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Participation in a Global Hearing Culture: Hearing Mothers' Translations of Their Childrens' Deafworlds

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a visual language gives hearing mothers the possibility of participating in their children's culture—a visual and sensorial deaf world. Drawing on the special issue focus on cultural difference as 'conflictual and ambivalent' (Kramsch and Zhu Hua, this issue), mothers also grapple with the demands of an unmarked global hearing culture, especially as their children's deafness becomes mediated by technology and medical intervention, under the guise of progress, social mobility, equity, and inclusion (Lane *et al.* 1996). Access to spoken English through technological aids supposedly 'solves' the perceived 'problem' of communication and cultural difference between mother and child. But what is at stake in this process of translation aided by new technologies? And, when mothers are speakers of other languages how does this cultural and modal translation process become further complicated?

'Hearingness,' is an unmarked physical, ontological, and ideological force that moves across perceived linguistic and cultural borders. A range of institutionalized 'normal' sensory experiences carve a line between what is

sufficient and what is deficient, and what is the privileged sensory experiences—hearing and speech. Hearingness underpins basic ableist assumptions about communication and culture and often excludes the visual, spatial, and vibrational sensory practices of deaf people. Historian and disability studies scholar Baynton (2008) describes deafness as both a cultural construct and a physical reality, 'a different sensory world than those that hear,' which has, 'certain consequences that cannot be *constructed* away' (p. 295).

Around 95% of deaf children are born into hearing families (Mitchell and Karchmer 2004) challenging hearing families and educators to think about issues of communication, culture, and identity in new ways. The cultural, political, educational, and sensorial landscapes of deaf people, in the United States and globally, are undergoing many significant changes complicating what it means to be deaf. Technological advances, improved surgical procedures, and a growing breadth of literature on the educational outcomes have led to an increase in the use of pediatric cochlear implants ('CIs'), a neuroprosthetic hearing assistive device, for deaf infants and young children (Mitchiner and Sass-Lehrer 2011: 72). As a result, there has also been increased medical and educational focus on spoken/oral approaches to the language development of deaf children (Nussbaum and Scott 2011).

This article moves away from the polarization within the cochlear implant debate ('deaf as deficit'/'hearing as fixed') to explore the lived experiences of hearing mothers of deaf children and the embodied ways the mothers translate their experiences in the sensorial world of their deaf children. Hall (1992) emphasizes that communication goes beyond what is spoken and heard, '... people of different cultures not only speak different languages, but what is possibly more important, inhabit different sensory worlds' (p. 2). Hearing mother narratives on communicating with their deaf children point us to an understanding of intercultural communication as 'semiotic awareness' (van Lier 2004) shaped in unbounded, unfinalized, and unpredictable spaces (Rampton 1995; Blommaert 2005). Pushing interculturality in a new direction, the narratives of the hearing mothers offer a window into shared and unshared meaning making in the symbolic and embodied dimensions 'in-between' deaf and hearing worlds.

This study explores how hearing mothers of deaf children, engaging in language practices with their children (in English, home languages, American Sign Language, and sign supported English), navigate these cultural and communication differences. I will first explore the relationship of technology and deafness from cultural and political perspectives to understand how technology, underpinned by a 'hearing-as-a-cure' monolingual ideology, facilitates the so-called inclusion of deaf children into the mothers' hearing world and discuss theorizations of 'deaf culture' that shape the hearing mother constructions. Next, I introduce a critical discourse analytic approach to the narrative data. The analysis portion of this article is in two parts: interwoven narratives from all mother participants and two specific excerpts examining multilingual

and multimodal interactions, accompanied by a transcript or video frame grabs.

Mothers described how having their children learn the global language (English) and unimodal code (speech) offers social, economic, and educational opportunities and access to the hearing world of sound and speech. Yet, mothers also described shared embodied practices with their deaf child as they enter into new social, sensorial, and communicative dimensions. Their narratives demonstrated how experiences in their children's deaf worlds fluctuate between the constraints of a perceived deaf-hearing culture binary and opportunities for growth by participation in these new spaces. My research finds that being 'in-between' modes and languages is also reflected in discourse. Hearing mother interviewees displayed ambivalent shifts in footing (Goffman 1981), in particular, mode-switches, which, I argue, parallel the ambiguous subject positions of their deaf children who they perceived as both deaf (without implants) and hearing (with implants).

2. TECHNOLOGY, 'DEAF CULTURE', AND SENSORY POLITICS

A 'phonocentric orientation' (Shaw 2015) of culture has resulted in a socially constructed deficit framing of deafness in mainstream discourses, projected onto the deaf by a hearing world; often, this has left little room to understand the basis of deafness from a linguistic, cultural, and sensorial perspectives. The distinction between capital 'D', cultural deafness, and lowercase 'd', the auditory condition of deafness, has been used by the Deaf community since the 1970s (Padden and Humphries 2006). It privileges being deaf from a sociolinguistic perspective and 'the Deaf' as a community of signers with a capital letter, 'D', to distinguish itself from the unmarked hearing world, the non-deaf, as the cultural norm. While the field has, to some degree, moved away from this dichotomous distinction, the construct continues to circulate as non-academic concept in societal discourses and in newcomers' understanding of deafness.

Progressive notions of inclusion (especially in education) that have sought to offer participation in a 'global hearing world' are, according to a 'Deaf Culture' perspective, audist. An audist ideology (Humphries 1977; Eckert and Rowley 2013) holds that speech/hearing mode is a superior form of communication. Therefore, the notion that 'Deaf culture' is defined by its language, a visual one, has played a crucial role in societal recognition of Deaf culture. And, while, in theory, inclusion models embrace diversity, they often erase sensorial and cultural difference in the case of deaf students.

Deaf Studies scholar Lane *et al.* (1996) speaks of Deaf culture as the ''bonds that hold deaf people together'' bounded by a common language, mores, values and territory (p. 124). In *The People of the Eye*, Lane *et al.* (2011) put forth a notion of Deaf culture defined through a set of cultural rules and values underlining social and linguistic practices and managing relationships through a 'Deaf Way' (pp. 10–14). Such definitions that include specific in-group

practices essentialize culture as static and not as a process, yet, at the same time, the definitions have played an important role in explaining and justifying Deaf culture to a hearing majority.[1] Theorists have critiqued the monolithic cultural model of deafness for constraining what it means to be Deaf (Turner 1994; Baynton 2008; Valente *et al*. 2011). Concepts such as Deafhood (Ladd 2003), highlighting the positive aspects and possibilities of being deaf, have also been critiqued as essentializing, combining 'ontology and liberation theory into one concept' (Kusters and De Meulder 2013). From these viewpoints, the traditional model of 'Deaf Culture', understood as membership into a community of sign language users, neglects the full range of experiences of being deaf and thus marginalizes some sub-populations of deaf people, such as cochlear implant users (or 'CI users').

