

PATHS TO SIGNED LANGUAGE INTERPRETING IN GREAT BRITAIN
AND AMERICA, 1150–1900

by

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Abstract

This study inaugurates a history of signed language interpreting (SLI) in the UK and US, with a primarily pre-twentieth-century focus. The problem of inaccurate and incomplete lay and academic research in translation and interpreting studies, legal history, and Deaf histories is challenged with three main questions. First, I investigate centuries of hearing speech–sign bilingual–bimodals, or hearing signers who learned and co-developed gestural communication systems with deaf signers before Deaf educational, linguistic, and sociocultural structures were forged. Similarly, I trace deaf intermediaries who emerged from the resulting Deaf-World *habitus* in the nineteenth century to function with or without a hearing co-interpreter. Lastly, I reveal a substantial collection of evidence that generates new ideas from well-known sources, and mines new and overlooked texts from historical materials and archival court records in the UK and US. Findings point toward a shared transatlantic pedigree among hearing interpreters, and origins of deaf British and American Sign Language interpreters that are similar to one another, but based in distinctly different cultural origins from their hearing colleagues.

Dedication

For signed language interpreters. Keep moving.

Keeping Things Whole

In a field
I am the absence
of field.
This is
always the case.
Wherever I am
I am what is missing.

When I walk
I part the air
and always
the air moves in
to fill the spaces
where my body's been.

We all have reasons
for moving.
I move
to keep things whole.

Strand, Mark. (1980). "Keeping Things Whole". *Selected Poems*. Atheneum.
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The second sacrifice falls to Dr. Hilary Brown of the University of Birmingham Department of Modern Languages. In a rare moment of speechlessness, I do not have words to equate how much and how deeply I am grateful to her. She supported me through an unending chain of tribulation so comedically Biblical, I did not even share it all with her. She is a Line Editing Assassin, and lent a constant empathetic strength, through eviscerating grief at the passing of her co-supervisor Dr. Angela Kershaw, a beloved mentor who first saw merit in my project, and the farewell to Dr. Gabriela Saldanha, whose thoughtful contributions we both missed. The names of all three women belong on this thesis. I celebrate our time together, render the success of this work to them, and claim every mistake and inadequacy as my own.

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INTRODUCTION

*What is to become of the interpreter under the new dispensation?
...Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis¹*

This study responds to a problem in translation and interpreting studies, namely the lack of an evidence-based history of signed language² interpreting (SLI) in the United Kingdom and United States. British Sign Language (BSL) and American Sign Language (ASL) practitioners have inherited an incomplete and erroneous self-conception of their origins, which has invited a pernicious friction—among themselves, and relative to the Deaf³ communities where they work—that compounds the complexities of growing into a profession. Histories of these two distinct communities of practice will be intertwined for the purpose of this study, both for reasons of practicality in English-language sources, and given their historically-related legal and governmental systems. Greater consideration will be given to similarities than drawing comparisons to highlight differences or consider their relative merits.

Pym (1998) laid out that the primary aim of translation and interpreting histories is to “express, address and try to solve problems affecting our own situation” (p. x), and nothing could be more essential than a well-researched ancestry, however fragmented. To borrow from the same foundational methodological text, “[signed language interpreters] have done something important in history,” and without a

¹ Caldwell, W. A. (1911). Experiences as an interpreter. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 56(2), pp. 172 & 179. The original article left this quotation in Latin, which most sources agree translates to “Times are changed, and we also are changed with them.” This thesis will treat whether to translate such non-English phrases on a case-by-case basis.

² The term “signed language” is analogous to “spoken language” — i.e., there is agreed-upon parallel term for gesture-based communication equivalent to “Anglophone” to describe English speaking people or geographic areas.

³ I use lower-case “deaf” to indicate people who do not auditorily hear, and “Deaf” for sociocultural groups of deaf signers. This will be further described in Chapter One “Definitions and Assumptions.”

properly historicized “identity and agenda as a professional group” (p. 160) to acknowledge those contributions, interpreters have arrived at a critical impasse.

Overview

In the United States, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) grew out of a 1963 Federal grant tasked with expanding and refining the pool of qualified interpreters (McClure, 1964). RID functioned afterward as both the national membership association and credentialing body for professional interpreters in the US until 2016, when the Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters began administering the certification process. When this study began, tensions had arisen in the “the business relationship...related to testing and certification” (Whitcher, 2016) between the American National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and RID. This led the NAD to ultimately retreat from their “historical relationship with RID” forged in 1964, long characterized by “cooperative efforts by the deaf and interpreter communities throughout the decades since” (Wagner, 2016, para. 3). The word choices in the two organizations’ statements spelled out the contemporary signed language interpreter’s landscape: the pragmatics of *business* versus the weight of *history*. As this thesis was underway, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) in the UK was also strained by conflict, and chose the 100th issue of their publication to address rifts over regulatory “divisive politics” and “reactionary voices” of a “fractured field” (Carmichael, 2017, p. 5). Interpreters’ imperfect grasp of our more *distant* past is partly to blame for entrenched collective memory masquerading as history.

It is true that for generations, interpreting has been seen as a service provided through Deaf-centered structures such as schools, missions, clubs, congregations and families, with the expectation that any “valiant” hearing signer would “soon be asked to interpret for a deaf person” (P. T. Corfmat, 1956, p. 6) in legal, employment,

religious, and later healthcare settings. The first RID convention was held at a school for the deaf (“Registry of Interpreters Holds First Convention in Delavan,” 1970). For a century, it had been widely understood that such institutions were the main pipeline of qualified interpreters. One deaf editor recommended that legal interpreters, or bilingual hearing people qualified to “translate both ways with equal facility, can always be found and their services secured by application at any institution for the deaf and dumb, and one should always be sent for, no matter how small the offence” (Swett, 1869). That same year in the UK, a similar announcement for interpreting services was publicized in an organization with both religious and secular aims. Shortly after the founding of The Liverpool Adult Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society by a leader from the Deaf community, the second object was “to provide an interpreter in case of dispute or misunderstanding” (*The Liverpool Adult Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society Report*, 1875, p. 2) between deaf workers and hearing employers. This is but one local example, and a similar network of teachers, clergy, welfare workers, and family members stretched throughout the British Isles. Interpreters in the UK and US who had for centuries been an export of Deaf communities have never questioned those origins.

As academic and commercial enterprises gained footing and even dominance over the experiential path to interpreting in the latter twentieth century, the lengthening distance from a perceived Deaf homeland necessitated a bridge that has “not exactly fit at the meeting point” (Bienvenu, 1988, p. 2). Resistance followed to the “cult of professionalism” (Scott-Gibson, 1994) of an educated elite of more recent arrivals to SLI practice, who were seen as a threat to oppose older paradigms of community-embedded interpreters.

Histories are primarily a record of change, and this study seeks to contribute to

the debate over the inevitable evolution of interpreter positionality with respect to Deaf communities through evidence-based analysis. While it is true that RID came out of NAD in the US, and early ASLI members worked closely with their own national associations for British deaf people, this thesis takes a longer view of the development of the interpreting role, which did not emerge from a mature Deaf community. This is the first systematic application of translation concepts to recover a more foundational history to pre-date the increasingly fraught period of professionalization since the twentieth century, and probes past the previous hundred-odd years when distinct Deaf communities formed and thrived.

The primary questions under investigation focus on people and texts, and divide time periods into the years previous to and after the earliest foundations of today's Deaf communities:

1. Before the establishment of standard signed language in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the UK and US respectively, how did lay people develop a more advanced gestural vocabulary, and begin to function as intermediaries between hearing and deaf primary interlocutors?
2. After Deaf-World educational, linguistic, and sociocultural structures emerge, what was the path for deaf intermediaries to function both with and without hearing co-interpreters?
3. From 1720–1900, how do surviving records demonstrate the salient features in the work of first untrained hearing and later deaf interpreters, and what readings are possible of a purely visual modality for which no original texts survive?

Pym (1992a) advised that a “hypothesis is properly historical in that it identifies a change process, it constructs an explanatory narrative, it is potentially falsifiable on

the basis of empirical evidence and it addresses a contemporary problematic” (p. 1). This study is structured less to test a question, and more to investigate, document, and preliminarily interpret qualitative data. However, the questions presented above will be developed within Pym’s expectations: a well-sourced story of how SLI in the UK and US is rooted in a unique history, with benefits *and* baggage carried into our present.

To do so, this study furthers an ongoing project to fill a substantial evidence gap in SLI history, which like the broader translation and interpreting (T/I) field, “throughout the twentieth century has essentially been concerned with contemporary practices,” as “expertise in historical research among interpreting scholars trained for the profession is rare (Pöchhacker, 2015, p. 72). Gile (1990) celebrated similar pioneering work in Kurz (née Pinter, 1969) for registering the critique that “the only available material in the literature are general descriptions and observations, based on subjective experience and lacking scientific weight” (p. 28). Kurz’ thesis sought to gauge interpreting aptitude with speaking/listening tasks, and the same deficits weaken longstanding historical claims about signed language interpreting. To that end, my master’s thesis (Leahy, 2015) applied communication theory to trace the legal pedigree of the BSL and ASL signed language interpreter. I studied developments under Anglo-American common law that led to the legitimization of the role outside of signing Deaf communities, and findings revised simplistic lessons overtly taught in ASL– and BSL–English interpreter pedagogy and subconsciously perpetuated by the cultural machinery surrounding deaf people. In the same vein as Toury (2012), this represents “another interim report; at best, a stepping stone for further developments” (p. 5).

It is also important to state what this thesis does *not* intend to do. Toury (2012)

could have intended this very study, which identifies the “main reason for the prevailing underdevelopment of a descriptive branch within [signed language] Translation Studies” as “an overriding orientation towards practical applications, which has marked—and marred—scholarly work ever since the sixties” (p. 2). Historical mediated interactions will be presented, but any analyses of strategies and skills must be constrained by the circumstances at the time, and the surviving evidence at hand. Also, while “the work done by descriptive historians can do much to orient and improve criticism” (Pym, 1998, p. 9), attention to critical theories of ability, culture, power, gender, and socioeconomic class in this project are left to experts in those domains.

Pym (1998) warns that despite the purest intentions, “[e]ven the most apparently non-evaluative descriptive discourses are founded on evaluative premises” (p. 9), which stripped out of context overburdens the evidence with unnecessary anachronisms, making for “an unfashionable and perilous exercise” (p. 5). Rather than add to arguments about historical deprivation and discrimination, or what D’hulst and Gambier (2018b) call “the fallacy of looking at the past through the lens of modern or contemporary categories, presuppositions, or methodologies” (p. 6), the primary tenor of this study will be to identify and analyze centuries-long historical threads which created and sustained SLI practice.

Though today’s British and American Sign Language users share a visual orientation to the world and therefore many common experiences, the languages largely developed independently of each other and are not mutually intelligible, despite contact with spoken and written English (D. McKee & Kennedy, 2000). Nevertheless, interpreters from those Anglophone communities share a deeper and more direct connection in the evolution of their SLI role. This introductory chapter sets

forth the rationale for exploring that history, which has largely been ignored within academic and professional communities of practice. I describe my qualitative methodology that combines re-readings of existing material with ongoing discovery of new data through a longitudinal and interdisciplinary approach.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is divided into three main sections. In the first, this introduction states the problem and three research questions, then describes what historical methods and approaches guided my research and analysis. Chapter One lays out the interdisciplinarity of the project across translation and interpreting studies, signed language interpreting studies and practice, and deaf history. I define key terms and contextualize assumptions in order to orient readers to the discussion of deaf individuals, Deaf communities, and signed languages. The data is summarized, and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, as well as the nature and inherent difficulties of collecting evidence is outlined. Chapter Two navigates and summarizes the selections from the research landscape of historical translation and interpreting studies, and foregrounds the contribution of “histerpreters” whose scholarship informs their practice, and vice versa. The philosophical debates on translation as a point of departure for history, vs. the history of translation are summarized, and relevant methods and approaches are considered. Material specific to signed language interpreting history is discussed as being scarce, shallow in scope and weak in primary and archival sources. Authors Gile, Pym and Pöchhacker, whose advocacy for sound research, practical methodology, and interpreting to receive equal attention within translation studies, have particular relevance to this study.

The second segment begins with the perspective of hearing interpreters (HIs). Chapter Three focuses entirely upon the first question that investigates the

emergence of hearing speech–sign bilingual–bimodals, or people who learned and co-developed gestural communication systems with deaf signers. The adoption of gestures and finger alphabets among people who primarily use spoken language is analyzed. Some primary historical evidence is bolstered by more contemporary accounts of deaf–hearing interactions outside of established cultural contexts and signed language communities. Deaf individuals in the nineteenth century who became fluent in both signed and written language provide reliable recollections that further illustrate what earlier intermediaries might have done. To broadly map the path which hearing laypeople took toward a more advanced gestural vocabulary that enabled them to assume the intermediary role, I reference culture-specific gestural vocabularies and other strategies deaf and non-signing hearing people use to communicate. Examples of these have been retained if not wholly conventionalized and adopted into all signed languages, and as such remain more accessible to people unacquainted with a natural signed language, and have proven invaluable to transnational deaf–deaf interactions where there is no shared signed or written language.

Chapter Four introduces the third research question: how the people and texts can be investigated through evidence of interpreter-mediated interactions from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century court records in the UK and US. Features of the dataset are described; one UK metropolitan area illustrates frequency of community interpreting during the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries; and payment is discussed as a marker of professional identity and employment status. Four features of courtroom work which follow introduce recusals, compulsion, teachers in a dual role as SLIs, and teamed interpreting work.

The third section responds to the second research question investigating the

route Deaf Interpreters (DIs) took into that role, as distinct from HIs. Chapter Five paints the backdrop for the emergence of educated culturally-deaf signers from established sociolinguistic communities as mediators. Literature specific to historical DIs that was intentionally reserved from Chapters Two and Three is reviewed, and threads of written–signed language bilingualism among deaf people are suggested, with emphasis on educational settings. Overlooked connections to DIs in early research projects on signed languages, and a brief historical survey of practice in professional capacities are summarized. Ten mentions of DIs from Deaf histories are given; both new insights to well-known examples, and others that have been previously reported are included. Chapter Six returns to research question three, to complete the analysis of legal cases where deaf people who were bilingual in English and their respective signed languages worked in the nineteenth century with other deaf parties who were less prepared to interact with the legal system.

For both sections on DIs and HIs respectively, the background chapters are significantly lengthier than the presentation of the data, in the service of context and auxiliary information that bolster the examples of historical interpreting. Given the expansive interdisciplinary and temporal scope of this study, what may be wanting in specificity is gained in synthesis. Specialists in T/IS, SLI, Deaf studies, history, law, linguistics, and other domains who do not see those areas of expertise illustrated or analyzed with the level of granularity to which they are accustomed will gain new insights from balancing upon a heretofore unexamined, if niche, vantage point.

Method and Approach

Archival and genealogical methods have largely driven the research of this thesis. While the reach continues to expand, at the time of this writing, over twenty electronic databases and roughly double that number of physical repositories in the

UK and US have been consulted. The most helpful physical collections have included the former UCL Ear Institute and Action on Hearing Loss Libraries, The National Archives UK, Gallaudet University Library Deaf Collections and Archives, and California State University Northridge Oviatt Library and the National Center on Deafness. Records in the US are often organized by state and locality; my proximity to the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, supplemented by onsite visits and remote staff assistance in accessing many smaller repositories yielded rarely-consulted material. Holdings in electronic databases continued to expand during my studies, and were a necessary substitute for physical access, as well as a concession for initial searches of periodicals and legal reports. Wherever possible, I followed up with original documents in their various languages, scripts, and states of preservation. Thousands of physical pages and digital images have supplied material for this study, and laid the foundation for a career's worth of work to further these initial lines of inquiry.

Pym (1992a) is correct to warn that logic and boundaries to an expedition of “potentially unlimited gathering of ‘fascinating’ data or random recovery of ‘forgotten’ texts” (p. 2), however satisfying it may be to some audiences, in lieu of a strong hypothesis. The historian is more than an aggregator, and must organize raw materials with various configurations and polarities to fashion novel insights from them.

From a single item that is difficult or expensive to get, to a cache of hundreds that were available for free, it has required vigilant recordkeeping, transcription, analysis, and layers of verification in order for shards of data to be reassembled from disparate and occasionally unlikely sources. Where possible, reliable birth–death dates are provided for interpreters, as well as significant individuals in the background

sections, in order to orient the reader who may be less familiar with their life histories, or could benefit from broad biographical comparisons among historical figures.

Signed language interpreter history has the capacity to weave the length and breadth of the social sciences together in a wholly new configuration, borrowing from and enriching the work of socioeconomics, politics, psychology, sociology, gender studies, disability studies, anthropology, law, history, and linguistics. The interdisciplinary assembly of this thesis will be primarily built via signed language interpreting studies, historical and mainstream translation and interpreting studies (T/IS), Deaf history, and historical Anglo–American legal studies. The gathering specialty of translation and interpreting (T/I) history is expanded upon below, followed by some considerations for weaving together timescales of longitudinal versus smaller history.

T/I History

In addition to gathering primary data, guidance specific to my task was available from scholars on historical topics, methods and approaches within spoken–written language T/IS. For practicing interpreters and student researchers, the basic primer in Hale and Napier (2013) attempted to “demystify the research process” for novice academics, but includes scant guidance on historical projects, confined recommendations to ideas for charting educational practices of recent decades, and advocated mere “[d]esk-top research” (S. Hale & Napier, 2013). Pöchhacker (2011), however, encouraged “a range of distinct theoretical and methodological approaches” including “archival research on interpreting practices in history” (pp. 9–10). Other authors have advocated historical approaches such as historiography, archeology, microhistory and biography.

Pym (1998) provided a compilation of prior work, and is “required reading for

anyone considering research in the area of translation history” (Cronin, 1999, p. 399). Rather than enumerate and respond to Pym’s many pragmatic and philosophical points, this study shares many of the concerns of the four overarching themes, neatly summarized by a reviewer:

In addition to a concern for present, the other general principles guiding the approach to translation history advocated by Pym are attention to causation (why translations are produced in the first place), a focus on the human translator and the foregrounding of interculturality as a constitutive feature of translators’ identities. (Cronin, 1999, p. 399)

Pym (1992) guided the prospective translation historian to formulate better questions, and avoid “seven shortcomings in the historiography of translation,” namely:

1. archeological accumulation of data that respond to no explicitly formulated problematic
2. dependence on anecdotal evidence
3. indiscriminate periodization
4. visions of translations as expressions rather than potential agents of historical change
5. axiomatic privileging of target cultures
6. the use of unfalsifiable methodological hypotheses
7. failure to appreciate the interculturality of the translator’s position (p. 233)

A deserving response to these admonitions from SLI history could form the structure of a separate essay. Failing that, I have tried throughout this study to reflect and respond to how I attempted to avoid—or admittedly risked breaching—such scholarly snares.

Pym (1992a) suggested that breaking ground with the most basic of questions, such as “‘who?’, ‘where?’, ‘when?’ and ‘what? (which text?)’,” gathers “the data needed to defend or attack historical hypotheses,” (p. 2). Lambert (1993) similarly

“formalized...the basic parameters for historical–descriptive studies: who, what, where, for whom and how?” (p. 11) as formative questions to guide translation history. D’hulst (2012) further differentiated the language of history (presentation of the facts), historiography (analysis of historical writing), and metahistoriography (analysis of historical methodology), and catalogues (rhetorical “circumstantial loci with the objects of interest”), namely *quis*, *quid*, *ubi* *quibus auxiliis*, *cur*, *quomodo* and *quando*. Little, if any, of this most basic conversation exists in SLI scholarship, and this study presents the foundation necessary to drive an “awareness of what translators have actually done” (Pym, 1998, p. 10).

Stressing the need for a systematic and collective program to map out and refine an organized inquiry, Lambert (1993) advocated that “the task of the translation historian” (p. 11) be within a tradition specific to translation, rather than borrowing methods wholesale from other disciplines. SLI history, however, is rarely decoupled from histories of Deaf communities—specifically the development of educational opportunities for deaf people—and analyzed on its own merits. It would be more difficult still to find a historiographical tradition within SLI. Lambert (1993) further allowed that the boundary between “historical material” as research “to be discovered, gathered, described” and “historiography” as “the discourse on the object of study” (p. 4) could be relaxed, as the synthesis of a “panoramic historiography cannot survive without a systematic interaction with small-scale research projects” (p. 5). An interesting observation described a research landscape that has dangerously packaged “the story of history” stripped of any historiographical meta-analysis, where “historical norms and concepts are not objects of study, they are taken for granted or even stressed and worshipped (Lambert, 1993, p. 10). Within SLI, this manifests as a polarization between lockstep allegiance to the Deaf community (seen as a

sacrosanct, historically-based relationship), vs. fidelity to professional interpreting protocol and product. Framed in folk history, this division not yet been shaded with much nuance, or properly historicized—a deficit which this study begins to resolve.

Longue Durée

In somewhat the same vein as Pym's (1998) organization of research into catalogs and corpora, the theoretical models applied in this study to interpret the dataset traverse a broader to a more focused inquiry. A longitudinal search for SLI origins assumes incremental progress and regression along a slower time scale that resists the more recent metanarrative of Deaf-World origins. Braudel (1980) provides an attractive contrast to rhetorical disruptions with the "*longue durée*," or a kind of megatrend in which "[p]ast and present illuminate each other reciprocally" (p. 37). As societal changes are seen within a longer context, seemingly obscure accounts and isolated data points permit a broader circumscription of SLI history. Here again, Pym (1998) might have intended this study, and the relatively shallow and incomplete existing literature on the topic, to be further explored:

...the many mistaken hypotheses and occasional partisanship of the earlier studies were often necessary conditions for later advances. Seen in this light, translation history is a long-term activity that is not easily upset by revolutions...Indeed, the rhythm of substantial advances could well conform to a rather slow process of development, if only because the material to be interpreted does not appear by magic. The stuff of history has to be gathered and assessed; explanation requires archaeology; solid research takes time. If translation history is to achieve long-term results, it must appreciate its own long-term history. (p. 13)

As will be shown, recognizable features of SLI practice originated, and in many

cases, sufficiently matured centuries earlier than today's interpreters have typically been taught (e.g., Hansbury, 2015; Leahy, 2019). D'hulst and Gambier (2018b) agreed that in order to understand "the kind of knowledge that has been collected or recycled in the course of the 20th century" requires "delving deeper into history since much of our knowledge belongs to the *longue durée* and expresses features of continuity rather than change" (p. 10).

Translation historians are still fomenting the methods and theories of a newer field, and as such, are susceptible to the dangers expressed in Braudel (1980) to be easily "overwhelmed by their own progress, if only because of the accumulation of new knowledge and the need to work together in a way which is yet to be properly organized" (p. 25). I suggested in an earlier work that SLI history is burdened by relatively recent advancements in the field, which are "accessible within the lived experience of contemporary practitioners, educators, and other thought leaders who witnessed the transition to professionalization" (Leahy, 2015, p. 37). This has generally concentrated historical observation to the more conspicuous changes brought about in the twentieth century, invited little challenge to or expansion of the received origin story as a product of the Deaf community, and widened the perceived generation gap for newer interpreters who were academically trained. Cokely, one of the main conservators of SLI social history and proponents of a Deaf-centered practice in the US stated this "could perhaps best be characterized as an emergent crisis of identity" when "interpreters/translitterators began to forge an identity that was distinct from the Community, and one viewed by many as independent of the Community" (Cokely, 2005, p. 16). This perspective illustrates the lament of Cokely's generation that interpreters ought to return to their origins within Deaf households, educational institutions, and social networks—because that is what interpreters

moored in the twentieth century can remember.

I take counsel from Pym (1998) that any temptation toward “contemporary certitude should be toned down” (p. 12), and resist an indictment of folk perspective of anecdote and memoir, to replace it wholesale with an academic counternarrative. The expectation to orient one’s interpreting practice from a Deaf center has been upheld by foundational authors who are seen as village elders; this has saturated and divided the SLI field. Thoutenhoofd (2005) characterized the “swing in attitude towards sign language interpretation, from seeing it as community service by a number of committed individuals to a body of professionals with certified qualifications,” leading to the professional status becoming, “a site of cultural conflict” (p. 237), as cited in (Phillip, 1994). Braudel (1980) warned that in emphasizing “the narrow confines of the present, the attention will irresistibly be drawn toward whatever moves quickly, burns with a true or a false flame, or has just changed, or makes a noise, or is easy to see” (p. 37). There are many informal examples of such debates within SLI today—some more cautious, and others that devolve into less civil arguments. My intention is to present the interpreter’s identity in historical time, gleaning clues from past protocols to inform present praxis and vice versa, without allowing political currents to enforce any single interpretation of the past or the future.

Micro–Macro valences

The longitudinal scale is purposeful in a research design that breaks new ground, and must therefore situate the data as both a product of their own past, and a foundation for the transformations that followed. With a healthy respect for macro scale, but without a slavish devotion to Braudel or Bloch, the data also contain circumscribed, microhistorical pauses, sympathetic to the interpreter’s perspective. Rundle (2012) advocated for localized microhistories to combat the debatable

“organic unity” (p. 236) of translators’ processes and experiences, which taken together, risks subsuming disparate historical contexts and texts into abstracted, ahistorical generalities. Munday (2014) also argued in favor of applying microhistory to translation and interpreting “to better understand how the detailed analysis of the everyday experience of individuals can shed light on the bigger picture of the history of translation in specific socio-historical and cultural contexts” (p. 65). Certainly, the macro is indebted to the micro and vice versa. While caches of personal papers and retrospective interviews detailing past assignments are generally not available in SLI, the method of this study seeks to ultimately serve the subject through a balance of humanizing the characters and panning outward with context to ground the lived experiences.

Ginzberg (1993) dubbed Kracauer (1969) “the best introduction to microhistory,” albeit by a cinema theorist and “nonprofessional historian” (p. 27). Kracauer is reminiscent of Pym (1998) both in tone, and a presentation strategy that demands readers follow conceptual threads through to their resolutions. The warning must be noted that “some attempts at an interpenetration of micro and macro history are more successful than others,” and can be measured along competing axes of breadth, or how much of the past captured with “intelligibility,” versus depth of “information,” or level of detail (Kracauer, 1969, p. 129). The same source advises that ideally, the relationship between “macro definitions” and “micro facts” should be such that “micro insights on their part aspire to recognition in the macro dimension,” and “macro explanations” be “at least partly be grounded in micro analysis” (pp. 126-127).

Both representative and seemingly inconsistent events and details are considered valid, as the microhistorian Ginzburg (1993) stressed that even points that

stray into “the most anomalous, can be inserted into a series,” and “if properly analyzed, shed light on [a] still-broader documentary series (p. 21). Borrowing a concept from Lévi-Strauss (1962)⁴, Kracauer may well have been describing SLI studies, which does not currently have overpopulated minutiae that lack a narrative arc, but suffers from weak historical generalities:

When the historian ascends from the micro dimension to ever higher levels of generality, he will reach a point, marked by what I have called the “historical idea,” beyond which, as he proceeds further to the dimension of “philosophical” ideas or extreme abstractions, the significance of his insights is bound to decrease instead of continuing to increase...(Kracauer, 1969, p. 131)

Ideas about the foundations of SLI currently circulate with very little substantiation, which is a different problem than “very high abstractions” Kracauer further cautioned could lose any “bearing on the evidence they are meant to cover” (p. 131). This study must not trade the existing flaw for a new one, with either a lack or a dilution of evidence to weaken analyses that could both “read ideas into things which the things do not include” (ibid.).

Histoire Croisée

The flexibility of *histoire croisée* as expressed in Werner and Zimmerman (2006) leaves such things as time scale “primarily a matter of the researcher’s choice of level of analysis” (p. 42). Rizzi et al. (2019) lists one of the “lessons of *histoire croisée*” as “working ‘bottom-up,’ from the details of encounters to the larger, sense-giving constructs of history” (p. 7), which demands that each data point be considered to potentially bolster, revise, and otherwise balance the ongoing analysis. As

⁴ “Par conséquent, et selon le niveau où l'historien se place, il perd en information ce qu'il gagne en compréhension...” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 346). “Consequently, depending on the level on which he places himself, the historian loses in information what he gains in comprehension...” (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 261).

discussed earlier, growing pains in the SLI field have suggested that even an unknown past can influence the present. Across historical time, the inevitable impacts are “not necessarily limited to elements in contact: they may also affect their local or remote environment and manifest themselves at a deferred moment” (Werner & Zimmerman, 2006, p. 39), long after precipitating forces have receded out of living memory. In crossing great distances of time and geography, the authors caution against “the pitfalls of asymmetric comparisons,” or “postulating a similarity between categories on the basis of a simple semantic equivalent, without questioning the often divergent practices...or negative comparisons (p. 44).

Wolf (2016) raises *histoire croisée* as a way to deal with “problems and questions that are subject to certain evolution during the process of analysis” (p. 229), and consider how “‘translation/interpreting’ or ‘translator/interpreter’” have been “historically constructed” (p. 230). For example, the development of the SLI role embraced the tensions that form legal precedents through respecting past decisions, or *stare decisis*, and allowing subjective judgment to examine cases in context. Five constituent components of that development resist a neat chronology but could be parsed as 1) the presence of a deaf party, 2) with legal agency, 3) who signs, 4) and is represented through an intermediary 5) who communicates effectively (Leahy, 2015). Werner and Zimmerman (2006) further offers *histoire croisée* as a credible frame to the kind of overlapping and occasionally backsliding progress found in my data, making “it possible to account for interactions that are part of complex phenomena that cannot be reduced to linear models” (2006, p. 43).

Data

Primary sources are crucial to an approach that seeks to uncover the underlying origins of “the function of interpreting rather than the current concept of the

profession” (Baigorri-Jalón, 2015, p. 11). Pöchhacker (2011) observed that “data typically encountered in interpreting research are of the non-numerical kind” (p. 14), and “interpreting studies could therefore be characterized as an empirical-interpretive discipline” (p. 15). Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón (2016) agree there remains vast “uncharted territory” that places us “still at the stage of filling the gaps. This task demands firstly the identification, construction and preservation of sources, which have thus far proven scarce and often difficult to access” (p. viii). Pym (1998) sees this format best “drawn up according to strictly controlled criteria—of which relative completeness may or may not be one—in order to test a hypothesis or a set of hypotheses,” with the “degree of completeness [to] depend only on the nature of the hypotheses to be tested” (p. 42). My approach is to build upon emergent themes, which continue to be refined and reinforced by new finds. The database containing the source materials that inform this study has been an ongoing project since 2012 and will drive a descriptive research design intended as a compliment to and development of my master’s thesis work. It was begun to undertake the overwhelming task of gathering primary data, in order to form initial hypotheses and guide next steps. Saldanha and O’Brien (2013) correctly observed that this type of research “exercises no control over the events it focuses on and also requires the examination of a wide range of sources” (p. 207). The challenge has been to schedule and fund research trips, while recognizing that collections and locations may not always be accessible, and therefore gathering even more information than this thesis requires. That said, the primary analyses here are confined to interactions between gesturing or signing deaf and hearing people who rely solely on written and spoken language.

This study maintains a strong preference for legal venues, given the evidentiary focus and likelihood of faithful and well-preserved documentation of

interactions the parties likely knew were being recorded. Ibbetson (2005) advocates starting legal–historical research with secondary material and following up with primary documents where extant. Archival research requires a particular familiarity with fragmented collections, years of coordinated travel, and a vigilant attention to newly-catalogued and -digitized sources.

