufficient funding, then they are being disabled rather than empowered (Hauser & Hauser 2008). This charge could be levelled at a number of government departments and policy makers, who are meant to be encouraging deaf and disabled people to take their place in the field of employment, but appear to have little understanding of what support they require. It is vital, even when it appears that provision has been made, that recognition is afforded to the '*gaps of quality rather than quantity*' that can exist in services (Turner 2007a: 64). In other words, if untrained, unqualified and unregistered communication support is provided through the AtW system, with no standards in place to ensure the quality, adequacy and skills of those delivering the service, then deaf employees are being denied the opportunity to operate in the workplace on a level with their hearing peers. There needs to be a consumer-led drive to push up standards of SLI provision in workplace settings. This will entail an ongoing extensive education and awareness programme, informing those responsible for the funding of SLIs for deaf people in employment about the need for quality provision.

In terms of the AtW assessment I suggest that rather than focusing solely on the needs of the deaf employee, it would be more beneficial to assess the communication needs of the *workplace* where a deaf individual is employed, encompassing both the deaf employee and their hearing colleagues. This would give a truer picture of the communication barriers and may lead to a deeper understanding of the issues involved. A holistic work-based assessment could lead to an SLI being assigned to an office or team for all employees to access when needed, and might result in more parity for the deaf employee as well as a clearer role for the SLI.

AtW assessors need to have a better awareness of the complexities of the deaf employee's workplace support needs, particularly in terms of their interpreting requirements for meetings or training events. AtW are reluctant to fund two SLIs for

events such as team meetings, but as the study has demonstrated, the nature of multi-party discourse results in the SLI struggling to provide adequate access for primary participants. Realistic funding allocation is therefore necessary to ensure that the support provided under the AtW scheme truly enables access, rather than being merely tokenistic.

There is undoubtedly a need for deaf people to be more involved in the process of deciding the most appropriate support for their workplace communication needs. Most deaf people are excluded from the decision-making processes in the institutions and organisations that are meant to serve them (Baker-Shenk 1991). If deaf employees are to achieve equality with their hearing peers then their views and opinions will not only have to be canvassed widely, but also taken fully into account. Given the evidence from previous research into deaf peoples' experiences within the workplace, the lack of development and change in this area suggests that their views and needs are still being disregarded.

8.3.6 Summary

This section has put forward a number of recommendations arising from the research findings. SLIs will need to '*expand their knowledge, talents, and extra-linguistic skills*' (Oatman 2008: 179) alongside the technical and linguistic aspects of their interpreting performance, in order to match deaf peoples' needs as they move into different fields of employment. Additionally, deaf and hearing individuals will require a deeper understanding of the interpreting process so that they might fully participate within interpreted workplace discourse. Finally, changes will need to be implemented at a governmental level, so as to ensure real progress is made in enabling deaf employees to access the workplace on a level with their hearing peers.

8.4 Contributions and Reflections

This section highlights the contribution the study has made to a number of fields, together with some reflections on the research process. There has been minimal exploration of the interpreter's role in this setting, either in signed or spoken language interpreting studies, and therefore the findings will contribute considerably to the

body of knowledge in this area. There are also implications for signed language interpreting across different settings, and in relation to the field of interpreting generally. Outside of the interpreting domain, the study also offers insights in to workplace discourse. Some of the particular challenges I have experienced in the course of the research process are addressed and the implications are considered. Finally, I discuss the ways in which research findings will be disseminated to research participants and the profession of signed language interpreting.

8.4.1 Interpreting studies

Roy's (1989) groundbreaking study demonstrated that interpreting is a complex communicative event, wherein all participants influence the direction and outcomes of the interaction. My findings evidence that the complexity of the interpreter's task increases when there are multiple participants in the interpreted event. In doing so, my research supports the findings of Takimoto's (2009) study, showing that interaction becomes more multilayered with an increased number of participants, thus adding to the interpreter's responsibilities and functions in controlling and managing the discourse event.

My analysis of workplace interpreted discourse indicates that SLIs exert considerable influence over the interaction between deaf and hearing employees, particularly in relation to turn-taking in multi-party discourse, and accessing informal talk and humorous exchanges. Furthermore, the study has demonstrated how a regular working relationship can impact on the boundaries between primary participants. In particular, the research has opened up the ambivalent nature of the bond between the SLI and the deaf employee, and the ways in which this can impact on the SLI's position in the workplace. Many of the findings are relevant to other interpreting domains, particularly settings involving multiple participants. It would be particularly useful, for example, to consider the findings of this study in connection with interpreter provision within educational settings. SLIs working with deaf and hearing students could use the findings to inform their practice in managing turn-taking in group discussions, as well as the ways in which they interpret classroom humour and provide access to informal talk. Given the nature of the relationship between the

educational SLI and deaf student, role and boundaries could also be examined in the light of this study.

By locating the SLI within a CofP, I have been able to further evidence that responsibility for effective communication does not lie solely with the SLI, but in fact requires a collaborative effort on behalf of all primary parties. This approach offers a new perspective on the SLI's role in multi-party discourse, and enables an appreciation of the many subtle strands which make up the shared repertoire of a work group. Analysis of the data has demonstrated that in workplace meetings or CofPs, the dominant norm is that of the hearing majority, with work practices being constrained by established rules and practice. Evidence suggests that SLIs are also heavily influenced by hearing norms, to the extent that their interpreting practice is impinged upon, often to the detriment of the deaf participant.

In addition to the contributions that the current study has made to interpreting studies, it has also reinforced the work of a number of researchers. The study has built on the work of Roy (1989), Wadensjö (1992), and Metzger (1995), by further evidencing the interactive nature of the interpreter's engagement in interpreted discourse events, and affirming the impossibility and unsuitability of maintaining an uninvolved, conduit-derived stance, particularly in the workplace domain. In doing so it upholds the view of those working in the deaf professional/ designated interpreter field (see Hauser & Hauser 2008). The research has also revealed the SLI's tendency, when faced with multiple speakers and overlapping talk, to produce an un-attributed monologue. This was identified by van Herreweghe (2002) but has been extended in this study.

In terms of signed language linguistics, the study has exposed the need for more detailed examination of elements such as contextualisation cues, establishing and maintaining the play frame and turn-taking behaviour. These aspects can then inform the teaching of interpreting, raising the standard of SLIs' signed language skills, and thus developing both the interpreter and the profession.

Finally, whilst the focus of this study has been on the ways in which SLIs impact and influence the interaction between deaf and hearing participants in workplace discourse, the findings could be of value to interpreters working in other languages

and across different domains. The findings could be particularly relevant to spoken language interpreters working with multiple participants. The importance of interpreting humorous exchanges and relational talk, such as small talk, during meetings is also of significance to spoken language interpreters, given their role in diplomatic and political domains.

8.4.2 Methodology

As highlighted in Chapter Four, various aspects of the research process, data gathering and transcription presented specific challenges. Some of these challenges can be utilised to inform future studies, particularly where researchers need to gain access to naturalistic data of interpreted events. In terms of obtaining agreement to participate in a research study, and securing access to research sites, the study has demonstrated the value of establishing a relationship of trust with the research participants. It has also emphasised the importance of a face-to-face approach to engaging with and recruiting deaf participants.

Taking a linguistic ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis has necessitated developing my relationships with both the deaf and hearing participants across the different research sites, shifting my role from that of interpreting-practitioner to practitioner-researcher. As outlined in Chapter Three, this involvement and engagement with research participants is a principal characteristic of the ethnographic approach. However, it did present challenges, particularly in terms of ensuring that the SLIs participating in the research felt as comfortable as possible with the process. Whilst I tried to convey the ‘non-fault finding’ approach of the study, and to emphasise to colleagues that they were not obliged to take part in the research, I am aware that a number of them felt uncomfortable at different stages of the process. A ‘growing’ point for future studies of this nature might be to look for ways of engaging practitioners in the research in a more positive way. Possibilities such as allowing SLIs to video themselves without the presence of the researcher, and facilitating a more open discussion of the research findings could prove a step in the right direction.