Baynton (2008), in his article 'Beyond Culture: Deaf studies and the Deaf Body,' argues that while the concept of 'Deaf culture' has been integral to the development of Deaf studies, it 'increasingly appears inadequate in itself as an explanation of the Deaf community and the experiences of Deaf people' (p. 293) as sensory and visual beings. Baynton strictly asserts that deaf children with CIs are not culturally Deaf as 'they possess no elements of a minority culture'; they do, however, possess a 'different sensory relationship to the world around them' (p. 303). Thus, although Baynton explicitly excludes children with CIs from the conventional 'Deaf identity' he brings sensory experience into and understanding of culture and identity. While Baynton's perspectives were important in shifting the conversation around being deaf, recent research has complicated these views. Kusters et al. (2017) call for 'innovations in the conceptual apparatus of Deaf Studies' (p. 3) as the nature of 'deaf worlds' shifts, particularly with central concepts such as 'Deaf Culture' and 'deaf community'.

To further complicate a discussion of Deaf culture and identity, it is often through the label of 'disability',[2] that deaf people have been viewed, in society and by institutions, as citizens with legal, political, and educational rights, and not through their identity as a linguistic minority. This medical model of disability is embraced by educational and medical discourses, where hearing assistive technology (such as CIs) is viewed as a 'cure' to deafness.

Hearing mothers in my study, as newcomers to deafness, often bring with them internalized dichotomous societal views of 'the Deaf culture'. Deaf children with hearing parents often never find an access point to a community of deaf people or ASL users. This compels me to ask: Where do study participants' cultural practices that may be sensory in nature fit into this notion of 'Deaf culture'? Being deaf, from this more sensorial view (and more removed from a community), inherently problematizes the notion that culture is limited to something that is socialized from elders to youth or parents to children.

In light of the expanding, but still limited, research on 'CI culture', Mauldin (2016), in her book *Made to Hear: Cochlear Implants and Raising Deaf Children*, frames the polarizing debate through two societal scripts—medicalization of deafness as a problem to be fixed and antimedicalization of deafness as a

culture in its own right. While considerable research on CIs has focused on CI-implanted deaf children's spoken language development and educational outcomes, there has been less attention to the language ideologies of hearing mothers with a CI-implanted deaf child (see Mouvet *et al.* 2013) or the language ideologies that play into CI-implanted deaf and hearing children's interactions (see Johnson 2015, 2017; Swanwick *et al.* 2016). Mauldin's research takes a much-needed longitudinal focus on the experiences of hearing parents embedded in the therapeutic culture and on the proliferation of new professional sectors and economies that have emerged through CI culture. Mauldin argues that despite hearing parents' recognition and acceptance of Deaf culture, parents' decisions to implant is heavily influenced by the shift in implants from the 'peripheries of innovation to become the most advanced and commonly used neuroprosthetic' (p. 9). Mouvet *et al.* (2012, 2013) highlight the role of social support care professionals in shaping maternal constructions of deafness, particularly when professionals adopt the medical model of deafness, but also emphasize the construction as fluctuating and influenced by language practices with their deaf children.

Intertwined technological, medical, and educational discourses reshape and retranslate deafness through cultural and linguistic practices. In their article 'Sensory Politics and The Cochlear Implant Debate,' Valente *et al.* (2011) discuss how the cochlear implant continues to stir heated debate characterized through 'science and technology versus culture. . .pitting the well-funded biopower industries against a tiny linguistic minority' (p. 254, also see Lane 1992). Through the lens of sensory politics or the examination of the 'intersection of biological perception and cultural mediation' (p. 246), we are presented with an understanding of how hearing culture determines the value of the auditory and visual practices of a minority culture (see also Bourdieu 1995 for discussion on senses, culture and class). The 'medical-educational-industrial complex,' Valente *et al.* note, are motivated by a 'particular cultural orientation favoring its own sensory orientation in the world' (p. 246).

Inclusive education efforts for deaf children with CIs are changing the landscape of what it means to be deaf. With federal and state policies in the United States driving intervention and inclusion efforts for students with disabilities in education, the majority of deaf students, 64%, (Gallaudet Research Institute: Regional and National Summary Reports, 2005) are now mainstreamed into regular hearing educational settings. Of 36, 710 deaf and hard of hearing students mainstreamed into American public schools in 2006–2007, half were educated in speech-only settings (Gallaudet Research Institute National Data 2006).

In the context of the Eagle Crest Early Intervention Center, the preschool where I conducted my larger ethnographic research project, the parental and educational verdict was clear on the use of hearing assistive technology or cochlear implants: Most hearing parents, given the educational access to programs and health coverage, chose to give their deaf or hard of hearing babies cochlear implants. This parallels a national and international increase in CIs.

Cochlear implants in the United States, the world's largest medical device market (Mauldin 2016), contribute to what Shaw cautions is 'the evolving transgressive human–machine relationship... in the modern hypermediated world' (p. 245). As of 2012, 324,200 people worldwide and 58,000 adults and 38,000 children in the United States received cochlear implants and this number is increasing every year (The Food and Drug Administration, the National Institute of Deafness and Other Communicative Disorders, 2012). However, access to implants is limited in developing countries as they are expensive and require extensive medical and educational support. Medical and technological access, thus, widens the language and educational inequalities of access already in place worldwide for deaf people.

3. INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEAF COMMUNICATION

The monolingual/monocultural politics that play into the language practices and educational opportunities of the deaf children and hearing mothers in my research are part of a larger narrative of monolingual bias that second-language learners face in the United States (Canagarajah 1999; Harklau 2000). Literature in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), however, has seen little focus on English as a *second* language of deaf people and sign language as a *second* language of hearing mothers of deaf children. Notably, Foreign Language (FL) and SLA researchers have paid greater attention recently to embodied and mediated dimensions of intercultural communication, particularly the affective aspects (see, for example, Pavlenko 2005; Kramsch 2009; Dewaele 2013; Block 2013). Yet, analyses of 'embodied' dimensions are most often conducted within frameworks that privileges (or assumes) the speech mode. While Deaf Studies has offered attention to the relationship between Deaf culture, language, and identity, there is little research examining the communication between deaf children and their hearing peers and families from an intercultural perspective (see Johnson 2017). Furthermore, because children with cochlear implants are often excluded from a definition of 'Deaf culture,' even less attention has been focused on the intercultural communication between hearing mothers and deaf children who have undergone implantation.