At this preliminary stage, a quantitative organization of the data would not prove soundly illustrative, since the collection cannot be assumed to be complete, or even representative. Though Pym (1998) requires no “period and genre divisions” of a database, a snapshot of the collection is in order (see Table 1). There is no attempt at a corpus design in the traditional sense; while multiple items may appear for a given legal matter (e.g., court papers, newspaper articles, and school records), others may be only obliquely served by elusive search arguments (e.g., deaf/deafe, mute/muet, dumb/dumbe, “silent,” “could not hear,” &c.), and whether documents are available in physical or digitized forms. The following table shows the distribution of sources consulted across various time periods.

Table 1. Abstract of Dataset.

Major Divisions	Items
Pre-1700	77
1700–1760s	49
1770s–1780s	33
1790s–1810s	38
1820s–1830s	55
1840s–1850s	52
1860s–1870s	51
1880s–1900	14

Total 369

Sources that refer to no interpreter and no attempt at communication, direct communication via mutually intelligible gestures, direct communication via writing, or speech and speechreading with or without the use of limited hearing ability are excluded, unless they can illustrate the historical status, role, and purpose of signed language interpreters. The same holds true for instances of a critical mass of bilingual–bimodals, or hearing signers within temporary polyglot “speech/sign communities” that “arise suddenly, spread rapidly, and disappear quickly” (Nonaka, 2009, p. 210). Widespread acceptance and fluency among residents in a locally prevalent signed system may nullify the need for interpreters. These phenomena might emerge in kinship groups, or in “village sign languages” used by “relatively closed communities with a high incidence of hereditary deafness” (Meir et al., 2017, p. 193). When deaf people are integrated into the general population, the increased familiarity among family and neighbors means that hearing signers generally outnumber them. Evidence of fewer hearing signers interacting with a single deaf individual, or a small, isolated deaf population may more closely mirror the dynamic prior to the more stable languages and cultures among deaf people such as exist today.

Before 1600, common law structures “had an established practice of looking to civil law and canon law for specific rules of law, for definitions of terms, for broadly applicable maxims, and for elementary categories and distinctions” (Seipp, 1993, p. 420). Where common law lacked a foundation for dealing with DPs, the data suggest a liberal borrowing, and therefore include selected items of interest derived from

Church and Roman secular authority. For example, an 1198 papal decretal validated a signed vow by a deaf candidate for the marriage sacrament, stating “what he cannot declare by words he can declare by signs” (Denziger, 1911, p. 177). This decision was likely influenced by Lombard’s *Liber Sententiarum*, where some fifty years earlier “On the Doctrine of Signs” endorsed consent through “*verbis vel aliis certis signis*” —words or certain signs. Though this counsel was not immediately or universally adhered to, it laid a foundation of legal agency for the DP, and in turn the legitimacy of the interpretation in the period covered by this study.

Pym (1992a) recognized that “archeological data” should suggest movement along “actively directional lines,” as “translations have a habit of going from and to specific times and places” (p. 5). Political separation or cultural differences notwithstanding, such is the case with common law precedents regarding DPs that were often exchanged between British and American jurisdictions, if they presented a solution to similar circumstances that arose within other legal systems. One of the more frequent citations is “Ruston’s Case” (Leach, 1789, pp. 347–348), which originated in the London Central Criminal Court, but remains widely cited in US case law in support of procedures for both deaf witnesses and sworn interpreters. *Ruston* has been treated thoroughly in Leahy (2016), and will be referenced in Chapter Four.

Historical evidences such as these are drawn from a variety of primary sources, from more ancient canon and civil law as mentioned, through national and tribal legal systems, and early English court rolls. Completeness and accuracy of the witness’ testimony, attorneys’ arguments and administration by court personnel depend on the reputation of the clerks and protonotaries who recorded the proceedings and decisions of the various Anglo-American jurisdictions. Mentions of intermediaries for DPs appear at the United States federal, state and municipal levels,

and British and Irish national, county, and municipal levels. Many were found through case digests and reports, and in the legal and popular periodicals that followed.

Electronic databases enlarge the field of inquiry, but may produce less reliable secondary sources such as inaccurate, incomplete, and sensationalized newspaper accounts. Where possible, such leads can point to original court documents and penal files, as well as sacramental and governmental birth, marriage, and death records, and local histories to contextualize subjects within their social worlds.

Spadework

Borrowing this term from the division of labor shared among the small field of T/IS described in Pym (1998) helps illustrate the organizational goals of SLI history. The initial concern to respond to the questions in this study continues to be gathering evidence through detailed archaeology—this label does not reference Foucault’s provocative abstractions, or respond to a re-definition of the vocabulary of historical inquiry. This study values history for its own sake, very much contrary to Foucault. Careful archival work is necessary to produce evidence for this project and, ideally, for future researchers across related disciplines. To dispel any assumption of a potentially loaded word, it must be said that this study adheres more closely to Pym’s definition:

The term ‘archaeology’ is not meant to be pejorative here, nor does it imply any particularly Foucauldian revelations. It simply denotes a fascinating field that often involves complex detective work, great self-sacrifice and very real service to other areas of translation history.” (Pym, 1998, p. 5)

As regards archaeology (gathering and listing) vs. historical criticism (evaluations of how translations “help or hinder progress”) vs. explanation (exploring causation), researchers are likely “to some extent involved in all three activities” (pp. 5–6). Each

has strengths in discovery, argument and storytelling respectively, and “division of translation history into separate but related parts could also prove useful for the actual organization of research” (p. 7). These methods can also draw a rough sitemap for extracting qualitative and descriptive evidence of signing intermediaries. Pym, however, issues the caution that quantity must be balanced with quality:

One cannot start studying a field just by collecting fragments that look like they might have something to do with that field. There must also be careful thought about what we are looking for, how we are likely to find it... (Pym, 1998, p. 11)

Pym seems to have agreed with Lambert (1993) that a “historical–descriptive approach to translation (history) has to go beyond a simple registration and/or accumulation” (p. 4). This introductory study satisfies both the necessity of building a documentary record, and proffering a preliminary analysis.

Pym’s “translation archaeology” enters into conversation with signed languages via Supalla and Clark (2014), which offered systematic sifting for traces of the origins and evolution of American Sign Language through transcribed, photographed, and filmed renditions, as well as folk vs. scientific etymologies. SLI history overlaps with Deaf history along linguistic lines, and additional sources supplement new shoots of inquiry by re-tilling partially-cultivated ground of that adjacent domain. Examples of data later in this chapter, and many additional ones throughout this thesis may broaden the scope of data available to historical linguists.

Straining for Data

The primary “complaint” in the title of Pym (1992a) is “the lack of history in translation histories,” and the enviable cache of spoken–written language material in “an age of excessive information and limited orientation” justifies his challenge that “an incipient discipline must accumulate data before it can say why it should

accumulate data” (p. 2). My orientation differs, as this study answers the reverse complaint: a lack of translation and interpretation data involving at least one signed language, and very little attention to SLI within the two primary adjacent domains of T/I and Deaf historical studies. These research gaps will be covered further in Chapter One.

As access to records inevitably expands, the quantity and quality of evidence will build toward what Pym (1998) labels a raw “catalogue” that aims for completeness and functions “as a data base and no more than a data base” and draws “the widest possible boundaries” (p. 47). Pym assures that after “self-sacrificing souls” have undertaken the painstaking archaeology, “one should be able to extract corpora based on alternative divisions” such as “key words, dates, authors” or interpreters, etc., and the “building of corpora could even be a relatively painless affair” (ibid).

As this study portrays a broad scope of SLI history *and* pauses to frame humanizing moments, it carries a high tolerance for vignettes for their own sake, published in the service of sharing undiscovered data that could add to or invite collaboration from other scholars’ research. Referencing the work of John Bagnell Bury, Kracauer (1969) reveals an affection for “the meaningfulness of ‘technical history’” despite the futility that such “labors for posterity...will never reach the upper regions of synthesizing histories” (p. 136). Even if the historian invests in “playing the long game,” though “likely to lose” it, Kracauer boldly ends the debate with “one single argument” deemed to be *the* “conclusive” one:

It is a theological argument, though. According to it, the “complete assemblage of the smallest facts” is required for the reason that nothing should go lost. It is

as if the fact-oriented accounts breathed pity with the dead. This vindicates the figure of the collector. (Kracauer, 1969, p. 136)

This study agrees that data isolates do carry intrinsic worth. Just as “the historian’s close-up is apt to suggest possibilities and vistas not conveyed by the identical event in high-magnitude history,” Kracauer (1969) saw similar value in a “photographic detail of a work of art for separate enjoyment” that can effect a “difference in quality and meaning” (p. 126) for the viewer.

The Translation’s Invisibility

During the period of study, signed utterances had no written or otherwise recorded forms to allow precise reconstruction and analysis of original texts. The first surviving representations of gestures were roughly “translated” into English or Latin by non-signing clerks or journalists who witnessed them. The reduction of three-dimensional movements into the printed word also encumbered the earliest sign language dictionaries, for which even two-dimensional illustrations were often impossible. Syle (1874) recognized that even for sign language experts, any such “attempt to frame a verbal description of a gesture, from which the gesture can be exactly reproduced by a reader of the description, will show the extreme difficulty of the task” (p. 739). Keep (1869) agreed that both manual signs *and* facial grammar, or “the bodily motions and changes of countenance which make up the sign language” would be “a difficult and cumbrous work...to express in words,” adding that such a written transcription “would be of comparatively little use in learning the language” (p. 93). In the case of historical HI/DI data, the same challenge extends to re-interpreting a non-signer’s description, and then re-animating it.

The 1666/1667 property case of Martha Elyot, a deaf woman seeking to transfer her lands to an uncle in exchange for her maintenance, illustrates this

feature. To rule out fraud, the chief justice “demanded, what sign she would make for passing away her lands,” and recounted “*as it was interpreted to me, she put her hands that way, where the lands lay, and spread out her hands*”(Wallace, 1882, p. 331). The clerk’s rather spare written version of Elyot’s statement as mediated through her hearing sisters retained arguably enough detail for a British or American Sign Language user to recognize references to geographic space, and possibly possession. It may also comport with the terminal predicate observed among hearing subjects with deaf family members in Meir et al. (2017).

Occasionally, secondary accounts from third parties described the signs produced by DPs who may not have been present or even alive at the time were set down into yet another, tertiary transcription. For example, an unnamed deaf “traveling man” was given a pauper’s burial in 1786 (*St. Mary the Virgin, High Ongar, Essex: Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1743-1812*, 1786). The inquest for his alleged murder occurred the following day, where Joseph Osborne, the primary witness, testified to several signed exchanges with the victim. Osborne had immediately recognized the local deaf man, and seeing the severe head wound, “made Signs to him to get up and go Home with him” (“Sunday and Tuesday’s Posts,” 1786). His ex-parte testimony of the decedent’s statement was entered without question: the unknown man who “retained his Senses till within a few Hours of his Death” was able to identify the murder weapon as a bill-hook, and “shewed, by Signs with his Fingers, that the Villains who committed the Fact were three in Number” (“Sunday and Tuesday’s Posts,” 1786).

The earliest examples in the data naturally skew toward the British legal system, in which deaf parties appeared centuries before any Colonial or American cases. As interpreter protocols gain momentum, and more items emerge, some

transcriptions are rich enough in original and interpreted utterances to justify selected case studies. In some instances, the English target text may be in the form of interpreted or reported “speech,” but carries sufficient domestic features from the signed source to allow for a level of forensic back-translation to derive how the DP may have rendered the message. In the High Ongar murder inquest, the victim “pointed to the Bill-Hook, and then to his Head, plainly indicating, that he had received his Wound by such an Instrument” (“Sunday and Tuesday’s Posts,” 1786). In the case of Martha Elyot, familiarity with typical communicative and social behaviors of contemporary DPs and an ability to visualize the gestures imperfectly transcribed by a non-signer is crucial to interpret the data effectively.

Use of Theory

This study takes an opportunistic and pragmatic perspective as a first attempt to collect and organize scant data with few proven authorities or cleanly overlapping patterns to rely upon. On the advice of a respected T/IS scholar who generously granted me a brief interview on theoretical strategy, “Use theories for what they give you, and explain why.” Concepts and vocabulary from adjacent traditions that may never have imagined this topic will be borrowed and applied, with the overarching organizing principle being a defensible version of SLI history that corrects and ultimately replaces the more primitive ones.

The schism of historical inquiry vs. theory divides analytical tools between those “whose main interest lies in the historical description” of texts, who either disregard or at best sideline translation theory, and the assumed majority “in the business of developing theories...without referring systematically to these historical data” (Delabastita, 1991, p. 138). Lambert (1993) agreed “that there is no genuine, theory-neutral road into history, exactly in the same way as there cannot be any

genuine, a-historical road into theory” (p. 3). Resolving the aims of the theoretical and “historical–descriptive” directions should restore “some order into the chaotic field of translation studies” (Delabastita, 1991, p. 138). Toury (1991, p. 185) similarly enlisted all TS scholars “to bring the results of descriptive studies to bear on the theoretical branch of the discipline” (p. 185). In the absence of “ideal theoretical frames,” elevated historical research to “an absolute necessity even and in particular for theoretical reasons” (Lambert, 1993, p. 21). Delabastita describes an ideal collaborative cycle, as theory predicts and history returns and reports:

...the ideal procedure seems to consist in a constant two-way interaction involving both describing and theorizing, in which the theory functions as a set of related working hypotheses, which help to direct and optimize the descriptive work, and which are, in turn, permanently open to revision and modification on the basis of feedback information resulting from the confrontation with historical reality. (Delabastita, 1991, p. 141)

Much like the critiques against unexamined, pseudo-historical generalities presented in the Method and Approach section of this chapter, Rundle’s interview of Rafael (2016) challenged “pushing this or that approach or subscribing to this or that theory” (p. 28) to impose contemporary viewpoints from “typical TS paradigms” (p. 30). Seeing historical data through contemporary analytical frameworks can identify roots of modern practice, but should be done with care to avoid lapsing into anachronistic certitude. Doing so with interpretations from the past could have the deleterious effect of “stripping each context of its historical difference/specificity so as to fit it into pre-determined categories or models” and “confirming ideas that we have already formed” (p. 30). Some of the literature reviewed Chapter Two demonstrates this tendency within SLI as well.

If a descriptive–explanatory study such as this is to advance T/IS with evidence from signed language, it must pursue a two-pronged program for an “explanatory hypothesis of ‘real-life’ phenomena” presented in historical questions and as “part of an overall endeavor” to avoid not being “reduced to the accumulation of mere facts” (Toury, 1991, p. 182). Advising specifically on the best way to study existing translation histories, Pym (1998) cautioned:

Awareness of the calculated or even misleading role of theory means that translation history cannot be based exclusively on what has been said about translation. Better historiography requires awareness of what translators have actually done. And the best historiography must surely come from relating the two, investigating the complex relationships between past theories and past practices. (Pym, 1998, p. 10)

As a workaday interpreter and translator, I also value an orientation that is not independent of theory, but provides practitioners with an account of the past in which they can recognize or even explain aspects of themselves and their work. To paraphrase Adamo (2006), it stands then, that “a fundamentally sound effort might be to recover the many silenced voices of [SLI] without imposing an overly strict interpretive model that would efface their complexity and richness” (p. 93). This initial history is therefore a labor of recovering, organizing, and sensemaking for interpreter–historians.

Habitus

As a vehicle to compare the communities of practice, namely hearing signed–spoken language interpreters (HIs) and deaf signed–signed or written–signed language interpreters (DIs), Bourdieu’s *habitus* (1977a) will be applied, insofar as a sociological and anthropological concept can be drawn upon for pre-cultural, pre-

societal interactions between highly individuated deaf and hearing signers. Isolating the critical cog *habitus* from the complex, challenging, and intradependent Bourdieusian machine has become an increasingly acceptable risk, and one I am willing to assume as a non-philosopher. This study does not attempt a fine-point analysis, but maintains a broad reference to the “practical logic” to describe how we embody and “carry within us our history” (Maton, 2014, p. 52), to be performed and perpetuated.

Meylaerts (2006) casted translators “as historical subjects translating for other historical subjects” (p. 59), and argued that “cultural situations before and/or after the nation-state” (p. 61) are not accounted for in a strictly sociological point of view in descriptive translation studies. In much the same way, SLI has not reconciled evidence of interpreting prior to the emergence of linguistic and cultural systems shared among deaf people. If Bourdieu corrects the preference for structures with greater attention to agency, *habitus*—the dialectic between them—could slip into “theoretical abstraction and a methodological imprecision” (p. 60), and strip away “plurality of...dispositions and identities” and “individual variations” (p. 61) inherent in smaller or inconsistent data points, as discussed earlier with respect to microhistories.

It will be shown that whereas the first HIs pre-dated the formation of a Deaf vernacular, DIs arose later, after the spread of residential education, and the linguistic enrichment and standardization that followed the gathering of a critical mass of deaf people within a geographically-bounded community. In this way, stances, expectations, and responses have been unconsciously shaped through long-forgotten historical forces begotten of “yesterday’s man who inevitably predominates” and makes available “the second natures of habitus” necessary to perform in their respective roles (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 79). This study seeks to parse HI and DI figures

from their overlapping but distinct lines of succession, and offer a possible source of dynamics which may have been “organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention” (ibid, p. 73).

Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón (2016) further outlines the historical project to draw interpreters themselves out of sterile textual analyses with a living “series of norms, a habitus, associated with a professional code of ethics and a social identity that have evolved through time” (p. ix). This *habitus*, or “way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination” (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 214), can superimpose a structure over the *longue durée* to analyze the roots of the incrementally and interpersonally-constructed role of SLI previous to and alongside the rise of canonical Deaf languages and cultures. In that pre-professional stage, intermediaries navigated between socially, culturally, or linguistically isolated DPs and mainstream legal systems.

Simeoni (1998) employed “cross-cultural practice of translation as a way of overcoming and enriching Bourdieu’s thought” (Williams, 2013, p. 104) and allowed that the translator’s *habitus* is influenced by both such interpersonal and group structures as “the elaborate result of a personalized social and cultural history” (p. 32). (Meylaerts, 2006) also criticized the “Bourdieu tradition” for referring to structures and agents of “national societies only,” calling for a re-imagining of intercultural agents in “cultural situations before and/or after the nation-state” (p. 61). This proto-condition can be applied to historical hearing intermediaries before the rise of Deaf communities, and later, acculturated deaf intermediaries working with unaffiliated DPs. Regarding Bourdieu’s “relevance for Deaf cultural study,” Ladd (2003) conceded that in the initial attempt, “it is not possible to generate a model which is congruent with the full range of Bourdieu’s theories,” and deemed it “more appropriate,

therefore, to draw on his theories at relevant points” (p. 221). As such, the intermediaries mentioned enter into “intercultural relationships, develop perceptions and practices partly through crosscultural habituses” (Meylaerts, 2006, p. 61) and largely through personal interactions, and will be further explored in Chapters Three and six.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the need to describe the centuries-long relationship between signing communities and SLIs through painstaking archival documentation. Methods and approaches from generalist and T/I history include an obvious debt to Pym (especially with respect to archeology), and complimentary perspectives of Braudel’s *longue durée*, Werner and Zimmerman’s *histoire croisée*, and Kracauer and Ginzberg’s microhistory. The difficult nature of finding historical renditions to or from unwritten languages were illustrated with examples of signing by a deaf party as summarized or reported by trained legal personnel and laypeople. The practical posture of this preliminary descriptive historical study does not rely heavily on theory, but does admit the concept of Bourdieu’s *habitus*.

Tracing signed language interpreting in the UK and US, as it evolved among both deaf and hearing intermediaries, presents a unique specialization of T/IS. Therefore, the following chapter will orient the complex positionality of SLI history—laying out definitions and assumptions that underlie this study, and situating SLI history alongside the main adjacent domains of historical T/I and Deaf studies.

CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION

“...eine lange Vergangenheit, doch nur eine kurze Geschichte.”⁵

With apologies to the psychologist Ebbinghaus (1908), the role of signed language interpreter also has “a long past and but a short history” (p. 1). Since relatively few scholars have taken notice of SLI work in general, and an even smaller subset undertaken any historical analysis, a brief orientation is in order. The previous chapter described the dataset, criteria for material of interest, and the methods and approaches to gathering sources. This chapter further lays out definitions and assumptions particular to the examination of historical intermediaries who worked with signed languages. Also, the unique kinships SLI history shares with historical T/IS and Deaf history are discussed, with a view to increased collaboration.

Like Pöchhacker (2007), this study adopts the basic assumption “that interpreting is a form of translation, in the wider sense, and that interpreting studies as a discipline, though open to a variety of interdisciplinary approaches, has a place in the broader field of translation studies” (p. 11). Signed language interpreting uniquely encompasses all three translation tasks identified in Jakobson (1959), namely, intralingual transfer within the same language, interlingual “translation proper” between two languages, and intersemiotic “transmutation...of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems” (p. 233). While not directly intending spoken–signed language interpreting by the last function, and without disclaiming signed

⁵ Ebbinghaus, H. (1908). *Abriss der Psychologie* (p. 1). Veit.

language as a fully linguistic and “verbal art” in its own right, there is nevertheless a comparison to be drawn to the visual arts of “dance, cinema, or painting” (p. 238).

Definitions and Assumptions

One of the challenges and benefits of such an interdisciplinary project is the broader intended audience. The opportunity for exchange can bolster a fragmented archival record and create new intersections of theories and methods, but may come at a cost to the specialist reader who must widen their view toward unfamiliar domains (such as signed language or Deaf studies). This uniquely systematic analysis of signed language interpreter history follows Snell-Hornby (2007), which holds that, in any interdisciplinary study, even “basic concepts and terms need to be clearly and unambiguously defined in their specific usage within the approach concerned,” and lay usages should be applied “with caution, particularly when these have culture-specific associations and are transcoded literally into other languages” (p. 322). For example, I intend “descriptive research” firstly as a qualitative contrast to quantitative “experimental” data, secondly to emphasize role and function over cognitive processing strategies, and thirdly as a preference toward reportage, and away from activism. I will avoid erecting semantic barriers for scholars from other domains, and will clarify insider concepts and terms of art common to discussions of signed languages and Deaf communities. In the spirit of Gile (1991) that relaxed the T/IS border by suggesting the convention of capitalizing “Translation” to include both, I will also assume more commonality than difference between the subdomains. This follows Pöchhacker (2007) who further argued against decoupling translation from interpreting, as it “would not be helpful for interpreting research as a whole,” and “obscure productive links and interrelations” (p. 21). In the interest of leveraging as

much analysis as possible, theoretical and practical lines of demarcation more strongly defended elsewhere in spoken-language circles will be largely blurred.

As Leahy (2015, p. 5) explained in similar terms, and in accordance with well-established conventions in academic and popular texts on signed language communities, this thesis will maintain working definitions using the deaf/Deaf (Markowicz & Woodward, 1978) and hearing/Hearing indicators. While “deaf” will describe a lack of auditory function meaning that producing and/or receiving spoken language is neither feasible nor practical, the cultural marker “Deaf” will be applied only when the interpreter facilitates communication with a deaf party (DP) fluent in the language of an established signing community. The same will be used for people who are “hearing” versus societal institutions that operate within a “Hearing” construct, insofar as the interpreter’s task includes navigating, or mediating between the DP and others who identify with the spoken-language majority. Senghas and Managhan (2002) and Plann (1997) agree that historically-oriented scholars do not universally capitalize “Deaf,” recognizing that “the notion of Deaf identity is a bounded sociohistorical phenomenon” (Senghas & Managhan, 2002, p. 71). In later cases that emerge in the timeline of this study, an interpreter may facilitate interactions between hearing court personnel and a DP who was educated at a school for the Deaf, assuming a usable signed language, and a high probability of enculturation as distinct from the Hearing world. With a focus primarily aimed toward the interpreter whose work ranges along a vast linguistic and cultural continuum, absent the luxury of deciding how d/Deaf their clientele are, this thesis will adopt that assumption, and distinguish between deaf or hearing people and Deaf or Hearing cultural affiliations.

Origins of British Sign Language

A handful of historical texts describe signing in Great Britain before Deaf communities began to use a contemporarily recognizable form of British Sign Language. A selection will be described here, with more to follow in this chapter, and throughout this study. Secretive codes for manually representing the English alphabet between hearing people began with Bēda Venerābilis (710), continued with Wilkins (1641), and began to resemble modern BSL fingerspelling by *Digiti-lingua* (1698). The letterforms were specified for deaf signers by Dalgarno (1680) and Defoe (1720), which Sutton-Spence (1994) reported what Emmerig (1927) attributed to the earlier work of John Wallis (e.g., Wallis, 1698).

Bulwer (1648), the “first book on the deaf in the English language” (Wollock, 1996, p. 4) catalogues 31 known deaf people, and documents the communication shared by two deaf brothers, some of which is thought to “closely resemble signs with a related form and meaning used in BSL today” (Schembri et al., 2018, p. 167). Additional accounts of signing within isolated individuals and families in both the UK and US will be offered in Chapters Three and Five.

The Braidwood Academy was the first organized school to work with private pupils in Edinburgh 1760 (Green, 1783); it relocated in 1792 as the London Asylum for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb Children of the Poor, with a public mandate and confirmed use of signing (Watson, 1809). There was no clear description of the exact signs in use, and the precise “origins of BSL [remain] unknown” (Schembri et al., 2018, p. 167). Leahy and Brown (2020) found eleven attempts to name British Sign language before Brennan (1975), which has been universally cited as the first mention of BSL in print. In short, the labels of “American and British sign languages” appeared in private transatlantic correspondence by 1960 (Stokoe, personal

communication, November 16, 1960), with the concept of a British Sign Language first codified in a linguistic study nearly a decade and a half later (Cicourel, 1974).

Origins of American Sign Language

This is unlike the case of ASL, which has more documentation of prominent influences, and began largely within the American School for the Deaf (ASD), the first public institution for deaf children in the US. For example, structure, vocabulary and fingerspelling was brought from *Langue des signes française* / French Sign Language by deaf immigrant Laurent Clerc (1785–1869), who was instrumental at the founding of ASD in 1817 (Clerc, 1952). Also, pupils from the collection of village sign languages in New England where high-incidence hereditary deafness had incorporated their signs into the ASD community by the early 1820s (Bahan, 1996, p. 6).

Alexander Graham Bell, who was familiar with signing but adverse to allowing schools to use it in the instruction of deaf children, was decades ahead of the discussion with an interesting argument intending to name ASL, which never took hold:

“I think, however, it would be advisable, on account of the loose way in which we are all accustomed to use the words ‘Signs’ and ‘Sign-language,’ to prefix some qualifying word to show that we mean a definite and specific form of Sign-language, and not any form of Sign language—for example, those crude forms brought into every school for the deaf by uneducated deaf children. I would have no objection to call it the ‘Gallaudet Sign-language’ or the ‘American Sign-language.’ Indeed, I am willing to accept any name that is specific and definite.” (Fay et al., 1893, pp. 333–334)

The generally-accepted beginning for the coinages “American Sign Language” and “ASL” came many years later (Stokoe et al., 1965).

“Language” Liberality

There are also longstanding debates on when gestural behavior qualifies as a language proper, and Ribiero (2007) further asserts that language cannot exist without a corresponding cultural milieu. Meir et al (2017) includes newly-developing sign languages with “no stable set of linguistic conventions that users can rely on” (190) and homesign systems (spontaneously created by small social groups such as families) as types of “young languages or restricted language systems” (p. 192). Regarding sign systems before the seventeenth century, Bragg (1997) reserved the word language for “natural communication systems that (1) have both a lexicon and a grammar, (2) are capable of expressing any thought on any subject, (3) are learned by...infants during the normal language-acquisition-threshold age, and (4) are living, growing, changing systems” (p. 2). Bragg further judged systems that do not meet these criteria either sublinguistic gesture lexicons without grammars, or protolinguistic signs used in small family or social groups. Nevins (1890) agreed that isolated deaf signers use gestures which are sufficiently idiosyncratic or conventionalized so as to require translation, but stopped short of using the label of a “language”:

Such signs as the dumb may make from infancy to indicate hunger, pain, anger, pleasure, &c., which become intelligible to those intimately associated with them, though they may be unintelligible to strangers, and cannot possibly be called a “sign language.” (Nevins, 1890, p. 1)

If mimicry and homesigns were expanded and “constructed upon some intelligent principle, which may be taught to a number of deaf and dumb as well as to hearing persons,” then Nevins conceded “they might then, in a perfectly legitimate sense, be

called a “sign language” (p. 1). Even if “such signs should have any easily intelligible meaning in themselves” (p. 1), the author considered the necessity of translation to non-signers as unrelated to the formal status as a language. Once national signed languages were sufficiently shared among a community of users by the nineteenth century, they were not widely labeled as such (Murray, 2007, p. 2).

Tweney (1977) observed that the field of interpreting studies “has not had to concern itself with the question of whether or not source languages or target languages constitute fully developed linguistic systems” (p. 103). This may be especially true for deaf interpreters (DIs), who according to Turner (2006) may perform more “‘intermediation’ using...forms not unambiguously assured of full linguistic status” (p. 289). As such I will still label any facilitation between spoken–written languages and underdeveloped visual–gestural systems that may not quite be languages *per se*, and certainly do not have a community of users within a shared culture, as “interpreting.” The primary analysis will be first concerned with mediating between signing deaf and non-signing hearing people, capturing the “historically created solutions” (C. Padden & Humphries, 1988, p. 120) which incorporate the DP’s primary mode of gestural communication as a resource. Historical DIs who use written or fingerspelled English and a standard signed language may also adapt pantomime and iconic movements to the highly-referential idiolect of a particular DP’s direct experience.

Adjacent Domains

SLI history presents a new opportunity for dialogue with scholars working along related lines. The previous chapter mentioned the hope that this study would enter into exchange with historical specializations within signed language linguistics, T/IS, and Deaf studies. The latter two connections will be further explored here. T/IS

benefits from expanding the notion of language to a signed modality, and increasing the coverage of historical interpreting practice to interactions between signers and speakers. In admitting the perspective of bilingual–bimodal intermediaries into the conversation, Deaf studies may stand to gain the most in terms of newly-introduced data, and reworked primary sources.

Historical Translation and Interpreting Studies

In recent decades, scholars have given greater attention to histories of T/I practice. In particular, Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón (2016b) sought to re-imagine the spoken-language interpreter's issues, "professional identities and practices along a continuum with the past, allowing us to strengthen our awareness of what being an interpreter means for current and future practitioners" (p. vii). In that vein, a descriptive, exploratory history of pre-professional signed language interpreting in Britain and United States presented in this thesis enriches that record through the perspective of practitioners from the subspecialty of unwritten, gestural language. To borrow the bold assertion in Ingram (1977c), any story "of interpretation based solely on languages which are orally produced and aurally perceived is an incomplete" account (p. 116).

Since this study began, work on T/I history has proceeded apace, and I have participated where time and resources allow. Working as a self-funded distance-learning doctoral researcher, I have prioritized attending and participating at conferences as part of my scholarly development. These experiences proved invaluable for networking, generalist and specialized inquiry, as well as giving and receiving advice. A selection of my travels included Saint Louis University's "The Tasks of the Translator: Developing a Sociocultural Framework for the Study of Translation across the Early Modern World" (March 2017), "The Translator Made

Corporeal: Translation History in the Archive” at the British Library (May 2017), the second “Symposium for Translation and Interpreting Research,” Gallaudet University (April 2017), “Translation & Minority 2: Freedom and Difference / Traduction et minorité 2: liberté et difference” at the University of Ottawa (November 2017), the “Conference of Interpreter Trainers” in Salt Lake City (November 2018), the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters in Paris (July 2019), and “100 Years of Conference Interpreting: Looking Back and Looking Forward” at the University of Geneva (October 2019).