In Chapter Four I referred to the commitment that I undertook to feed back research results to participants, and to contribute to improving the ways in which SLIs could work together with deaf and hearing participants. I consider this to be an essential element of my methodology, and one which I believe was instrumental in securing agreement from research participants and gaining access to the research sites. The ways in which the research findings have been and will be made available to research participants is detailed in section 8.4.5.

The study has also demonstrated that there is a need to explore different ways of producing transcripts of multi-party interpreted discourse. The paucity of discourse-analytical research of multi-party interpreted interaction meant that I had to adapt existing transcription systems in order to adequately illustrate the complexities of interpreted discourse. Developments in technology and software tools will undoubtedly benefit the transcription of data where there is both spoken and signed language content, but consideration will still need to be afforded to making any transcription as ‘reader-friendly’ as possible, so as to ensure accessibility.

8.4.3 Workplace discourse

As a sociolinguistic exploration of interpreted interaction, this study contributes to the wider field of linguistics, particularly studies on institutional discourse. The description of the use of humour and small talk within a mixed culture workplace CofP further adds to the body of knowledge regarding the collaborative and collegial nature of workplace interaction, as well as building on the existing literature of humour research. Additionally, it emphasises the value of relational talk as a component of workplace discourse, demonstrating its worth in analysing participant relationships and interaction, particularly in intercultural settings.

8.4.4 Limitations

Although this thesis contributes to both the body of academic knowledge and to interpreter practice in the workplace domain, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One of the major limitations is the extent to which technology was used in the project. As outlined in Chapter Four, I was reliant on a single video camera to capture complex multi-party interaction. This subsequently impacted on the choices open to me in terms of software tools for data analysis. The use of two or more cameras would have enabled the recording of the events from different angles, and thus data analysis could have benefited from the use of a software transcription tool, such as Elan or SignStream. This may have allowed for a more detailed breakdown of discourse features.

In terms of the research sites and participants, the majority of the workplaces involved in the study were white-collar in nature. A study which encompassed a wider selection of workplaces, such as manufacturing or service industries, may have revealed different CofPs and alternative practices therein. Additionally, gathering the data over a longer period of time at the same workplaces may have enabled more detailed observations and provided further insights and understanding.

As the sole researcher in the study, all of the research was conducted by me, including data gathering and analysis. Accordingly, my presence will have impacted on both the research process and the results of the study. As explored in Chapter Four, I tried to be as reflexive as possible throughout the research process and the analysis of the data, but my personal characteristics, life experiences and practitioner relationship with the research participants will inevitably have coloured all aspects of the current study.

Finally, whilst a number of recommendations have been made for improving SLI practice and for widening deaf peoples' participation within the workplace, research in this area is in very early stages. This study has been an exploratory one, and the findings would be strengthened by replicating the process on a broader scale and with a wider variety of participants. This would in turn lead to deeper insights which could inform interpreting theory and ultimately develop interpreter practice.

8.4.5 Feedback to research participants

I have on a number of occasions throughout this thesis stressed the value of feeding back the results of the research to the research participants, perceiving this as a vital element of the research process. It is therefore important to detail here some of the ways in which this has already been achieved, together with proposals to disseminate the research findings more widely in the future.

In terms of the hearing research participants, findings have been fed back in a number of ways. I have forwarded any published articles originating from the research to the five research sites, requesting that the information is circulated amongst staff. In the latter stages of the study, I offered to visit each site to give a brief presentation on the research findings. This offer was only taken up by Livingwell, but provided me with the opportunity to ensure that the deaf participant had access to the findings. I have also twice presented findings from the research to the SLIs from Radfordshire interpreting service.

I will ensure that the research is made available to the deaf participants by offering individual face-to-face meetings to outline the key findings. Given that deaf participants are frequently unable to access research findings published via traditional academic routes, consideration will be given to making the findings available in a signed language format. This is dependent on sourcing the funding to produce the material in this format, but I consider it to be a vital part of the feedback process. Making the research findings available in a signed format would also enable the information to be made more widely available to the deaf community.

8.5 Recommendations for Future Research

'Interpreters in the workplace are still a relatively new phenomenon...a great deal of learning needs to take place by all concerned to promote a healthy accessible working environment.' (J17.3)

Despite the development of interpreter training programmes, the accreditation of interpreters, and improvements in the provision of interpreting services, there is still

insufficient meaningful research into *'exactly what we do, how we ought to be doing it, and how we ought to be training the next generation of interpreters'* (Moody 2007: 187). There are a number of aspects arising from the current research which suggest avenues for future research. I echo Hale's (2007: 62) recommendations in relation to medical interpreting- more studies with professional, trained interpreters are required in order to analyse issues which complicate interpreted interaction. This includes how SLIs manage turn-taking, the most appropriate ways of dealing with overlapping speech, and how to best to interrupt the discourse event to offer or to ask for clarifications when, due to linguistic or cultural reasons, communication is not achieved (Hale 2007). Furthermore I agree that the focus of future investigations should continue to move away from concerns with *'narrow source-text/ target-text comparison'*, i.e. attention to measurements of 'interpreter error', 'correctness', and 'equivalence', but should shift towards *'a more procedural and descriptive account of what actually happens in an interpreter-mediated event'* (Mason 1999: 159-160).

Specifically relating to the shared repertoire of a CofP, essential future research would entail detailed investigations into how deaf people use humour. For example, a descriptive study on the ways in which deaf people frame their utterance so as to signal 'this is play' would be highly beneficial. The findings would enable SLIs to recognise the signals produced by deaf participants, thus allowing them to cue hearing participants into the shift in frame. SLIs could then develop suitable strategies to produce a more culturally appropriate interpretation. A more detailed examination of the linguistic features used in humorous exchanges by deaf people would also allow for the definition of humour to be widened to encompass signed language users.

A detailed investigation of how turn-taking occurs in multi-party discourse between deaf participants would allow observation of the contextualisation cues utilised by deaf individuals, and enable a deeper understanding of the turn-taking process. This would be particularly relevant if conducted within a workplace CofP consisting solely of deaf employees. Any research which adds to the body of linguistic knowledge of signed languages will subsequently encourage the development of the appropriate skills in SLIs.

Access to small talk and casual conversation is an important element in enabling an employee to integrate into the workplace and to achieve full membership of a CofP. I therefore suggest that there is a need for further research on this aspect of workplace discourse, exploring the extent to which the SLI is involved in the communicative event and how they manage the complex layers of interaction. In workplaces where there are multiple deaf employees participating in meetings it would be useful to examine if instances of small talk occur between the deaf members of the CofP, and if so, when and how these are interpreted by the SLI. A project which could capture informal, naturally occurring workplace discourse would be of immense interest and value. The examination of how SLIs manage small talk and humorous exchanges should also be extended outside of the workplace environment and considered in such settings as education, conferences and training and community interpreting generally. Given the paucity of research into the interpretation of humour within spoken language interpreting, this field would also benefit from further research.

It would be useful to replicate this exploratory research in different workplaces. It would be particularly interesting to collect and analyse data from team meetings where there are two SLIs co-working the event, as they may utilise different strategies for managing multi-party talk. Furthermore, an investigation into how SLIs manage multi-party discourse when the majority of participants are deaf could potentially uncover different working practices and strategies which could then be applied to hearing dominated events.