Hearing mothers of deaf children are in a process of becoming 'hearing mothers,' an unmarked process that becomes marked in their communication with their children. In the case of the hearing mothers in my study, they negotiated a new way of viewing the self, as a 'hearing mother of a deaf child', in tension with global norms that circulate around conventional ways mother–child relationships are understood, often including the ability, or at least possibility, for a mother and child to communicate in a common language.

The stories in this study complicate the polarizing CI debates while shedding a new light on how we think about intercultural communication. Drawing on Zhu's notion of interculturality, participants in this study used discursive and interactional choices to 'do cultural identities' through 'moments of identification' with deafness and hearingness (Zhu 2014: 212–13). I believe this study extends this conversation, specifically how we think about cultural 'memberships' and the doing of identity through a lens of interculturality that includes an understanding of embodied dimensions as 'culture'.

Culture for hearing mothers of deaf children is a site of struggle and a process of meaning-making emergent in and through language, which includes bodily and sensorial ways we experience the world. As a 'a process that both includes and excludes' (Kramsch 1998: 8); culture is 'making do' (De Certeau 1984) and a 'relationship not a state' (Baynton 1996: 24). Educational, technological, and societal discourses limit where and when sign language and home languages can be used often forcing hearing mothers of deaf children into using spoken English, even when they speak different languages in the home. Mothers modeled the English teacher discourse, such as 'Use your voice!', a common refrain I observed when a deaf child used only sign in the classroom.

The central emphasis on spoken English, with the promise of opportunity and 'fitting in' for hearing mothers' deaf children, and the steadfast grasp to ASL, with the hope their deaf children will connect to cultural Deafness, are two new linguistic paths hearing mothers of deaf children in this study arrived at, often at the expense of a shared home language like Spanish. The mother one imagined becoming, for example, a Spanish-speaking mother who shares the ability to hear and speak in Spanish with her child, is re-negotiated through new cultural and linguistic practices. Deafness, in these spaces, is not defined by a state or condition, it is something mothers do with their children as they navigate physical differences. Mothers cultivate new affective bonds in the intimate third spaces that often privilege visuality, but are often limited to these special mother-child contexts.

The language learning of hearing mothers and deaf children is multi-scaled, situated in the complex relations between the interpersonal, cultural, and historical (Kramsch 2002; Lemke 2002). The mothers in my study felt the weight of a perceived monolithic 'Deaf culture' at the same time they desperately wanted their child to be hearing. While their external projection of culture appeared as two points on a dichotomous spectrum, in practice 'culture' was far more conflictual, contested, and messy. The complexity of interculturality in these deaf-hearing spaces demands a relational and reflexive way of seeing language, embracing the 'contradictions, unpredictabilities and paradoxes' (Kramsch 2002) rather than reducing language learning to the linear and static metaphor of 'learner as apprentice'. Hearing mothers were not teaching their children sign language, they were learning alongside and from them.

While the linguistic, educational, and social avenues to explore deaf experiences are vast, this study provides a just sliver of work drawing attention to understanding the experiences of deaf children and hearing parents, a

narrative that has been overly neglected in the broader second language learner narrative and in intercultural communication studies.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Zentella's (1997) 'anthropolitical' linguistic methodology, a socio-political conscious ethnographic positioning, calls on researchers to make their researcher stance transparent. I understand that my identity as a hearing child of two deaf parents, plays a role in translating the cultural experiences of my participants. Drawing on videotaped interviews conducted with six hearing mothers of deaf students in the preschool classroom, I took a critical discourse analytic approach in analyzing the narrative data to address the following research questions:

- How do hearing mothers carve their sense of self through new language practices?
- How do societal discourses around inclusion/diversity shape how hearing mothers understand communication with their deaf children?
- How does an examination of embodied modes of culture provide insight into intercultural perspectives on deaf communication?

The narrative space, I believe, is a 'privileged site for identity work' (Baynham 2014: 67) to understand the dynamic relationship between the identity 'brought along' or 'the accumulation and sedimentation of identity positions in habitus' (p. 73), and the identity 'brought about' in interaction.

In the process of coding the video-taped interview data, there were two aspects of the communication that stood out: (i) participants use of mode blending and (ii) participants use of mode switching. *Mode switching* extends the concept of code switching, moving between two languages, dialects or registers, to include interactional shifts between *embodied modes*: sign, speech, gesture, or a spatial/sensory aspect. I use the term *mode blending* to encompass the blending (simultaneous use) of two different modalities: sign, speech, gesture, or spatial/sensory mode (for example: touch, vibration, silence). Mode blending is more encompassing of various modes than 'code blends', the simultaneous use of ASL and speech (Petitto *et al*. 2001), or a 'co-speech gesture', the simultaneous use of gesture and speech (McNeill 1992). Despite the fact that I conducted the interview in English as a *hearing and speaking* interviewer, participants chose to use multiple modes. This led me to ask the question: What affordances do multiple modes offer participants in their narratives?

The organization of the data analysis is twofold. In part one (5.1), I provide short narrative excerpts from the videotaped interviews that offer us an understanding of the in-between spaces the mothers experience in their communication with their children. The excerpts also provide insight into how the English language is viewed as giving access to a global hearing culture. In parts two (5.2) and three (5.3), I offer in-depth modal analysis of two interview excerpts (with mothers Fernanda and Gloria) that illustrate the multimodal

interactions representative across the data. I build on Norris (2004) in an attempt to capture what she calls 'modal density,' or complexity of multiple modes, in interaction. For the third example, the multimodal transcription and accompanying frame grabs should be used together in the analysis. Following the data analysis, I conclude with a discussion of how a modal analysis helps us rethink in what way we translate embodied dimensions of cultural experience.

4.1 Research Setting and Overview of Participants

I established relationships with participants over my years (2008–2012) as a volunteer at the Eagle Crest Early Intervention Center (ECEIC). The center is one of the few federally funded intervention-based programs specifically for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in the large urban area covering eight different counties in California. Most of the deaf children used CIs and the remaining few used other forms of hearing assistive technology. The stated philosophy of ECEIC was to 'maximize communication potential' through a bimodal communication approach that includes English and a sign support system, or manually coded English. Although ASL is not explicitly encouraged in instruction by the school's administration, ASL usage, by teachers, often with graduate degrees in Deaf Education, sometimes found its way into language practices in the classroom.