If “historical research has traditionally occupied a subordinate position in interpreting studies, which itself is considered a subdiscipline of translation studies” (Takeda & Baigorri-Jalón, 2016, p. viii), then intermediaries working in the visual–gestural modality may be the ultimate subaltern. The broader field of translation and interpreting studies (T/IS)—already an amalgam—presents an interdisciplinary context in which to examine the triply marginalized case of signed language interpreters. Like interpreting itself, “interdisciplinary work is an improvisation” (Kimaïd, 2017, p. 484), and this study draws outside the lines of oral and written forms, and welcomes ideas from translation or about translators that bolster the discussion. In a more recent study of historiography, Pym (2016) added the caveat that if *Method in Translation History* were written today, it would ensure that “the concept of ‘translation’ should allow wider scope to its spoken modes, and second, that more serious methodological attention has to be paid to the complex plays of interests in the mediated encounter and their relation to action” (p. 241). These imagined additions to Pym’s original counsel link directly with analyses of un/spoken, and enacted transactions are certainly the core of this study. As mentioned earlier, this study is in part indebted to Pym’s *Method* (1998), which provides the framework

to weigh the viability of past attempts to build an academic record, consider the raw materials, and construct a new space to consider and present signed language interpreting history. As general translation history grows, proportionately fewer avenues for text analysis and less authoritative material is available for signed language scholars to match the strides of spoken–written language studies.

Deaf History

Neither does SLI history have a strong tradition of hobbyists (e.g., Lee, 2015) to build upon, much less work at the professional/academic level (e.g., Lane, 1984) that Deaf history does. While histories had been written by and about Deaf people since the nineteenth century, the first discussion of Deaf Studies as an academic subject began in the US during the 1970s (Hoffmeyer, 1975; Panara, 1974), which fueled proposals that outlined entire university courses of study in the 1980s (Katz, 2000). Though perhaps technically a subdiscipline of Deaf Studies, the earliest Deaf history curricula for interpreters predate those developments. In the case of the British Deaf community, historical perspectives were elevated and fleshed out in the training of missionaries⁶ in the UK since the late 1920s (Collins, 1928). In the US, embedding ASL instruction with Deaf history and cultural lessons have been the norm at least since Sternberg, Tipton and Schein (1973). In both contexts, the attendant *interpreting* history has been inexplicably overlooked.

Many authors historicize the institution of Deaf education as a kind of synecdoche for Deaf history in general (see Lane, 1984; Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989; Van Cleve, 1999). Perhaps through natural processes of language contact with bilingual–bimodals and according to Lane and Battison (1977) the intentions of

⁶ Ordained or lay clergy who administer ecclesiastical programs and undertake social service/welfare work. In the context of serving deaf people, they would also be expected to perform interpreting tasks within congregations, and in the community.

hearing educators to impose speech and speechreading, signed languages have been seen as “singled out for particular repression among minority languages” (p. 59), and historically “subject to systematic efforts at annihilation by the dominant (oral) language” (p. 57). This and other factors outside the scope of this study have thwarted fluency in either signed or spoken–written language for the majority of deaf people. One result is that interpreters regularly encounter deaf signers with unpredictable English intrusions who sign with “varying levels of proficiency,” which “presents a challenge” to working between language pairings “with diverse language populations” (Gamache, 2018, p. 19) and additional complexities.

That preoccupation with the flourishing of signed language vs. the domineering influence of spoken–written language filters into the messages delivered through interpreter training programs, and has perpetuated through professional discourse. Venuti (2005) drew upon White (1978) to describe such an “emplotment” of facts whereby “events can be emplotted in a number of different ways,’ each of which carries explanatory force” (Venuti, 2005, p. 812). The proceedings of the first organizational meeting of interpreters in the United States followed suit, inaugurating the profession with a reference to the “first permanent school for the deaf in America” (McClure, 1964, p. v). Albert Pimentel, the first executive director of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) in the United States and deaf himself, reinforced the master narrative that “the concept of interpreting as a distinctively unique communicative service to deaf people dates almost from the beginning of education of the deaf in 1817” (A. Pimentel, 1973, p. 129) in that country.

Deaf education, however, has made an unmistakable impact upon SLI history. Educators and administrators who could both hear and sign did form a ready voluntary interpreter pool in the nineteenth century, while religious and social workers

came thereafter, although to a greater extent in Britain (Llewellyn-Jones, 1981, p. 89). While not the first interpreter of record, the first educator–interpreter may have been Henry Baker, who as a private tutor predated the institutional educational system, and accompanied one of his pupils to court in 1753 (Barnes, 1772). This case will appear in more detail in the discussion of teacher–interpreters in Chapter Three.

The assumption that interpreting was subsumed within deaf education has been repeated throughout the literature (e.g., Fleischer, 1975). Generations of interpreters sitting for national credentials in the United States have internalized the myth from study materials such as Dirst and Caccamise (1980), which claimed

Interpreting for persons with hearing losses has been occurring since the language of signs was formally initiated into the educational system in the United States at the American Asylum for the Deaf (American School for the Deaf) in Hartford, Connecticut in 1815. At that time there was no formal recognition of these interpreting services. (Dirst & Caccamise, 1980, p. 5)

This assumption was copied into the next iteration of instructional and test preparation reading lists, as Frishberg (1986) repeated the narrative unquestioned that “the story of interpreting begins with the introduction of the language of signs to the public education system” (p. 10). The presumption that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century interpreters “were available from schools for deaf people, from among deaf people’s family members, and from churches which integrated deaf members through the use of signing” (ibid.), is not inaccurate, but may have effectively dampened any curiosity, given that the revised Frishberg (1990) continues to appear on the Knowledge Exam for ASL interpreters (Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation, n.d.). Interpreters in the UK share this longstanding belief, and have also been disinclined to question it:

I [had] very little knowledge of this subject, which is surprising even to me; one might assume that professionals have a thorough understanding of their roots. Throughout my training I attended numerous Deaf Studies lectures...on the history of deaf people. My limited understanding of the origin of interpreters was that we evolved from missionaries and social workers from the 19th and 20th century who...inadvertently found themselves in the role... (Hansbury, 2015, p. 26).

Following the rejection in Bragg (1997) of “the myth that the deaf were mercilessly persecuted as defectives in the ‘Dark Past’ until the rise of Deaf Education” (p. 4), this study challenges the notion that the first interpreters formed an allegiant apparatus to signing communities arising from such institutions. Rather than assume the claim in Cokely (2005) that “the roots of the practice of sign language interpreting/transliterating lie squarely within the aegis of Deaf Communities” (p. 3), this work recovers the interpreters’ perspective before and alongside the development of the Deaf-World to close that gap in the scholarship. A Scottish case from 1817 (“Diligence in Jean Campbell, alias Bruce case. Process Papers of the High Court of Justiciary,” 1817) has been mentioned in scores of mainstream and Deaf community publications, relying wholly upon secondary sources. For example, Jackson (1990) cites newspaper accounts to reference “Crown vs. Jean Campbell, alias Bruce” as “the first occasion anywhere in the world where a sign language interpreter was appointed by a court to assist in the questioning of, and providing answers from, a deaf person” (p. 81). Leahy (2015a) disproved this, and Chapter Four of this thesis presents selected evidence from archival records that describes the work of legal intermediaries and proto-interpreters in the centuries prior. This study is the first known source to reference original court records of Campbell/Bruce, and Chapter Six

will clarify the role of a deaf individual called upon to facilitate the communication process in the case.

The first known example in the British courts of a sworn interpreter of record was the improvised oath of Ralph Russell (Cooke, 1742), a longtime associate of the deaf party. The deaf individual appearing in Common Pleas was not affiliated with any community of signers in the contemporary sense, and the 1720 case predated the generally accepted inception of deaf education by forty years. In the United States, Joseph Boswell seemed to have taken a more formal oath six years before any permanent school had been founded on that side of the Atlantic, acting as “an Interpreter, duly sworn” in an 1811 criminal matter (Lincoln County Maine, 1811).

Since the mid-twentieth century, research on signed language interpreting has been framed in turn by social services, the communication conduit model, sociolinguistics, bilingual-bicultural mediation, demand-control occupational psychology, and power dynamics (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014; Mindess, 2006; Monikowski & Winston, 2003; Stewart et al., 1998). The aim of this study is to deepen historical inquiry into signed language interpreting, and ultimately form a practical and longitudinal contribution to interpreter preparation and in-service learning. In crafting a research agenda principally applied to training and curricula, Marschark, Sapere and Seewagen (2005) describe a surprising “lack of serious inquiry about these issues and the paucity of research about even the most basic of questions” (p. vi). Certainly, there can be no greater foundation for researchers, educators, practitioners and students in the UK and US than an evidence-based study of interpreter history. Ideally, data and analyses from this study will be included and further interrogated by Deaf/disability history, and mainstream translation and interpreting (T/I) studies. As the budding research community continues to evolve, build on earlier studies and

generate applied lessons, it is more crucial than ever to reconceive signed language interpreting in proper longitudinal context and in conversation among related disciplines.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the signed language traditions under study, namely British Sign Language and American Sign Language. I have laid out an inclusive definition of “language” and conflation of T&I for historical analysis purposes. I delineated the operational definitions such as individuals who are deaf vs. Deaf-World social, educational, and cultural institutions, and clarified assumptions of what kinds of evidence will be considered.

The following chapter will discuss selected literature for T/IS in general, and its subdomain of history, as well as for hearing SLIs. Additional background sources specific to deaf SLIs are given in Chapter Five to frame the discussion of that practice, which carries origins and a perspective rooted somewhat different to hearing SLI history.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

There is perhaps a need for a book on signing, for it is a big subject and can be approached from many angles.⁷

The initial contribution of this study will be a survey of research at the intersection of generalist and historical interpreting/translation studies with signed languages of the US and UK. The intersections presented by British and American Sign Language interpreting history have never been elevated within a graduate-level thesis, much less the subject of intense archival work. It is therefore critical to introduce such a specialized topic by first describing what has or has not been done, and position my work as a response to the broader academic conversation. This chapter structures the existing research into two main categories: firstly, guidance from leading T/I authors who study spoken–written languages, and secondly a survey of signed language interpreting material, both with particular attention to historical studies. A review of historical material that mentions deaf interpreters is found in Chapter Five, as an introduction to the data analysis in Chapter Six.

Since the latter decades of the twentieth century, academic and professional attention to “translation and interpreting has expanded at a rapid pace” across the humanities and social sciences as “anecdotal and largely prescriptive writings” advanced toward “empirical research and descriptive studies” (Angelelli & Baer, 2016, p. 1). Similarly, many authors describe the “explosion” in particular of scholarly activity in signed language linguistics, interpreting, and pedagogy throughout the world since

⁷ Sutcliffe, T. H. (1949, February). On translating into signs. *Books and Topics Which May Interest the Missioner to the Deaf*, p. 14.

Stokoe (1960) was the first trained linguist to apply principles of that field to claim the “virtually unknown language, the sign language of the American deaf” (p. 7) was a “truly linguistic” (p. 67) system. Despite initial and unexpected “resistance and even hostility” (Battison, 1980, p. 41) against these ideas from hearing *and* deaf people, laypeople and academics alike have generally embraced them as the starting point for the discipline of signed language linguistics, which continues to debate and refine the course that Stokoe first laid out. This has in turn seeded a host of well-known related efforts, including signed language interpreting studies.

The reception in the UK is lesser known, and so warrants an aside here based on new information in Leahy and Brown (2020).⁸ Churchmen began corresponding with Stokoe almost immediately after the findings were published. Eighteen months later, the Council of Church Missioners to the Deaf and Dumb formed a “small subcommittee” (P. T. Corformat, 1961) tasked with investigating the British system. Committee member Percy Corformat, whose other writings will be reviewed later in this chapter, was raised using what would come to be known as BSL with his deaf parents, but confessed his lingering doubts to Stokoe, of his “own system (one cannot call it a language and the word “system” might also be questioned) of gestures and signs” (ibid.). Corformat would later chair another committee re-constituted in 1964 at the short-lived College of Deaf Welfare, where the investigation continued apace (P. T. Corformat, 1966). Like in the US, opposition also followed, as Canon(hon) Tom Sutcliffe, a senior member deafened in adulthood who had himself published an interpreting handbook and concise dictionary (Sutcliffe, 1951, 1954), “strongly

⁸ Grateful recognition to my collaborator, Peter R. Brown for continued findings on this project.

stressed that it could only be an auxiliary” system, and not a language (P. T. Corfmat, 1966, p. 3).

As missionaries continued what had been a topic of interest for years (Ayliffe, 1950; Crellin, 1950; Sutcliffe, 1949), they recognized the importance of understanding the signs they used. Despite Stokoe’s suggestion of “BSL” mentioned in the previous chapter (W. C. Stokoe, personal communication, November 16, 1960), they first ventured to label it “English Sign Language” (The National Council of Missioners and Welfare Officers to the Deaf, 1963). The sources suggest that although among the missionary–interpreters’ strategies was the suggestion to model fidelity to English word order and pronounced lip patterns (both with and without using one’s voice) during signing, they conceived of “ESL” as distinct from varieties found elsewhere in Britain (particularly Scotland).

Though worthy of debate, it would fall outside the scope of this thesis to add further historical evidence on the beginnings of signed language *study* in the US and UK, which first attracted attention in the nineteenth century, and matured in the twentieth. It is also far too early to pronounce even a preliminary analysis of the impact, except to say that in the US, the impetus seems to have been more to document ASL in order to attain deeper recognition and validity to signing as a method in deaf education, and in the UK, the motivation may have leaned toward improving instruction to hearing people in order to carry out a social service/pastoral role that would include interpreting duties.

The period of deliberate but separate attention directed toward T/IS history and the domains of signed language studies may be relatively short and have only recently begun, and the broad scope of literature entries that have been consulted

have shaped this study number in their thousands. Special journal issues have reinforced the currency of this topic, such as *Meta* (2004), 49(3), *L’histoire de la traduction et la traduction de l’histoire / History of Translation and Translation of History* and (2005), 50(3), *Le prisme de l’histoire / The History Lens*; *Translation Studies* (2012), 5(2), *Rethinking Methods in Translation History*; and the twenty-year commemoration of *The Translator* (2014), 20(1). Since beginning this research, T/I history has gained greater currency. Notably, the University of Vienna founded *chronotopos—A Journal of Translation History* in 2019, and additional special issues dedicated to history appeared in *The Interpreters’ Newsletter* (21), *Revue Internationale d’Études en Langues Modernes Appliquées/International Review of Studies in Applied Modern Languages* (2017) and *Translation and Interpreting* 11(2). Lastly, the manifesto of the newly-launched History and Translation Network (2021), proclaimed as its first tenet A.1 that “acts of translation and interpretation play a crucial role in the making of history” (History and Translation Network, 2021, para. 2), a thesis statement strenuously supported by this study.

Saldanha and O’Brien (2013) recognized the practicalities of historical research in particular, which “exercises no control over the events it focuses on and also requires the examination of a wide range of sources” (p. 207). Such is the challenge of this chapter. Proving the lack of signed language interpreting (SLI) history material within both signed and spoken language T/IS would merely sound a repetitive drumbeat out of a vast terrain of interdisciplinary literature. Rather, this review will offer a focused reading of foundational and otherwise relevant sources to build tentative connections between translation/interpretation (T/I) history, and signed language. If the premise of a given work fell reasonably within that scope, but was silent on SLI history, that absence and missed opportunity will be mentioned.

The literature reveals many tensions to navigate: spoken vs. signed language studies; theory vs. practice; historians vs. translation scholars; translation history vs. translation as history; history of translators vs. translations; micro vs. macro history. D'hulst and Gambier (2018b) called for a dismantling of “walls that have been built” that cordon the history of translation studies away from the discipline, and instead advocate that “we should more likely account for binding elements” instead of “foregrounding binaries” (p. 3). This sentiment is consistent with the aim of this study to welcome disparate if not fragmentary elements, evidence and approaches into a preliminary description of SLI history.

Though an active practitioner and avid consumer of scholarship since 1989, I am however undeniably subject to very real tensions between the expertise and myopia I bring to interpreting the data, and judging the literature. The examples in Gile (1999) were specific to T/I studies and intended for an audience of interpreter–researchers he came to call “practisearchers” (Gile, 1992, p. 150). Gile (1999) cautioned against common pitfalls in reading, assessing, and citing academic literature, and addresses the weaknesses of workaday practitioners not trained in research, and academically-grounded scholars who are not practicing interpreters, or even familiar with the translation process. These apply to research practices within any specialty, but after surveying so much material for this study, much of the counsel rings particularly true, given the patterns that emerged from the work of both camps. For example, Gile (1999) denounced omitting references due to ignorance, a maneuver of “wilful discrimination” (p. 31) against personal detractors and “‘clan-based’ opposition” (p. 31), or simply for lack of a legitimate citation. Also, the inability to discern and prioritize the research landscape can result in “over-abundant and unselected references” (33). Stripping details out of context or misreporting facts,

findings, and other authors' arguments also devalues the academic record, and in the case of SLI, perpetuates the continuing citation of outdated or disproven claims.

Guiding Material from T/I Studies & History

As my prior scholarly and applied training had not been in spoken–written language translation and interpreting studies, this wholly research-based doctoral project required a tremendous amount of additional personal study. My supervisors, who are accomplished T/IS authors and historians, wisely assigned mini-papers covering various topics to augment and structure my otherwise self-guided preparation. Focusing my reading on the more familiar terrain worked by translation historians—both those engaged in more aerial historiographical meta-discussions as well those who produce histories of T/I work on the ground—undeniably aided my acculturation. As I pursue greater mastery of the theoretical underpinnings, technical and methodological strata, and unwritten allegiances and antimonies in the broader field, the results of my ongoing review of the literature is reflected throughout this thesis, and in a more concerted form in this section.

Holmes (1988) situated translation history as a “meta-discussion” for self-examination of within the descriptive, theoretical, and applied branches of T/IS (p. 79), which Pym (1998) challenged as “fragmented,” if dialectically connected historical inquiry without a single “consecrated plot” (p. 2) to call home. D’Hulst and Gambier (2018b) conceded that “contemporary translation studies is more than before committed to a disciplinary self-reflection,” but lags far behind traditions within “many disciplines of the social sciences and the humanities” (p. 2). Attention to history within T/I studies began with the ornamental addenda function of “introductory chapters...encyclopaedias...or anthologies” (ibid.). The same holds true for SLI at a smaller scale, and as will be discussed, accounts that originated internally and are

filtering into mainstream T/IS were circulated by non-historians, with varying degrees of depth and little to no dedicated historical effort.

Retracing the formative arguments in spoken language T/IS benefits the overall analysis; more recently, Pöchhacker (2015) paused to celebrate the progress in this area:

...expertise in historical research among interpreting scholars trained for the profession is rare. And yet, there have been major advances over the past two decades, so much so that research into interpreters and interpreting in history is now a productive line of investigation. (p. 72)

Parallel Origins

A study seeking to build a foundation such as this naturally draws upon the earliest T/IS material for a practical approach to largely untraveled terrain. The 1972 founding document in Holmes (1988) welcomes “new channels of communication” to respond to “a common set of problems, approaches, and objectives” with scholarship that forges new connections among the disciplines.

Pöchhacker (2011) asserted that gains in T/IS are outcomes of cooperative efforts “derived from advances in other, more established disciplines or sub-disciplines” (p. 6), and the same could be said for how the SLI research tradition has benefitted from exposure to T/IS. Where mainstream T/IS lay in 1972, so historical scholarship is situated today within signed language interpreting and translation, with “incidental and desultory attention from a scattering of authors, philologists...or an idiosyncratic linguist” (Holmes, 1988, p. 3). The inescapable parallel of “the Second World War as a kind of turning point” (Holmes, 1988, p. 68) also applies to the precursor to professionalization of signed language interpreting in the United States.

Federal programs initially intended for veterans expanded to train deaf people, who, like many women, had gained unprecedented wartime work experience. In response to the increased demand for interpreters, a 1963 Vocational Rehabilitation Administration grant seeded the “National Registry of Professional Interpreters and Translators for the Deaf” (J. M. Smith, 1964)⁹, which inaugurated systematic study of the field.

Holmes (1988) invited descriptive translation studies (DTS) to ground research in products, processes and functional orientations, and Toury (1991) confirmed these divisions form a “basic principle of organization...and not a mere necessary evil” (p. 180). These three elements of DTS are “not just related, in some obscure way, but outright interdependent” (Toury, 1991, p. 182). Lambert (1993) predicted that this development may have constituted “one of the most explicit indications of the rediscovery of history in Translation Studies” (p. 6). Adamo (2006) reported that indeed “scholars involved in descriptive translation studies have repeatedly highlighted the underdevelopment of historical reflection and historical research in the field of translation studies” (p. 83).

SLI Reception in the Mainstream

Thirty years ago, signed language interpreters generally understood that many T/I practitioners did not consider them legitimate peers, and often felt unwelcomed in those circles. Criticism in Gile (1991b) toward the research community was heartening, however, for not mentioning an engaged ASL–English interpreter corps: “Mais pourquoi ne pas avoir parlé des interprètes de langage des signes, très actifs aux États-Unis?” (p. 663). There has been a recent shift in generalist translation and

⁹ The professional organization is now the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, with the credentialing division partitioned out into the Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation.

interpreting scholars who formerly confined their analyses to spoken–written languages, overlooking signed language T/I studies, with even less notice accorded to the historical subspecialty. Despite differences in signed vs. spoken modalities, commonalities in approach, deficits, and application have begun a constructive exchange regarding theory and practice.

In recent decades, a few T/IS scholars have “broadened the field” to recognize the growing professional and academic status of SLI, even citing “the benefits of linking up with signed language interpreters who were at a relatively more advanced stage of professionalization” (Pöchhacker, 2015, p. 67). SLI has no greater advocate in mainstream T/IS than Pöchhacker, who continues to recognize research based on signed language. Relying largely upon Frishberg (1990) and Isham (1998), the section “Pioneer and Paragon: Interpreting for the Deaf” (Pöchhacker, 1999, pp. 128–131), demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the subfield, although it begins as the vast majority of the literature does—in the 1960s. Given that much “SLI often takes place in community (public service) settings,” Pöchhacker (2015) further praised the earliest studies of those settings “by SLI researchers, linguists and communication scholars in the US and Sweden” (p. 67). Rather than silo SLI within a single chapter, the Pöchhacker (2016) revision of Pöchhacker (2004) regularly embedded examples throughout the text, which presented SLI as a mature component of interpreting studies worthy of study by scholars of spoken–written language T/IS.

In general, however, SLIs are largely absent from T/IS, and figure literally and territorially at the periphery of an already marginalized Deaf History. Unfortunately, signed language practitioners and “advanced Master- and PhD-students in Translation Studies who need background information on the history of their field”

(D'hulst & Gambier, 2018a) will not find any specific entry in that volume, which focused solely on the spoken–written language tradition.

Andres (2012) barely mentioned SLI except to somewhat errantly include it among “[n]ew fields and types” (p. 2518) that emerged in the twentieth century. Pöchhacker (2016) did include the case of SLI, but it does not map neatly onto the historical themes that organize analyses along “chronological, geographical and typological parameters” (p. 152): historical periods, geographical regions, major events, services within an institution, or the work of an individual. There may be more fertile ground in recent histories. After the mid-twentieth century, legal and community interpreting practices began to more closely resemble each other, international settings including both spoken and signed language interpreters become more commonplace, and academics from both camps present and publish to a combined audience.

Repeating the assumption about recent origins of SLI, Roberts (1987) aimed to “reveal that the supposed differences between [spoken and signed] interpreting are relatively superficial” (293), criticizing Seleskovitch and others whose theories and experiments had ignored the latter (though there was more exchange that followed, e.g., Seleskovitch (1992)). Compared to the study of written translations, Santoyo (2006) describes “oral translation or interpretation” history as “one of the most notorious empty spaces in our field” (p. 13), and makes no mention of SLI at all. This research seeks to fill that vast gap with lay and proto-SLI data from “[e]veryday, common, unerudite, unscholarly translations [that] have hardly ever attracted the attention of historians” and “the incorporation of minority and/or minorized languages into translation history research” (Santoyo, 2006, p. 38).

History of T/I vs. History through T/I

The opportunity for translation history to expand or even structure the work of non-T/IS historians has been an ongoing conversation in the literature. Recent interest in the “inter/trans-disciplinary potential of translation as an object of historical research” (Rundle & Rafael, 2016, p. 23) available to non-T/I historians will be briefly reviewed, as well as responses from advocates for keeping historical inquiry within the T/IS domain.

D’hulst (2012) lead with the “two angles” of translation as a lens for history, and the history of translation, privileging the latter. Rundle (2012) advocated working wholly outside a T/IS “research community that has little specific expertise” on historical methodologies or contexts (p. 233). Rather than histories *of* translation, he argued strenuously for history *through* translation, addressing an audience better qualified to understand the impact and meaning brought out by a historical focus.

Responses to this self-described “rather stark and binary choice” (Rundle, 2014, p. 6) generally advocated for a pluralist approach, including DTS, which presents “one framework among many, *in particular* when it comes to historical approaches to translation—and the question of the nature of the relation of ‘patterns of behaviour’ (St-Pierre, 2012, pp. 240–241). Delabastita (2012) faults Rundle for overstating the tension between incompatible approaches that are actually “overlapping, complementary, and mutually enlightening” (p. 247).

Hermans (2012) simplified the “false opposition” between camps of historians and translation scholars, asserting “[w]ithout knowledge of the history of translation we cannot understand translation in history” (p. 244)—an apt justification of this thesis’ strategy to extract SLI out of general Deaf history. Hermans further reinforces

a preliminary approach to data gathering: “remember that this is a two-step process: we need to form an idea of what translation was like at a certain historical moment and in a given environment before we can assess what role it played” (244). Bandia (2014) too found little merit “for the translation historian to devote time and effort to coaxing other historians to view translation history as a legitimate academic discipline rather than working towards constructing a serious history of translation” (p. 114).

One of the values of the present study is how it draws from adjacent domains, and returns valuable data and insights. In the debate over creating history of translation vs history through translation, the aim of this project is trained squarely upon the former, with an eye toward the latter for future work within Deaf History. However fruitful interpreter history might be as a vehicle to analyze the deaf experience, the current fashions deconstructing power and oppression would likely not admit a first foray such as this to become “interpreting as a lens for Deaf history,” which risks the perception of colonization and audism (term of art analogous to racism or sexism; see Humphries 1977). If Deaf historians so choose, this study could, however, inform an expansion of cultural studies to leverage “translation both as a historical object...and as an approach to interpreting other historical subjects” (Rundle, 2014, p. 7) from a Deaf perspective.

Histerpreters

Delabastita (1991) drew attention to another “false opposition,” internal to hybrid scholars working in T/IS who cling to polarizing “conceptual tools” from their primary disciplines, and remain unable to “engage in a fruitful exchange of ideas” (p. 138). Over a decade and a half later, Pöchhacker (2007) challenged the field to not divide “into separate paradigms purely on the basis of professional domains,” which would prove counterproductive, and “obscure productive links and interrelations” (p.

21). Faculty and scholars from domains involving deaf people and signed languages who successfully maintain an active interpreter/translator role must choose their participation wisely. This is not only to be wary of ethical boundaries, but also to carefully balance and synthesize their competences so each identity benefits from the merits of the other.

Just as the interpreter–researcher (Gile, 1999, 2001) connects practice and scholarship, so can experienced interpreter–historians facilitate a conversation among past, present and future interpreters, primary interlocutors, and their co-created texts. In the case of this study, the experienced BSL or ASL interpreter could yield greater insights into fragmented or distorted accounts by comparing them to one's own practice, and basing their reading of the second- or third-hand reports from the interpreter's standpoint. Such affinity with the subject in the researcher's perspective can ground the analysis in practical terms, and provide necessary "coherence and overarching story line" (Hermans, 2012, p. 244).

Gile (1992) made an early case for "opening up" collaborations for "practitioners cum researchers" or "practisearchers" (p. 152) wary of "the methods and views of other disciplines" (p. 153). The same source warned of the deficits among non-T/I researchers, who recruited non-qualified subjects, lacked real-world experimental conditions and were too lenient in skill assessment. However, the "outsiders" from the social sciences brought valuable specialization and methodological training to interpret data and results, and often have the luxuries of time and institutional affiliation. In the case of cognitive scientists, the considered opinion was that "the questions and issues that interpreters consider important often seem totally devoid of interest to cognitive scientists and vice versa" (Gile, 1992, p.

156), an observation which may hold true for non-T/IS academics who study signed languages.

Referencing Delisle (1997), interpreter–historian Baigorri-Jalón (2006) urged other “researchers of the history of our disciplines use the methods and the skills of the historian” as “in all likelihood, it will not be history scholars but rather translation and interpreting specialists who will be attracted by this field of study” (p. 103).

Notwithstanding interpreters’ ability to think interculturally, with particular sensitivity to the translation mechanics embedded in historical evidence in multiple languages, Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón (2016) abandoned that tack to call upon historians for “new research...to overcome the quasi monopoly of this type of research by practisearchers, as Daniel Gile calls them, or histerpreters in this particular field” (p. xi).

Signed Language Interpreting Scholarship

The “body of scholarship and social action which testifies to the establishment of sign language interpreting as a defined occupational and academic field” (G. H. Turner, 2007, p. 2) may have been founded under somewhat improvised circumstances. Patrie (1989) was affectionately critical of “‘home-made’ interpreters” from the 1970s who formed the professional SLI base and defaulted through “experience alone” (para. 2) to fill the educator role, but lacked formal education themselves. Professional development priorities for that generation of ASL interpreting faculty were reported in Anderson (1982), which found language fluency, interpreting skill, and effective teaching outranked study of general and historical literature, borrowing spoken–written methods, or even pursuing interpreting credentials. In many cases, these people became trusted voices in SLI history, as products of their time, and by virtue of their status as participants and witnesses to a

more recent lived memory. One such person with a mighty legacy was Lou Fant (1931–2001). Fant (1990) regretted that the period of professionalization of SLI in the US in particular has “had an unfortunate history with regard to research” due to “a basic mistrust” and “a jaundiced eye” toward researchers’ methods and motivations, and a preference for “practical, pragmatic approach to solving problems,” thus inviting skepticism and devaluing the merits of the work (p. 47).

Turner (2007) was far more positive about the state of things, enlarged the tent to include non-academically trained educators and authors, and praised their “breadth of experience and education” (p. 4) that brought “a healthy diversity of ‘voices’” (p. 5) to the conversation. Cokely (2005) was more disapproving of “the virtual absence of research” in the formative period when “activity was mistaken for accomplishment” (p. 18):

Clearly there is value in the anecdotal experiences of practitioners of the day and the received wisdom of the Community in shaping interpreter/transliterators assessment and training programs...However, without the prerequisite research base, necessarily rooted in the Community, it is unclear whether such initiatives can truly be effective. (Cokely, 2005, p. 18)

The situation Gile (1992) described pertains specifically to spoken–written language “practisearchers,” and echoes Patrie and Cokely’s frustrations:

“The first generation pioneers had personality, ambition and drive, and because they were so few, some of them found themselves in academic positions which were higher than what their actual academic training and research knowhow would normally allow...” (Gile, 1992, p. 155)

Entrusting generalist SLI inquiry, much less an expectation of original, thoughtful interpreter history in the hands of such faculty did not produce a research tradition to parallel the educational one. If advances come by “the crucial role of interpreter education as the driving force of research endeavors” (Pöchhacker, 2011, p. 6), the shallow foundation is deepening, if mainly quantitatively. Despite exponential growth in SLI research output from 1970–2005 in English- and German-language publications (Grbić, 2007), Hale (2012) found more recently that interpreting faculty generally still does not read, produce, and are not even held to the expectation of publishing peer-reviewed scholarship. Leeson, Wurm, and Vermeerbergen (2011) offered an astute observation that the first descriptive and prescriptive applied research from “generation zero” has been followed by “first generation” forays into theory and analysis (p. 2). At this stage, it is unsurprising that very little meaningful historical analysis has been considered. As the professoriate matures, and leads the evolution of praxis and pedagogy, it is more crucial than ever to reconceive signed language interpreting in proper longitudinal context—and not reinforce methods and political standpoints that absorb only the past fifty years of lived memory.