Any future examination of the impact of the SLI on workplace interaction would benefit from a focus on issues related to gender. If, as Coates (2007) states, overlapping talk and co-constructed utterances are more common between female participants than male participants, does the sex of the SLI impact on the interaction between deaf and hearing participants in workplace meetings? Do female SLIs manage aspects such as turn-taking, humour and small talk differently to male SLIs? Do members of a CofP accept interjections to take turns or humorous shifts in frames differently when interpreted by a male or female SLI? Do participants in '*traditional male interaction*' (Tray 2005: 130) react differently to utterances produced by someone from a different gender?

Another aspect of interpreting in the workplace domain which merits further attention is telephone interpreting. The difficulties of telephone interpreting were recurrent throughout the questionnaire and journal data, and the issues deserve detailed attention. A study which examines the ways in which SLIs manage interpreted telephone calls could produce a wealth of data, and would be of great advantage to the profession generally.

As more organisations and companies move towards employing SLIs as members of staff, consideration will have to be given to the dual role that this gives the SLI. Given that a number of SLIs referred to the difficulties involved in having to ‘switch hats’, from SLI to staff member, and the impact this has on their role and boundaries, further research into how SLIs balance this aspect of workplace interpreting would be extremely useful.

The questionnaire issued in the initial stages of the research process asked SLIs if they felt they reflected the deaf employee’s character and identity in their interpretation. Although it has not been an avenue pursued in the current study, due to practical and temporal constraints, there were sufficient responses to indicate that this could prove a fruitful, if highly complex, topic for a future research project.

Finally, given the hierarchical nature of workplace discourse, the negotiation of face in relation to interpreter-mediated workplace encounters would be extremely beneficial, as this is an under-researched area in signed language interpreting studies.

8.6 Summary

In Chapter One I used a posting from an interpreter e-group to illustrate some of the challenges facing the SLI in the workplace domain. The individual responsible for the post asked how SLIs should handle jokes *‘that the other side doesn’t get’*. I believe this thesis has gone some way towards exploring how SLIs can develop strategies to manage this and other aspects of workplace discourse. I have demonstrated that interpreting in workplace meetings presents a challenge for SLIs across a number of levels. Not only are they lexically challenging in terms of the specific language and jargon used, meetings also pose an interactional challenge due

to the requirement for the SLI to manage aspects such as turn-taking and overlapping talk. Finally, the meeting as a discourse event is also contextually challenging, represented by the shared repertoire of the CofP.

The study has investigated the complex nature of the workplace, and has demonstrated that the SLI has an integral role within a CofP. The research has reinforced the fact that the SLI's task in discourse management is highly complex, and there will never be a definitive answer as to how SLIs should interpret a specific utterance, humorous or otherwise. However, the research has highlighted the collegial nature of workplace discourse, particularly the elements of small talk and humour, and has emphasised the fact that the SLI must always take into account the participants engaged in the interpreted event and their relationship to each other. The SLI's decision-making process must thus be heavily based on the contextual nature of the discourse event. The thesis is perhaps best concluded with the comments of three SLIs, responding to the question about whether or not they consider it part of their role to inform deaf clients about workplace norms and culture. For me, their views neatly summarise the key themes running throughout this thesis. Firstly, as one respondent notes, interpreting the *'asides, jokes, explanations'* (QR: 52) goes some way to ensuring deaf employees have an equal experience of workplace discourse. Secondly, *'it depends'* should always be the SLI's motto, as *'anything we pass on will be coloured by our own experiences'*, and it is therefore *'important to question why we are doing it'* (QR: 53). Finally, it should always be borne in mind that the workplace SLI will always need to be flexible and open to reviewing and adjusting their practice, as *'one size does definitely not fit all'* (J12.1).

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

INTERPRETING IN THE WORKPLACE

MPhil/ PhD Research Study

This questionnaire forms part of a five year MPhil/ PhD research project, with the University of Central Lancashire and supported by Radfordshire Deaf Society, and is a preliminary information gathering exercise. Following the analysis of the questionnaire responses, further data will be collected, by videoing of real life, interpreted workplace interaction and semi-structured interviews. These will be analysed and the outcomes of the study will be used to inform and effect change in current interpreting practice.

Background to the study

The work place is a complex environment, with its own specific culture and behavioural norms. Employees can relate to each other in a variety of ways and on differing levels of formality. Throughout all interactions, the issue of power is prevalent, with people continually negotiating and renegotiating the roles that they undertake within conversation. Knowledge of the workplace, its culture and the unwritten rules that underpin that environment are a vital tool in gaining and maintaining power in discourse settings. Deaf employees are frequently disadvantaged in terms of accessing information and consequently the workplace holds considerable potential for linguistic and cultural misunderstanding.

Research Aims

- ✚ To investigate how sign language interpreters employ their knowledge of workplace culture and examine how this affects the dynamics of everyday interaction between Deaf and hearing employees and their employers.
- ✚ To examine the ways in which sign language interpreters influence the outcomes of the distribution of power in discourse.
- ✚ To investigate the ways that sign language interpreters reflect and convey social identities in the workplace.

All information you provide will be used as part of my research project into Sign Language Interpreters in the workplace. All information is strictly confidential and will be recorded in a way that is anonymous and non-attributable. Data will be stored on a computer database and is subject to the Data Protection Act. You are entitled to withdraw from the project at any time and your data will be destroyed.

How to fill in the questionnaire

- **Please tick one box only unless the question states that you can tick more than one.**
- **Multi-choice questions- please circle option that applies to you.**
- **Some questions ask you to give details by writing on the dotted lines. You do not have to write in complete sentences.**

SECTION ONE: ABOUT YOU:

First of all, a few brief questions about you.

Q.1 Gender: Male/ Female

Q.2 Are you: Hearing/ Deaf/ Hard of hearing/Hearing Aid User

Q.3 Age on 1st September 2004

Q.4 INTERPRETING QUALIFICATION (circle option that applies to you):

MRSLI/ LASLI (Licensed ASLI member)/Trainee Interpreter/ Junior Trainee

Interpreter/Other (please describe.....)

Q.5 WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST SIGN LANGUAGE QUALIFICATION:

NVQ4 Interpreting units/ NVQ4 Language units/ BSL3/ BSL2/OTHER (PLEASE DESCRIBE).....

Q.6 HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING AS AN INTERPRETER

0-2 years

2-5 years

More than 5 years

Q.7 Have you worked outside of the interpreting field?

YES/ NO

Q. 8 If yes, do you feel that your previous work experience has informed your interpreting practice? Can you give an example?

Q.9 If no, do you feel that this affects your interpreting performance in any way?

Please describe.

SECTION TWO: INTERPRETING WORK

Q.10 Do you interpret in office/ access to work settings (i.e. interpreting in the workplace) as part of your interpreting work?

YES Continue to Question 12

NO Please answer Question 11

Q.11 If you do not interpret in workplace settings please state why not:

Prefer not to work in this setting

Insufficient experience to undertake this type of work

Have worked in this setting before and found it too demanding

Do not enjoy working in this setting

Have not been offered work in this setting

Other reason (please describe).....

Q.12 How would you describe your role in this setting?

- Sign Language Interpreter
- Interpreter/ Personal Assistant
- Personal Assistant
- Other (please describe).....

Q.13 Do other people see your role differently in this setting? Please describe (e.g. Deaf client- 'my support worker').

Q.14 How often do you interpret in this setting?

- Regularly-at least once a week
- Intermittently- two or three times a month
- Occasionally- four or five times a year
- Other (please describe)

Q.15 Are there specific areas of workplace interpreting that you find difficult? If not, please continue to Question 16. If yes, please tick all categories that apply to you.

- Technical vocabulary and jargon
- Maintaining client/ interpreter boundaries
- Telephone interpreting
- Interpreting team meetings
- Interpreting supervision meetings
- Interacting with other employees
- Interpreting during breaks/ meal times
- Other- please describe.....

Q.16 What are the main work related issues for you when interpreting in an office setting?