I knew all six mothers for at least a year before conducting the interviews in the academic year 2011–2012. All classroom parents were invited to participate in the study and had given consent for my classroom observations. Five of the six mothers who agreed to be interviewed attended the weekly 'parent sign language' class, aimed to bridge home and school language practices. Consent was given for the use of video and the representation of visual data in publications. The class curriculum encouraged the use of a sign support system, Signing-Exact-English (also called SEE-sign) and not ASL, to communicate with their child. I participated in the class, as Signing-Exact-English is different from the ASL I grew up with. Signing-Exact-English draws on borrowed and modified signs from ASL as well as invented signs that correspond to spoken English grammar. Sometimes this form of communication is called sign supported English, as the objective is to facilitate full spoken English acquisition (and eventually 'drop signs' or no longer need to sign simultaneously). In practice, however, parents rarely adhered to the recommended communication methods. Some mothers mixed in ASL and Spanish speaking mothers coupled Spanish with the 'English' signs. I seldom had a chance to interact with fathers due to their infrequent participation in school activities, and, thus, no interviews were conducted with fathers (a similar situation was noted in Maudlin's 2016 study focusing on hearing parents with deaf children).

I am grateful to the mothers for the opportunity to share our experiences with deafness and for the deeper understanding this gave me when exploring their children's language experiences.

4.2 Languages at Home

Four out of six of the hearing mothers I interviewed were from households in which multiple languages were spoken. The linguistic diversity in the households is reflective of the local demographic in this city in California. All mothers used varying degrees of sign with their child, mostly Signing-Exact-English and some ASL at home. Two parents expressed the desire to 'hold onto ASL' despite the SEE-sign focus at this school. One mother noted she wants to continue '*using* ASL because ASL is a real language' but she wants to '*do* SEE-because it ties in with English.' In her use of 'doing SEE-sign,' the mother encapsulated the functional aspect of the sign system because it (in theory) leads to English acquisition. In the two Spanish-speaking households, Spanish and SEE-sign were often used together in bimodal production, which, one could say, undermined the entire goal of SEE sign, which is to verbally and manually produce English.[3]

The language profiles and country of origin (if other than the USA) of the mothers I focused on were as follows.

The mothers' deaf children had diverse home language experiences and also varying experiences with their hearing assistive technology. In my yearlong ethnographic observations, I found that the children at my research site had a complex, contextual, and shifting relationship with their CIs. Some days they embraced them, other days they resisted them. Leigh and Maxwell-McCaw (2011) elaborate on this embodied relationship, 'For many who are uninitiated, it may be baffling to consider that a piece of equipment, specifically a cochlear implant, has the power to convey an identity or influence one's identity' (p. 95). One student, 6-year-old Irene, considers her cochlear implants, to use her exact words, 'a part of my body,' and finds great comfort in sleeping next to them. In the classroom circle time, she explained in bimodal production (using sign and speech), how each morning she wakes up and excitingly feels around on her night table for her CIs while calling out for her mom to help her put them on. However, when Irene had battery or technical issues

Table 1: Language of participants

Mother	Languages (in order of most used in the home)
Gloria	Spanish, English, Signing Exact English (El Salvador)
Fernanda	Mam, Spanish, English, Signing Exact English (Guatemala)
Marcia	Tagalog, English, ASL/ Signing Exact English (Philippines)
Amy	English, ASL/ Signing Exact English, some Cantonese, Mandarin and Japanese
Terry	AAVE/English, Signing Exact English
Susan	English, Signing Exact English

with the CI, she proudly exclaimed to everyone that she would 'have to be deaf' and 'use more sign language.' Another student, Beto, often resisted CI use, pulling off and hiding his CIs around the classroom when he became upset or frustrated. Overall, the CI experiences were intricately tied to the context, language choices and affective shifts among users.

5. DATA ANAYLSIS

5.1 'When the cochlear implant device breaks. . .he is still deaf': the 'in-between' embodied spaces

I begin by introducing narrative excerpts from each participant highlighting the 'in-between' embodied spaces the mothers shared with their deaf children. I use the voices of all the mothers to paint a complex picture of ambiguity, contradiction, and opportunity in the intercultural in-between spaces. The position of in-between is built on the dichotomy of the two worlds but also pushes us to rethink this space a non-dichotomous. In these third spaces of intimacy, mothers grappled with the demands of a global hearing culture while they held on to the sensorial experiences with their child. Having their children learn English held the promise of opportunity, yet the intimate communicative spaces the mothers held on to demonstrate a speaking back the 'English-only' ideology that permeated educational discourses.

The difficult decision to implant children with CIs is due to the perception of better access to social, economic, and education opportunities later in life. Mother Amy described her thought process, 'It is his life, not my life. But, I am trying to do the best I can. . .based on what I think he would want as an adult.' Amy displayed a linguistic understanding of the benefits of bilingual acquisition, but still felt the pull to English through a non-bilingual method, sign-supported English, or SEE-sign: 'That's why I thought I would go with the hybrid approach. . .but not the kitchen sink method with gestures. I wanted to do it with actual language. . ..with ASL to start and SEE-sign because it ties in with English. But, [I] still do a mix of the two.'

> 'Wow, we got this. . .we're learning this new thing this new world-this new whole language. . .its exciting. And knowing that someone else would learn it along with me. . .' Mother Gloria exclaimed as she describes the 'new world' where she learns sign language together with her daughter. Similarly, mother Susan looked back at her language-learning experience in a positive light. She reframed what the hearing discourse projects as 'loss' to 'gain' for her, which provided her a communication avenue to a visual world. She explained, 'I look at his hearing loss as a blessing. . .a blessing in disguise. Because if it weren't for his hearing loss I probably would have never learned sign language.'

All of the mothers I interviewed put forth an understanding of 'Deaf culture' or 'Deafness' as exterior to their experiences—as something not their own and

often inaccessible. In the majority of the cases, mothers would bring up these points on their own when sharing stories about their children. The language of 'the Deaf culture' was familiar to mothers at the school where it was celebrated through tokenized events or activities often in participation with the sister 'hearing classroom' across the courtyard. Mother Terry explained, 'I have a lot to learn about the Deaf culture.' Similarly, mother Marcia stated, 'It's intimidating. . .you know. . .going to those Deaf events.' The 'the' in 'the Deaf Culture' and 'those' in 'those Deaf events' index an exteriority or a distance to deafness although this deafness is that of their own children. Despite this constant external indexing expressed by the mothers, they also claimed new language practices as their own. Mother Terry reflected on the exciting process of learning a visual language together, in which the child, a 5-year-old, takes the lead. She explained what happens when she and her son do not know a sign, 'If he's not sure and I'm not sure, he'll go get the [ASL-English] dictionary. . ..and say, ''Let's look it up mommy!''' In this collaborative language-learning experience, where the access point is often a sign language dictionary, there is no linear 'expert to novice' or 'mother to child' language-learning relationship, rather, mother and child were learning at the same time.