Selected Histories of Signed Language Interpreting

In this highly specialized corner of academia, sources to support SLI history inevitably overlap from project to project. Leahy (2015a) included an extensive review of texts central to general and legal Deaf Studies and signed language interpreting, as well as historical disability law. Naturally, some of the same concepts and therefore sources also ground this study—with the omission of disability, less emphasis on Deaf histories, and far more survey of spoken and signed language T/IS. Others have been added to inform and update the scope unique to the research questions under analysis here. Many historical sources that reported mediated

interactions between hearing and deaf people did not aim to produce a history *per se*, but as data that demonstrate historical interpreting, have been included throughout this thesis.

A 1980 issue of the RID newsletter published an article from a fellow genealogist–interpreter who, while researching her own family, had stumbled across an 1852 newspaper exchange detailing a deaf woman’s initiation into an Indiana temperance society through an interpreter. She did not pursue additional details to verify or expand upon the account, but modern tools reveal the interpreter was likely Justice of the Peace Jared C. Jocelyn (1797–1871). What the author may have lacked in precision or context, was redeemed with rare insight in line with the tenor of this study:

“Lest we become too smug that interpreting services *today* are allowing deaf people to become masters of their own destiny, may I suggest that a hundred and twenty-eight years ago, role models were apparently available without a Code of Ethics, without certification, procedures, without interpreter training programs, and I’m sure, without pay...we do deaf people a disservice if we have the attitudes that only today are deaf people able to function because “professional interpreters” are available. (McKee, 1980)

In the longer timeline of this study, community interpreting in 1852, though not unremarkable, is not entirely foundational; also, expectations of payment and protocol in legal venues had already begun to mature, as will be shown in later chapters. Even with a collection of seemingly unrelated caselaw and isolated incidents of interpreting in various societal domains, it does ring true that interpreters “are able to do what we are today because of interpreters like Brother Jocelyn” (McKee, 1980).

Historical anecdotes like the above are not entirely absent, but well-supported treatments of SLI history are rare, and passing references from secondary writings typically lack primary research or novel insight. Mirroring the critique in Pym (1998), these oblique historical allusions create an echo chamber of “unbearable repetition and unprofitable generalization” (p. 10). I will not review an exhaustive list of sources which do not mention SLI history, as most do not claim such a focus. As an example, compendia such as those listed below occasionally highlight historical texts on signed languages/gesture, or include information on interpreting, but do not draw any intersection between the two. While these are all US-based, some contain works published in the US and elsewhere:

Austin, G. (Ed.). (1975). *Bibliography: Deafness*. Silver Spring, MD: National Association of the Deaf.

Federlin, T. (1979). *A comprehensive bibliography on American Sign Language: A resource manual*. New York, NY: Author.

Fleischer, L. R. (1977). Sign language bibliography. In *Proceedings of the first national symposium on sign language research and teaching, Chicago, Illinois May 30–June 3, 1977* (pp. 297–307). National Symposium on Sign Language Research & Teaching.

Mathers, C. (2010, March 1). *An annotated bibliography of resources of interest to ASL legal interpreters*. The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers.

National Association of the Deaf Communicative Skills Program. (1970b). *Manual communication bibliography*. National Association of the Deaf.

Patrie, C., & Mertz, J. (Eds.). (1997). *An annotated bibliography on interpretation*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University.

Rand, L. W. (1962). *An annotated bibliography of the sign language of the deaf* (Master's thesis). University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

Smith, J. M. (Ed.). (1964). Language of signs bibliography. In *Workshop on interpreting for the deaf, June 14–17, 1964, Ball State Teachers College, Muncie, Indiana* (pp. 93–94). Muncie, IN: Ball State Teachers College.

After a review of hundreds of works covering signed language, T/I history and Deaf history, the selections below focus on the main sources from which dozens of others are derived, and continue to be cited.

Morris (1999) was among the first to recognize the rise of SLI “in England in the second half of the eighteenth century” (p. 24), and drew fruitful parallels to the practices of those working between spoken languages. McDermid (2008) concentrated an outstanding documentation of SLI on “the history of the field within a Canadian context,” (p. 2) beginning in earnest after 1860. Australian interpreters have just begun to detail their very recent origins as well (Heuston et al., 2016). Napier (2006) undertook a broad survey of interpreting, interpreter education, and the theoretical and applied research traditions in all three contexts of the US, UK and Australia. Historical portions of this effective but heavily-summarized sketch relied mainly on commonly-cited lived recollections reviewed elsewhere in this chapter.

The sections in Leonard (Forthcoming) covering SLI in the Irish legal context approach a corpus of available data for 1816–1924. Thorough outstanding quantitative work in a challenging research landscape reports the incidence of interpreted cases, types of offences and venues, and a reliable picture of who the interpreters were. Notable findings include interpreters being admitted more frequently when matters were heard in higher courts, and a clear pattern of an increase of professionals (e.g., teachers and clergy) in a secondary interpreting role, as numbers of family and friends decreased.

Scott-Gibson (1991) has been widely cited as a source of SLI history in the UK, but offered no primary data to support the observation that “for generations...religious workers or teachers who had acquired some knowledge of

sign vocabulary” were outnumbered by “people who had grown up in a family with at least one Deaf member...who had thereby assumed the role of the ‘go-between’” (p. 253). Regardless of the ratio, the category of ad-hoc interpreters drawn from members of the clergy, the professions, and families has persisted, which Youngs (1967) applauded “have performed nobly and in some cases successfully,” though today, “deaf persons need more than this kind of help” (p. 50). Rudser and Strong (1986) refers to such “pseudo interpreters” who “worked less often, if at all, as formal interpreters and focused less on absolute accuracy in their signing than did subjects who had learned to sign more recently but principally for interpreting purposes—where accuracy is more salient than in other situations” (p. 326).

Kellett Bidoli (2001) circumscribed interpreting within the domain of Deaf education, claiming that by 1880 speech and speechreading as an educational approach “took firm hold...in Europe (and British Commonwealth countries), rejecting sign language in the classroom for a century,” and “[t]he Deaf had thereafter to learn to speak and thus there was no need for interpreters of sign language” (p. 133). Indeed the suppression of signed languages was strengthened and systematized after the late nineteenth century (Kinsey, 1880), but Kellet Bidoli (2016) gives no source in the repeated claim that SLI “was continually ignored and discouraged, there being no need for it,” except for untrained interpreters’ “sporadic aid when requested in the secrecy of the home” (p. 99). These unchecked statements disregard interpreted legal cases since 1880, and are partially based on oversimplifications of DPs having been universally regarded as “mentally retarded, stupid, incapable of logical thought” (C. Kellett Bidoli, 2016, p. 96), which is contradicted by well-researched historical scholarship (e.g., Bragg, 1997; Cockayne, 2003).

The chapter of Roy, Brunson, and Stone (2018) entitled “Through the Lens of History” looks at both spoken and signed language T/I history. This theme is an invaluable introduction to the volume, and will hopefully inspire future “histerpreters.” However, occasional overreliance on derivative sources may counteract advisement that students seek out primary material. For example, in repeating the account of a cadre of deaf courtiers to the Ottoman Sultan that was popularized from Miles (2000), the assumed source in original Dutch and English translation (Haga, 1612, 1613) was not consulted; doing so would reveal that the key claim of “a sign translator’s help,” while documented in another commentary, was not contained in that particular text. Also, the inaccurate claims of “the first records of requests for an interpreter in the courts of London” (Roy et al., 2018, p. 31) and the first example of “teachers being asked to interpret for deaf people in court” (p. 35) echoes work mentioned earlier (Stone & Woll, 2008; Woll & Stone, 2013) that does not venture outside the Old Bailey Online records. Lastly, the summary of the Deaf Welfare Examination Board that first taught and assessed interpreting skills of prospective mission workers in the UK neglected contemporaneous and primary materials which will be described in Chapter Four. It is difficult to summarize the complex dynamics of lay and professional clergy functioning as interpreters, but organizational records might have contextualized, clarified, or even refuted the common criticisms that were merely reported.

Leahy (2021) lays out the precursor to this study through a theory of five constituent requirements of the SLI role, incrementally legitimized under Anglo–American common law through 1) the presence of a deaf party, 2) with legal agency, 3) who signs, 4) is represented through an intermediary 5) who communicates effectively. The data also situated the origins of contemporary interpreting protocols in

the eighteenth century, firmly before the formation of matured Deaf communities. This refuted the assumption in Janzen (2005) that any “standard practices” among signed language interpreters, “or more recently ‘best practices’” have had “but a short history” (p. 3).

Becoming a Profession

Turning to the professionalization of SLI in the UK and US, lay and academic sources indicate that both communities showed greater interest in examining their origins after the 1970s. Leahy (2015a) concluded that after SLIs in the US were “formally organized in the mid-twentieth century,” and began to practice among and collaborate with “largely educated and culturally deaf people...any examination of the interpreter’s work generally begins thereafter” (p. 23). Early on in that enterprise, Ingram (1977a) insisted that there be no argument whether SLI “might be a profession or that it should be a profession or that it is a profession in some countries,” but regardless of the status within “individual nations, let us affirm as a universal ideal principle that interpretation is a profession” (p. 64). In the following decades, analyses in Braden (1985) and to a lesser extent Cokely (2000), determined that SLI bore more resemblance to a trade or occupational class, and did not meet the formal definition of a profession. For the purposes of this study, the terminology will not be as starkly interrogated, and what follows is a review of selected lay, professional and academic sources that are typically reported in any such examination, as well as material that had gone underutilized, or laid undiscovered.

As other introductory sections common throughout the literature, the “Historical perspectives” opening to Bontempo (2015) exemplifies a deference to Deaf history as the basis for interpreting history, “to provide a context for the work of signed language interpreters,” presuming “signed language interpreting in one form or another has

probably existed for as long as there have been Deaf communities” (p. 113). The material then summarizes many of the same sources reviewed in this chapter, and concluded that the “field of signed language interpreting as we know it today has its roots in the Deaf community” (p. 116). While a hardworking T/IS handbook entry likely does not intend a historical examination *per se*, this illustrates well the current state of mainstream SLI studies. Although scholars earnestly see the value of presenting a historical foundation, the field lacks an internal tradition of historians to present tools and findings that challenge unexamined sources and unattributed assumptions.

In the US

Because the most rapid progress in SLI is accessible within the lived experience of contemporary practitioners, educators, and other thought leaders who witnessed the transition to professionalization in the latter twentieth century, they are often repeated as authorities, conflating the beginnings of the profession with the beginnings of the practice. For example, the value of the “History of Interpreting” in Dirst and Caccamise (1980, p. 5) is that it came in the midst of twentieth-century professionalization in the United States, while many of the figures were still alive and active. However, it contributed to the myopic tone that laid down a canonical version of US SLI history that did not venture beyond lived memories and oral traditions.

Frishberg (1986), required reading for the American Sign Language–English interpreter exam in the US for decades, propagates the assumption that “the story of interpreting begins with the introduction of the language of signs to the public education system” (p. 10) in the nineteenth century. Albert Pimentel, a deaf man who was the first executive director of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)—the membership and former credentialing body for SLIs in the US—also upheld the received legend that the interpreting field began as an avocation of hearing people

connected with educational systems for deaf children (Pimentel, 1973). Ingram (1977c) was a rare voice to clarify that “[t]he practice of interpretation of sign language dates back many, many years,” the profession shifted from “a more-or-less clinical to a more-or-less linguistic” (p. 109) focus, and any academic examination was comparatively recent. Isham (1998) similarly recognized that since the twentieth-century move to professionalization, practitioners have shifted their philosophical orientation “from ‘community member’ to ‘objective professional’—and back again” (p. 233).

Fant (1990), a memoir from a towering influence in the US, focused on twentieth-century professional organization largely lived and led by the author and others who approached SLI as social or filial duty and “did not perceive [themselves] as launching a new profession” (p. 12) in 1964 with what was originally named the “National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.” The brief report in Uemura (1977) sets forth the system of “informal and formal origins” (Abstract para. 2) in the United States, which formed the RID, or “the certifying body,” and the National Interpreter Training Consortium, a Federally-formed “training body” (p viii). Vidrine (1979) was far more developed, and is a valuable snapshot of the US landscape a decade and a half after RID was founded. That dissertation mined neglected documents, and conceded that it while it “did not generate new data its value was to probe and characterize existing work to generate new conceptual frames, and to point out research gaps” (Vidrine, 1979, p. 5). Forty years on, it has risen to the level of historical data, given that some of the people and documents are no longer available to consult.

The well-sourced argument in Cokely (2005) formed an intelligent and grounded analysis of more recent tides in professional posture from cultural to legislative, academic, and commercial influences. The assertion of laying out “our

historic footing” overreaches by claiming that “the roots of the practice of sign language interpreting/transliterating lie squarely within the aegis of Deaf Communities” (Cokely, 2005, p. 3). Most historical observations in the field accept this folklore as social fact, and perpetuate the error that interpreters are a “relatively new fixture” (Tuck, 2010, p. 906) in courtrooms. Interpreters have been taught implicitly within the Deaf culture, and explicitly from texts and course curricula, that they are products of Deaf-World systems. They believe hearing signers emerged within the last two centuries from signing communities, and have never questioned those origins. A Deaf studies approach would likely not recover the history of hearing bilinguals who function as intermediaries; Frishberg (1986) rightly recognizes that such a “historical record does not focus on interpreters, but merely alludes to them by noting that various deaf leaders participated in administrative or policy-making positions in mixed hearing and deaf groups” (p. 11).

Research has demonstrated the shift in demographics of HI practitioners from those who were raised in a signing environment, toward native English users for whom signed languages are an L2 (Babbini Brasel et al., 1974; Nowell & Stuckless, 1974; Stauffer et al., 1999). With this transition, the historically practical pathway for native signed or spoken language HIs has transitioned to a more educational one. Some of the works that sought to document the history of US signed language interpreter *education*, not practice, include the comprehensive list in Adler (1969), an early glimpse in Yoken (1979), a later retrospective in Vidrine (1984) and updated snapshot in Risley (1983). The latter includes a valuable catalog of available postsecondary programs of that moment, despite unverified and incomplete data. Ball (2007) substantively began in the twentieth century, and Ball (2016) created a well-researched picture of the developments of the last sixty years in the US, largely

through access to the individuals who brought it about. Siple and Hurwitz (2018) also capitalized on living memory and institutional records to document one pioneering program housed in a research university charged with “technical training and education...for successful employment” of deaf people (United States 89th Congress, 1965). As the first RID members founded and participated in interpreter training programs, that generation gave primacy to the beginnings of their own formation, and rarely examined any historical precursors to their personal experience.

In the UK

Many patterns seen in ASL interpreter history accord with the story of BSL practitioners, where although professional standards and organizations came later in the UK, the practices of “first self-selected, later culturally-appointed, and finally professionally-trained interpreters” (Leahy, 2015a, p. 37) were rooted. While primarily focusing on the deaf parties in legal cases, a popular multi-volume Deaf historical nonfiction noir series (e.g., Jackson, 1997; Jackson, 2000) does include information on interpreter mediation during courtroom proceedings. Many of these appear in writings by other lay and academic authors, and some are included in the data to be presented in this thesis. More recently, Brien et al (2002) reported British Sign Language–English interpreting in England, Scotland and Wales was first differentiated as “a distinct occupation” in the 1970s, adding how it “has gradually become a profession is a complex story, and one that is far from concluded” (p. 5). The following items fall outside the data collection time frame in this study, but warrant attention and further analysis of more contemporary BSL interpreter history.

Lysons (1965) is a well-constructed history of the situation in England, Scotland, and Wales that locates the transition from “voluntaryism” to state-provided services for deaf people. While not a direct treatment of SLI work, it documents pre-

1963 government-commissioned reports, as well as legal and procedural milestones that created social and employment services, which led to an interpreting mandate for welfare workers who operated within pastoral and secular organizations. Lysons (1973) continued the legislative line of inquiry and turned a greater focus toward the blind than the deaf population. Taken together, the two theses effectively modelled how to introduce an original study of a broad and complex topic at the master's level, then develop doctoral work that references and builds upon it—precisely the overarching research plan I have undertaken. Lysons also self-funded his research, travel, and university fees, and as an outsider, took care to introduce himself and garner support for his academic aims (Lysons, 1962).

After completing his graduate work, Lysons exhibited good faith, and revisited the community he had studied to translate his findings to a lay audience, complete with clearly-presented data and thorough references to primary sources (Lysons, 1977a, 1977b, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1978d). It must be stressed that this final step to make academic work accessible and “available to members of the community” (Baker-Shenk & Kyle, 1990, p. 66) has long been a critical one for any academic whose research includes BSL and ASL users, even when deaf populations do not figure in the primary research question. Today, this sentiment is shared by historians of disability, and considered “at its most basic and obvious,” to include “presentations in communities that are directly affected by this history, which should be done in a way that is accessible to all (e.g., avoiding academic jargon)” (Reaume, 2018, p. 34). Public engagement is an enormously charged topic among signing academics, and as a member of a practice profession, is compounded by yet another audience. Throughout my graduate studies, I have made strenuous parallel efforts to broaden my impact, and create habits of participation in outward-facing conversations: in print,

social media, and in-person formats, among deaf and interpreter communities in the UK and US.

Simpson (2007) is another example of an academic navigating a complex story for professional and lay audiences—in this case a history of the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People, and the background organizations and events that led to its establishment in 1980. He was also an academic and began as a relative outsider to the Deaf community in the UK, and under his leadership, CACDP advanced BSL interpreting as a professional practice “after so many false dawns” during the 1970s (Simpson, 2007, p. 116). There is candid description of the development of a register and examination, which required negotiating legacy “interpreters” holding the Deaf Welfare Examination Board (DWEB) credential, and political maneuvering with the British Deaf Association, who was dubious that a sufficiently high standard of quality would be met. Though claims are not consistently sourced throughout, there are useful references to additional material, and valuable appendixes containing citations that summarize key data in twentieth-century BSL interpreting. Appendix 3 is a particularly detailed and well-researched history of the Deaf Welfare Examination Board, which, “from the beginning of 1953” (The Deaf Welfare Examination Board et al., 1953, p. 2) had been reorganized with a broader scope than the previously-constituted Joint Welfare Examination Board, discussed briefly in of this study.

The memoir in Corfmat (1990) included anecdotes about work as a DWEB leader and BSL interpreter, beginning in the 1930s, with some repetition from Corfmat (1982), for which interpreting was the sole focus. Because the memorialist was raised in an intergenerationally-deaf family, and was the only hearing person in his immediate household, he had language models who encouraged him to produce

signs with “care in execution” (Corfmat, 1982, p. 122), a topic he had argued strenuously for some decades prior (Corfmat, 1969), and which surely informed his lectures to trainees (Corfmat, 1953a, 1953b). As a first-person witness to many of the events and a personal associate of key figures in the twentieth century progression to recognize and professionalize BSL interpreting, his position to offer retrospective advice was well-earned. Interestingly, he gave a uniquely clearheaded and starkly realistic picture of his own beginnings, warning that “[c]hildhood communications with deaf parents do not lead to Interpretation” (Corfmat, 1982, p. 126). As an eighteen-year-old, he admits to only producing the signed familylect learned among “Corfmat-deaf where the understanding of facial gestures and bodily movements needed no actual Signs or Gestures of the official B.S.L.” (ibid). While recognizing “the value inherent in childhood Communication which has been caught rather than taught” (Corfmat, 1982, p. 127), he cautioned that any prospective interpreters with a background similar to his who were progressing along the training and assessment pipeline be held to an updated expectation. With this, Corfmat’s career reached into a contemporary mindset that heritage signers were “no longer dealing with parents only,” and experts were to “wean them from such childhood attitudes and knowledge” (p. 126).

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed material from the perspectives of mainstream and historical T/IS, and SLI scholarship, both before and after modern professionalization of hearing interpreters in the UK and US. In short, there are relatively few carefully-executed and historically-sound sources for SLI in either camp, and most scholarship recycles citations that are held to little scrutiny.

The next chapter examines possible historical routes available to hearing people to adopt gestural forms of language, and describes how those bilingual–bimodals interacted with deaf signers, and influenced national and international sign systems. Additional literature to support an analysis of the path for deaf people to function as expert witnesses and interpreters working either in relay teams or independently will be discussed separately in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER THREE: HEARING PEOPLE ON THE DEAF COMMON: THE ORIGINS OF SPEECH–SIGN BILINGUAL–BIMODAL INTERMEDIARIES

“La mère du muet connaît la langue des muets.”¹⁰

The modern research tradition that first paired bilingualism in the spoken and signed modalities of hearing American Sign Language users as children (Wilbur & Jones, 1974) and adults (Bellugi, 1972) was expanded by Mason (1987) to include deaf ASL or Langue des signes du Québec (LSQ) signers with a command of *written* English or French. This chapter broadens the definition further to investigate the first research question of this study: the origins of speech–sign bilingual–bimodals—in other words, hearing signers who emerged first as interlocutors, and then as intermediaries prior to a distinct language and culture among deaf people.

In the absence of much direct literature, the research landscape is approached from a macro perspective, with some attention to methodological and theoretical directions. I first offer examples of gestural traditions among hearing people in some Western societies. I then visit the opposite end of the spectrum with a glimpse into hearing people using signs to represent the letters of the alphabet. The bulk of the discussion that follows centers on hearing signers in exchange with isolated deaf individuals, local groups, national signed languages, and ultimately the global deaf community. As with any interpreter or translator who must first master a second language, this chapter will explore how hearing people have approached and contributed to the visual modality. Chapter Four will examine the actual task of

¹⁰ Ben Cheneb, M. (1905). *Proverbes arabes de l'Algérie et du Maghreb* (Vol. 1). Paris: Ernest Leroux, in Miles (2004, p. 534), referring to family-coined gestures.

interpreting more closely.

There are relatively scarce data prior to the founding of the first formal schools for deaf children in Britain in 1760 and America in 1817. The years which followed have received an outpouring of attention from scholars, primarily from within or directed toward the signing corridor of academia. Turner (1994) laid out a masterful critique of this, at once celebrating epistemological progress, while calling for “fresh theoretical frameworks” (p. 150), refined questions and more nuanced analysis in the social sciences of received constructs such as “Deaf culture” that were ripe for “reappraisal” (p. 151). Werner and Zimmerman (2006) similarly decried the “culturalist turn,” which for all the gains in “refining our understanding of the differentiated functioning of societies and cultures” also brought “a fragmentation of knowledge, thereby showing it in a relativist light” (pp. 30–31). This study aims to expand the received Deaf-World perspective with a more longitudinal historical one, and this chapter specifically draws on examples outside of that ready but narrow cultural lens to investigate questions that mainstream Deaf histories do not ask.

In order to reconstruct and illustrate the significance of hearing people during the pre-Deaf cultural period, it will be necessary to extrapolate from the comparatively small number of primary sources available in two ways. Firstly, many of the earliest available data are repeated throughout related academic literature. Deaf studies often understandably subordinates the names and identities of these early interpreters, and may underemphasize or strike them out entirely, though such details may be available in the historical record. This study sheds new light on those well-known recurring items by focusing on the hearing intermediary facilitating the interactions instead of on the deaf principal participants. Secondly, with the growth of deaf cultural studies and signed language linguistics since the 1970s, accounts of isolated deaf

people have trickled into the academic record. Though well outside the scope of this study, selected contemporary examples from geographically remote or “primitive” subjects are purposefully used as proxy data to reimagine historical deaf–hearing dynamics.

In doing so, one must be mindful of and correct for analytical distortions in the comparisons. Werner and Zimmerman (2006) suggest that the *histoire croisée* approach allows for “intercrossing of spatial and temporal scales, which can be...the result of a theoretical and methodological choice” (p. 39), but caution against “postulating a similarity between categories on the basis of a simple semantic equivalent, without questioning the often divergent practices encompassed by them” (p. 44). For example, Schuit (2012) took care to demonstrate that forty-seven deaf Inuit Sign Language, or Inuit Uukturausingit (IUR) signers (with roughly double that number of hearing IUR signers) currently form a loose language community across the vast territory of Nunavut, Canada, but not a distinct culture *per se*:

A few deaf signers acknowledge deafness as a ‘connecting factor’. It would be somewhat misguided to equate this to the Deaf identity found amongst Deaf people in urban societies, as no specific characteristics that could be classed as Deaf culture are recognised among deaf Inuit. In addition, IUR signers all identify strongly with the Inuit culture, rather than with Deaf culture. Therefore it would perhaps be more appropriate to refer to a ‘deaf connection’ in this case. (Schuit, 2012, p. 392)

Haviland (2013b) expressed confidence that families, especially those with multiple deaf members, have “certainly emerged continuously over the course of human history” to develop communication strategies among themselves, but could report on “remarkably few references to studies of them (p. 346). Cockayne (2000)

surveyed the commonly-cited examples of deafness from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, highlighting the period of accelerating efforts in Enlightenment inquiry into deaf education, medical cures, a greater interest in signing, and therefore more frequent mentions, and commiserated:

References to encounters with deaf people in diaries and literature suggest that they managed to communicate crudely with strangers and elaborately with close intimates, through improvised languages composed of signs and gestures. As employment of sign language was infrequently recorded, it is difficult to judge the prevalence of its use. (Cockayne, 2000, p. 66)

Hearing Signers on the Deaf Common

If the past is a territory “that can and should be explored and reassessed with a fresh look by each generation and by each researcher” (Takeda & Baigorri-Jalón, 2016), the main conceit of my argument is the metaphor of a shared physical space: the village commons. Pym (2012) offers translation as “a striking metaphor for the moving of people” (p. 17), and I will apply this notion to the journeys hearing lay people made between the settled spoken language territory and the signing space forming on a corner of the common. One of the goals of this study is to recover a small parcel of ground for hearing messengers who participated in that emerging linguistic minority. As protocols emerged for a “translation apparatus as a public service system, as one systemic constituent of the public space” (Dasgupta, 2010, p. 7), hearing bilingual–bimodals first connected speaking and signing societies, and made their home in that intersectional middle ground. Even if a distinct geographical and political territory were to be founded by and for deaf people (Van Cleve & Crouch, 1989a), Dimmock (1981) conceded that any “children, if hearing, were to be ambassadors for trading and other necessary contacts in the outside world” (p. i).

Figure 1, taken from Pollitt (2000, p. 72), illustrates the intersectional lifeworld joining the Hearing–speaking and Deaf–signing domains. Interpreters are just one of the avenues of access, both in the lives of DPs and other hearing people (the latter shown within dotted lines) who may come into contact or not:

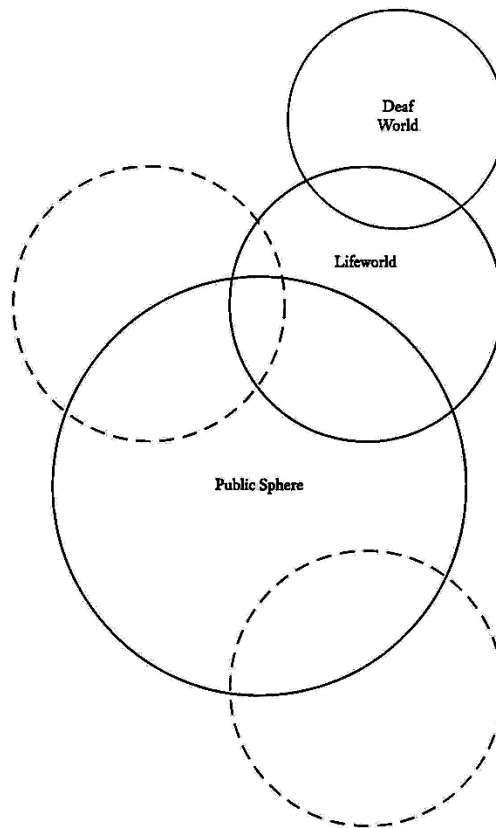


Figure 2. Deaf People's Access to the Public Sphere

Figure 1. Deaf People Access to the Public Sphere (Pollitt, 2000, p. 72).

Contemporary scientific discovery with regard to signed languages was inaugurated by the seminal *Sign Language Structure: An Outline of the Visual Communication Systems of the American Deaf* (Stokoe, 1960). William Stokoe proved that deaf signers and their “hearing partners in communication” (p. 7) shared a system with all the component parts and necessary rules to constitute a formal language. Though Stokoe typically confined his analyses to Deaf users of American Sign Language, he occasionally included hearing bilinguals, who he regretted were

“in scarce supply,” yet could “become the most valuable interpreters not just of language but of those aspects of hearing culture not directly accessible to the deaf” (Stokoe, 1972, p. 157). Mallery (1881) saw in the more formal language of Deaf communities of his day “conclusive proof that signs constitute a real language and one which admits of thought” (p. 30). Extending his claim that this from the Deaf community “exhibits a creative action of mind and innate faculty of expression beyond that of ordinary speakers who acquired language without conscious effort (ibid.).

As a teenaged pupil at the newly-founded American School for the Deaf (so named as the first permanent institution for deaf children in the United States) in 1822, future Deaf community leader George Loring also recognized that “[t]he language of signs belong to the deaf and dumb,” yet “some persons who can hear and speak converse by signs” (Edwards, 2012, p. 64). By extension, these same findings hold true for British Sign Language (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999). For centuries, hearing signers have been in close exchange with deaf people in the UK and US, well before Deaf communities developed and ultimately informed that relationship during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries respectively. Ladd (2003) called for further analysis of past collaborations with hearing people to inform the experience of Deafhood, trusting that “no doubt that as time goes on, we will...locate more examples of Deaf individuals, communities and their interaction with lay people...shedding more light on positive Deaf-lay relationships” (p. 96).

This study responds to that plea. By definition, the isolated deaf person must have in hearing people a ready reception and reciprocation of gestures, and this study takes the a priori assumption that hearing signers have existed as long as deaf ones, and that the Deaf-World emerged from the hearing one. Existing studies in mainstream Deaf history generally do not place bilingual–bimodals, or hearing fellows

with some command of both spoken and signed language, alongside the real or imagined deaf villagers of a pre-Deaf enculturated past. This omission is entirely appropriate given the priorities in that domain, and to borrow from Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón (2016a), it is the responsibility of SLI historians to seek out those “voices, traditionally silenced in standard [Deaf] history books” (p. x). This takes a slightly different tack relative to spoken–written language practitioners whose identity and effort may be invisible within their work products: the HI or DI working into a signed language is often the *most* visible element of a given interaction. This conspicuousness admits a different kind of risk for the signed language practitioner, who by turns avoid “stealing the spotlight” from both deaf viewers and hearing speakers (e.g., Mielke, 2014), when their very task may necessitate the addition of a physical spotlight to ensure their signs are seen clearly and comfortably. As signed language interpreters’ utility and virtue rests in not inserting ourselves into deaf-led discourses, we must take care to integrate but not colonize Deaf spaces with our own narratives. Without question, interpreters must pivot toward deaf people in our own research and practice—and back. To conflate the two perspectives, or relegate the study of one group as subpart to the other is an oversimplified and unrealistic solution. A separate strain of interpreter history is called for, which ideally could heal growing pains through a more nuanced understanding of our present position, and more practically, feed new analyses back into primary deaf narratives.