Q.17a Do you work with the same Deaf client(s) on a regular basis?

YES/ NO

Q.17b If yes, can you describe how this affects your interpreting?

Q.17c What, if any, do you feel are the benefits of working with the same Deaf client(s) on a regular basis?

Q.17d What, if any, are the negative aspects of a regular working relationship?

Q.18a Do you interpret ‘office chitchat’ or informal conversations during your interpreting assignment?

Regularly

Sometimes

Never

Q. 18b If ‘sometimes’, can you say when?

Q.18c If ‘never’, why not?

Q.19a Do you inform your Deaf client about workplace culture and the workplace norms of hearing people? Can you give an example?

Q.19b Do you consider this to be part of your role within the workplace setting?

Q.20a When interpreting between a Deaf and hearing employee, do you try to reflect their personalities?

Q.20b If so, can you describe how you do this?

Q.21a Are there any other ways that the structure and organisation of the workplace setting positively benefits or constrains your interpreting?

Q.21b If so, can you describe the ways in which it does so?

Q.22 This questionnaire only covers some of the issues that arise in workplace interpreting. If you feel that I have missed out things that you consider equally important please add your comments below:

Q. 23 Are you willing to take part in further research? I am looking for a number of interpreters to participate in a reflective diary/ journal keeping exercise between October 2004 and December 2004. If you would be interested in taking part, please complete the section with your name and address below or contact me at julesdickinson@hotmail.com for more information. Your details will not be passed on to any third party and will only be used to contact you for the purpose of this study.

Name:

Address:

Preferred Contact details:

Many thanks for taking time to complete this questionnaire; your assistance is deeply appreciated.

Research funded by: Radfordshire Deaf Society and the University of Central Lancashire

Please return your questionnaire to:

Jules Dickinson
Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service
Radfordshire Deaf Society
(Address deleted)
Or email to: julesdickinson@hotmail.com

Appendix B: Email invitation to participate

Email content to interpreter e-groups- e-newsli@jiscmail.ac.uk, the-grey-zone@yahoogroups.com, members-asli@yahoogroups.com

Calling all interpreters!

My name is Jules Dickinson and I work as a sign language interpreter in the East Midlands. I am currently undertaking a five year, part time MPhil/PhD research project, looking at interpreting in office/workplace settings. As an initial stage of this research I am looking for interpreters to fill in a questionnaire and I would like to invite you to contact me if you would be prepared to complete one for me.

I have not sent the questionnaire out as an attachment, as I understand that there are problems with distributing viruses amongst the e-groups. I have pasted the covering page at the end of this email to give you some idea of the nature of the project. You can contact me by email at julesdickinson@hotmail.com and I will send you an electronic version. If you would prefer a paper version please contact me with your name and address and I will post one to you with an SAE for return.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will assist me in this project. 'Office' interpreting is a rapidly expanding domain for interpreters and a very complex one- hopefully this research and your responses will help to clarify and explain some of the issues and difficulties that we come across in this field.

Many thanks

Jules

Appendix C: Reflective Journal Template

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL- GUIDELINES

Why a journal?

I want to collect evidence of the issues that confront you, working as a sign language interpreter in office and workplace settings, as well as the impact and influence of your role in this area. The aim of this journal is for you to make a note of particular instances in your workplace interpreting. These can be about times that you felt were difficult or problematic, but could equally be about successful interpreting scenarios. The main thing is for you to record what happened, what it meant to you and why you think it happened in the way that it did, in this specific setting.

Confidentiality and consent

Examples and quotes from your journals will be used in my research. It is therefore important that you keep your diary as anonymous as possible. When using your data, I will also change names and scenarios to avoid the identification of participants. I will always seek your permission should I want to identify yourself as the interpreter in a given scenario. However, your client will not be identified. If it is impossible to cite the example without clients being identified, that example will not be used. You may withdraw from the study at any time, by notifying me, and your information will be destroyed.

How should I fill in it?

These points below are meant to provide you with guidelines for your reflective journal. If you use them as a template you should be able to produce a rich description of the interpreted event. However, you do not have to follow this format; the important thing is that you feel comfortable with keeping a record of examples of when you felt your interpretation was affected by the dynamics of the workplace setting.

Scenario:

- What was happening?
- When was it happening?

- Where was it happening?
- What was the setting?
- Why was it happening?
- Who was involved?
- How were you involved?
- What were the outcomes of the situation?
- How did you honestly feel about the event?

Critical awareness

- What ideas or concepts influenced the way you behaved in this scenario?
- How did those ideas or concepts affect your relationships with the other participants?
- What power relations were involved in the situation?

How often should I fill it in?

The frequency of your entries is entirely at your discretion. You do not have to make an entry everyday; I would prefer you to use your own judgment and note down issues that are important to you when they occur. This might mean that you will be making daily entries; alternatively you might only have one example a week. Please photocopy the journal sheets and use them as a template for your entries. The period for completion of the journal is from October to December 2004.

Return date

Please return the journals to me by the 31st of December 2004. Attach the cover sheet with your diarist number to your journal sheets. Many thanks for your participation in this part of the research project; I hope that you have found it interesting. If you would like to be kept informed of the outcomes of the questionnaire and journals, please tick below and return this sheet with your journal.

Please inform me of the results of the questionnaire and journal research.

Contact details:

Name:

Address:

Email:

Questions and Clarifications

If there is anything you would like to ask me, either before you start the journal, or during completion, please feel free to contact me. You can either email me at julesdickinson@hotmail.com or telephone at 0115 9700516 (Radfordshire Deaf Society) and I will get back to you with regards to any concerns, queries or points of clarification.

Appendix D: Journal Example

Scenario: Weekly supervision meeting

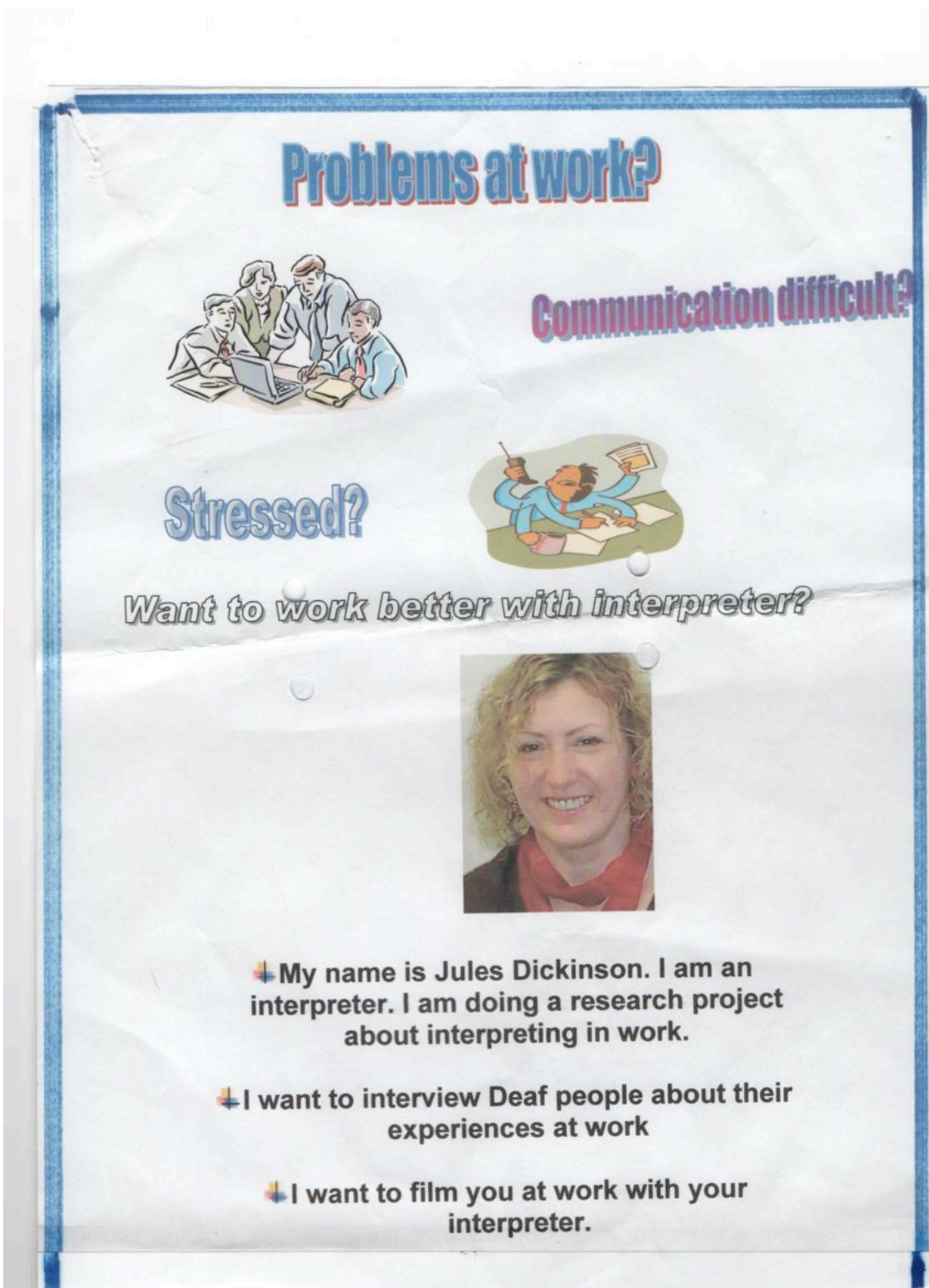
Participants: Line Manager and Deaf person