Marcia was a fluent Tagalog-English bilingual and used a mixture of SEE-sign, ASL and English in the home. She understood the choice of implanting her son as distancing her from the culture of Deafness. In the interview, she described a dichotomous 'us vs. them' view of the two visual approaches, 'We're SEE and then [.5] there's ASL'. Yet, a few moments later, she positioned her son deaf when the 'means to hear', or technology, fails. Deaf culture, in her view, was something her son could be a 'part of' but, as a hearing mother, she distanced herself from that possibility. She continued:

> I'm just going to keep encouraging the sign because I know that when the [cochlear implant] device breaks or if he needs another mode and that was always our intent from the beginning because even though he has a means to hear- he is still deaf. I try to encourage him to be part of the Deaf culture and, you know, go to those events.

Here again we see the exterior indexing of deafness with 'the sign,' 'the Deaf culture' and 'those events.' Yet, she stressed the importance of the basic embodied reality her son experiences, 'he is still deaf.' While Marcia wanted her son to experience both worlds, she insisted that she could never really understand his physical experience of being deaf, 'I didn't live it.' Marcia emphasized the pressures of a global hearing culture in the following passage, aiming her message directly at mothers who chose not to implant their deaf children:

> I understood where they [parents who didn't implant] were coming from. Why can't you accept him as he is? And, you know, you are always trying to be accepted in life. . .and which, you know, I understand that, but, at the same time- I didn't live it. I am in a

> hearing world and that's what I want for my child. But, I am not taking away the fact that he is deaf. I want him to be able to function in both worlds.

Traveling two hours to have her son in the 'closest' intervention program, Susan explained the language and education choices she made for her child. Susan viewed ASL and SEE sign, or sign supported English, as 'equally valid' yet she felt that SEE sign is the best way to access the English language. She stated: 'Using signing exact English sort of nipped that problem in the bud.' The 'problem' referred to here is access to English; implying that ASL doesn't provide the access avenue to English. She then described her position on English: 'I know the English language very well and I love the English language.' She wanted her son, ML, to come to 'appreciate the English language' as she did. Yet, she explained that his 'hearing loss doesn't go away, it is always with him.'

The ways of doing, being, feeling and thinking in a new language becomes a challenge and, like Susan, parents wanted the comfort of their home language and 'culture' to share with their child. Parents found solace in using SEE-sign because it functions (theoretically, at least) to, eventually, facilitate the fluent use of spoken English. What is important to take away from reviewing these short interview excerpts is that, while, on one hand, mothers may have described deafness and hearingness as dichotomous, they also held viewpoints that fluctuate in the multidimensional sensorial spaces. In the following two sections, I offer a closer examination into two specific multimodal interactions with mothers Gloria and Fernanda. Mode blending and mode switching occurred regularly throughout the interviews with both English-speaking-mothers and multilingual mothers and in the classroom setting (Johnson 2017). I selected these two interactions as they captured the complex layers of cultural translation, and even more so with an interpreter offering an additional layer of translation.

5.2 'Dos Culturas': co-participation in the utterance through blending

Mother Fernanda, a Mam-speaking Maya, immigrated from Guatemala 10 years ago. Her son, Beto, has bilateral CIs. She attended the parent sign class regularly, always accompanied by a Spanish–English interpreter. In this interview Margarita, a teacher's aide in the deaf classroom who handled communication with Spanish-speaking parents, provided interpretation. She used sign supported English in the interpretation (as required by the school), although, it should be noted she was taking ASL classes at a community college. The transcription and gloss are located below.

When discussing culture in the interview, Fernanda expressed, in her second language, Spanish, that she wanted her deaf son Beto to have, 'dos culturas…la mia y esta la de Beto' ['two cultures…mine and Beto's' *my translation*]. The Spanish was accompanied by a sign, forming a mode blend. Fernanda points to her ear and drags index downward, which can be translated to the sign for 'deaf' (see figure 1 for image). By 'dos culturas' it may, at first, appear unclear what 'two cultures'

Figure 1: Interview with Fernanda: Fernanda (left) points to ear, signs 'deaf.' Margarita (right) signs 'here'

Fernanda was referring to in the statement. American, Deaf, Guatemalan, Maya? With 'la mia' [mine] one may assume that she was referring to her Guatemalan or home country roots. But, what did Fernanda mean by Beto's 'culture'? From the verbal exchange alone, it is not clear. However, in blending together the verbal utterance 'la de Beto' with the simultaneous loosely articulated ASL sign for 'deaf,' we understand Beto's 'culture' was connected to deafness. With the extra and *different* translation the mode blend provides, I would argue then that the 'dos culturas' is connected to sensory experience, hearingness ('la mia'—the mother's) and Deafness ('de Beto'/ASL sign for 'deaf' or pointing gesture to the ear).

The interpreter, simultaneously, added another layer of co-participation to the mode blending. The interpreter translated Fernanda's 'dos culturas' into a new mode blend. Margarita used sign language and speech to express 'here' verbally and visually (see figure 1, sign for 'here' is five handshape, both hands palm-facing upward). The 'here' is the interpreter's translation of 'la de Beto.' In Figure 1, you see that Margarita's 'here' is produced at the same time as Fernanda is signing 'deaf.' The interpreter, Margarita, an immigrant to the USA from Mexico, indexed through the sign 'here' and spoken word 'here' a present location and, metaphorically, an American or California 'here' as Beto's 'culture.' While Fernanda appeared to be referring to the sensory difference as 'dos culturas,' Margarita translated 'dos culturas' as 'here,' as the 'United States', and the country of origin. Margarita mapped her understanding of 'dos culturas,' as home country versus new county, onto Fernanda's statement. Looking at this interaction from multiple codes (speech, sign, and bimodal), we may interpret the interaction differently.

Another question relevant to this interaction is why did the majority of participants use sign or gesture in the interview? I believe that my positionality as a hearing child of deaf parents influenced the modal choices participants make in interaction. For the mothers who all spoke English fluently (except Fernanda), these translanguaging moments with our shared language resources were not intended to make their utterances more accessible, but

rather to assert an understanding of deafness or belonging across our experiences. And, perhaps, Margarita, who proudly volunteered to interpret, interspersed signs in this interaction to project herself to Fernanda and me as a skilled interpreter of English, Spanish, and SEE sign.