Hearing Gesture

Deaf signers are not the only people who have innate ability to communicate through their bodies. This study will does not parse gestural communication *per se*, or enter into a debate about the finer points of its paralinguistic vs. linguistic function, except to assert that speakers and signers of any languages hold one communicative

strategy in common: gesture. Goldin-Meadow (1982) defined this universal behavior as “motor acts...used symbolically for communicative purposes” (p. 55). The premise of McNeill (1992), which mainly treats spontaneous hand and body movements that occur during speech, is that “gestures are an integral part of language as much as are words, phrases, and sentences—gesture and language are one system” (p. 2).

According to McClave (2001), this holds true for both hearing and deaf people:

...ASL users and non-signing Americans share this gestural part of language.

That part of language that is gestural is easily borrowed from spontaneous gestures of the hearing into signed languages since it is the most accessible to deaf people. Among hearing people, spontaneous gestures co-occur with the conventionalized verbal language system, and among deaf people the borrowed gestures also co-occur with the conventionalized language system—but a nonverbal one. (McClave, 2001, p. 68)

The case of Italian speakers is particularly complex, given the historical political boundaries which gave rise to distinct spoken dialects. This in turn created widespread use of gestures to circumvent misunderstandings between hearing people, such as with the case of Plains Indian Sign Language in North America (Clark, 1885). Pizzuto and Volterra (2000) confirmed that certain signs in *Lingua dei Segni Italiana* (LIS) were more transparent to informants who did not know how to sign, due to greater overlap with culturally-bound “conventional gestures that are commonly used, with the same meaning as the LIS signs, by Italian hearing people” (p. 270). In other words, gestures used by Italian speakers were naturally transmitted to deaf people, adopted into LIS, and retained their forms sufficiently for non-signers to decode back as shared items. Figure 2 below is an illustration of these twenty items:



Figure 2. Hearing Gestures within Lingua dei Segni Italiana
Pizzuto and Volterra, 2000, p. 275).

Other national signed languages have readily adopted facial, manual, and bodily behaviors of hearing nonsigners available in the surrounding sociolinguistic environment. Cicourel (1974) concluded that “the nonverbal forms used by the hearing in a particular culture can be related to the gestural forms developed by the deaf” (p. 36). Crasborn and Hiddinga (2015) rightly bring attention to a social fact that is intuitive to any signer, hearing or deaf:

While hearing people can go through life without ever interacting with a deaf person, the reverse is unimaginable. Although we expect substantial variation from individual to individual, it may well be that the majority of interactions deaf people have in life are with hearing people. (Crasborn & Hiddinga, 2015, p. 61)

This same source further asserted that like deaf signers, hearing non-signers also have an innate ability to “mobilize similar communicative intentions to make themselves understood or try to understand the other,” though with a less-practiced repertoire applicable to “nonspeaking environments” (Crasborn & Hiddinga, 2015, p. 63). Bringing lived experience to bear and solving communication problems relies heavily upon iconicity, which “is fundamental to all languages (signed and spoken),” and “serves to bridge the gap between linguistic form and human experience” (Thompson et al., 2012, p. 1443). Hearing people may also recruit these “imitative representations” as the “scaffolding, (a middle ground)” to support the acquisition and use of any language (ibid, p. 1447). It is also safe to assume that a culturally-embedded repertoire of stand-alone and co-speech gestures with or without the accompanying vocalizations was among the first such contributions of hearing bilingual–bimodals.

The “gestural inventory” retained by contemporary hearing learners of a signed language may not always serve the process in reverse, as they initially “produce modified signs that have a gestural counterpart” (Boers-Visker & Van Den Bogaerde, 2019, p. 410). Brentari, Nadolske and Wolford (2012) found the influence from co-speech gesture continues to present in hearing signers today, for whom prosodic “gestural behaviors from a spoken L1 can influence a signed L2” in the same way the transfer from one’s spoken A to B language occurs (p. 411).

Stokoe (1960) recognized that hearing laypeople might fail to notice a simple co-speech gesture like the “shoulder shrug,” which would stand out to a deaf onlooker as transmitting “a definite ‘meaning’” and eventually, become “more pronounced, even exaggerated” among both deaf and hearing signers alike (p. 7). Indeed Deuchar (1978) found that among the negation strategies in colloquial BSL that range from iconic to conventional forms, the “negation gesture” shrug (accompanied by one or two upturned extended palms) borrowed from hearing gesture was the sole strategy in nearly eight percent of the data (p. 30).

Gestures from the wider spoken-language community do not consistently map onto linguistic groups, however. Morris et al (Morris, Collett, Marsh, & O’Shaughnessy, 1979) found patterns among hearing non-signers across Europe which can be traced to millennia-old colonial migrations and boundaries for common symbolic gestures, which “extended their ranges across national and linguistic boundaries” (p. xx). In many cases, localized conventions ascribed different meanings for the same physical action¹¹. In others, an entirely different gesture would be necessary to communicate a particular concept. Again, an example from Italy is illustrative. The researchers asked over 750 Italian speakers in at least 75 cities, “How do you indicate ‘no’ with your head?” (p. 248). A gesture could not be any simpler, more commonplace and more frequent, but the findings indicated otherwise. The sharp distinction in the region shown in Figure 3 below reveals that “the Greeks...left an indelible mark on the everyday actions of the local inhabitants in the

¹¹ To extend the example into formal signed languages, a similar THUMBS-UP gesture has entered BSL as a greeting, and a friendly parting in ASL. In ASL it has also been further conventionalized to express irritation or relief at being “done” with someone or something.

form of the head toss” (p. 252), the “most dominant gesture of negation in Greece” (p. 250).



Figure 3. Map of the Greek Head Toss Gesture in Italy (Morris et al, 1979, p. 255).

The study surmised that the head toss vs. shake confluence began after swamps were drained in the Volturno valley during the 1930s, and inhabitants enjoyed newfound mobility across the ancient natural barrier. Over forty years later, many respondents reported a cross-border understanding of both gestures,

demonstrating that like many deaf people versed in more than one signed system, hearing people also negotiate a kind of gestural bi-dialecticism. This comports with the claim in Kendon (1981) that while living sign languages that “occur in strings in a discourse relationship” (p. 157), dating hundreds of years in development appear to “undergo quite rapid changes,” while gestural emblems on the order of thousands of years and often produced in isolation “can persist with relatively little change” (p. 152). This forms the basis for a shared gestural lexicon between deaf and hearing people. Hearing–speaking communities undoubtedly have their own “visual accent...to the extent that mastering them would be the utmost achievement of a foreign speaker, equivalent on a visual plan to the total loss of an alien accent” (Poyatos, 1997, p. 268). According to McClave (2001), deaf signers appropriate some of these, such as the “head gestures from the surrounding hearing population (p. 67).

Such learned facial and bodily movements available to any traveler of the cultural topography are foregrounded in signed languages and formed the primordium from which they sprung. Morgan (2017) firmly agreed that “[i]t cannot be ignored that the gestural substrate and norms from which these languages arise and in which they still exist” surely dictate how signs borrow, habituate and embed signs with the spatial conventions shared among hearing and deaf users (p. 579). Kendon (1997, 2002), Stokoe (2001), Wilcox (2002, 2012) and Armstrong and Wilcox (2007), and Armstrong (2011) furthered the claim for a more gesturally-conversant past in human language; Fischer (2015) confirmed:

Early records of sign languages, such as they are, show the iconic and gestural roots of signs much more graphically than their more arbitrary descendants; that gestural substrate is closer to the surface and more pervasive than analogous phonetic symbolism is in spoken languages. (p. 448)

There is widespread agreement that behaviors that form the background of spoken interactions—especially when the lexical information is ambiguous or incomplete—will traverse modalities. One example of this transition from iconic gestures that retained “a close formal relationship to the semantic content” (McNeill, 1992, p. 12), toward more abstracted and generalizable forms came in 1576, at the marriage of Thomas Tilsye to Ursula Russel in Leicester. The deaf groom—perhaps the world’s first native deaf translator—needed no third-party hearing interpreter, and concluded his self-translated vows¹² with gestures indicating death, followed by “pullinge as though he would ring a bell,” which was understood by the authorities sanctioning the ceremony as a show of commitment until “his lyves ende” (Nichols, 1815, p. 589). To a British Sign Language audience, this may signify both an approximate equivalent of “until death do us part,” as well as a reference to the place of burial rites, the contemporary BSL sign CHURCH being a reduced version of the tolling action. There is no etymological proof that any element of Tillseye’s vow is the direct antecedent of modern BSL, but it is irrefutable that the now conventionalized CHURCH sign in Figure 4 (Mitchell, 2014) is based on a similar tolling gesture that had once been more generally understandable to non-signers. A more stylized archaic form closer to the description of what Tillsye used is shown in Figure 5 (Arkas, 1898, p. 69).

¹² For a more thorough description of Tilsye’s self-translation of the Anglican marriage vow as found in the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, see Leahy (2015a, pp. 50–53).



Figure 4. Modern BSL Sign CHURCH (Mitchell, 2014).



Figure 5. Stylized/Archaic BSL Sign CHURCH (Arkas, 1898-9, p. 69).

Such signs “prompted by nature” (H. Lane & Battison, 1977, p. 70) abound in the sources typically consulted (e.g., Bulwer, 1644). Potter (1989) found Bulwer’s hopeful attempt to popularize rhetorical and natural gestures into a universal language as “a particularly good illustration” of the “mixture of revelation and concealment” (pp. 43–44). In the end, recycled schemes to suggest the visual–gestural can transcend spoken language overlook the agreed upon enrichments and rules among regular users, and such a system inevitably becomes impenetrable to outsiders.

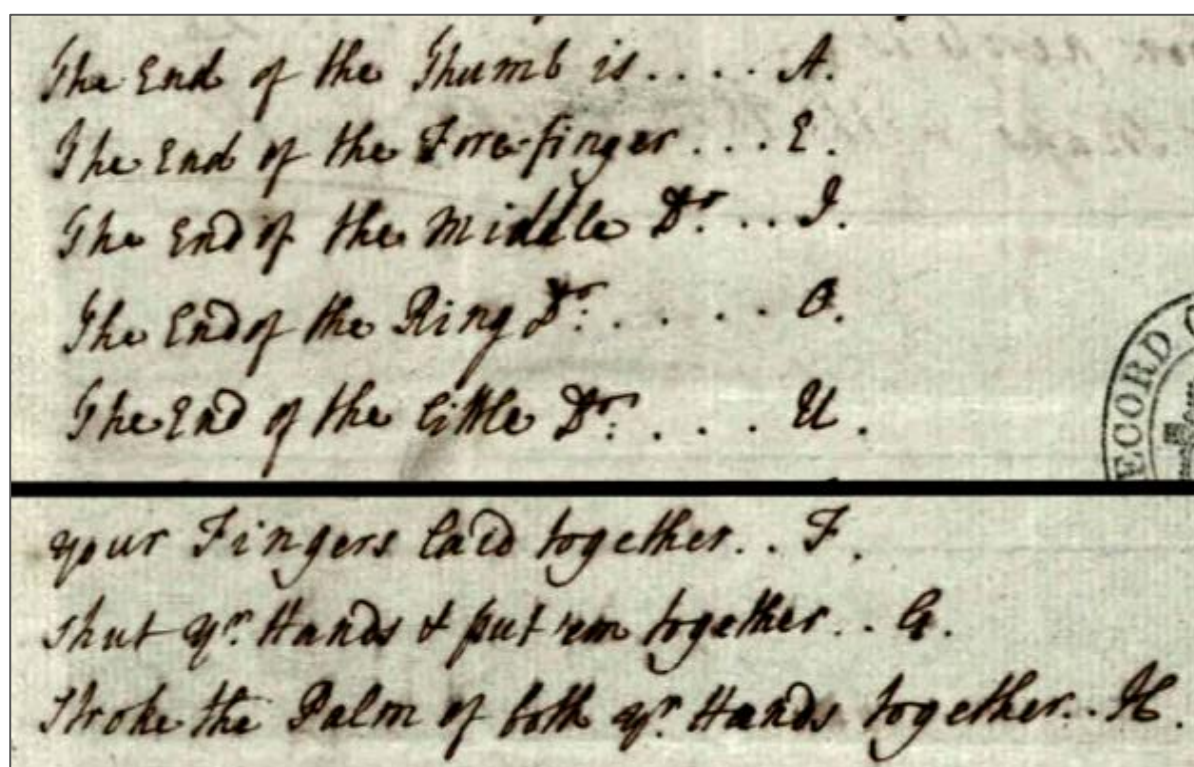
Fingerspelling

Another type of communication that also found a secret use is the most persistent artifact of contact between deaf and hearing people on the common: handshapes of individual letters of written languages, known historically as dactylology and today as fingerspelling. Gordon (1886) aptly calls attention to “a common error” of mistaking the ancient practice of manual letterforms as an invention

of Deaf communities, when they are in reality “a borrowed art” (p. 52). These handshapes made the practical leap from clerical orders under vows of silence to lay people through the published alphabet of Fray Melchor de Yebra (1593), borrowed from St. Bonaventure and used mainly as a pastoral tool for deathbed rites with hearing people. Plann (1997) correctly underscores that Yerba’s suggestion to expand the alphabet to benefit the daily communication of those with hearing loss was directed “unequivocally to deaf people who had lost their hearing after having acquired spoken language,” (p. 220) and not meant to instruct or be added into the gestural repertoire of signing deaf people. These efforts would soon follow in Spain, France, Scotland and England (Gordon, 1886). Today, fingerspelling (and attaching specific letter shapes onto signs) is a feature of most signed languages, and Nevins (1890) characterized the device as “perhaps, the most generally known system of communicating with the deaf and dumb that is employed by hearing persons,” because it obviously would assume “knowledge of spelling and reading” (p. 2).

The literature nearly universally cites sources that point toward efforts by hearing tutors to teach spoken–written language to deaf pupils from the sixteenth century onward. However, one source recorded by a Jacobite operative and prisoner (Leigh, 1745) demonstrates some letterforms among hearing people in Britain, including handshapes and movements for clandestine exchanges. This remarkable document dates well after the systems for secretive communication published in Wilkins (1641), which instructed to “Let the tops of the fingers signifie the five vowels” (p. 117). This convention has persisted through Dalgarno (1680), *Digiti-lingua* (1698), Wallis (1698), and onto Defoe (1720), which Sutton-Spence (1994) termed the first appearance of the “modern British manual alphabet” (p. 58). Most of Leigh’s other letters do not resemble Wilkins’, and it is not known whether any of the other systems

were known to the rebels, who could have relied on another spelling system, or arrived at similar conclusions among themselves. As this is a newly-discovered source that was in actual use, with contemporaneous original documentation, an excerpt and accompanying transcription are included below in Figures 6, 7, and 8:



The End of the Thumb is....A.
 The End of the Fore-finger...E.
 The End of the Middle D^o....I.
 The End of the Ring D^o.....O.
 The End of the little D^oU.
 Your Fingers laid together..F.
 Shut Y^r. Hands & Put 'em together..G.
 Stroke the Palm of both y^r. Hands together..H.

Figure 6. Selected Jacobite fingerspelling from Leigh (1749), transcription by Anne Leahy.

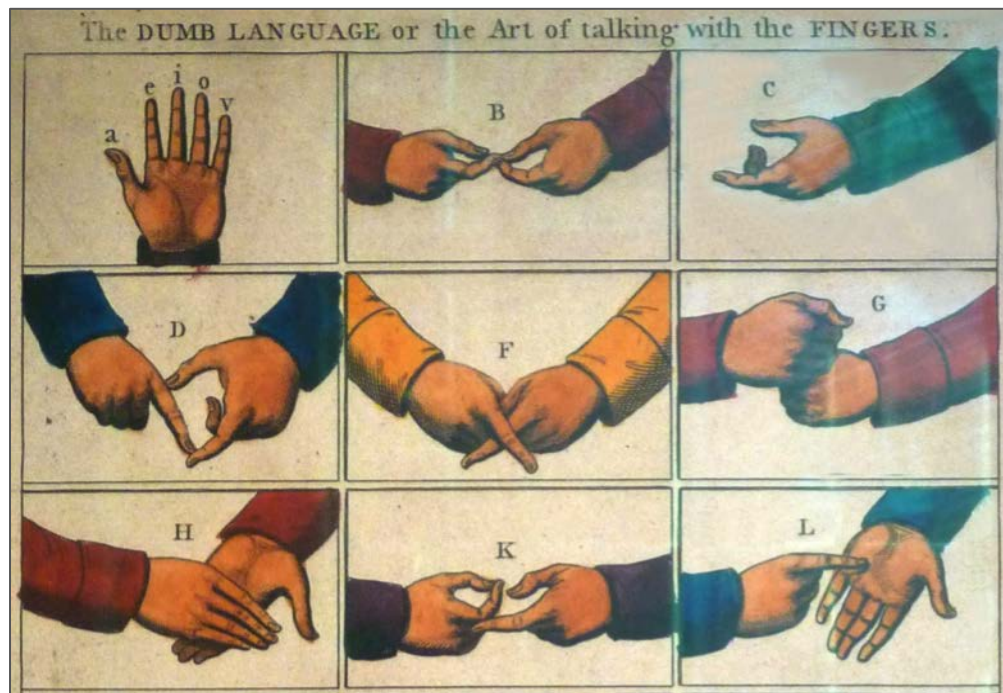


Figure 8. Selected Letters from an Early BSL Alphabet
(Printed by Bowles and Carver, London (n.d.). Wellcome Library no. 17991i).

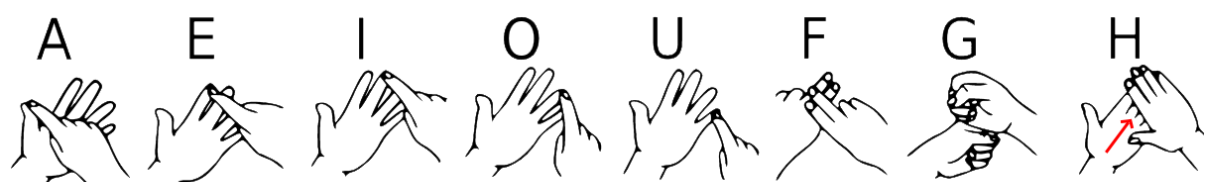


Figure 7. Selected Letters from the Modern BSL Alphabet.

Dalgarno (1680) predicted broad practical uses of fingerspelling, according to “particular cases wherein it may be convenient” for hearing people to learn the system:

1. Silence. 2. Secrecy. 3. Pleasure. In cases of necessary Silence, it may be useful to...those that are about sick people, as near relations, Nurses, &c. So for Secrecy, if people be in company, but not so near as to whisper one another in the Ear, it performs the office of whispering; it delivers, and receives secret messages, &c. And lastly for pleasure; it may be an ingenious and useful divertisement [p. 91] and past-time for young people. (p. 90)

Glimpses of the first two were given earlier, and evidence of the third is constantly presented to deaf people and interpreters today, who commonly encounter those who claim to have learned the manual alphabet, most often as children; prior to formally learning a signed L2, I myself was no exception.

Homesign

Users of fingerspelling are typically literate in a written language. A more practical beginning for deaf people during the period of this study was individuated sign communication, which Barrett (1886) termed a “mothers’ sign system,” and today is called homesign: “the originally spontaneous, subsequently habitualized signs used in families that have a deaf member” (Streeck, 2009, p. 210). Veteran educator of the deaf Isaac Peet observed that “[a]ll mothers make signs” to the hearing child as well, who “learns speech gradually from the connection of things, and from the gesture of the mother” (*Conference of Principals of Institutions for the Deaf*, 1880, p. 19).

Schaller (2010) referenced the impact of this instinct among many mothers of deaf children during an interview with a contemporary deaf man raised in a hearing

family who spent his early years without a model of formal signed language. Not only were improvised visual strategies better than nothing, they built an advantage through a legitimate albeit latent foundation:

SS: A cognitive scientist at the University of Chicago, Susan Goldin-Meadow, has shown that deaf children who are exposed to gestures-home signing-learn language better, even with a late start, than those who have no visual communication. Would you say that your mother's gestures helped you learn language?

DW: (before I was half-way through my question): YES! (Schaller, 2010)

Wundt et al. (1973) argued that “a natural system of gestures” that “does not require a long, continuous tradition” can result from a microcommunity of deaf signers (p. 58). More relevant to this study, if hearing people “accustom themselves to fit the needs and means of expression” of a deaf individual, “such collaboration “to a certain degree, can substitute for an environment of deaf-mutes” (ibid.). In either case, the communication needs that arise from specific social contexts necessitate that “neologisms occur extraordinarily frequently within a spatially limited area,” and it has long been observed that such coinages “that have arisen in spatially separate environments and under doubtlessly independent circumstances are, for the most part, very similar or indeed closely related” (p. 59). As Davis (2003) suggested, “language is a communal practice” (p. 99), and it is unlikely hearing signers had no influence, given they, rather than deaf people, would have often been the exclusive interlocutors of pre-Deaf-World signers.

Harvey Peet, the pioneering educator to the emergent American Deaf community of the early nineteenth century, understood the importance of this pre-linguistic stage, and left a legacy through his son and granddaughter who would form

three generations of educators and interpreters among deaf people. The elder Peet situated the isolated deaf person as the ad-hoc initiator who seeks “at first from instinct, and then from design, to make a language of his own... necessarily a language addressed to the eye, a language of motion and expression, that is, of gestures.” If this deaf person finds a willing audience to teach, and those hearing peers “learn his language, aid him to develop and improve it” (Peet, 1855, p. 5), a social world is created.

These relationships formed prior to canonical Deaf culture—or for culturally unaffiliated deaf individuals thereafter—would have been transacted on public space, or de facto Hearing space. Pym (1998) recommends such a rhetorical or “operational fiction” (1998, p. 178) as “a story that can help us think critically about other stories.” Following the metaphor of the village commons, we might imagine a deaf person walking the green as a societal outsider. If this deaf villager attempts to recruit hearing compatriots, some of these may founder who “through dullness, stiffness, or indolence, were disqualified to aid them in developing their instinctive language of gestures to the degree necessary to enable them to profit by the experience of others, and to share in social communion” (Peet, 1855, p. 10). However, if the villager’s lessons find purchase with some hearing fellow who discovers what Peet coins “*synideas*” (H. P. Peet, 1855, p. 9) or *like-mindedness*, together they co-opt a corner of this commons of heretofore “undivided land”¹³ as signing space.

Stokoe (2001) makes such a critique of the 1973 report on an isolated deaf resident of the Solomon Islands from Kuschel (1973). Within Kangobai’s lifetime, many hearing friends and family collaborated with him, and had already formed linguistic rules around their signs:

¹³ “commons,” Oxford English Dictionary

[Kuschel] called Kangobai the Silent Inventor, but of course his sign language was not the invention of one individual. It grew out of give and take, the everyday interaction in that island culture, between deaf Kangobai and his hearing companions...Although this language had been in use for only one generation when Kuschel discovered it, its users had already extended and conventionalized the meanings [of formerly purely iconic signs]. (Stokoe, 2001, pp. 70–71)

Kuschel (1973) loosely organized the linguistic data into three types of gestures. The broadest category which may be decipherable by non-islanders included signs such as the imperative “‘stop’ in which the hand is held before the body with the palm held vertically towards the receiver” (p. 11). Though the immediate culture did not have “a copious gesticulatory tradition” (p. 25), signs in the second group were those which other islanders would most likely understand, e.g., the representation of a particular species of lizard, where an extended “oscillating” index finger “makes slow zig-zag motions along the ground” (p. 15). The third group represented certain concepts too specific to be decoded without the level of hearing intermediary Stokoe referenced. In this case, only “a few selected members” (p. 10) of that intimate social world understood that FATHER would be identified by a tattoo worn by Kangobai’s own father, or any elder brother was shown as someone with an extracted tooth, as his own brother had (pp. 15–16). Jenkins (1911) noted a similar pattern from the “first generation of American sign makers” of the mid-nineteenth century, who relied heavily on hyperlocal and exhaustive detail, to the next generation’s “more compact and condensed” style that allowed objects to become “a symbol of wide generalized meaning” (p. 467).

Fischer (2015) added that in this process, “gesture can also be

grammaticalised into sign languages” and become formal vocabulary, grammatical markers, and while the *entrée* “can sometimes have mimetic sources, they can be quite language-specific” (Fischer, 2015, p. 445). For example, the data in Fusellier-Souza (2006, p. 45, Fig. 3) offer examples “that seem to be metaphoric extensions of expressions used in spoken Portuguese” (p. 42). This contradicts the assertion in Woodward (1978) that among the varieties of signed communication systems that crop up “wherever there have been deaf people associating with each other,” prior to schools for the deaf, these could have “developed through normal patterns of interaction, not through the invention of hearing people” (p. 345).

To advance the metaphor and perhaps challenge Woodward, if villagers marked a semi-public signing space within a corner of the Hearing world, or a Deaf commons (“a place with no owners”), it may have prepared and propelled semi-lingual deaf villagers to advance toward one another, and form the underlying structure of a nascent Deaf Community (“a place with many owners”). Lane and Battison (1977) use the now-famous beginnings of deaf education in eighteenth-century France to describe how, the Abbé Charles Michel de l’Epée formed a critical mass of deaf students, whose original “‘home signs’ became the signs used by a small community” (p. 70). These examples clarify how verb tense was originally marked with discrete affixes that contemporary BSL and ASL signers would still recognize:

The pupil, though Deaf and Dumb, had like us, an idea of the past, the present, and the future, before he was placed under our tuition, and was at no loss for signs to manifest the difference.

Did he mean to express a present action? He made a sign prompted by nature, which we all make in the same case without being conscious of it,

and which consists in appealing to the eyes of the spectators to witness the presence of our operation; but if the action did not take place in his sight, he laid his two hands flat upon the table, bearing upon it gently, as we are all apt to do on similar occasions: and these are the signs he learns again in our lessons, by which to indicate the Present of a verb.

Did he design to signify that an action is past? He tossed his hand carelessly two or three times over his shoulder: these signs we adopt to characterize the past tenses of a verb.

And lastly, when it was intent to announce a future action, he projected his right hand: here again is a sign we give to him to represent the Future of a verb. (Abbé de l'Epée, 1801, p. 30)

Early evidence from the procedure for electing new pupils to the rolls at London's Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Children of the Poor also disproves the deaf-only signed language hypothesis. The questionnaire requiring “the attestation of two credible witnesses” (Highmore, 1810, p. 698) that families would have submitted with their application assumes that by the school's minimum admittance age of nine years, children raised within a hearing–speaking family may have shared signs with, if not received practical instruction from hearing people:

Does ____ discover intellect, by making signs intelligible to those with whom ____ has constant intercourse; and do they evince memory, judgment, &c.? (Highmore, 1810, p. 698)

It appears uncontestable therefore that deaf children regularly entered formal education with existing signing skills. The headmaster Joseph Watson recorded:

They have been accustomed to make the sign of sleeping, one, two, or more, nights; or, of enduring one, two, or more, cold or hot seasons, (that is,

summers or winters,) and pointing forward to mark futurity: (meaning, one day, two days, one year, two years, &c. to come.)—The same sign, pointing behind, has served them to mark time past: the present, they have distinguished by pointing directly upwards, and describing the light or darkness that surrounds them. (Watson, 1809, pp. 110–111)

Emblems such as those listed above are common to other recollections from deaf adults about their childhood before receiving classroom instruction. One such example was the autobiographical statement of Theophilus d'Estrella, who would become the first pupil, and later an educator at the California Institution for the Deaf and Dumb (James, 1892), and the case study of Melville Ballard to be expounded later in this chapter. For both men, their mothers' aptitude to introduce or share signs with their sons was pivotal in their linguistic and intellectual development, with d'Estrella even recalling that "[w]hile my mother was alive, I did not know that I was deaf" (James, 1892, p. 617).

Kendon (1988) recognized that the prevailing assumption was to cast our focus upon "the deaf for a study of the process of the lexicalization of gesture," but quickly added that "we may see something of this process among the hearing as well, even when speech is fully available at the same time" (p. 137). However, any hearing signer does not an interpreter make. Excursus C of Toury (2012), "A Bilingual Speaker Becomes a Translator: A Tentative Development Model" (pp. 241–258) goes to great lengths to critique prior scholarship and set forth the path from fluency in more than one language to "translating as a *skill*" (p. 245) demanding an "interlingual capacity" to consciously work "*across* languages" (p. 248). Though conversational facility or even bilingual fluency is not a proxy for interpreting ability, the first lay interpreters were drawn from the ranks of these connections between commoners.

These invaluable explanations of how signed language communities first formed help deduce the kinds of signs and rationales for them that historical deaf–hearing interactions were built upon. Much of the scarce and well-traveled documentation of deaf signers prior to the era of education also features hearing people in the roles of interlocutor or intermediary. Unlike most of the existing literature, this study focuses on the relationship or role of the bilingual–bimodal figures. Richard Carew’s 1602 *Survey of Cornwall* mentioned Edward Bone, who was “deafe from his cradle, and consequently dumb,” and a “sometimes servant” of Peter Courtney of Ladock, with whom he had enough association to share an effective homesign system. While it is not clear how Bone managed to gather local bulletins, the men obviously had regular and effective two-way communication:

Gwhich fellow...would yet bee one of the first, to learne, and expresse to his master, any newes that was sturring in the Countrie...And to make his minde knowne, in this, and all other matters, hee used verie effectuall signes, being able therethrough, to receive, and perform any enjoyed errand. (Carew, 1723, p. 139)

Later that same century, the celebrated diarist Samuel Pepys met the young deaf servant of Sir George Downing (in whose honor the London street was named). In 1666, Pepys recorded that the boy who had been “mightily acquainted” among those in society, was, like Edward Bone, also known to be well-informed about current events: “he made strange signs of the [Great] fire [of London], and how the King was abroad, and many things they understood, but I could not, which I wondering at...” (Pepys, 1893, para. 1). It is unknown whether Downing provided the young man with a tutor, but certainly no organized educational opportunities would have been available at that time. The signs which were not immediately obvious to a

visitor were perfectly understood by frequent hearing interlocutors who made the effort. Downing chided Pepys that with “only a little use, and you will understand him, and make him understand you with as much ease as may be” (Pepys, 1893, para. 1). A single evening was not adequate time to master the communication system, so Downing was obliged to interpret an errand Pepys wished the unnamed servant to perform. The boy “fell to his work,” and thereafter returned to make his report, which was interpreted and verified by others in attendance.

That same year, the three unnamed hearing sisters of Martha Elyot, presented earlier in the Introduction, functioned as both character witnesses and language intermediaries, acting in a dual role that will be further illustrated by examples in Chapter Four. The women appeared in the Court of Common Pleas in order for Martha to participate in making an internal family agreement legally binding. They sought to properly convey “the house and land” to an uncle, who had “maintained her, and taken great care of her” in exchange for the transfer of “her land for security” (Carter, 1668, pp. 53–54). Chief Justice Orlando Bridgman sought proof of consent for such an arrangement, and whether or not he understood their interpretation to Martha, he requested a verbal interpretation for what followed, suggesting that he could not decode her response.