Setting: small office environment, very cramped


Throughout this meeting the Deaf client was writing down comments made by his supervisor, and he was using the opportunity to make a deliberate break in eye contact with the supervisor and myself. Because of my background knowledge of this particular client I knew that he was not happy with the way that supervision was going and was signalling his disagreement and displeasure by taking his time with his notes and avoiding eye contact. This behaviour made me feel extremely awkward and I had to exercise considerable self restraint to stop myself attracting the Deaf person's attention. I was very aware of the fact that the supervisor was ready to resume the conversation and although I knew that it was not my responsibility to control this aspect of the exchange, the urge to do so was almost overwhelming! At one point I did actually tap the floor to get the Deaf client's attention, even though there had been no verbal signal from the supervisor to initiate my action.

Because I work with this Deaf client on a regular basis, I was aware that his action was not due to a lack of awareness of conversational norms. I also knew that the supervisor was aware of the fact that Deaf people could not take notes and look at the interpreter at the same time. The discomfort stemmed from the fact that the Deaf client was deliberately taking a long time to look away from both of us, clearly making a statement about how he felt he was being treated. I am aware that had I decided to take control of the conversational flow and attract his attention each time there was a pause, I would have made a very different impact on the meeting. I may have indeed taken this action had I not been aware of the background to the event. What surprised me was the level of anxiety and discomfort that I felt and I attribute this partly to the belief that as interpreters we actively work to make conversation smooth and flowing, trying to avoid conflict and awkward pauses, healing the rifts. It made me realise that as uncomfortable as it may be for me, I sometimes have to accept that the success or smooth running of the event is not always within my control and is not always my responsibility. Silence can often be a valid and powerful tool.


Appendix E: Poster for Deaf Participants



Problems at work?




Communication difficult?



Stressed?

Want to work better with interpreter?



- ✚ My name is Jules Dickinson. I am an interpreter. I am doing a research project about interpreting in work.
- ✚ I want to interview Deaf people about their experiences at work
- ✚ I want to film you at work with your interpreter.

Appendix F: Invitation Letter to Deaf Employees

DATE

Dear

Re: Working with Sign Language Interpreters- Research Project

I am a sign language interpreter at Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service. I am doing some research about how interpreters work with Deaf and hearing people. I want to try and improve the service we offer and make things better for Deaf people at work.

Would you be interested in being involved in my research? I will need to visit you at work. I will need to video you and the interpreter at work. I will also want to interview you. **All of the information will be confidential.**

Want to know more? Please come and see me at Radfordshire Deaf Club on Wednesday 23rd February 2005, between 6pm and 9pm. I will explain all about my research. If you cannot come on this day, please let me know. I will arrange to meet you on a different day. You can contact me at the deaf club or email me at julesdickinson@hotmail.com.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Jules Dickinson

Sign Language Interpreter

MPhil/ PhD Research Student

UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL
LANCASHIRE



Appendix G: Consent Form

Sign Language Interpreting in the Workplace Research Project Consent Form

Name:.....

Contact details:

Home Address:.....

.....

Telephone/ Mobile:.....

Email:.....

Work details:

Work Address:.....

.....

Telephone:.....

Line Manager/ Team Leader/ Supervisor:.....

I am interested in/ agree to take part in the research project. I understand that all information will be confidential. It will be stored and used according to the Data Protection Act. I also understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

Signature:

Date:.....

Appendix H: Letter to Employer

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Interpreting in the work place- Research project

I am a sign language interpreter based within the team at Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service. I am contacting you to ask if you would be interested in taking part in a research project, looking at the ways in which sign language interpreters function in work place settings, with a view to improving practice and to developing guidelines for employers and employees.

As part of my research I want to video interpreters working in a variety of different contexts within the workplace setting and I am seeking permission to arrange to collect this data within your workplace. I am looking for a range of settings such as one-to-one meetings, everyday office work, team meetings etc. I realise that collecting video evidence can disrupt normal working practice but wish to assure you that all steps will be taken to ensure that any interference is kept to a minimum. Obviously, all participants must consent to the collection of the video data and they will be fully informed before any recording takes place.

I can assure you that all information gathered will be treated in the strictest confidentiality and will be stored according to the Data Protection Act. Video clips will only be used to analyse the ways in which sign language interpreters work. There will be no reference made to sensitive or confidential information. All data will be made anonymous and participants are entitled to withdraw at any point in the research. Any data that has been collected up to that point will subsequently be destroyed.

As an employer of Deaf staff I hope that you will be prepared to take part in a project that will directly benefit yourself and your employees. I have enclosed a brief statement outlining the project with this letter but I am happy to discuss it with you in more detail and provide you with any further information that you might require. I

will contact you next week to see if you would be interested in taking part in the project.

Yours faithfully

Jules Dickinson (**Sign Language Interpreter, MPhil/ PhD Research Student**)

Appendix I: Background to Research

Research Outline for Employers

Profoundly Deaf people who use sign language are a marginalised group within mainstream society, frequently denied the opportunity to participate fully in employment. The impact of the Disability Discrimination Act and attitude change over the last decade means that the workplace has gradually become more accessible and Deaf people have moved into employment fields that would not previously have been open to them, increasingly being offered opportunities to work in more professional fields. At the same time support systems have had to be put into place, to enable Deaf people to work on a level footing with their non-disabled peers. The provision of sign language interpreters (SLIs) is one way of addressing the communication needs of Deaf employees.

Despite considerable research into spoken language interpreting, sign language interpreting research is still a developing area. Research has taken place into workplace talk and the effects of workplace culture and intercultural communication but there has been very little exploration interpreted discourse in the workplace. The provision of interpreters in this setting is virtually unique to the field of sign language interpreting. To date, sign language interpreting research has focussed on medical, legal, educational, theatre, and conference interpreting. Previous work has also examined the organisation and provision of interpreters and Deaf people's experiences of work but there has been no exploration of the ways in which SLIs work in employment settings.