Fernanda's interaction gives us insight into how the use of multiple simultaneous modes by participants may open up narrative spaces and present new meanings. Because I am familiar with signs and basic Spanish, I noticed some of the mismatched translations, but the video frames assist in capturing the modal density of the intercultural layers. When the layers of translation are presented, we are offered the multidimensional cultural space of Fernanda in which deafness and hearingness are not on opposing sides of an axis, but, rather, all axes are in play in this 'moment of identification' (Zhu 2014).

Through a detailed analysis in the following interview excerpts, I will further explore these in-between spaces. I argue that the experience of being 'in-between', in between modalities, languages, and sensory worlds, is reflected *in discourse*, in an *embodied* way.

5.3 'I shut my mouth': embodied ways of creating the past in the present

A fluent English-Spanish bilingual from El Salvador, Mother Gloria used both spoken English and Spanish alongside signs with her daughter Ale, who uses CIs. Mother Gloria noted in the interview that whenever Ale could not communicate what she wanted in spoken English or Spanish, she would rely on repeating the sign over and over until her mother or father understood her. However, as Gloria pointed out, with her father who was 'too stubborn' to learn signs, Ale got to the point of 'screaming in sign at him' on many occasions. While one cannot 'scream' via voice in signs, one can use more forceful signs or rapidly repeated signs. Gloria put forth a great deal of effort, in the sign class and at home, to use two modes of communication (SEE sign and Spanish or English) and viewed the bimodal production of SEE sign and English as a 'bridge' between the 'hearing and deaf worlds.'

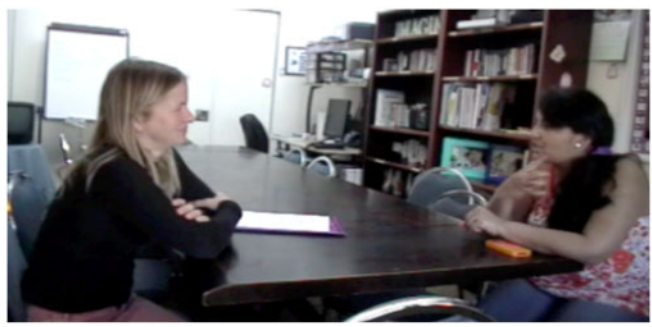
Throughout the interview, despite the fact that I was interviewing her in English, Gloria used sign alongside her speech. In such cases, the use of sign was not solely for reinforcing meaning or filling in a gap that could not be expressed through the spoken mode, but to emphasize a shared understanding of the 'in-between' with the interviewer, a hearing child of deaf parents. Gloria, similar to all interview participants, interweaved signs throughout their reflections during the interview.

In the following interview clip, Gloria discussed the calm and peaceful experience upon entering the visual world of her child. In this nearly one-minute interaction, Gloria interspersed instances of sign. The use of a mode blend(s) (signing and speaking) is indicated by uppercase letters in the transcription. The third column provides more modal detail, and corresponds to the asterisk in middle column (Figure 2).

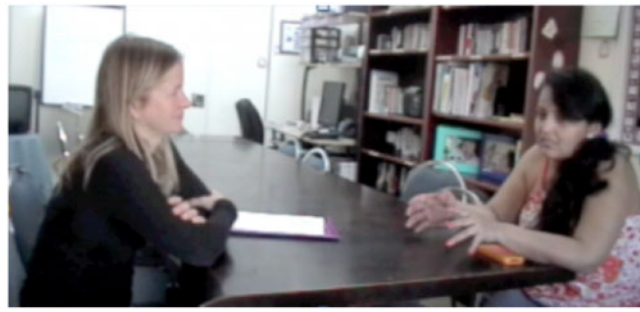
Addresser/ Addressee:	Speech (English)/Sign	Accompanied Embodied Utterances, marked by *
1Gloria: 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 JJ: 12 Gloria: 13 14 15 16 17 18 JJ: 19 Gloria: 20 21	I shut my mouth and just sign to her* (.5) and if I sign to her once twice the same sentence the same, you know, order or action or whatever I wanted her to do sign it two three times you got it↑* and she said OK* and it feels so:: peaceful and calm and LOVING* (1) that she would just sit there in bed (.5) and LOOK* at me moving* my hands and she will respond back OKAY* and she would try to do the okay* sign without without] [without speaking= =without even speaking (1) and yeah and its great that she gets to that point because then I could be completely in a loud environment and she could be like *YOU KNOW WHAT MOMMY SAY TO YOU and she's like* (1.5) you know she gets it] [right right wow yeah I know she knows that she might not PRACTICE it and see it every minute she talks but I know she is really capable of it	hand runs alongside mouth (figure 3A) eyebrows shift up, gaze left (figure 3B) 'OK' signed with head nod (figure 3C) 'loving' signed and spoken (figure 3D) 'look' sign and spoken 'moving' accompanying by sign for 'sign' 'OKAY' signed, whispered with nod open-close 5-handshape with 'okay' (see figures 3E and 3F) gaze forward, eyes wide as signs leans back, cross-armed gesture after 'like'

Figure 2: Transcript for 'I just shut my mouth' (00:54)

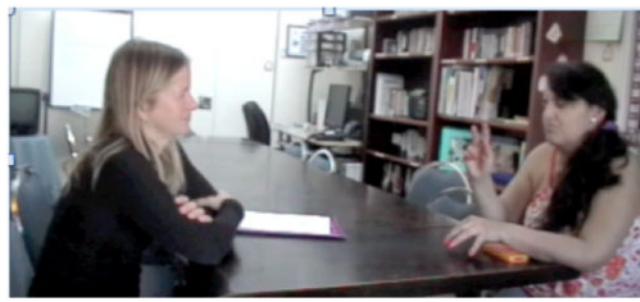
Accompanying video stills for transcript:



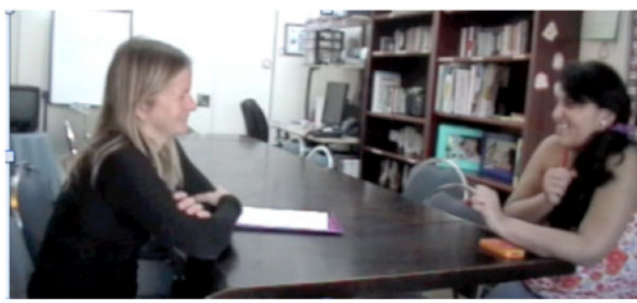
(2A) Mother Gloria's gestures 'shut my mouth' (line 1).