Though the reporter who originated the transcript was criticized for inaccuracies as compared to primary documents (Wallace, 1845), Elyot has been quoted over the centuries to support the position of the deaf party in various legal contexts. Allowing for the likelihood of a flawed account, Wallace (1882, 1861) demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the interpreting process as it had been recorded, and the distance between pantomime that any lay person might understand, and the Elyot sisters’ advanced system:

Yet it would appear plain, that an interpreter present—one of her sisters probably—understood by the act of her hands, that which even so intelligent a person as Chief Justice Bridgman—one of the very first men of that or of any day—*of himself*, did not understand. In itself, therefore, the action of the hands, whatever it was, conveyed no meaning: or in other words, the woman and the interpreter conferred only by conventional signs. (Wallace, 1882, p. 333)

Groups of Signers

At the opposite extreme, larger village-level systems in use among a larger population with a disproportionately higher incidence of genetic deafness are **not** the subject of this study. Those small societies with a significant deaf segment will also have disproportionately more hearing people accustomed to communicating with them. As mentioned earlier, “hearing members of the community [who] use the local sign language” will significantly outnumber the “deaf members of the community” (Meir et al., 2017, p. 193). Nonaka (2012) asserts that the presence of hearing signers willing to learn the local gestural system remains one of the sociolinguistic dynamics “crucial for the spread and maintenance of village sign languages” (p. 286). Nevertheless, it seems uncontested that the collaborative influence from hearing people also impact on that larger scale, and nativization of those features by deaf signers enter into such languages.

Where fewer signers create microcommunities of communication within families and small groups, the opportunity for more sophisticated sign formation similarly creates an environment where “[s]igns change away from their pantomimic or imitative origins to more arbitrary shapes” (Frishberg, 1975, p. 700). Any hearing bilingual–bimodals would gain access to the code otherwise unavailable to the general population. A common example of this linguistic process from iconicity to

abstraction in American Sign Language demonstrates the transition in the sign universally glossed as HELP; the original version represented supporting someone by the elbow. There are many linguistic processes whereby signs undergo historical change; in this case, Klima and Bellugi (1979, p. 75) illustrate how the dominant articulating hand of HELP (viewer's right, signers' left) as produced in isolation has moved to the underside of a fist in a preference for centralization of both hands in front of the body, shown in Figure 9 below:

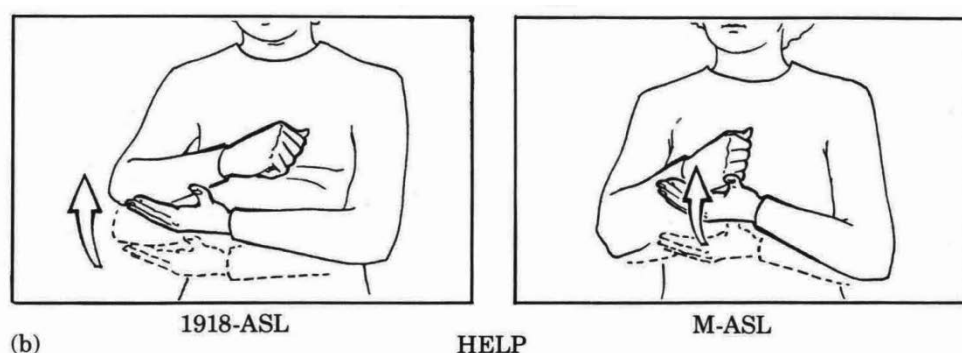


Figure 9. ASL Sign HELP from 1918 and Modern Usage. (Klima & Bellugi, 1979, p. 75).

Over time and with the benefit of a language community, sign forms that began more closely linked to their meaning may make a similar shift away from their once-discernable roots. Pettingell (1875) also believed that early ASL had been “founded in natural pantomime, but when elaborated and systematized for the more precise expression of ideas, it becomes a conventional language and is unintelligible to those who have not learned it” (p. 4). In the case of isolated deaf people, conceptual drivers for new signs may arise from conditions to a particular location, person, or phenomenon. Mallery (1881) suggested that such “accidental or merely suggestive signs peculiar to families...are too much affected by the other members of the family to be of certain value” (p. 30) upon arrival at a school environment absent those household idiosyncracies.

Barnard (1835) conceived the process of coining signs occurred in three phases. The process begins with natural and mimetic forms used with non-signers, which require “a mass of gestures to denote a single thing” (p. 372). These are milled into “colloquial language found in the institutions for the deaf and dumb” by isolating a “single feature” to serve as a more efficient “instrument of communication,” which strips the pantomime of “the property of universal intelligibility” (pp. 372–373). The final stage which lies outside the scope of this study, sees new signs contrived and rearranged to correspond with the features of written/spoken language, “methodized and subjected to the laws of artificial syntax” that serve as a stepping-stone” toward reading and writing (p. 372). When a new pupil arrives into the language-rich school environment, his own “signs of reduction which he has been accustomed to employ among his friends” (p. 375) may no longer find purchase. Though two students’ conventionalized forms may “stand for the same idea, [and] come usually from the same extended description” (p. 375), the abbreviations have been ground through a different mill entirely, and may arrive at differing conclusions. Nevertheless, the community and especially the instructors must remain conversant in pantomime. During arriving pupils’ transition to the local vocabulary, “it will be necessary to employ, in his instruction, only those signs which are purely natural” (p. 375), and “the entire language of action” will always remain “the earliest available instrument of communication. (p. 386).

According to Streeck (2009), the research community is still only “beginning to understand how conventional signs in signed languages evolve from deaf–hearing ‘home-signs’ ...that is, the originally spontaneous, subsequently habitualized signs used in families that have a deaf member” (p. 210). The prevailing wisdom is that “many if not most conventional signs in sign languages around the world—are built

around a common trope, what Adam Kendon (1980) calls ‘enactment’ and Jürgen Streeck (2009) dubs ‘gesturecraft,’ or the visual exploitation of common human patterns of (manual) action” (Haviland, 2013a, p. 164). Addressing the first gathering in the United States which sought to organize the interpreting profession—or *field*, to extend the geographical imagery—Schreiber (1964) repeated the culturally-received anecdotal evidence that having little access to interpreting services may bring social gains for deaf users of formal signed languages as hearing people naturally shift to this visual modality:

...the deaf in rural areas, having lived in a small community all their lives, are well known, their difficulties are known to their neighbors and as a result while there may not be many available interpreters in these locations, neither are there many occasions in which they are needed. (Schreiber, 1964, p. 35).

So-called isolated sign systems have the upper hand to “see” and respond to their immediate environments, unlike more rigid languages that require specific vocabulary and shared rules. In the case of Jeremiah Wait, the deaf barber of Oxford, his entire neighborhood participated in his shared communication system. He was memorialized in 1758 as having been “deaf and dumb from his Childhood; notwithstanding which he carried on Business, was remarkable for having the most early Knowledge of all Occurrences, and his Gestures were so well understood, that he could converse with almost half the Inhabitants” (“Country News,” 1758). Not only could this man negotiate with customers about the relatively straightforward and present matters of shaves and haircuts, he must have had tense markers such as de l’Epée described, and ways to receive and repeat detailed activities regarding local people, places, and things. Unfortunately, whatever gains in vocabulary or visual strategies the hearing members of the community had attained in conversation with

Wait died with him.

With schools for deaf children came naturally-formed geographical and social worlds, with the educational institutions functioning as the “consular office” (Sleight, 1852, p. 12) among the population of deaf adults after graduation. Language communities sprang up, as did signing families where “hearing children of deaf, signing parents were the people most likely to act as interpreters, having learnt to sign quite naturally within the family home” (G. H. Turner, 2006, p. 285). This analysis rejects the unquestioned assumption that hearing signers raised with fluent deaf adult language models, such as in Müller de Quadros et al (2015), formed the *first* HI pipeline, as the earliest evidence of interpreting pre-dates the gathering of deaf children into school communities, and any hearing signer offspring they would create.

There are also a growing number of more recent studies on high-incidence deafness in families and small communities that tend toward a polyglot environment. As mentioned earlier, these lay outside the scope of this study, as a more widespread gestural vocabulary among hearing people would nullify the need for interpreters. It should be noted, however, that hearing signers figure in all the listed cases, and gain substantial attention in Haviland (2013a), which follows Gumperz’ “multilingual speech communities” (p. 160) through three generations of Zinacantec Family Homesign or “Z” users—so named for the township of Zinacantán, in Chiapas, Mexico, and “the invention of three deaf siblings, their hearing sister, and two nephews—none of whom have met other deaf people or had exposure to any established sign language” (p. 161). Two first- and second-generation women effectively raised in both spoken Tzotzil and Z emerged as reliable “interlocutors and translators” (p. 163), with occasional misunderstandings during interactions and attempts to gloss video recorded utterances. The endnote in Haviland (2013b, pp.

346–347) offers an excellent overview of more recent projects that closely describe complex “evolving homesign” (p. 311) in contemporary sources that involve systems shared among *both* deaf *and* hearing signers. Among the catalog of examples, Fusellier-Soutza (2006) was included as evidence of three isolated and minimally-educated deaf adults who each “has a privileged interlocutor (a family member) with whom the language is shared” (p. 37).

Frishberg (1975) mentioned a similar situation that endured exposure to a standard sign language outside of the homesign group: an isolated family of four hearing and five deaf children. They instinctively devised a system which seems to have proven serviceable into the children’s adulthood, enriched by the number of users and years of usage:

Confronted by the reality of the situation—her children’s deafness—the mother, living in a rural area of Tennessee, simply invented her own gestural system to communicate with her children. Even when all the deaf children had gone to the Tennessee School for the Deaf and learned standard ASL, they still used homesign with their mother. (Frishberg, 1975, p. 713)

Doubtless, all of the children—particularly those who were deaf—shaped this durable system which remained a functioning familylect. The following case study gives a more discursive insight into this process with a family remarkably willing to include a single deaf child, insofar as they were capable of communicating with him.

Case Study: Ballard

Melville Ballard was the first graduate of the National Deaf Mute College (now Gallaudet University) in Washington, DC in 1866 (“Necrological Notice: Melville Ballard,” 1915), and an ideal subject to trace from the sole deaf member of a large

and inclusive hearing family to fully enculturated member of a thriving nineteenth-century Deaf community. Though a more recent example, Ballard's firsthand experience represents both the culturally- and linguistically-unaffiliated though hardly isolated deaf youth, and the ability to re-create and comment upon it from a distance. His life sketch found primarily in Porter (1881)¹⁴ unfolds a rich, first-person account of an early gestural familylect prior to formal education and canonical signed language from the perspective of a well-educated and successful deaf adult. He was raised in rural Maine with "two brothers, of an age not far from his own, with whom he was accustomed to communicate freely by signs." He also shared this system with his "mother and sisters, and to some extent his father" (p. 113). After he was deafened as a toddler ("Necrological Notice: Melville Ballard," 1915), the family developed a wide vocabulary through naturalistic and pantomimic strategies, including many parts of speech, and a general concept of time was maintained: "Number of days was so many sleeps; years were winters, described by the snow falling and accumulating and then wasting away" (Porter, 1881, p. 113).¹

More recently, Michael Olson reported receiving handdrawn letters from his hearing mother who also used similar pictorial representations of "sleeps" to count the days until he returned home from the residential school for deaf children in the 1960s:

When I went in to the school for the deaf I was about five and I was so thrilled to get mail...My mother would write on a card only two more sleeps and you will be home. It was counting the days for me to see how many days I would have to sleep at school before I was sleeping at home in the bunk bed with my brother. So it helped me have a sense of counting down to the time when I

¹⁴ Porter (1881) is quoted heavily throughout this section, and full citations will appear as appropriate, followed by page numbers only.

would be going home. (Garey & Hott, 2006)

Additionally, a deaf man who had spent six years at a UK school for deaf children roughly during the 1930s–40s signed only with hearing neighbors as an adult, and reverted to a similar sign to indicate a “day’ (i.e. 24 hours), which is a brief sleeping motion (head tilted to one side, resting on folded hands)” (Macleod, 1973, p. 74).

In some instances, the Ballard family signs were indicative of modern ones, such as a person’s age “marked as stages of growth or of increase of stature” as CHILD and ADULT appear in both ASL and BSL. Also, WHITE, which referenced the nearest available object, a man’s exposed “shirt-bosom” (Porter, 1881, p. 113) as it does in ASL, and LIGHTENING, which Ballard credits to his hearing brother, again resembling both BSL and ASL forms:

One day, while we were haying in a field, there was a series of heavy thunder-claps. I asked one of my brothers where they came from. He pointed to the sky and made a zigzag motion with his finger, signifying lightning. (Porter, 1881, pp. 111–112)

The biographer wished “no uncertainty as to how far Mr. Ballard may have been aided by such signs in his early mental processes” (113). When he was eleven years old, Ballard successfully made this transition. His parents George and Susanna seemed to understand that they had prepared him well, but in order to advance his education, he must be boarded 230 miles (370 km) away at the residential school in Hartford, Connecticut (“Necrological Notice: Melville Ballard,” 1915). There he would be among other deaf students, and in the care of professional teachers. The following account of a parting conversation with his mother demonstrates the Ballard’s gestures had begun to acquire symbolic representations necessary for a full language. The

detailed dictation allows any signer to play back the conversation with complete understanding of the gestures, arrayed in syntax appropriate to signed sentences, though some hints were offered in the original for a non-signing audience:

You go far yonder; ride day night; read-book; write; write fold [as a letter]; I unfold read glad; snow (falling flakes cold white) piled-up (hand gradually raised from near the ground) waste-away (hand gradually lowered—that is to say, after one winter) you come-back glad. (Porter, 1881, p. 114)

There is little doubt that Melville surpassed and lengthened his mother's gestural reach. Feldman, Goldin-Meadow and Gleitman (1978) found that even very young deaf children are “mothers to the sign” (p. 376) used within their families. Preschool-aged subjects whose parents had disallowed them exposure to signing communities “performed elaborate and structured gesturing” (p. 376) that resembled only 25% of their caretakers' actions, with “a striking qualitative distinction in form between the signs” (p. 377). When presented with novel items, the subjects spontaneously coined signs for toys they had never seen before, demonstrating with “straightforward evidence that the children could create manual representations independent of a tutor” (377), whereas “mothers depend heavily on objects in the world around them as props” (378). We can assume that in the Ballard family, where signing was consciously developed and encouraged, a similar dynamic progressed apace.

Eckley and Edward Ballard were born two years and one year before Melville (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1860) respectively, and are likely the ones he looked to for information, as educated interlocutors and translators of written English. One of the pair once explained a lively newspaper article that lent itself to a signed rendition,

wherein “A man, while out hunting, discovered a squirrel and was preparing to fire at it, when the dog, in his excited caperings, struck the trigger of the gun, and the man was killed” (Porter, 1881, p. 114). So taken with the tale, Melville quickly sought out some local hearing boys to break the story to, but they were unable to apprehend his signs. This indicates the Ballards’ sign system must have sufficiently reduced from full-body pantomime so as to be beyond the ability of non-signers, even when they are well known to each other. The family could hold limited discourse on abstract and religious topics among themselves, but “signs for actions, as well as for objects, were specific rather than generic; thus, there was no general sign for kill, or for make” (Porter, 1881, p. 113). To reference a supreme being, Ballard reported, “I remember that my mother once told me about a being up above, pointing her finger towards the sky and with a solemn look on her countenance” (Porter, 1881, p. 111). This convention appears in other coinages between pairs and among small groups of signers, who index through gaze and/or pointing upwards to signify the godly realm of Western thought, especially in regard to the consequences of perjury invoked by the witness oath (e.g., Leahy, 2016). In signed languages, the spatial roots drawn from the mental paradigm of heaven, god, etc. existing above the earth have conventionalized to be produced in higher signing space, the BSL case being almost exactly as Mrs. Ballard coined it for her son. Ultimately, her signing abilities were outpaced by young Melville’s curiosity:

When she mentioned the mysterious being up in the sky, I was eager to take hold of the subject, and plied her with questions concerning the form and appearance of this unknown being, asking if it was the sun, moon, or one of the stars. I knew she meant that there was a living one somewhere up in the sky; but when I realized that she could not answer my questions, I gave it up in

despair, feeling sorrowful that I could not obtain a definite idea of the mysterious living one up in the sky. (Porter, 1881, p. 111)

The French pioneer of deaf education Sicard believed that though signs are ideal to represent concrete objects and action verbs, the language of gestures might even be preferable to spoken language for the expression of metaphysical ideas¹⁵ (Sicard, 1800, pp. 1–2). By his second year at the American School for the Deaf, the spiritual lessons begun at home among hearing family had been repeated in written catechisms, augmented by chapel services in ASL, and Ballard's rebirth out of his familylect was complete. As a window into that process, Jordan (1983) is valuable as a study conducted before widespread "recognition and acceptance of sign language" in Scottish schools for deaf children. Even with limited exposure to standard BSL and few adult models, "linguistic deficiency in sign language seems to disappear quickly. Without ever having any formal instruction in sign language, deaf children become fluent users" (p. 238). However, the claim in Barnard (1835) can still be made today, namely that after a deaf person has become a fluent member of a signing community, the roots of that language, or "signs truly natural" remain in use both "by deaf-mutes, in their intercourse with each other, and with their [hearing] friends" (p. 372). Without that communication with hearing family during his first eleven years, he may not have been as well-equipped to be "translated into a world of light," and "a new being" (Porter, 1881, p. 112) upon joining his deaf peers. A more recent example of a newly-founded school for deaf children saw a similar explosion of language, primed by home signs: "On the playgrounds and schoolbuses the children were inventing their

¹⁵ "Il est donc vrai que, même pour l'expression des idées métaphysiques la langue des gestes pourroit être préférée à la langue parlée"

own sign system, pooling the makeshift gestures that they used with their families at home” (Pinker, 1995, p. 36).

International Sign

Thus, strategies gained through signing with hearing people can be seen as an intermediate step toward a deaf–deaf vernacular used between people with no shared signed or written language. Co-speech gestures, and other repertoires shared by hearing people have historically shaped attempts at communication among individuals and groups of hearing and deaf people. As deaf signers segmented themselves, and grew into increasingly larger groups to develop these linguistic building blocks, formal signed languages took root, and absorbed with the iconic and culturally-embedded systems surrounding them. For example, the colloquial “means of sentence negation” in BSL mentioned earlier that is undeniably “similar to the hearing gesture which is often described as shrugging one's shoulders, and may accompany negatives in speech. The palms are out and upwards, and it may be made with one hand or two” (Deuchar, 1978, p. 30).

International Sign (IS) is a categorical term for a highly variable range of strategies used when people from different signed languages communicate with each other directly. IS has been discussed as the final step in the ultimate deaf experience: transnational, cross-linguistic, direct signed exchange. I will not enter into linguistic analysis of IS and its constituent parameters and influences, or debate its merits relative to national signed languages. Instead, I offer it as a practical example of how communicative norms shared by deaf and hearing people—both within their respective groups and between one another—shaped the course of deaf signing, and by extension, bilingual–bimodal work on the Deaf common.

For centuries, “national sign languages evolved separately, often with minimal contact with other sign languages” (World Federation of the Deaf & World Association of Sign Language Interpreters, 2016, p. 1). During that time, users of different signed languages have occasionally met, and intuitively and spontaneously negotiated gestural communication with varying degrees of success. In the 1950s, a more intentional cooperation among an international group of deaf and hearing people sought to engineer, refine, and standardize IS. These efforts “aimed at facilitating “communication within the formal confines” of the World Federation of the Deaf (Madsen, 1975, p. 3), primarily through agreed-upon vocabulary (World Federation of the Deaf, 1959). There is widespread recognition that these signs have continued to iterate and adapt as the discourses they serve have expanded, and new entrants have widened the gestural repertoire, and contributed or modified vocabulary.

Crasborn and Hiddinga (2015) offers the exceptional insight that to navigate discourse with a non-signer, deaf people “will constantly need to appeal to their communication skills that go beyond the linguistic and interactive resources offered by conventionalized sign languages (p. 65). Where signers may not share a vocabulary, a written language, or fingerspelling, the boundaries of one’s own sign language can curb creativity to think outside of it. The authors further hypothesize that a lifetime of solving problems in deaf–hearing encounters in this way sharpens “the exact same communication strategies that deaf people use in first-time encounters with deaf people from other sign language backgrounds,” and “thus constitute a founding feature for one of the core elements in the experience of being deaf (p. 61).

An essential component of grammar in such an exchange is negation. Figure 10 from (Supalla & Webb, 1995, p. 344) shows the distribution of negation structures in a roughly 40-minute sample of International Sign lectures delivered to an audience of deaf researchers. The data was gathered from two signers who are fluent in their respective national signed languages: Langue des Signes Française (LSF) and BSL, and included the “shrug” observed by Deuchar (1978) alluded to earlier:

TABLE 15.4
Typology and Frequency of the Negative Marker

<i>Form</i>	<i>Typology</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
 Manual negator: palm-up	Postverbal negator	V Neg	(10)
 Two variants of NONE	Postlexical Quantifier	N Neg	(13)
 Headshake: <u>hs</u>	Simultaneous Headshake	<u>hs</u> []	(9)
	Postclausal Headshake	[] <u>hs</u>	(12)
 Three variants of NOT	Postclausal Negator	[] Neg	(37)
 Preverbal Negator	Preverbal Negator	Neg []	(5)
 Two variants of CANNOT	Double Negator	Neg [] Neg	(8)

Figure 10. International Sign Negation Structures (Supalla and Webb, 1995, p. 344).

Some of the additional forms would be recognizable to hearing audiences, though admittedly require familiarity with Western traditions. An overwhelmingly predominant choice was to use “either a flat open handshape or a closed hand with extended index finger” in “either a single or repeated side-to-side movement...with one hand or two” (p. 345) a total of 35 times.

Conclusion

Just as hearing signers can be an early albeit uncultivated route into Deaf spaces even today, they may also broker the communication in both directions. This chapter has described some historical shifts in historical hearing signers' visual *habitus* that has ranged from the gestural lexicons locally available to them, to more sophisticated systems co-created with deaf signers. As signing communities formed, the distance grew between users of signed languages and the general hearing population. Strategies to adapt to that space without a SLI, or cultivate signing among hearing people have grown out of necessity, historically developed and modeled through deaf signers' collective cultural, and individual interpersonal experiences. When contact takes place between signed languages that are more or less mutually unintelligible today, signers and interpreters communicate with one another in similar ways, reverting to deaf signer–hearing nonsigner conventions in an indication of early interpreting practice and signed languages themselves.

From the examples of Martha Elyot's sisters, Peter Courtney and George Downing, it follows that interpreters became increasingly necessary after the seventeenth century—not because deaf people could not hear, but because English speakers reached the limit of their visual vocabulary as deaf signing conventions matured out of mimicry and into more economical and abstracted forms. Contemporary examples of other hearing people, e.g., the Ballard family, Kangobai's intimates, and the Zinacantec villagers lend insight into how historical deaf–hearing interactions created microcommunities with languages advanced enough to require a mediator for outsiders who could no longer decode the gestures.

Once locally- or individually-coined signs were gathered, sifted, and conventionalized, and a delineated Deaf space was thriving, linguistic and cultural

exchanges carried out by hearing *commuters* (i.e., those who interchange things or places) have worn and widened that path in both directions. Among spoken language communities, mobility between worlds such as this has “played a central role in the traditions of translations and hence in the development of societies” (Lambert, 1993, p. 20). The late Larry Fleischer, a leader in deaf education and interpreter education similarly believed that “the widespread use of qualified interpreters for the deaf has brought a new dimension to the deaf’ in their view of the world at large” (Fleischer, 1975, p. 16). In Pym’s (1998) “more general hypothesis, translators *are* intersections” (p. 182) that admit both short-term traffic and long-term migration. The case of signed language interpreters who travel between those hearing and deaf territories, though usually within a single country or culture have been no different.

According to Meylaerts (2006), “the less geography is a distinctive feature between languages, literatures, and cultures, the more the actor’s habituses play a key role in their definition and in the understanding of intercultural dynamics” (Meylaerts, 2006, pp. 61–62). Because the Deaf common was first bounded within a remote part of the larger societal village, the walk connecting the majority culture to Deaf signers may feel elongated indeed. Pym (1998) observes that we get “the very term ‘culture’...from the verb *colere*,” or “to till the land, to engage in cultivation, farming,” and society is rooted precisely “by staying in one place, breaking open soil to sow crops... establishing a temporal permanence requiring political organization and defence” (p. 17). From this stability “eventually, come the commercial centres where the products of cultivation are exchanged, along with their language, requiring translation” (Pym, 1998, pp. 17–18). This truth risks the ironic position of another definition of *commute*: “to trade a punishment for a fine,” or at least to be modernly perceived as eagerly exchanging their task burden for money. Jestng aside, this

possibility should be approached with a sensitive and thorough argument. This study recognizes that “[h]ow scholars depict and discuss signed languages is pivotal to the understanding and respect of the people who use them” (Parks, 2007, p. 73), whether they be hearing or deaf.

Bilingual–bimodals have left a mark—some would claim scars—upon contemporary signed languages and the Deaf-World. If we personify the languages of BSL and ASL as *homo sapiens*, they carry fragments of a deeply embedded Neanderthal DNA. We can imagine those early contributors—hearing people who were slower, less agile, visually creative or precise, many of whom were left behind after the mass migration of hybrids and native-born deaf signers to the Deaf-World. Figure 11 is based on a similar concept in Johnston and Schembri (1999), and illustrates how visual–gestural communication that was once available to both hearing and deaf members of a community distills into increasingly conventionalized and lexicalized forms.

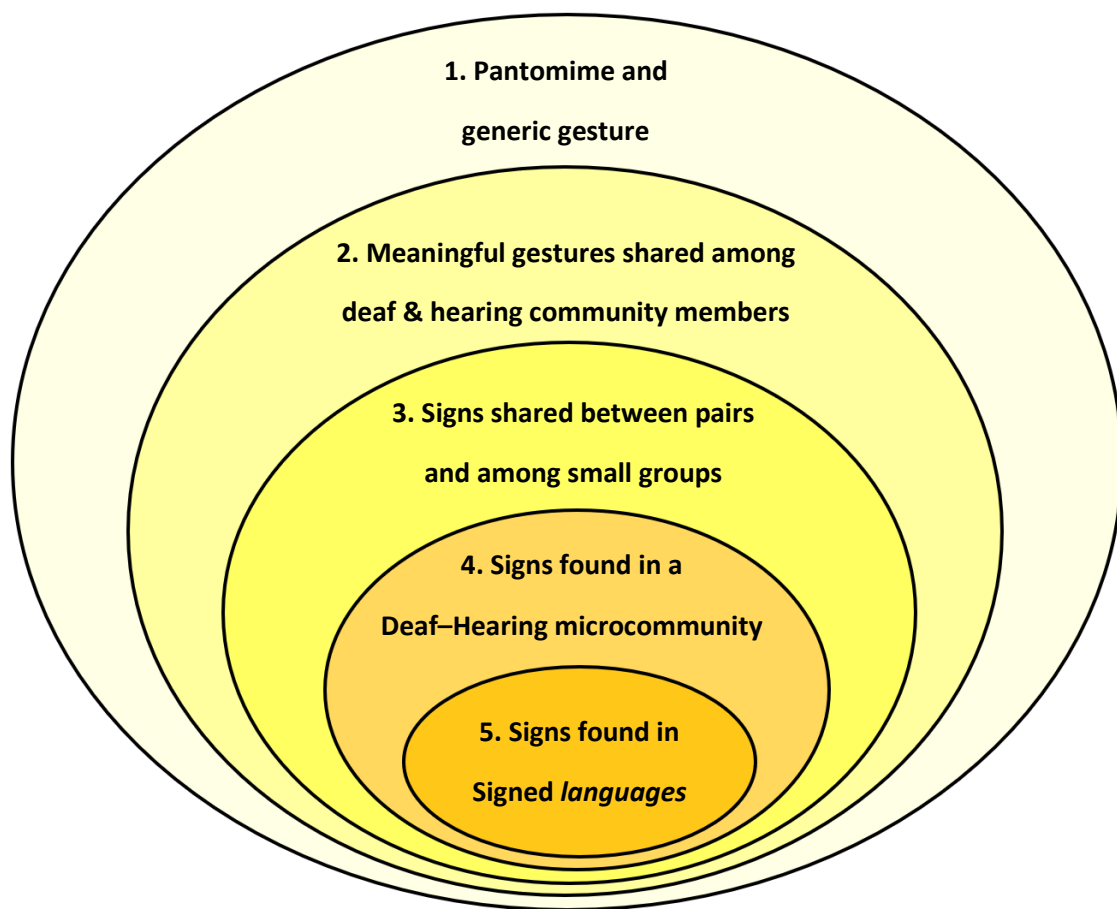


Figure 11. Deaf–Hearing Gesture–Sign Hierarchy [based on Johnston and Schembri (1999)]

With this kind of titration, signs grow ever more distant from their less potent but more generally accessible roots. This study has primarily focused on the first three levels of deaf–hearing strategies, namely 1) outermost and palest mimetic imitation or pointing to present referents, to 2) behaviors in general use, such as head movements and the index-finger or open-handed negation, onto 3) conventionalized and/or reduced forms such as “sleeps” and “snowfall cycles.” These co-created features feed into 4) intergenerational and/or extended sociolinguistic circles among a critical mass of deaf and hearing signers, and continue to augment the repertoire of 5) natural signed languages, as the necessity arises.

Hearing signers could not keep pace with those who used and continued to refine the system as a primary form of communication—like the rough gestures of the mothers in Feldman et al (1978) that were “primitive and inept” (p. 377) compared with their children’s innovations and improvements. This may be an ongoing dynamism in all signing communities, where there are inevitably “many more nonnative signers than native signers” and natives can expect to have more “non-natives as their communication partners” (Van Herreweghe & Vermeerbergen, 2012, p. 1037). This perpetual influx of hybrids may influence word order and other incursions from the majority spoken language system, which though natives may find acceptable or even accommodate in response, do not use during “when signing with to another native language user” (p. 1038).

If culture functions as the living catalog and tutor of socially-constructed reality, language is the “long-term memory” (Seleskovitch, 1992, p. 9) within individual and “collective memories” (C. Padden, 1990, p. 190). The distant contributions of hearing people upon the Deaf commons lay outside of that, in pre-cultural, pre-memory, and the fragments presented above offer a rhetorical map to recover that lost record. Chapters Four through Six will continue to paint a well-sourced picture of the foundations and early practices of SLIs through vigilant use of primary materials. While some of the examples will feature homesigns or contrived gestures born of necessity, they will be structured in terms of legal precedents, features of the interpreted interaction, and the work of native deaf interpreters. Though British and American Sign Language users hold many experiences in common, they do not enjoy a mutually intelligible or even adequately overlapping linguistic pedigree, but interpreters from those respective communities share not only a spoken language, but a direct connection in the evolution of their role.

CHAPTER FOUR: HEARING INTERPRETER DATA

“...if his dialect of gestures is sufficiently copious and precise, to give evidence in a court of justice, proper precautions [must be] taken that the interpreters who accompany him before the attesting notary or magistrate are faithful, competent and disinterested.”¹⁶

The previous chapter proposed a collective past for hearing signers that drew upon gestural vocabularies used in spoken-language communities, and further refined visual communication strategies through interactions with individual and small groups of deaf signers. As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, as schools for deaf children proliferated throughout the nineteenth century and created pockets of deaf and hearing signers, legal and social patterns which had existed for centuries began to coalesce into the expectation that bilingual–bimodals act as interpreters in public spaces. In continuation of Leahy (2015a), legal settings provide the best documented accounts of the setting and details of interpreted interactions. This chapter confines the discussion to practical themes with ample evidence and connection to how the work is done today, demonstrating how the SLI is positioned within the legal system (recusals and compulsion), within the Deaf community (dual roles and personal–professional relationships), and among one another (team interpreting).

In this chapter, I describe the functions and roles of SLIs in the ongoing

¹⁶ Peet, H. (1856). On the legal rights & responsibilities of the deaf and dumb. *American Journal of Insanity*, 13(2), 169.

dataset, present a snapshot of the prevalence of community interpreting in one UK locality, then show early evidence of SLIs being paid as compared to volunteerism, as a function of professional identity, and both as a fee and as reimbursement for expenses following a court case. From the many possible features of legal work, four are supported with evidence: recusals, compulsion, teacher–interpreters and working as an interpreting team.