The initial aim will be to generate a detailed description of how interpreters function in the workplace and then to explore the potential for change in current interpreting practice. The key research questions will examine how SLIs employ their knowledge of workplace culture and how this affects everyday interaction, norms of discourse and communication between Deaf and hearing employees, and their employers. The research will also look at how SLIs handle the complex power structures that exist in

employment settings, as well as considering the ways in which interpreters reflect aspects of the Deaf and hearing participant's social identity.

The research will be primarily qualitative in nature and a study will be conducted in conjunction with Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service. Ten to fifteen samples of workplace interpreting will be video-recorded and analysed, identifying problem areas. I will then take an action research approach, working with a small group of interpreters, suggesting changes to their practices. A further eight to ten samples of interpreted workplace interaction will be recorded and analysed. Five samples will then be selected as case studies. The participants will be interviewed on a face-to-face basis and will observe the video evidence, feeding back their perspectives and commenting on the interpreted event. The outcomes of the intervention will be compared with existing interpreting theories and will be evaluated from the perspective of the interpreter, deaf client and employer.

Appendix J: Letter to SLI

Dear Interpreter

Re: Interpreting in the work place- Research project

I am a sign language interpreter based within the team at Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service. I am contacting you to ask if you would be interested in taking part in a research project, looking at the ways in which sign language interpreters function in work place settings, with a view to developing alternatives to current practice and creating guidelines for employers and employees.

As part of my research I am seeking to video sign language interpreters working in a variety of different contexts within the workplace setting and I am asking for your agreement to allow yourself to be filmed. I am looking for a range of settings such as one-to-one meetings, everyday office work, team meetings etc. I realise that arrangements to video some evidence will be potentially disruptive and care will be taken to ensure that any interference with normal working practice is kept to a minimum. Obviously, all participants must consent to the collection of the video data and they will be fully informed before any recording takes place. I am currently in the process of contacting Deaf employees and their employers to discuss the project and to explore their interest in taking part.

I would like to reassure you that this is not a faultfinding mission. I am not looking at what mistakes interpreters make, nor will I be making judgments or comments about the quality of the interpreting. My interest is in how, as interpreters, we negotiate the complex environment of workplace settings. As a fellow practitioner I fully understand all the concerns and anxieties that we associate with being filmed and my aim is to make the process as pain free as possible.

I can assure you that all information gathered will be treated in the strictest confidentiality and will be stored according to the recommendations of the Data Protection Act. Video clips will only be used to analyse the ways in which sign language interpreters work and will be viewed only by those people involved in the project. All information will be made anonymous and participants are entitled to

withdraw at any point in the research and any data collected up to that point subsequently destroyed.

I hope that you will be prepared to take part in this project. I realise that any investigation into working practices can bring up difficulties and sensitive issues. However, the aim of this research is to work together with employers, employees and interpreters to address those issues and hopefully the project outcomes will benefit both yourself and your Deaf and hearing clients.

Please contact me if you have any strong objections to being filmed as part of this project or if you would like further details. I am happy to discuss the project with you in more detail and provide you with any further information that you might require.

Yours faithfully

Jules Dickinson

MPhil/ PhD research student

julesdickinson@hotmail.com

Appendix K: Letter to Employee (deaf and hearing)

Dear

Research Project: Sign Language Interpreters in the Workplace

My name is Jules Dickinson and I am a sign language interpreter based at Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service. I am currently conducting a research project looking at what sign language interpreters do in workplace settings.

I will be visiting your workplace to video sign language interpreters at work. I want to collect video data that shows sign language interpreters working with both Deaf and hearing employees in everyday work situations. These will include team meetings, one-to-one discussions, everyday conversations etc. I am only interested in analysing how interpreters do their job. All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and all participants will be anonymous. You are entitled to withdraw from the project at anytime and all the information relating to yourself will be destroyed.

I hope that you will agree to being filmed as part of this project. The results of the research will be important for making sure that sign language interpreters do their job well and for finding ways of improving our service to both Deaf and hearing employees.

If you have any objections to taking part in the research or if you would like to ask any questions about what I will be doing please feel free to contact me at Radfordshire Sign Language Interpreting Service.

Yours faithfully

Jules Dickinson

Sign Language Interpreter/ MPhil/ PhD Research Student

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Appendix L: Video Corpus Details

Video Corpus- Interpreted Workplace Interaction

Organisation	Interpreted event	Number of Participants	Duration of video
Livingwell	Team meeting (A)	5 (1 SLI, 1 deaf, 3 hearing)	39 minutes
Livingwell	Team meeting (B)	8 (1 SLI, 1 deaf, 7 hearing)	51 minutes
Radfordshire Education Services	Team meeting	8 (1 SLI, 3 deaf, 4 hearing)	54 minutes
Radford City Social Services	Team meeting	7 (1 SLI, 1 deaf, 5 hearing)	44 minutes
Radford University	Team meeting	10 (1 SLI, 1 deaf, 8 hearing)	1 hour, 38 minutes
Moneymaker PLC	One-to-one supervision	3 (1 SLI, 1 deaf, 1 hearing)	19 minutes
Moneymaker PLC	Team meeting	8 (1 SLI, 1 deaf, 6 hearing)	41 minutes

Appendix M: Video Playback Interview Questions

M.1 Interpreter Interview Questions

Questions:

- 1) What made you decide to be an interpreter?
- 2) How do you perceive your role as an interpreter?
- 3) How do you perceive your role in this specific interpreted event?
- 4) During this event do you feel that you undertook any tasks or roles that you see as being outside your remit as interpreter?
- 5) How much control do you feel that you had in the interaction in this event?
- 6) Do you feel that you were part of the meeting/ interaction?
- 7) Are you aware of the ways in which you indicate turns and changes of speakers?
- 8) How able/ confident do you feel to stop participants/ interrupt overlapping talk? When do you tend to do so? How do you decide?
- 9) Are you aware of any bias in your decisions to interrupt/ stop speakers/ allocate turns?
- 10) Is there anything in this interpreted event that you feel is different from normal? Is there anything that you identify as being particularly positive or negative?
- 11) How would you rate the success of this event?

M.2 Hearing Participant Questions

1. How long have you worked with Deaf people and interpreters?
2. What do you understand the role of the interpreter to be?
3. How do you perceive their role in this specific interpreted event?
4. Are you aware of any other tasks or roles that you see as being part of the interpreter's remit? Can you describe these?
5. Does the interpreter feel like part of the team? Can you explain why/ why not?
6. How much control do you feel that you had in the meetings that you have observed? Has this been affected in any way by the interpreter's presence?
7. Do you feel that you were part of the meeting/ interaction?
8. Do you feel that the Deaf person is part of the interaction?
9. Are you aware of the ways in which turns and changes of speakers are occurring?
10. How able/ confident do you feel to stop participants/ interrupt overlapping talk? When do you tend to do so? How do you decide?
11. Are you aware of any bias in your decisions to interrupt/ stop speakers/ allocate turns?
12. If the interpreter seeks clarification, are you aware of who requires that clarification (e.g. the interpreter or the DP)?
13. Can you tell me about anything that you have noticed in the clips that you have observed?
14. How successful were the interpreted team meetings from your perspective? (i.e. smoothness of interaction, appropriate responses, feeling as though the Deaf employee is part of the team)
15. Are there any other comments/ observations that you would like to make in respect of working with interpreters?

M.3 Deaf Participant Questions

1. How long have you worked for this company?
2. Do you have regular interpreters at work?
3. Can you tell me what are your communication needs are? What do you need an interpreter for?
4. Do the interpreters have any additional responsibilities?
5. You have seen some clips from the team meetings. Can you explain your views, how you felt?
6. In one of the clips you have viewed there is an instance where you can see that you are repeatedly trying to get into the discussion to make a point. How did that feel?
7. Do you have difficulties with taking turns in meetings? Are you aware of the ways in which hearing people take turns if they want to say something?
8. As the only deaf participant how confident are you in interrupting, asking people to stop or slow down?
9. Do you have any comments you want to make about the clip you have seen?
10. Do you feel included in the meetings?
11. Are there any other things that you want to raise, any points you want to tell me about?