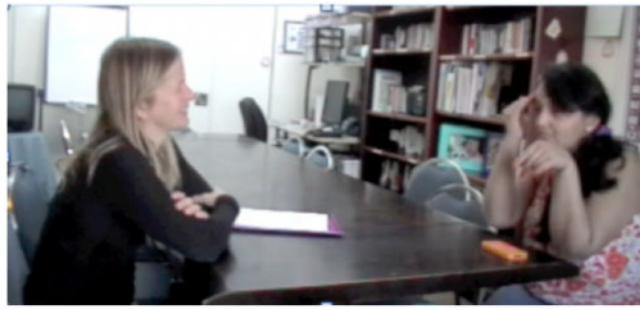
(2B) Mother Gloria's narrative shift from mother to daughter represented by gaze and posture shift left (lines 4–5).



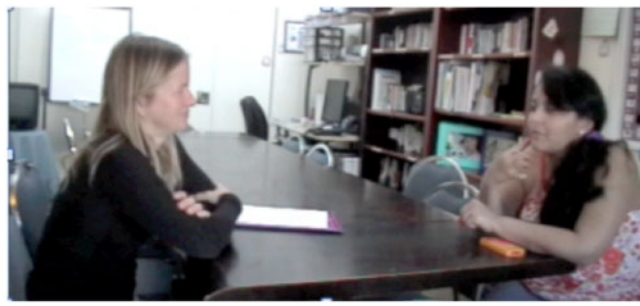
(2C) Mother Gloria imitates daughter's 'Ok' sign. (In this frame, she finger-spells 'Ok') She signs without speech (line 6).



(2D) Mother Gloria signs/gestures 'loving' ('s' handshape at chest) with speech (line 6).



(2E) Mother Gloria signs 'know' (closed 'five' handshape, bent at knuckles fingertips tap forehead) without speech (line 14).



(2F) Mother Gloria signs 'Mommy' ('five'-handshape, thumb on chin) without speech (line 15).

Gloria used mode switches and mode blends to bring herself, bodily, into a past experience, as she translated a conversation she had with her deaf daughter, Ale. When she described the 'special place' she shared with her when she 'shuts her mouth' (line 1), she also physically enacted the non-verbal aspect of her daughter's sensory world. Drawing on first person and using a combination of sign only production and bimodal production, Gloria marked her shift into a past experience with her child (e.g. 'You know what Mommy say to you?' line 14–15). In this space, or 'past' time scale, she took on the role of mother and her spatial and modal orientation offered me the ability to imagine her daughter in front of her. When Gloria moved back out of the past, into the present, she shifted into 3rd person and a verbal mode (e.g. 'You know, she gets it' line 17) In this 'present' space, I was the interviewer and she was the interviewee.

At different points in the passage, Gloria chose to literally 'shut her mouth,' using only sign with me, embodying the non-verbal. In other words, in this embodied narrative, she was 'doing in discourse' what she describes. The mode switches to signing only or, metaphorically, to the perceived 'silent,' but more accurately deaf, world of her daughter (lines 5, 9, 17), allowed her to move back in time through the sensory experience she verbally describes as, 'shutting her mouth.' In line 16, Gloria stopped talking and reenacted the conversation with her daughter, without voice, signing 'You know mommy say to

you?' leaning forward, neck outstretched, eyebrows raised just as if her daughter stood in front of her. In this moment, I felt I was, temporally, her daughter. Through our shared language resources (and in knowing my experience as a hearing child of deaf parents) Gloria positioned me in place of her daughter in our physically shared space rather than direct her eye gaze in a neutral space. This is the 'in between' space in which we understood each other and moved together from present to past. In this mode switch to the non-verbal, she affectively brought the 'peacefulness' she referred to verbally into the discourse space.

Gloria explained that when she 'shuts her mouth' a special embodied connection opens up with her daughter. This visual non-verbal space was a space where Gloria and her daughter reached an understanding together, but it was also the space that we, as interviewer and interviewee, found common ground. Shifting into the signing mode allowed her to re-enact the interaction and, at the same time, she remembered, bodily, how it felt. But this bodily experience extended to me as well. I, too, remembered how it felt to enter a silent space: watch your parents' hands move, feel the vibrations of a hand hitting a table or hear the sound of a laugh sharply breaking the silence. She took on the role of mother in her interaction with me, exemplified by the posture shifts, raised eyebrows and direct eye gaze at the interviewer with the pronoun 'You,' bringing the calmness from her past experience into the present moment effectively allowing her to blend the past into the present. The projection of 'daughter' by Gloria as she embodied her earlier self into my physical space also forced me to move back into time to remember the non-verbal deaf spaces I have experienced. The use of modality in this interaction opened up temporal spaces for identity processes for both the interviewer and interviewee. While the mode blends (English and signs) parallel the SEE-sign approach of the classroom, the mode switch (co-sign to non-verbal/ASL) is a unique instance of the multiple symbolic layers of Gloria's translation.

In parts of the interaction, there were instances in which Gloria embodied her daughter's positioning in the interaction she described. In line 10, Gloria did not sign the word okay as it is done conventionally in ASL or SEE-sign (fingerspelled 'O' 'K') but, rather, opened and closed her hand in a loose approximation of the handshape just as her daughter did. Ale has four digits (fingers) on each hand thus her hands are slightly less agile when it comes to producing sharp and clear signing handshapes, although this posed no problem to communication for her.[4] Her mother translated this 'different ability' by using the same modified open handshapes as her daughter, as if she had the hands of her daughter. In other words, she was embodying the physical difference of her daughter.

In line 16, Gloria took on Ale's gesture of sitting back and crossing one's arms, which functioned to finish the sentence 'She's like. . ..' The pause accompanied by the arm-crossing gesture finishes the sentence. The shift between the verbal utterance 'She's like. . .' and the cross-armed leaning back gesture represented the narrative shift from performing mother to performing

daughter. Through the mode shifts and mode blends from English to sign, Gloria attempted to convey that an understanding exists beyond words between her daughter and her; and, instead of just telling me directly, she showed me the relationship through the embodied utterances.

In the last section (lines 18–20), Gloria shifted back into spoken third-person mode and a more didactic tone. She explained, 'You know she gets it,' 'she might not practice it' and 'see it' but 'she is really capable of it.' In this few lines, Gloria used 'it' four times and referred to her daughter in 3rd person. The 'it' referred to is the embodied visual world of communication she shared with Ale. The multiple 'its' indexed deafness on the outside of the mother–daughter experience; she explained that the 'it' is then the deafness which her daughter 'gets and practices' (line 18) but was not fully her own. Yet, ironically, Gloria demonstrated, in this interaction, that the 'it' was something that she *has* embodied as her own. I, as the interviewer, felt this understanding. When Gloria uttered, 'she gets it' (line 18), I overlapped with 'right right wow yeah' (line 19). We, Gloria and I, shared an embodied understanding of the in-between.