Accounts of hearing interpreters working with DPs in Anglo–American courts are scanty until the mid-nineteenth century, when legal protocols and social structures accelerated demand among deaf people, and the prevalence of hearing signers increased the availability of services. The data do not yet draw clear patterns and themes in all categories, but taken together, broadly form a growing catalog of evidence containing a wide variety of circumstances. Table Two below contains four individual lists of relevant features of the DP, venue, interpreter, and common law found in the dataset, which occur in various combinations:

Table 2. Elements of UK and US Cases.

Roles of Deaf Party	Matters	Interpreter Principles	Legal Principles
Accused	Civil	Addressed Directly	Agency/Standing
Applicant	Competency	Deaf Intermediary	In/Capacity
Complainant	Contract	Expert Testimony	Contract
Decedent	Coroner	Familiar to DP	Execution
Defendant	Criminal	Gesture	Inheritance
Deponent	Ecclesiastical	Hearing Understand	Leniency/Waiver
Donor	Inheritance	Interpreter Allowed	Pleading
Ecclesiastical	Marriage	Miscommunication	Sentence
Heir	Prison	Monitor	Standing Mute
Institutionalized	Property	Neutrality	Swearing to Oath
Landowner	Taxes	No Interpreter	Testimony
Legal Agent	Testamentary	Oath Text	

Marriage	Wardship	Payment
Minor	Welfare	Prochein Amy
Parishioner		Proxy
Party in a Contract		Recusal
Patient		Reporting/3rd Person
Plaintiff		Same as Spoken
Prisoner		Signing
Spouse		Relays
Subject of Hearing		Swear DP Understands
Taxpayer		Teaming
Testator		Voir Dire
Victim		
Ward		
Witness		

Building upon foundational concepts of the interpreter oath and the expectation to deliver expert opinion on the fitness of the DP as found in Leahy (2015a), this chapter will present selected cases from the UK and US that reveal bases of sign language interpreting that contemporary practitioners will recognize—some generally applicable, and others more specific to legal venues. First, I present a small amount of quantitative data on the prevalence of signed language interpreting in Irish courts and among missionaries in the English Midlands, stretching into the twentieth century, and describe the transition of status from volunteer avocation to a paid occupation during that time. I will then introduce cases that demonstrate selected features of the named in Table Two above where there are adequate examples and sufficient context to warrant inclusion. Within those items, it remains difficult to assess the actual interpretations produced by historical HIs; however, certain concepts are observable in the accounts. These include the expectation of payment, compulsion by the court vs. the right to recuse oneself from interpreting, dual-role teacher–interpreters, and teamed interpreting. Until the twentieth century, all HIs operated in a

personal and professional capacity; this chapter explores that balance as family members, friends, clergy and teachers take on the interpreter role, with specific attention devoted to the latter, as mentioned. Examples that demonstrate the foundational and largely unrecognized work of historical intermediaries in the UK and US who were themselves deaf will be covered in Chapters Five and Six.

Prevalence

While nineteenth and early twentieth century data from the Irish legal system might technically be counted as British, and therefore within the scope of my research, I defer to the analysis in an upcoming doctoral thesis covering deaf people in Irish legal and social institutions (Leonard, Forthcoming). The focus on Ireland offers a well-bounded picture that approaches a corpus, with an outstanding meticulousness that includes the majority of available material—this would be difficult if not impossible to achieve within the broad geographic scope of this study. Quantitative findings that *may* be roughly applicable to HIs in the UK and US include summaries of the prevalence and types of legal settings and characteristics of interpreters 1816–1924:

Table 3. Irish Cases Admitting an Interpreter, by Category of Court, 1816–1924.

Type of Court	Number of cases	Interpreter Present	Percentage
Superior / High	8	5	63%
Assizes	74	43	58%
Dublin City Commission	12	5	42%
Quarter Sessions	53	16	30%
City Recorders	29	10	34%
Petty Sessions	294	65	22%
Town / City Police	179	41	23%

(Leonard, Forthcoming)

These Irish data confirm an observable pattern in other jurisdictions and in more contemporary settings of “the higher the court, the higher the percentage of occasions where interpreters are reported to have been used” (Leonard, Forthcoming).

Unfortunately, it also skews surviving material away from the more commonly-occurring lower jurisdictional matters, which may appear in newspaper accounts, but are less likely to have created or preserved primary records.

I have compiled another approximation of the prevalence of community and courtroom interpreting in the UK from 1893–1933, from the number of times an interpreter was called from a particular religious/social services organization within the Leeds area. Unlike many annual reports from similar groups throughout the UK, the Leeds United (later “Incorporated”) Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb included a tabulation of “public events” to which they dispatched hearing interpreters. These assignments included religious and social gatherings with a hearing guest speaker, baptismal and marriage sacraments, interments, and police or court matters. In other areas where lay or ordained workers did *not* have the ability to effectively interpret, there were requests for people with such skills to be posted to those districts. One such recruitment effort in Birmingham decades earlier than the Leeds data published one of the first known advertisements for an interpreter position: “Wanted a hearing and speaking Missionary, well able to interpret in the Finger and Sign Language to an adult congregation” (Brown, 1877). Joseph Moreton responded, and six months later, he had been awarded the missionary–interpreter post (“Summary: Birmingham,” 1877). He later transferred to Leeds and led the work at the very Institution that created these records.

It is difficult to estimate the deaf signing population within the Leeds catchment area, but according to the same source, the number of persons registered to the United Institution grew from about 250 to 350 during this period. Figure 12 below is drawn from 17 available *Reports of the Leeds United/Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb* where the figures were published for years shown.¹⁷

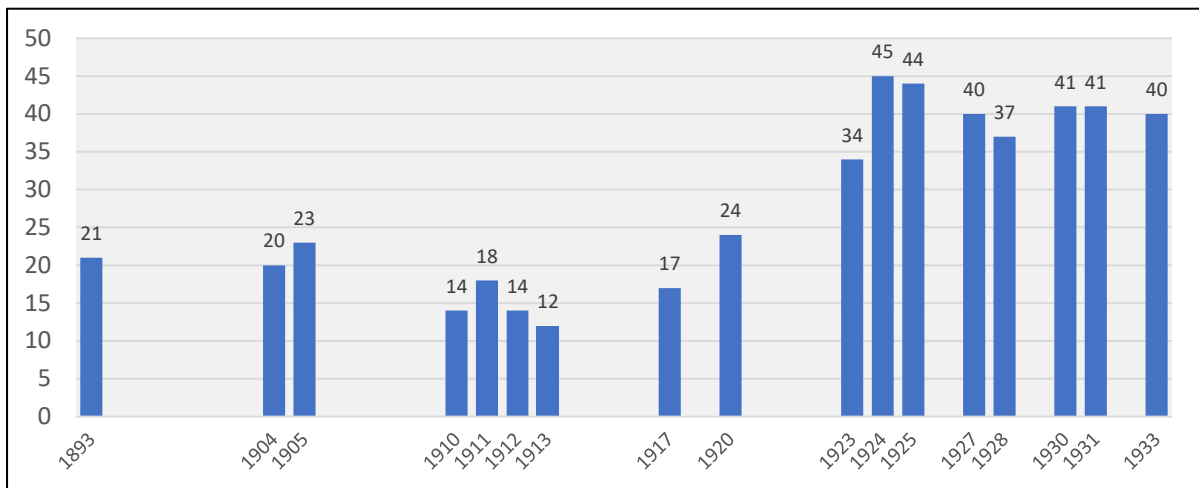


Figure 12. Interpreted Events by Leeds Institution Staff 1893–1933.

While one cannot confirm these trends are reflective of community interpreting throughout Britain during the forty years of Leeds data, it is interesting given the only

¹⁷ (*The Fifty-Fifth Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1931; *The Fifty-First Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1927; *The Fifty-Fourth Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1930; *The Fifty-Second Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1928; *The Fifty-Seventh Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1933; *The Forty-Eighth Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1924; *The Forty-Fourth Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1920; *The Forty-Ninth Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1925; *The Forty-Seventh Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1923; *The Seventeenth Report of the Leeds United Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1893; *The Thirty-Fifth Report of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1911; *The Thirty-Fourth Report of the Leeds United Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1910; *The Thirty-Seventh Report of the Leeds United Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1913; *The Thirty-Sixth Report of the Leeds United Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1912; *The Twenty-Eighth Report of the Leeds United Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1904; *The Twenty-Ninth Report of the Leeds United Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb*, 1905)

such existing record originated within a city of middle range in both geographical location and size.

As deaf education proceeded apace, the encouragement of English literacy among DPs in the nineteenth century may have impacted whether a HI would be called upon at all. Leonard (Forthcoming) observed a sharp rise in Irish data “where the written word is used, exclusively or alongside sign language,” and reported that in 11 out of 95 cases where a DP chose or was compelled to write, “an interpreter was also present.” An apprenticeship dispute in the UK and a rape case in the US provide an interesting spectrum of how courts determined whether a DP responded in real time via writing. When one interpreter elected to communicate solely by fingerspelling to a deaf witness, the justice concluded that “the witness was able to write;” but had it been “a capital case,” he would have unquestioningly taken testimony via an interpreter. The 1827 opinion in the UK Court of Common Pleas that “when the witness can write, that is a more certain mode” (Carrington & Payne, 1829, p. 127), became a commonly-cited justification to augment or altogether replace the interpreter with real-time handwritten exchanges. By contrast, an 1830 sexual assault case heard in Litchfield County, Connecticut allowed that a DP who could “read and write, and communicate ideas imperfectly, by writing” may still “give evidence by signs, through the medium of an interpreter” (Day, 1853, p. 93). The latter was more remarkable for the allowance of a “confirmatory witness” to enter testimony that the victim had “committed to her, in writing” the same version of the facts as was communicated through the interpreter at trial (*ibid.*). The decision to forego writing with the victim, and admit evidence through the same medium—by way of a third party, no less—was objected to by the defense, but overruled on both counts.

Payment

Historical trends of volunteerism vs. compensation for interpreting services between hearing and deaf people continue to inform and complicate the profession today. In the past, individuals acted out of social bonds and adherence to cultural expectations, or felt compelled by a higher calling to serve deaf people. Less-nuanced statements used by way of brief introductions, that were never intended as historical research, have situated SLI solely from hearing “family members or friends...volunteering their time and skills” (Patrie, 1989, para. 2). It is true that until the mid-twentieth century, ad hoc interpreting was largely provided by “children of deaf parents, denominational workers, teachers of the deaf, friends, relatives, and others who were familiar with the language of signs,” and “[r]arely were they paid for their services,” with regular bookings or dedicated staff positions being “unheard of” (Levine, 1979, p. 1). Questions of how forms of in-kind and monetary payments are perceived, negotiated, and transacted, and whether interpreters as a category have transitioned from an occupational function to a truly professional role (e.g., Braden, 1985; Hanson, 1978; Lightfoot, 2004) could fill a separate study. For the purposes of this chapter, I first offer a brief sketch of relatively recent twentieth-century developments. This will be followed by more historically distant evidence of a growing expectation that interpreters be properly and fairly paid. This contradicts the widespread assumption that all interpreting services prior to the mid-twentieth century movements toward professionalization were uncompensated monetarily, and done by HIs in service of social and cultural repayment to deaf people as a marginalized class. On the strength of an increasingly organized worldwide SLI community of practice, the World Federation of the Deaf Commission on Psychology resolved in 1975 that “Interpreters of sign language should in all ways be treated like all other interpreters,

in regard to confidentiality, payment, and like matters” (referenced in Ingram, 1977, p. 65).

Volunteerism

Like the translator tradition among missionaries in general “who had acquired their knowledge of non-European languages for the express purpose of spreading the Gospel” (Delisle & Woodsworth, 1995, p. 176), ordained and later also lay clergy have taken a secondary role as interpreters among deaf people for centuries. Since the nineteenth century, professional and lay missionaries in the UK have seen interpreting as a natural extension of their liturgical work (e.g., “A deaf and dumb service,” 1869). This extended to pastoral and social services, such as employment assistance coupled with the provision of “an interpreter in case of dispute or misunderstanding” (*The Liverpool Adult Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society Report*, 1878, p. 4). Such interpreters retained the authority and salary of their primary profession, while bifurcating their role into an ancillary if not wholly voluntary interpreting function. In the UK, the Joint Examination Board was founded in 1929, and began awarding the first credential for lay and professional workers among deaf people in 1930 (The Joint Examination Board of the Central Advisory Council for the Spiritual Care of the Deaf and Dumb & The Council of Church Missioners to the Deaf and Dumb, 1945). Training for the diploma was delivered with the expectation that graduates acquire “proficiency both in the use and in the reading of finger-spelling and gestures” (The Joint Examination Board, 1931) and would function as fluent signers in order to give sermons in BSL and be effective interpreters in church and community. As the first cohort began the course at the beginning of 1929, a deaf missionary at the National Institute for the Deaf initiated the publication of an interpreter directory:

Mr. McDougall pointed out the necessity for expert interpreters in various contingencies in which deaf persons might be involved. He suggested that a list of persons competent for this service should be formed and that it should be available to any authority or person who might need such assistance.

(National Institute for the Deaf, 12 Mar 1929)

After a period of investigation and consultation with experts, the matter of vetting and qualification was referred to the missionaries' own organization later that year (National Institute for the Deaf, 10 Dec 1929). As graduates completed the program, the first national directory of screened BSL interpreters was distributed (National Institute for the Deaf & British Deaf and Dumb Association, 1930). Leahy (2018) found that this resource may have been created in response to a decades-long pattern of police officers functioning as unqualified interpreters with deaf parties in UK courts. This could be due to the persistent assumption that "[i]n criminal cases the duty falls on the police officers concerned" ("Court Interpreter Sometimes Scarce," 1958).

History has not looked entirely favorably upon the ordained clergy and lay welfare officers, and "in recent years it has become common to criticise the work of the Missioners as being paternalistic" (Simpson, 2007, p. 211). In retrospect they are viewed as having been "mostly hearing, who were all-powerful and all-knowing" (Dimmock, 1993, p. 51). One deaf filmmaker has resisted the received "cliché idea" that "deaf people of the past...were meek, submissive, disempowered and just followed a path prescribed by the missionary," believing instead this to be a "myth since deaf people were strong characters" in their own right (McGilp, 2017). There is much more to be done in this area, which warrants further study and a more nuanced analysis to reconcile lay and archival sources, and recent recollections with long-forgotten evidence.

One of the most well-known and self-reflective ASL interpreters of the twentieth century was Lou Fant (1931–2001), who like several of his UK counterparts, was both a church worker and the son of a deaf preacher. He recalled that as a young man in the 1940s, interpreting was largely an unpaid service. People filling that role did not consider themselves interpreters *per se*, so volunteered as a favor to the less fortunate who needed care but could not afford to pay; in his case, he also felt a sense of duty to family, and the unspoken altruistic tradition within the Deaf-World (Fant, 1997). The demand inevitably advanced from interpersonal interactions to large-scale meetings from the local to international level. Cokely (2005) observed that spoken-language practitioners working at the same conferences were comparatively “well compensated” under prevailing professional standards, but signed language corps were expected to work pro-bono as their duly-incurred “contribution” (p. 5).

The memory of interpreters as virtuous volunteers is still very fresh in the profession’s collective consciousness. Tom Anderson, a prominent deaf leader in the US saw the danger in that social contract at professional conventions for teachers of the deaf:

...our young hearing friends are “put on the spot” literally, with no other reward than casual thanks. Convention officials...expect to find ability among a group of young people who know they should not admit this ability, and who actually are penalized at conventions for the admission. I have seen interpreters, soaked in perspiration after rendering an address, forced to return to their hotel for a bath and a change of clothing...The sensible course would be to provide a team of expert interpreters, and pay them well for a service which is difficult to render. (1938, p. 128)

Professional Identity

In the US, Sarah Woodside (1844–1909) was perhaps the first person named on an official document as holding the occupation of sign language interpreter, though her work was likely unpaid. She had five deaf older brothers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1850), and became the primary interpreter for a Reformed Presbyterian congregation of deaf people in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Acheson, 1909). Unfortunately, Sarah did not refer to herself on this piece of evidence, as it was her death certificate. The informant validated her lifelong labors, and reported her occupation as “Deaf-Mute Interpreter” (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1909).

Of the 286 field workers who gathered data for Martens (1937) study of occupations of deaf people begun in 1934, five individuals or 1.7% of the total cohort of 286 who were likely “predominantly women” (p. 5) reported their previous occupation listed “interpreter” (p. 6). There was no indication whether they had been compensated, or a dedicated pro bono community resource. It is tempting to suppose one of the individuals who requested to be documented as a working interpreter was Nellie Gillespie Shawl (b. 1896), who was the first known interpreter to have self-reported it as a *paid* occupation. On her 1920 marriage application, she documented herself as a “Mute Interpreter” (Probate Division, 1920) employed at the Goodyear Tire and Rubber plant. In her supervisory role over “welfare and educational work” among the hundreds of deaf automotive industry workers, she gained the reputation of a “shock absorber” between them and their hearing colleagues (“Altho She Can Speak and Hear, Akron Girl Gives Life to Welfare of Mutes,” 1919).

Dorothy Marsden (1906–1984) was born into a signing family the year before Woodside died, and as the second known person to acknowledge employment as an

interpreter, may have been numbered with Gillespie among the 5 field workers recruited in 1934. By 1933, she had been interpreting “finger language” regularly in the Los Angeles County Court (“Press Photo #A25823,” 1933). On the 1940 Census, she listed herself as a private practice “Court Interpreter” who had worked the equivalent of 30 full-time weeks in 1939 (Bureau of the Census, 1940). Dorothy was still practicing during the initial move to professionalization (*Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Meeting: Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf, Riverside, California, April 12-17, 1964*, 1964), but there is little evidence she carried on after entering her sixties. This named reference places her in firm affiliation to San Fernando Valley State College, where the Leadership Training program hired Elizabeth Gesner (1897–1964) as the first interpreter attached to a center housed in a postsecondary institution in 1964, and Faye Wilkie (1918–2016) followed closely behind as the first staff interpreter for deaf students attending classes at a US university in 1965 (Jones, 1988).

Youngs (1965) acknowledged that as interpreting became “more and more recognized as a professional service,” the resulting discussion of “matter of fees” was unavoidable (p. 55). The original Code of Ethics of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Payment was of two minds concerning community interpreting, indicative of the volunteer and paid practices among the membership and the shifting trends at the time. In the case of legal interpreting, there was a firm expectation of payment:

The interpreter shall use discretion in the matter of accepting compensation for services and be willing to provide services in situations where funds are not available. Arrangements should be made on a professional basis for adequate remuneration in court cases comparable to that provided for interpreters of foreign languages. (Quigley & Youngs, 1965, p. 10)

Shortly after RID was founded in the US, leaders recognized that “different states have varying economic standards resulting in varying concepts of salaries,” and deemed it “not realistic to have a rigid national fee schedule” (Pimentel, 1969, p. 59); this remains true today. According to Ingram (1977b), RID may have overstepped antitrust law through publishing a suggested “minimum fee schedule” (p. 59) in an attempt to wrest some predictability for a vast and varied interpreting market. Discussions of the “two-hour minimum,” and “unethical scabbing” to undercut “commonly accepted rates” (Ingram, 1977b, p. 72) are still topics of strenuous debate, and interpreting communities matured to the point of ratified codes of conduct generally include prudent business practices in the document.

Percy Corformat (1914–1990), who was raised during this changing expectation by deaf BSL-using parents, may have been the first person specifically employed and designated as an interpreter in that language community. Fortunately, he left a detailed memoir, and reported:

In 1938 I was offered a post that was not advertised at all. My friends thought it my kind of work—an interpreter—described as a “police court interpreter” but likely to be called upon for any interpreting situation throughout London and sometimes elsewhere. (Corformat, 1990, p. 67)

Fees in Courts

Similarly, paid interpreter posts in the twentieth century can point to the earlier recognition of SLI work in legal venues, where such skills were first compensated. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1867 authorized courts in Great Britain discretion in paying defense witness fees, considered “reasonable and sufficient to compensate such witnesses for the expenses, trouble, and loss of time” (Glen et al.,

1887, p. 488). Master of the Rolls Lloyd Kenyon recognized this standing practice in the time of George III, when “All courts suffered the payment of witnesses, as a compensation for their trouble” (“Proceedings Related to the Westminster Scrutiny,” 1785). In 1905, the UK Home Office was sent what may be the first list of interpreters qualified to work with DPs in legal settings, though it was limited to the greater London area. Their response went so far as to draft “ordinary interpreters’ fees” for the courts in the amount of “7/6 for the first case, and 5/- for any subsequent case on the same day” (Gilby, 1905).

In the US, allowance and amount of witness fees seem to be largely locally-governed decisions. Macy (1948) includes a lengthy section on dealing with deaf parties and interpreters, and advised:

As to payment of the interpreter where no statutory provision is made, undoubtedly he is entitled to witness' fees; and if the court is one of general jurisdiction, whose expenses in general are directed to be paid by the county, he may be allowed reasonable compensation. But where the court is one of limited jurisdiction, or where the expenses which it may allow and charge to the county are detailed by statute, he must usually look to the parties for his charges as in the case of any other expert witness. (Macy, 1948, pp. 929–930)

By 1966, the US *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure* was amended by Rule 43(f), which authorized “the court to appoint interpreters (including interpreters for the deaf), to fix the compensation, and to direct its payment and ultimate taxation as costs” (Advisory Committee on Civil Rules, 1966). While such guidance was seen as forging procedural and budgetary expectations to compensate interpreters for deaf parties, such rules did not initiate the practice.

In addition to the existence of stated policy for interpreters payment in the UK and US, there is evidence that it was indeed an occasional practice in the nineteenth century. What follows is a selected list of UK and US cases where interpreters were covered by witness fees, compensated for their services, or had expenses reimbursed:

1. In 1830, senior instructor from the American School for the Deaf William W. Turner was present for a four-day trial with a young deaf woman who accused an older hearing man of sexual assault. The Litchfield, Connecticut County Superior Court paid him \$9.00 (Litchfield County, Connecticut Superior Court, 1830a). A further description of this trial is given later in this chapter.
2. In 1871, a Miss Briscoe interpreted for a deaf victim of theft in a borough court in greater Manchester, UK. The “magistrates granted Miss Briscoe her [unspecified] expenses” (“Robbing a Mute,” 1871). The amount may remain a mystery, as lower jurisdictions do not typically retain such records.
3. William Wilson and John Parker, were paid for interpreting an assize trial in 1876 for a DP accused of murder. To Jackson (1997), the amount was £40, which seems outlandish at the time, but a marginalia note in the court

Cooper £40 to pres & give ev
 Wilson
 Humpage
 Bristol
 Caldicott
 Robinson
 Miley
 Parker

} £40 ea to give ev
 (Wm Assizes)

Figure 13. Payments for Todd (Warwickshire Assizes: Samuel Todd, 1876)

records includes both names in a list of witnesses who were paid, and it appears to indicate that amount:

4. While not a strictly legal case, the closed-door inquiry concerning the misconduct of members of the Board of Trustees of the Wisconsin Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb specifically itemized “interpreter’s fees” among the expense list (Wisconsin State Board of Charities and Reform, 1879, p. 18). The principal of the school, Louis Henry Jenkins was paid \$20 for his services over several days, and possibly traveled to other locations to allow investigators to interview additional witnesses.
5. In his memoirs, Rev. Frederick W. G. Gilby (1865–1949) recalls his first interpreting experience outside of his deaf parents. It was for a London Crown Court case¹⁸ that occurred roughly between 1880–1884, and he was given half a crown (Gilby, 1937, p. 45).

Features of Cases

Leahy (2015a) set forth the earliest milestones of the signed language interpreter role under common law, including the first-known instances to resemble contemporary practice, mentioning a signing deaf party and a sworn hearing intermediary specifically referred to as an interpreter: *Ferrers* in 1720 in the UK (Cooke, 1742) and *Hill* in 1811 in the US (Lincoln County Maine, 1811). The case which created the first widely-cited precedent to admit a HI came as a result of a 1786 trial at the London Central Criminal Court, also known as the Old Bailey (Leahy, 2016). During a larceny trial for which a deaf man was the prosecution’s main

¹⁸ This matter may have been *O'Brien v. Blackwall*—follow-up research pending when travel resumes.

witness, his sister came forward as the interpreter and passed a voir dire examination so adversarial, that it demonstrated the legitimacy of the interpreter role and oath to the sitting judge, and “Ruston’s Case” (Leach, 1789) has since been cited in legal reference texts: “A witness, though deaf and dumb, may be sworn and give his testimony for felony, if intelligence can be conveyed to, and received from him by means of signs and tokens” (p. 347). In the history of interpreting with deaf parties in common law courts, *Ruston* can be viewed as an opening argument that inaugurated what a contemporary SLI would recognize as professional practice. The citation was rephrased more broadly in Highmore (1822) to read that a DP “of sense to have intelligence conveyed to him, may be a witness, and give his evidence by signs, through' the medium of an interpreter” (p. 84).

As indexes and electronic searches become more refined, additional data from other counties, colonies, states, and common law nations are certain to expand our understanding of the origins and patterns of HIs. This chapter by no means offers an exhaustive list of available data, but these selections that offer sufficient detail to make analyses or open investigative leads to additional insights. One of the first unambiguous instances occurred in 1721 when a Mrs. Bull accompanied her unnamed husband to remit a real estate fine with a Mr. Keep. While consulting the original remembrance rolls is a straightforward procedure at the National Archives of the UK, my attempts over several years to decipher the prothonotary’s stylized legal paleography has still not located the exact entry. The handwritten records were digested and typeset some decades later, and printed in a more accessible format:

A fine was to be acknowledged by a deaf and dumb person; and upon his wife's making it appear to the Court that she could converse with him by signs, and give evident proof of his consent to what was proposed; and which was

done to the satisfaction of the Court; the fine was ordered to pass. (Cooke, 1742, p. 23)

This clerk also transcribed an earlier Ferrers (Court of Chancery, 1718) that introduced a similar point of law permitting DPs to appear for themselves, and cross-referenced the two. The Bulls' matter repeats the framework of expert testimony from the hearing intermediary, mutual comprehension between the DP and interpreter, and firm consent to the arrangement as was shown in Ferrers. No histories of signed language interpreting, and relatively few for Deaf communities include primary archival research that pierces the eighteenth century. Following the completion of this thesis, I will continue the search for more definitive details about the life and work of figures such as Mrs. Bull and others.

Recusal

A simple search of *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online* reveals four examples prior to the seminal *Ruston* 1786 case. The earliest, though interpretation did not take place, is interesting from the perspective of the would-be interpreter. In 1725, John Hewitt was called to appear in a grand larceny case involving his deaf co-worker ("Trial of George Armstrong," 1725). Only a few years after Ferrers and Bull were allowed to make their property transactions accompanied by an interpreter, the sitting Justice in *Armstrong* matter-of-factly required the same protocol in a criminal matter:

The Court made Enquiry, if the Prisoner had any Friend or Relation by whom he could in any manner convey or receive Idea's of the Matter in Question?

John Hewit depos'd, that he was the Prisoner's Fellow-Workman, and they understood one another well enough in Rope-making, but could not

pretend to be certain of his Meaning in such a Case as this. (“Trial of George Armstrong,” 1725)

Because Hewit recused himself and was not compelled to act in the role of interpreter on that occasion, he was not named as an official interpreter of record, and cannot be strictly regarded as such, but earned due attention for two reasons. Firstly, the Justice immediately recognized that due process would be served for a signing deaf defendant only through the services of someone familiar to them. After Armstrong’s preliminary hearing determined he was legitimately deaf and not merely obstinately mute, there was no wrangling about the DP’s cognitive or linguistic limitations, or the legality or appropriateness of admitting an intermediary to communicate with him.

Secondly, Hewit declined. In modern practice, many sign language interpreters are oblivious to their own inadequacies, or are coerced into accepting assignments above their abilities. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (2005) in the US codified against these aspects of human nature, with Tenet 2.0 of the Code of Professional Conduct, which asserts, “Interpreters accept assignments using discretion with regard to skill, communication mode, setting, and consumer needs.” In the UK, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters (2014) issued an even more direct injunction to “not accept an assignment which is beyond your competence.”

Any working interpreter today would respect John Hewit for his own difficult decision. He stood before the Justice who specifically requested his attendance, and declared that while comfortable discussing the finer points of fibers, spinning and braiding in the gestural system Armstrong shared with him, and perhaps even confident he could render the Court’s spoken English into a faithful translation, he

“could not pretend to be certain of his Meaning in such a Case” as a defendant within the criminal justice system. Stokoe (1980) granted that even today, if the deaf audience can receive a more English-based transliteration, rendering from true ASL into grammatical English may be the more difficult half of the equation:

Moreover, interpreters, who very fluently encode the words of a speaker they are listening to, find it very difficult and anything but fluent to watch a signer and to put the Sign output into spoken English—the latter task is genuine translating, the former is secondary encoding. Much of the difference in difficulty for the simultaneous interpreter arises in this system difference. (p. 20)

Hewit therefore grasped the gravity of this ethical dilemma, and erred on the side of admitting the task was beyond him, or as Morgan (1974) conceded, “a good interpreter will know when it is better *not* to interpret (p. 31).

The data reveal another recusal in Ireland more than a century after *Armstrong*, though the circumstances were a far more wrenching failure of due process. The complaining DP accused a hearing man of rape, and her aunt and brother “admitted that though they knew many of her signs, there were many they did not know, and they accordingly refused to swear” (“Rape,” 1844). After the Court compelled Catherine Goulding and Patrick Buckley to interpret without an oath, the resulting attempts made it “impossible to proceed further” (“Sentencing the Prisoners,” 1844). Government counsel suggested a *nolle prosequi*, to which the judge consented, and the defendant was released.

Compulsion

A DP appeared at the Old Bailey in London in 1796—not merely as a witness,

but as the defendant. Sarah Burrows, the mother of the accused accompanied her uneducated teenaged son William on his first of two theft cases (“Trial of William Burrams,” 1796). It must be noted that the family surname was misrecorded and carried down as “Burrams” in court and gaol (Home Office, Ministry of Security, 1796) records though the more likely correct spelling was “Burrows” as in related contemporaneous records such as the Derby Mercury account (“Old Bailey,” 1796) and a recidivist charge from 1801 (Home Office, Ministry of Security, 1801; “Trial of William Burrows,” 1801). Sarah’s perfunctory voir dire was conducted by Lord Chief Baron Archibald MacDonald, and perhaps thanks to *Ruston*, was succinct and resolved without complication or complaint:

Sarah: I am the mother of the prisoner; he was born deaf and dumb.

Court: You can make him understand you by signs?

Sarah: Yes; I asked him about the watch, and he told me he did not steal it.

Court: He can write?

Sarah: He writes from a copy, but he never writes his name right.

Following this exchange, the jury stood convinced that William was indeed deaf, Sarah was sworn in, and the trial proceeded with no dithering as to the DP’s mental fitness, language, or the impartiality and validity of the interpreter. Neither was there any weight given to her latent interpretation of an *ex parte* conversation she held with her son regarding his innocence. However, the above examination by court personnel exemplifies a theme throughout the data wherein interpreters submit to an oath that they *guarantee* the DP’s understanding. Though Justice Heath rejected such a standard, assuring Martha Ruston to “not interpret farther than you know” (“Trial of William Bartlett,” 1786) with her brother as prosecutorial witness, the

authority overseeing this trial subscribed to a much different philosophy for a deaf defendant.