Appendix N: Transcription conventions

All names used in the transcripts are pseudonyms

text	spoken contributions from hearing participants
<i>text</i>	spoken contributions from signed language interpreter
TEXT	signed contributions from deaf participants
<i>TEXT</i>	signed contributions from signed language interpreter
MP	indicates mouth-pattern
SA	indicates source attribution
RS	indicates role-shift
[]	paralinguistic features, descriptive comments, e.g. [laughs]
(xxx)	transcriber heard talk but could not identify the words
(.)	noticeable pause
:	extended or stretched syllables, e.g. minut:e:s
__(underline)	emphasised speech, e.g. <u>no</u>
-	indicates finger-spelling, e.g. F-A-C-S
—	incomplete or cut-off utterance, e.g. a pair of—
?	rising or question intonation or facial expression

Appendix O: Transcripts

O.1 Pretty Sandals

1-----
Jane: I like your sandals Janice they're pretty
Janice: they're last years
2-----
Jane: nice
Janice: I did buy some new ones for this year
[SA, MP] [MP, head back, facial expression]
Sonya: *LIKE THEIR SHOES ME OH LAST YEAR BOUGHT NEW THIS YEAR*
3-----
Janice: they were bloomin expensive
Sonya: *EXPENSIVE*
4-----
[everybody looks at Janice's sandals]
Mary: like
Sonya: *LIKE*
5-----
Jane: I bet she's bloomin expensive
Sonya: *HOW MUCH MEANS CLARIFY*
6-----
Jane: how much?
Sonya: *HOW MUCH*
7-----
Janice: fifty
Sonya: *SAID FIFTY POUNDS*
8-----
Jack: no:o:o:o
Jane: that's not bad
Sonya: *NOT BAD*
9-----
[directed to interpreter? not voiced]
Sally: FIFTY?

Jack: fifty what? P?

Sonya: *FIFTY P?*

10-----

Jane: pounds!

Sonya: *FIFTY POUNDS*

[puts her head on the table]

Janice:

Jack: you're joking

11-----

[multi-channel sign]

Sonya: *'V' JOKING*

Jane: no:o

Janice: no:o

12-----

Jane: gaw, that's alright

Jack: you're nuts Janice

Sonya: *MAD*

13-----

Jane: get real

Janice: [sits back up, nodding and looking at her sandals]

[looking at Janice's sandals]

Jack: fifty quid for a pair of—

Sonya: [multi-channel sign]

FIFTY POUNDS SANDALS 'V'

14-----

[quietly]

Janice: no (x) these cost ten so over the two years

Sonya: *TEN POUNDS MEANS TEN POUNDS*

15-----

Sonya: *PLUS TEN POUNDS TWO YEARS*

Janice: that's fine

[unintelligible background comment]

Jane: that's fine God I think you should have a third pair

16-----

[indicates Jane as speaker]

Sonya: *FINE THIRD HAVE BARGAIN*

Janice: they're either really trendy or they're old ladies sandals

17-----

[indicates Janice as speaker]

Sonya: *MEANS EITHER NEW FASHIONABLE*

[laughs quietly]

Janice: I'm not sure which but I've decided they must be really trendy hehe

18-----

Sonya: *OLD LADY SANDALS NOT SURE*

Mary: okay everybody

O.2 That's My Catchphrase

- 1-----
- [indicates self]
Danielle: ME SKEGNESS
[rising inflection]
Stuart: *skegness*
- 2-----
- Stuart:** *WOW*
Danielle: BRIGHT
- 3-----
- Stuart:** *nice*
Danielle: RELAX
- 4-----
- Stuart:** *LOVELY*
lovely
Harriet: she keeps saying Skegness but I am sure she had a lovely time
- 5-----
- Stuart:** *SAY -S- NICE TIME GOOD TIME GOOD?*
Danielle: [shrugs, MP 'alright']
- 6-----
- [laughs]
Stuart: *aww its alright*
Danielle: [laughs]
[all laugh] [smile voice, casual, not really bothered tone]
Harriet: that's one of your favourite phrases, oh, it's okay, it's alright
- 7-----
- [quote marks, smiles, leans back, head tilts to side, exaggerated MP, RS]
Stuart: *ALWAYS SAY OK ALRIGHT*
Danielle: C-P GOOD OK MY CATCHPHRASE
- 8-----
- [laughs]
Stuart: *that's my catchphrase that is*
[nods] [light laughter in voice]
Harriet: it is

9-----

[laughs]

Stuart: *RIGHT YES*

[slightly more formal tone, serious facial expression, hand gesture]

Harriet: everything alright upstairs?

10-----

[stops laughing, eyebrows raise]

Stuart: *UPSTAIRS ALRIGHT GOING ALRIGHT*

Danielle: YES FINISHED

O.3 Do You Want To Hear The Panic Alarm?

1-----
Alex: it its could be a difficult morning so
Jason: yep

2-----
Alex: we just need to be extra careful really
Stuart: *DIFFICULT CAREFUL AWARE ALL OF US LET KNOW*

3-----
Alex: we've also got to
Derek: YOU WANT

4-----
Alex: sorry?
Stuart: *GO AHEAD*
[laughs]
Derek: WANT TEST PULL WANT HEAR? YOU?

5-----
Derek: [extended laughter]
[all participants laugh]
Stuart: *yeah err so shall we test the err panic alarm*
Alex: [sardonic, mock exasperated tone]
again?

6-----
Stuart: *AGAIN HEADACHE*
[looks around, innocent facial expression]
Derek: WANT TRY ME PULL

7-----
Stuart: *y' know I'd like to try it...see what happens*
[innocent facial expression][contorts face] [shrugs] [laughs]
Derek: WHAT? EARS HURT OH DEAF PUT BACK IN

8-----
Stuart: *it doesn't affect deaf people so*

9-----
Alex: the other thing we've looked at is Michael's windows just to update people

O.4 I'll Bring My Cricket Helmet

- 1-----
- [Body shift side to side, head nod]
- Derek:** WELL SIGNED YES NEXT WEEK SEE WHAT
- Stuart:** *but you know we'll*
- 2-----
- [Body shift backwards, facial expression 'careful']
- Derek:** AGAIN GIVE MONEY PACKET
- Stuart:** *see what it's like on next week*
- 3-----
- [laughs]
- Derek:** HELMET ON
- Stuart:** [laughs]
- 4-----
- Derek:** FACE GUARD CRICKET HELMET
- [coughs] [delivered in 'flat' voice]
- Stuart:** *put head guard on (.) just in case things get out of hand*
- 5-----
- Derek:** HOME HAVE BRING IT
- Stuart:** *so I've got one at home I'll bring it for safety reasons*
- Alex:** the other thing we're doing

O.5 It's Not Fair!