6. DISCUSSION

I have argued that in the modal layers of intercultural communication, in particular the mode-switches and mode blends, hearing mother interviewees Gloria and Fernanda displayed ambivalent shifts in footing (Goffman 1981) reflecting the fluctuating subject positions of their deaf children who they perceive as both deaf (without implants) and hearing (with implants). Through modal shifts between sign/speech and silence/voice and mode blends, mothers did 'deafness' and 'hearingness,' pushing an understanding of interculturality to include embodied dimensions. The narrative excerpts from all the mothers in part one offer insight into the nuanced ways hearing mothers viewed technology and deafness—as access to a hearing world, but also as interfering with an intimate visual and sensorial space they share with their child.

How the mothers translanguaged in their home practice, moving between modes in their narratives, paralleled the paradoxes I found in the classroom (Johnson 2017). The translanguaging in classroom practices, such as signing the 'Good Morning' song first in English/Signing Exact English, and, then, in Spanish/Signing Exact English and the strategic ways the deaf and hearing children moved between English and sign, demonstrate the complex ways sense-making took place for teachers and students, as they drew on a range of semiotic resources. We must be careful, however, not to romanticize the 'bilingual' 'Good Morning' song and bimodal language practices and lose track of the ultimate privileging of English (for example, it makes no pedagogical sense to combine sign supported English with Spanish), just as we must recognize the limited ways the hearing mothers entered the Deaf world of their children. The ambiguity and contradiction reflected in discourse mirrored the

ambiguity in how mothers positioned their children in deaf and hearing worlds.

In Gloria's narrative, the body played a crucial role in opening narrative spaces (Baynham 2014) and navigating ideological contradiction through temporal and spatial means. During our interview, the interaction evolved from Gloria's and my ability to impose subject positions on the other and project our own, both past and anticipated ones, onto the other.

While similar changes in positionality take place in verbal narration or code-switching between two languages, two simultaneous modes opened up the possibility of expanding into the past and present at the level of the utterance; this, perhaps, offers a more nuanced way of understanding what Blommaert (2005) calls 'layered simultaneity' or the process in which language is expressed simultaneously on multiple time scales. With Gloria's examples, we saw how the body manages ideological struggle. When Gloria 'shuts her mouth,' she shifts into a non-verbal mode creating a feeling of 'peacefulness' by doing what she says in discourse. My 'brought along' identity as a 'hearing child of deaf parents' allowed her to project the role of daughter into my space, and I had the feeling, onto me. De Fina (2014) stresses that the construction of identities stem from '*both* interlocutors' habitus, i.e. shared ways of understanding aspects of social experience' (p. 53). Through the co-embodied narrative, we understood the experiences of each other through our own.

Broadly speaking, this data demonstrates that the use of multiple modalities created spaces for new meaning making providing us with insight on the social and individual level. While the cultural constructs of hearingness and deafness are often addressed through essentializing static binary relationships: deaf versus non-deaf and disabled versus abled binaries, sub-binaries of the discourse on normalcy (normal versus non-normal), my participants problematized such binaries by shaping their cultural translations as an in-between third space of ambiguity.

Ultimately, however, new technologies and 'ontologies of hearing ways of being' (Valente *et al*. 2011: 252) will overwhelm the intimate deaf spaces; they will become less frequent as the children 'drop signs,' acquire spoken English, and are mainstreamed into the hearing education system. This intense pressure was illustrated in the interwoven narratives of all the mothers. Implants and access to English are perceived to 'solve' the problem of cultural difference, or 'nip the problem in the bud' as Susan explains. We witnessed the mothers longingly reflect back on these shared spaces in their narratives, providing insight into how their experiences with sensorial cultural difference are important, but slowly being lost. The third spaces of intimacy provided a space of cultural translation between their child's deaf world and their hearing one. The findings from my study provide insight into the importance of the visual spaces in which the mothers learn from their children, yet the societal, education and medical discourses underpinning the language learning choices cut these shared experiences short. Whenever I have met mothers and children (from this intervention program) after they graduate and are mainstreamed into public hearing schools, I have noticed that the use of signs drastically decreases.

7. CONCLUSION

The interview data presented in this article provide a rare contextualization of the hearing mother–deaf child language learning experiences and offers new insights into the intersection of modality and identity. The mothers in this study both embraced and struggled with the 'in between' they shared with their deaf child through *some* exposure to the language of their child, sign language. However, 80–90% of hearing parents of deaf children never learn a sign language such as ASL, or even sign supported English. Children from Latino and Black families (more than half of my participants) and are even more likely to have a home environment in which no signs are used (Lane *et al.* 1996). The mothers in my study had some access to ASL and signing, which is not the case for many hearing parents with deaf children.

Technology holds the promise of access and inclusivity, but the mothers' experiences showed us that something is lost. Intervention programs for deaf children are introduced with the best of intentions, yet often fall short of offering access to the visual language of a deaf child. Shaw (2015) views cochlear implants as part of the larger issue of mass technologies, in that they exacerbate 'The loss of identity, authenticity and connection with the sensory world, even a sense of rootlessness' (p. 248). In a way, this 'rootlessness' was found in the ambiguity expressed through the mode blends as participants hold dear both their hearing world and their children's sensorial world. These findings call on us to consider Baynton's demand for 'new configuration of abilities' (p. 294) that takes into account how deaf visual bodies shape cultural practices. Baynton claims that preserving sensory diversity and recognizing physical difference extend the argument for 'Deaf culture' as opposed to basing the cultural argument solely on a linguistic minority one.

Deafness, from the perspective of hearing participants, became a shared third space between mother and child, often isolated from a deaf community. This hybrid third space was a place of cultural translation (Bhabha 1994) and a subtle resistance to the hegemonic force of English. While participants found themselves on the 'outside' of what they perceive as Deaf culture, they still shared new embodied processes with their child. In these in-between spaces, mothers 'make do' (De Certeau 1984) with the semiotic resources they have to make connections to others and make sense of their own experiences. In so doing, they show us how they bring together the global culture of hearing technology and the local meaning-making culture of the deaf through personal commitment and embodied engagement.

NOTES

1 Historically, the USA has generally lacked legal, educational, and social recognition of sign languages. Deaf people have not been counted on the US Census since 1930 and sign language is not recognized as a 'language spoken at home' on the US census. The MLA did not officially recognize ASL as

a language until 1980. Prior to its recognition, it was put under the category of 'invented languages' along with the language used in the TV program Star Trek (Davis 1997).

2 It is estimated that the number of people with disabilities in the USA is between 35–43 million, making up the largest minority group in the USA (Davis 1997).

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