1-----

Alan: how many hours constitute a placement day

Sandra: [waiting for Dawn to make eye contact as she is looking at the agenda]

2-----

Alan: this this is something that came up (.) at a stakeholders meeting last week

Peter: right (.) seven (.) seven

Sandra: *HOW MANY HOURS PLACEMENT ONE DAY*

3-----

Alan: what we're trying to ensure

Bella: aah the reason I asked it is because one of my students

[looks at Bella, indicates speaker]

Sandra: *SEVEN HOURS SEVEN HOURS WHY ASK*

4-----

Bella: was compl- who does complain about a lot of all sorts of things

[wry tone, very subtle smile]

Alan: surely not

Sandra: *ONE STUDENT (.) COMPLAIN LOTS COMPLAIN DIFFERENT*

5-----

[laughs]

[complaining voice, dramatic emphasis]

Bella: but she was saying it's not fair

Alan: because I've only done

[pauses, looks at Alan]

Sandra: *DIFFERENT ISSUES HERSELF SAY NOT FAIR*

6-----

Alan: I do nine hours a day and she does twenty

Bella: I'm well she said she said

Sandra: *I NINE HOURS OTHER TWENTY*

7-----

Bella: she said I'm here nine to five and she said and other people are finishing at three

Alan: yeah

Mandy: yeah

Sandra: *I HERE NINE TO FIVE OTHER FINISH THREE*

8-----

Bella: and I said well I'm sorry about that but you'd better get used to it

Sandra: *ME NOT FAIR FEEL FINISH FIVE SORRY MUST USED TOUGH*

9-----

Bella: because you'll work a lot longer hours than that when you're qualified

[smile]

[shrugs shoulders]

[smile]

Sandra: *WORKING MORE QUALIFY ANYWAY DOESN'T MATTER USED*

10-----

[general laughter]

Mandy: you should have said if you qualify

Alan: go shopping whilst you've got the chance

[eyebrows raised, eyes wide]

Sandra: *I-F BECOME QUALIFIED SAY I-F DEFINITE*

11-----

Bella: yes but I must admit I was aware that on one of my other

Sandra: *KNOW OTHER STUDENT BEFORE*

12-----

Bella: student's previous placements it was at like a day centre

Sandra: *OTHER DAY CENTRE PLACEMENT*

13-----

Bella: and they they did finish about half three

Sandra: *FINISH HALF THREE*

O.6 Take It Like A Man

- 1-----
- Mandy:** I mean I've been a nurse and that wouldn't do for a patient
- Sandra:** *BEEN NURSE SELF* *CAN'T PATIENT*
- 2-----
- Mandy:** if you thought their drip was running out and you thought
- Sandra:** *MEANS LOOK SEE DRIP DRIP*
- 3-----
- Mandy:** oh well I'll come back to that in a week
[‘don't care' facial expression]
- Sandra:** *ONE WEEK LEAVE NOT BOTHER LEAVE*
- Alan:** [laughs- guffaw] [other participants laugh]
- Dawn:** [smiles]
- 4-----
- Mandy:** you'd be in real trouble
- Sandra:** *TERRIBLE CAN'T LATER*
- 5-----
- [laughs] [other participants laugh]
- Unknown:** you'd be dead
- Sandra:** *CAN'T THINK ONE WEEK LATER IGNORE*
- 6-----
- Alan:** I feel I feel like I'm taking a lot of crap on behalf of everyone
- Mandy:** I'm serious
[looks at Alan] [directed outwards] [points at Alan] [directed at self- roleshift]
- Sandra:** *FEEL CRITICISED* *CRITICISED*
- 7-----
- Mandy:** oh yes
- Alan:** I'm not quite sure how best to deal with it
[leans back]
- Sandra:** *NOW DON'T KNOW HOW SOLVE PROBLEM*
- 8-----
- Mandy:** yes (.) yes (.) well I don't know
[quiet, serious voice] [participants laugh]
- Bella:** I should take it like a man

[gestures, head tilt, sits forward]

Sandra: *NEED BECOME MAN STRONG COME ON*

9-----

[laughs]

Mandy:

[general background laughter]

Alan: I've trained for it I've got my shin pads on

[lip pattern 'shin pads']

Sandra: *TRAINED SHINS*

10-----

Alan: I've got a box in the car (xxx)

Sandra: *SAFETY CLOTHES*

11-----

Mandy: no we're not getting at you personally

Alan: no (.) no

Sandra: *NO NO NOT CRITICISE PERSON*

12-----

Mandy: we're getting at the system

Alan: I'm thinking (.) I'm thinking how do we deal with this?

Sandra: *THIS UNIVERSITY*

O.7 Have We Spelt Sarah-Anne's Name Right?

1-----

Lorraine: page five

[waits for Doreen to look up from minutes]

Sandra: *PAGE*

2-----

[indicates Lorraine]

Sandra: *PAGE FIVE ANYTHING RAISE*

Andrea: have we spelt Sarah-Anne's name right there?

Lorraine: no (.) is it wrong?

3-----

[‘naughty’ facial expression]

Sandra: *S-A-R-A-H A-N-N WRONG MISTAKE*

Marie: it's wrong on the minut:e:s

[holds eye contact with Sandra]

Doreen:

4-----

[head turn to side]

Sandra: *SPELLING NAME WRONG*

[smile voice]

Lorraine: mmmm yeah (.) space

[glances at minutes]

Doreen:

5-----

Sandra: *WRONG MINUTES*

Marie: and an ‘e’ no ‘e’

[indicates minutes, nods, smiles]

Doreen:

6-----

[leaves space]

Sandra: *HAVE SPACE S-A-R-A-H (.) A-N-N*

Lorraine: no there is an ‘e’

Marie: oh there is an ‘e’

[nods]

Doreen:

Mary: yeah

7-----

Marie: there isn't an 'e' written on here

Sandra: *HAVE 'E' NO 'E' THERE*

Lorraine: oh there is on mine

Mary: there is on mine

8-----

[leans back] [smiles, emphasizes final 'E' with lifted hands and stress on index finger]

Sandra: *S-A-R-A-H A-N-N-E*

[smiles]

Doreen:

Marie: page five?

9-----

Sandra: *PAGE FIVE*

Lorraine: no page fo:u:r

10-----

[head shake, LP 'no'] [‘trouble’ facial expression]

Sandra: *PAGE FOUR*

[participant laughter]

Marie: aaah its spelt two different ways then

11-----

Sandra: *TWO DIFFERENT WAYS PAGE FOUR PAGE FIVE*

[laughter]

Lorraine: oh no

Marie: because mine's spelt without an 'e'

12-----

Lorraine: oh dear

Sandra: *DIFFERENT*

[looks at minutes, nods and smiles]

Doreen:

13-----

Mary: did you see the email?

Sandra: *NO 'E'*

[holds eye contact with Sandra, smiles]

Doreen:

14-----

Mary: did you send it?

[indicates Lorraine]

Sandra: *SEE EMAIL*

Lorraine: I sent it yeah

15-----

Lorraine: if only that's all they had to worry about!

[laughs]

Marie: I know!

Sandra: *ONE ONE THING EMAIL WORRY*

16-----

Lorraine: if I was you Marie I'd get back to her and say well everyone puts an A

[indicates Marie]

Sandra: *YOU REALLY BACK*

17-----

[high-pitched, reporting, whining voice]

Lorraine: in my name can I send an email out to everybody

Sandra: *EVERYONE 'A' MY NAME*

18-----

[laughs]

Marie: to everybody yeah

[laughs]

Doreen:

Sandra: *WANT EMAIL EVERYBODY LET KNOW NOT 'A' OFF*

19-----

[emphasised signing style, raised eyebrows, exasperated facial expression]

Sandra: *M-A-R-I-E THAT'S IT*

[quiet 'listing' voice]

Marie: anything else page five

O.8 Do You Want To Say Something?

1-----

Mary: something so they know
[Indicates to take turn, finger briefly lifted from nose]

Derek:

Sandra: *NEED WITH PICTURES NEED KNOW*

Alex: themselves and those can be

2-----

[speaker change not indicated]

Sandra: *BECAUSE THEMSELF UNDERSTAND*

Alex: laminated or those could be y'know

Mary: yeah

3-----

Sandra: *CAN BE 'L' SHEET*

Alex: yeah (xxx) in a way that they can

Mary: yeah that's it

4-----

Alex: hold onto

Mary: so these things

[Indicates to Derek, questioning look, addressing directly]

Sandra: *SAY SOMETHING? YOU?*

5-----

Sandra: (xxx) *erm*