A newspaper article supplemented the *Burrows* account with an alternate version of the events. Again the sitting justice exerts control over the interpreting process, demanding sure and transparent communication:

The Chief Baron then called the mother up, and told her he was informed that she could make the prisoner understand what was going on in Court; if so, she should communicate to him in the way she was accustomed to do. She should make known to the prisoner what the witness said, as the Judge should tell her. (“Trial of William Burrams,” 1796)

If Sarah feared there would be no room for interpreter error in her son’s trial, then the balance of her exchange with MacDonald as documented by the reporter confirmed that fact:

Could she make him understand? She answered, “No, Sir, I cannot.” “You had better try to explain to him by your manner,” said the learned Judge, “if you can, for if you cannot, he must remain in jail for ever. I will tell you what to say to him, and do your best to make him understand what I shall tell you.” The mother said she would, and then she was sworn to interpret to the best of her skill and understanding. (“Old Bailey,” 1796)

While this should be read with a tempered view of the melodramatic portrayal, an informal survey of working interpreters results in a split opinion of this judge’s intent: optimistic readers believe the judge was acting in good faith to accommodate the interpreter, and the more jaundiced give it a threatening read. In ways similar to the Philips (1985) description of Judges’ transformation of written text to verbal

expansion, clarification and simplification to language and culture learners who have to navigate the plea process, the Old Bailey account implicates the court in a kind of intermediary translation, in order for the overwhelmed SLI to have a useable English source. The Chief Baron elevated due process over the interpreting process, ensuring Sarah's role supported a fidelity to common law principles, and she could expect some, albeit much less, reciprocity to her task.

The account of actual witness testimony, hints toward a more positive view of MacDonald's rigor. After the prosecution witness recounted the theft at the silversmith shop on Christmas Eve, he seems to help Sarah navigate the information by prompting her:

The Chief Baron desired the mother to make the Prisoner understand this evidence, which he repeated to her. She did so; and he exhibited several gestures with a very quick motion, by which the mother understood him to say, that he did not run away with the watch. ("Old Bailey," 1796)

Finding the testimony of the shopkeeper's assistant unimpeachable, and believing William to be partially-literate in English, and therefore morally culpable, the Chief Baron advised the jury he would remit punishment with mercy if they found him guilty, which he was. William physically flinched "as if he understood the nature of it very well" ("Old Bailey," 1796) when his mother interpreted the sentence of a private whipping.

Teacher-Interpreters

As mentioned earlier, it was common for historical interpreters to be functioning as such in a secondary capacity to their profession as teachers of deaf children. At first, family, neighbors and friends who shared a successful

communication system with DPs would step into the interpreter role as dictated by judges; later, educators, clergy (such as those trained by the Joint Examination Board mentioned earlier), co-workers and other professionals leveraged the credibility of their primary role to lend a perception of authority and expertise to the interpreting task. The 1890 case of deaf defendant Samuel McClure illustrates well this transfer of the bases of SLI from the common law toward hearing people who worked within the deaf community. David Buxton, a teacher, missionary and frequent interpreter responded with a well-informed three-page letter to McClure's defense attorney (Buxton, 1890), who was unfamiliar with existing criminal procedure for a DP, and "sought advice from authorities in deaf education and social services, not the law" (Leonard & Leahy, 2016, p. 27). Buxton's involvement came at the recommendation of Francis Maginn, a deaf teacher and occasional DI who will be discussed briefly in the following chapter. Of the many possible additional examples, I have chosen to highlight three teachers for their positions at the beginning of a centuries-long trend.

Upon hearing that an accused deaf arsonist was put to trial without an interpreter and institutionalized in a mental asylum for life, Boston deaf leader William Swett railed against the lack of due process:

"We hold that no deaf-mute can be fairly tried for any crime in any court unless he has the benefit of an intelligent interpreter to translate to him and from him everything which passes between the court and the prisoner. Such interpreters, persons who are perfectly acquainted with both the mute language and the English, and can translate both ways with equal facility, can always be found and their services secured by application at any institution for the deaf and dumb, and one should always be sent for, no matter how small the offence, provided it requires a trial, otherwise the mute stands rather a poor

chance of having justice done him. (Swett, 1869)

Teachers who could sign were seen as ready interpreters because their daily task required rendering lesson material through signed instruction, and assigning translation tasks as a method of teaching written English (as will be discussed in Chapter Five). One such case occurred at Westminster, though the DP travelled in from elsewhere. Lady Mary O'Bryen, Countess of Inchiquin resided at Rostellan Castle on the family estate in County Cork, Ireland ("National Illustrations–Part II," 1847) and she appeared in the Court of Common Pleas in February 1753 to ratify the transfer of some entailed family lands in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire at the time of her marriage. O'Bryen was born deaf and did not speak, but as a privileged member of the peerage, she would have enjoyed the advantage of private tutoring before education was generally available to the majority of deaf people.

To initiate the transaction, the Chief Justice John Willes "wrote down a Question, as to her Consent" to turn the lands over to the prospective buyers. In addition to that effort to communicate directly with her, the abstract of the transcript mentions that a Henry Barker was also sworn, and "explained the Question to her by Signs, which she answered by Signs" (Barnes, 1772, p. 168). This was actually Henry Baker (1698–1774), a named witness to the signatures in original related documents (Papers of Bradwell Grove Estate, 1753). Baker was a successful teacher and speech and language therapist to deaf children of wealthy families (Henderson, 1885) including Lady Mary and her younger sister Anne, who were his sixth and seventh pupils, having begun instruction in 1730 aged eight and seven respectively (W. Baker, n.d.). Baker was not specifically referred to as an interpreter, but obviously performed the functions typical to that role while under oath. Though the girls' father would have

engaged Baker to train their *voices* thirty years prior, it appears Lady Mary did not have intelligible speech, and the manuscript clearly describes a *signed* exchange. He also offered expert testimony reinforcing the DP's understanding and intent, and “deposed that she understood the Question, and was willing” to agree to the transaction. Afterward, she “also under-wrote the Question with these Words, (viz.) *Yes, I do know and consent*” (italics in original) and added her signature. With this, the Court ratified the contract (Barnes, 1772, p. 168). The original legal document does bear her signature and seal (*Exemplification of a Common Recovery*, 1753), but unfortunately no marginalia or loose sheets containing the handwritten examination from the Court have survived.

Though Baker's instructional methods were kept secret during his lifetime, (Henderson, 1885), more is available now, including a notebook containing drills and writing samples from children who were taught immediately after the sisters. O'Bryen was presented as reasonably bilingual at the Common Pleas property transaction; she had a command of a type of signing—perhaps reinforced by regular interaction with Anne—and was also literate in English. Whether in Justice Willes' mind it was the direct written exchange or Baker's testimony that validated O'Bryen, the court official who digested the case annotated the entry that “Several similar have happened” through interpreters, citing Ferrers by Ralph Russell in 1720 and another tenancy hearing from 1749 (Barnes, 1772, pp. 168–169). Far from having “no lasting impact” as Lane (1984, p. 168) claimed, Baker was possibly the first teacher of the deaf to step into the interpreter role. This natural dual role remained a common source for educator–interpreters throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This pipeline grew, not only in the UK and US, but has become a pattern repeated throughout deaf educational systems worldwide to this day.

The first public institution for deaf children in the United States was founded in 1817 in Hartford, Connecticut. In June 1818, Celestia Bull (aged 11) was admitted as the 47th pupil to the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, having contracted spotted fever as a toddler (American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, 1833). She left school around 1824, and in February 1830 brought charges against an older hearing man, Thaddeus K. DeWolf for sexual assault that had occurred in June 1828. Her former teacher William W. Turner (1800–1887) “was sworn well & truly to interpret to the said Celestia Bull the questions & demands made by the court to her & her answers made to them” (Litchfield County, Connecticut Superior Court, 1830b). Turner had come to the school in 1821 (Draper, 1917), and was reported to have become a fluent and effective signer who used sign language in the chapel and the classroom (Macomber, 2014). He gave visiting lectures to early classes at Gallaudet College, and its first president Edward Miner Gallaudet recalled:

I remember one lecture given by him, especially—the most entertaining one at which I was ever present. He was clear, distinct, and full in all that he undertook to say. And from that time to this I have felt this power worthy of serious and earnest cultivation. (Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf and Dumb, 1887b, p. 187)

A former student added that indeed not only was his “sign-making...wonderful, and in the descriptive parts he was simply inimitable,” but President Gallaudet had also declared them “the finest specimens of sign-making he—and he was a connoisseur—had ever seen (Draper, 1917, p. 141).

Protocols of the time demanded that his interpreter *voir dire* procedure include being sworn as expert witness, and he testified “that said Celestia, had resided in said Institution about five years & was capable of relating facts correctly in that manner”

(ibid.). Turner had a large audience to a lengthy assignment, as a newspaper account reported “an unusual degree of interest and...a large concourse of people” which left the courthouse “crowded during the whole period” of the trial, which lasted from a “Wednesday afternoon...until Sunday night.” (*Litchfield Enquirer*, 1830, p. 3).

Naturally, the defense attempted to discredit Bull by objecting to an interpreter’s involvement, and demanded she enter *written* testimony, but after Turner’s claim “that she could read & write and communicate her ideas imperfectly by writing” (ibid.) she was permitted to be examined by the State, and cross-examined by De Wolf’s attorney. One of Turner’s assistant teachers (and a future principal of the school) reported decades later that these “questions on the cross-examination were put in signs through another teacher of the Asylum, Rev. Mr. Brinsmate, who had been induced to attend the trial on behalf of De Wolf” (H. Peet, 1856, p. 144).

The defense made strenuous efforts to impeach both her testimony and character, on the bases of waiting over a year to report the attack, and inconsistencies with her versions of events, which had been provided earlier in writing and secondly verbally, at trial under oath, through the interpreter. The prosecution countered with Celestia’s claim that she deferred making a report out of fear and intimidation, and further expert testimony from Turner, who opined:

...the Deaf & Dumb, generally, have a sense of inferiority to other people & as a class are easily intimidated, credulous, sincere, and submissive, and from his knowledge & acquaintance with said C[elestia], he believed her to possess that character. (Litchfield County, Connecticut Superior Court, 1830b)

The accused objected once more to this assessment, and after a guilty verdict, escalated both complaints about allowing Turner’s interpretation and expert opinion to the Connecticut supreme court, which granted the appeal. Unfortunately, the

Connecticut State Library has been unable to find records of a second trial in Litchfield County.

A second objection to Turner was initiated by Klein Valentine (1999), whose indictment of this episode included factual and citation errors, and analytical overreach. Editorial oversight allowed conclusions such as “William Turner did not respect deaf persons as his equal,” but labeled “each deaf individual psychologically maladjusted” (p. 64–65) to be drawn. Not only an anachronistic assessment of a historical figure by contemporary standards, this oversimplification failed to recognize Turner’s admiration of deaf people’s signing, which he deemed “as far as they use it...a perfect language, and for beauty and effective expression it is not surpassed by any language ever yet spoken or used” (Turner, 1853). Klein Valentine also conveniently omitted the context of Turner’s remarks, which were made in defense of an inconsistent and latent accusation of sexual assault, not as a blanket statement. I presented the original text and facts to six deaf women who work with deaf sexual assault survivors, and each one confirmed Turner’s expert opinion with their own, conceding that it can still be true, and given the time period, would have been an inescapable conclusion.

As a postscript to the work of educator–interpreters, Joseph Watson (1765–1829), first headmaster of the London Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb founded in Bermondsey, London, may have initiated organized public service interpreting. Though outside of a legal venue, it is valuable to note that two years after the first public institution for deaf children began operating, Thomas Godsall and James Newsome, churchwardens of St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey, collected rates from parishioners to fund construction of “a new Gallery on the South Side” (*Office Papers, Bermondsey, St Mary Magdalene, Church: Gallery*, 1794) of the church. This created

an enclosure “to form a pew for the school for the Deaf and Dumb” (Gray, 1976, p. 11), presumably due to the influence of Newsome, who served on the Asylum’s original committee (H. C. Mason, 1792, p. 2) and Watson, who would have been bringing his pupils to services and acting as their interpreter. Both men’s names appear on memorials inside the main area of the chapel today. Phillips (1841) includes a lithograph of the “South West view of St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey as it appeared in the year 1804,” that shows the second-story extension, though that original addition has been subsumed within more recent construction.

Team Interpreting

In the typical two-language environment, a pair of A–B language bilinguals work in tandem (unlike the Turner–Brinsmate scenario described in the previous section) to support and correct one another, interchanging from primary to secondary positions at regular intervals. When two practitioners work among three languages, the B–C relay will take as their source the target language produced by the first A–B target translation, in a coordinated but asynchronous process. Examples of hearing–deaf relay interpretation will be covered in Chapter Six, but one interesting case that predated them is appropriate to a discussion of HIs.

In 1843, Angelica Stiegelmeier (sources mistakenly give her surname as “Mester,” her sister’s married name) was a thirty-five-year-old (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880a) uneducated German-born deaf woman living in St. Charles, Missouri, US—then the Western frontier with a thriving German-speaking immigrant community. Her family was affiliated with a German Evangelical Union congregation led by pastor Philipp Heyer (Kribben, 1843¹⁹). It was alleged that the married Heyer

¹⁹ I am indebted to Erika Haak, volunteer consultant for German-language records at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, US, for assistance in reading this article.

groomed Stiegelmeier for an affair (both were likely in their mid-30s), then administered her an abortifacient to remove the consequences (“Trial for Libel,” 1843). When the matter was brought to court, the only available HI who could confidently communicate with the victim “by arbitrary signs” was her younger sister Frederika. She was 26 years old (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1850) did private work for leaders of the local synod as a seamstress, and had already advocated to them for her sister’s safety (Kribben, 1843). Frederika had been living in the United States for at least seven years (*St. Charles County, Missouri Marriage Register*, 1836), but her community and domestic life was such that she did not speak English. An unnamed German–English interpreter was conscripted from among the many bilinguals in the area, making it “necessary that she should interpret the signs of her sister, and her answers were afterward interpreted into English to the Court” (“Trial for Libel,” 1843). Frederika’s husband Gerhardt Mester brought an unsuccessful legal suit against Heyer for “disturbing a religious assembly” (*St. Charles County, Missouri Circuit Court*, 1843, pp. 338–339), but no original records have been located to add more details to this early example of trilingual interpreting with a DP.

Another example of a team of two HIs in the UK demonstrates a single shared spoken language, and two differing signing systems. Once the majority of DPs in a given area had been generally socialized among peers at school and into adulthood, a more standardized signed language was “the outcome of this community life” (Kyle et al., 1985, p. 23), and the interpreting task became more predictable. An illustration of the midpoint of that transition is an 1826 sexual assault matter heard in Scotland. Robert Kinniburgh, the principal of the Edinburgh Institution for the Deaf and Dumb worked with Robert Turnbull, a saddler from near the plaintiff’s home forty-five miles south, to assist the court in communicating with her (Shaw, 1832, p. 212). What the

reporter omitted was detailed by Sir Walter Scott, who was seated in the audience as a spectator: “Kinniburgh was sworn interpreter, and a neighbour who knew the conventional signs she invented for herself, as K. was supposed to understand the more general or natural signs common to such people” (Lockhart, 1837, p. 402).

In this case, the two men functioned unlike most interpreter teams. In this instance, the two interpreters shared the source or A language of English, not the intermediary or B step of BSL which Kinniburgh alone had, or the tenuous C quasi-language between Turnbull and the DP. The exact procedure is not clear, but it is likely they performed a kind of hybrid of the two models. They might have conferred in real time, detecting their respectively recognized signs from the complaining witness, and cobbling together a spoken English approximation. Kinniburgh, who had much more experience as an interpreter, may have taken the lead producing BSL in the variety most unmarked by English that he could manage, accepting feeds from Turnbull when there was a more effective variant in the DP’s repertoire.

At the time of the trial, deaf education and interpreter courtroom protocols had existed for decades, yet at this late stage, this culturally-estranged DP still needed more than an outside representative from the established community could deliver. Even so, there is no indication that Principal Kinniburgh, the presumed authority recognized by the sitting justice, felt in any way undermined or defensive about accepting assistance from a rural saddler. An experience a decade earlier that may have prepared him to welcome unconventional arrangements in a demanding situation will be described in Chapter Six.

Conclusion

From the foregoing data, many features of courtroom and even generalist interpreting emerge that are uncannily recognizable from a contemporary perspective.

Today, the primacy of impartiality generally prohibits family members from acting as interpreter, but anecdotally, judges continue to allow and even compel it. The interpreter role has been relieved of antiquated duties such as testifying as expert witnesses regarding a DP's intellectual and moral fitness, in order for courts to determine how or whether to proceed. Life circumstances which had historically been inconsistent among deaf people were replaced by compulsory education for all children, and the anticipation they would grow into independent adults. Cardinal principles such as recusal, compulsion, dual personal and quasi-professional roles, and teamed interpreting are still universally discussed among practitioners, educators, and students, and have their roots in centuries of precedents. The *Code of Professional Conduct* (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2005) in the US, and the *Principles of Professional Practice* (Association of Sign Language Interpreters, 2014) in the UK agree on these and many other shared philosophical concerns of mediating the communication, and facilitating relationships between other people, while operating with the bounds of professional expectations.

Fred Schreiber, an officer with the National Association of the Deaf at the founding of RID, was very pragmatic in his requirements that interpreters “must be able to hear; they must be able to sign; they must be willing; and they must be available” (Schein, 1981, p. 50). Since many such people were by definition close to the Deaf community, Best (1943) appreciated that courts were “for the most part willing to accept as interpreter any person who is regarded as competent or is proved to be qualified for the purpose” (p. 312) even if a friend or relation. He believed that it would have been rare to see “the services of such a person rejected, despite his possible acknowledged interest in and sympathy with a deaf complaining witness” (p. 312). Throughout the data, historical interpreters coped with being pressed into

service, while navigating competing duties to represent the moral and intellectual capacity of the DP in the preliminaries, and remain impartial and avoiding slipping into the advisory role during testimony.

Henry Baker and later Joseph Watson may have initiated the pattern of instructors and school administrators entering the interpreter pool—indeed, the data show by the nineteenth century, they overtake it. Caldwell (1911) remembered, “Under the manual method of instructing the deaf, no teacher could advance very far in his career without being called on, in some capacity, to act as an interpreter” (p. 172). Harvey Peet, the first in a line of three successive generations of educator–interpreters, was familiar with the Code civil des Français that specifically required deaf defendants have an interpreter accustomed to conversing with them,²⁰ but insisted that “[t]here are cases in which some person skilled in the idioms and mental characteristics of the deaf and dumb, as a class, will make a better interpreter” (H. Peet, 1856, p. 135). Naturally Peet favored the practice of “the French tribunals” of his day that “usually [called] upon a teacher of the deaf and dumb, or well-educated mute, to serve as interpreter in such cases, probably making the letter of the code defer to its spirit” (ibid). The next two chapters describe such a path that deaf educators and graduates carved out in advancing a role of legal intermediary in their own right, with or without a HI.

²⁰ Article 333 reads, “Si l'accusé est sourd-muet et ne sait pas écrire, le président nommera d'office pour son interprète la personne qui aura le plus d'habitude de converser avec lui” (Dufour de Saint-Pathus, 1808).

CHAPTER FIVE: THE RISE OF DEAF NATIVE SIGNING INTERMEDIARIES

Observing, that he was inclined in company to converse with one of his school-fellows, by the tacit finger-language, I asked him why he did not speak to him with his mouth? — To this, his answer was as pertinent as it was concise, "He is deaf."'²¹

The previous two chapters laid out the historical bases and legal foundations of hearing intermediaries with deaf parties in the UK and US, followed by an examination of primary data. The following two chapters will continue that pattern, beginning with research question two, a historical orientation to native deaf people—those based within minority signing communities—in the role of intermediary. With that context, the data in the next chapter returns to the third research question regarding salient features in the work of untrained *deaf* natives who emerged after HIs, and worked both with and without a hearing co-interpreter. Positioning these examples as objects of T/I history, and not simply Deaf history, enriches and challenges the living memory of DI work, and clarifies knowledge and practice for scholars, educators, working professionals, and prospective interpreters. In service of sharing a variety of examples, material in this chapter extends into the twentieth century, while the legal cases in the following chapter

While it is probable to assume that HIs have always existed wherever deaf individuals have lived, it is equally improbable to assume the same for DIs. The deaf adults who were first enlisted to mediate for others less prepared to interact with the legal system were privileged by greater exposure to signed and written language, and

²¹ Green, F. (1783). *Vox oculis subjecta*. Benjamin White, p. 152, regarding the author's son Charles, one of the first formally educated American deaf children, while boarded at the Braidwood Academy in Edinburgh.

world knowledge. This elite deaf class may have also been experienced *consumers* of HI interpreting, and understood the mechanics of interpreted communication. The deaf legal parties who relied on DIs were less savvy to the process, had no exposure to formal signed or written language whatsoever, or were simply less bilingual.

This notion invokes the chapter in Toury (2012), “A Bilingual Speaker Becomes a Translator: A Tentative Development Model” (pp. 241–258), which uses the term “native translator” in a technical way that describes lay untrained bilinguals from a minority language and culture along the path to legitimacy. Bartley and Stone (2008) reinforces, however inadvertently, the main assumption of this chapter: “as long [sic] Deaf people have been in existence, they have been translating and interpreting *within the Deaf community*” (emphasis added; quoted in E. Forestal, 2011, p. 11). These with other contemporary authors and practitioners situate deaf interpreters from that minority culture as a modern, politically subaltern response to hearing interpreters (e.g., R. Adam, Aro, Druetta, af Klintberg, & Dunne, 2014; Stone, 2009).

The following two chapters balance that view with a broader view of the function, and a much longer history that developed the role. As I shall demonstrate, untrained DIs have been contributing for longer and in more varied ways than has been supposed, and the forgotten pioneers of the field developed Deaf-World *habitus* (as laid out in the Introduction) from the Deaf community at large, and not from multi-generational signing deaf families. This chapter lays the groundwork through evidence and analysis of DIs who operated outside the primary research scope of Anglo–American legal venues. First, I describe the backdrop of the contributions of Deaf education to English–sign bilingualism among deaf people, and how early linguistic studies recognized languages used within the community. I then highlight both known and newly-discovered early written translations and signed interpretations

performed by deaf people, and summarize twentieth-century advancements that began to organize DIs in a more deliberate way. I then offer re-readings of existing material in deaf education, sign linguistics, contemporary signed language interpreting practice, and Deaf history, to foreground the contribution of deaf linguistic intermediaries. Finally, ten sketches of historical DIs outside Anglo–American common law courts will preface the discussion of DI data to follow in Chapter Six.

Deaf Natives

Many authors have observed that even for culturally-unaffiliated deaf people who have not yet been exposed to a signing community, gestures and signs can be a natural and spontaneous form of communication. Gallaudet (1819) described this “native language of signs by which, of their own accord, they express their ideas to a certain extent, and soon teach this language to their families and friends” (p. 784). While this type of microcommunity can be valuable to study the HI role, it may be too inclusive a definition of “native” signing to properly locate deaf *intermediaries*. In this context, I intend those who operated from a standpoint informed by Deaf-World membership, and retained the ability to communicate effectively with deaf people who are on the fringes of the Deaf Common, if at all.

The following two chapters agree with Adam et al (2014) that “Deaf and hearing interpreters are situated differently with respect to their habitus,” given “where Deaf and hearing interpreters are culturally placed within a minority language community” (p. 7). I do not intend the restrictive contemporary definition of “deaf native signers” in the linguistic sense, or those “who were exposed to [a signed language] by family members in early infancy, and who use [it] as their primary language” (Morford & Carlson, 2011, p. 2). Confining linguistic analyses to this type of signer—the target population that has driven corpora and determined fluency

markers—has been increasingly challenged as “native signer bias” in the literature (e.g., Jaeger, 2017). Such a definition would also prove too narrow for historical purposes, and anachronistically presuppose today’s relative prevalence of families of intergenerational deaf signers.

The assumed composition of a “deaf family” is unfortunately still welded to the inaccurate statistic of 10% of deaf people having two signing deaf parents. This is the result of a combination of bad data, and unexamined myth that will not be explored here, except to say that Mitchell and Karchmer (2004) aggregated six studies and found fewer than 4% of deaf children and adults reported that both of their parents were also deaf. The sociocultural impact, however, could be significant, as leaders from that sliver of the community may believe their “Deaf Ethnicity” nullifies the need “to focus on ideas drawn from the 90 percent” with hearing parents, because their “10 percent can adequately do that job, spreading its influence to the rest of [Deaf] society” (L. Fleischer, 1992, p. 141). Signing deaf families are a primary pipeline for DIs today. Many have reported “formative experiences” interpreting for deaf parents and siblings “who had limited English proficiency” (The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team, 2009, p. 2), and commonly-cited studies such as Stone (2009) that drive the academic narrative recruit only DIs with two deaf parents.

Cicourel and Boese (1972) simply called deaf native signers “persons born deaf” (p. 225) whose “language is based on visual, somesthetic and kinesthetic information” (p. 233). This earlier work also labels “the role of systematic manual signs, and accompanying embellishments often subsumed under the label paralanguage, as a native language” (p. 225). Soon after, Cicourel (1973) recognized the category was “crude and served us at the time,” and dismissed it as “not very

useful any more” and refined the earlier characterization to “the sign language used by deaf children and parents from deaf families” (Cicourel, 1978, p. 279) in use today. Woodward (1973) further restricted deaf native signers to those raised by deaf parents, exposed to ASL by age six, and whose signing departs from English syntax. Even so, one of the five test results from deaf respondents with hearing parents who acquired ASL younger than six and attended some college demonstrated “no dependency relationship between $\pm$ deaf parents” (p. 100).

This study terms “deaf natives” from the viewpoint of the translatorial function of working language fluency. More broadly than L1 BSL or ASL signers, this means a deaf person who is literate in English, but primarily visually dominant, possesses a breadth of facility along the sign–gesture continuum, and was born into or exposed to a language community and corresponding culture. Ideally, this language and cultural exposure will have taken hold during childhood.

Deaf Bilinguals

Taken collectively, deaf people necessarily form “a bilingual community” (Stone, 2009, p. 26) by virtue of existing within a surrounding spoken-language society. Subjects in the following two chapters would have been prepared to advance toward BSL– or ASL–English “interlingualism” (Toury, 2012). In possibly the first in-depth linguistic investigation of deaf signing, Tervoort (1953, p. 295) extrapolated that in addition to his Dutch subjects, members of all signed language communities exposed to instruction in their respective spoken–written languages inevitably infuse those principles and structures into their visual forms. Cicourel (1974) described similar complexity for BSL, and concluded “there has been some inevitable oral language influence on ASL [and BSL] which researchers should be sensitive to when engaged in studies of the grammar of gestural signs” (1974, p. 44). Even within

intergenerational deaf families, “these persons are usually exposed to a manual or gestural sign system that may have borrowed elements from oral language rules” (ibid.), and artifacts of that contact have been normalized by the community of users.

The landmark findings in Stokoe (1960) that legitimized ASL (and perhaps by extension, all mature signed languages) by demonstrating the criteria of formal language, *did not rely solely on deaf signers*. Though community mythology would suggest otherwise, the pioneering research which formed the decades-long bedrock to sign linguistics and Deaf studies, as well as the backbone of signed language interpreting theory and practice included data from two bilingual–bimodal, or hearing signers. Among the deaf subjects, researchers again found they had to “settle for a bilingual informant” (Stokoe, 1972, p. 122), conceding that “purely visual communication with no admixture of English is rare” (Stokoe, 1960, p. 29). Indeed all fourteen deaf subjects were documented with syntax corresponding to English, and some who can be identified from research notes were known to have lost their hearing in advanced childhood (*Record Group 1*, n.d.). Social contact with hearing signers in the deep DNA of sign languages (introduced in Chapter Three), and influences from spoken languages enforced more recently have been codified in the methods and literature of contemporary research. The challenge in Tervoort (1973) that such ambiguity invalidated the claim and called the very existence of any formal signed language into question, seems to not have impeded the momentum of Stokoe’s claims. The present study leaves the finer points of Deaf community bilingualism vs. diglossia to sociolinguists, along with influences from “forces of oralism” that “waged the battle against signing” (H. Lane, 1984, p. 100) in favor of speech and speechreading to amplify these phenomena. Instead, the analysis is grounded in the HI’s pragmatism to respond practically to BSL and ASL users—

including DIs—to accomplish the tasks of direct and relay interpreting along a language/dialect/code continuum with English (see Stringham, 2012). As for historical DIs, evidence in Krenz (2000) supports the assumption that a tradition of literacy and written–signed bilingualism predated the formal adoption of educational methods banning sign language in schools, and would have informed their interpreting practice as well.

DI literature today privileges those with deaf familial ties and formative cultural experiences (R. Adam, Aro, et al., 2014; The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team, 2010). Unlike many in today’s DI corps, none of the historical deaf intermediaries in the data or supporting anecdotal evidence considered in this and the following chapter were born to signing deaf parents. Though raised in hearing families, all did participate in signing communities, became more or less culturally affiliated, and most became sign-dominant, or L1 signers. Bell (1884) traced the emergence of 215 deaf pupils born to deaf parents in a 66-year collection of records from 2 out of the 58 schools in operation at the time, the first having been born in 1832 (pp. 39, 75–76). The author admitted the project advanced his hypothesis with “only partial success” through “imperfect data” (Bell, 1884, p. 26). Figure 13 displays an either updated or corrected calculation (Great Britain Royal Commission on the blind, the deaf and the dumb, 1889b) showing of 298 cases, the first deaf child was born to two deaf parents by 1829:

DEAF-MUTE CHILDREN OF DEAF-MUTE PARENTS.					
Analysis of 607 Cases.					
Sex.		No.	Cause of deafness.		No.
Males	-	271	Congenital	-	328
Females	-	275	Non-congenital	-	40
Not stated	-	61	Not stated	-	239
		607			607

Of 368 deaf-mute children of deaf-mute parents, 328 or 89·1 per cent. were congenitally deaf, and 40 or 10·9 per cent. were non-congenitally deaf.

PERIOD OF BIRTH.				Father deaf, Mother unknown.	Mother deaf, Father unknown.	Both Parents deaf.	Total.
1800-9	-	-	-	3	—	—	3
1810-9	-	-	-	1	2	—	3
1820-9	-	-	-	6	6	1	13
1830-9	-	-	-	14	11	11	36
1840-9	-	-	-	23	14	20	57
1850-9	-	-	-	31	30	41	102
1860-9	-	-	-	32	35	61	128
1870-9	-	-	-	21	37	120	178
Ascertained	-	-	-	131	135	254	520
Not ascertained	-	-	-	35	8	44	87
Total	-	-	-	166	143	298	607

Figure 14. Deaf-mute Children of Deaf-Mute Parents (Great Britain Royal Commission on the blind, the deaf and the dumb, 1889, p. 1).

As introduced earlier, virtually all of the literature similarly labels any deaf signed–spoken/written language bilingual raised among signing deaf adults as a “native signer” who serves as a cultural and linguistic role model for the rest of the Deaf community. Fleischer (1992) illustrates the widely-accepted narrative that “Deaf children of Deaf parents” in signing schools singlehandedly rehabilitate new pupils with ‘homemade signs...to become more humanistic, more like others’ (p. 141). Forestal (2005) also observed that “deaf adult children of deaf parents translated for their parents,” and “often felt this was an important factor in becoming bilingual” (p.

236). However, the nineteenth-century DI data do not demonstrate a pattern of contributory familial bases of interpreting ability, and none of the figures were second-generation signers born to deaf parents. Instead, the main differentiation was access to education: generally, the deaf intermediaries were formally educated and bilingual in English and BSL or ASL, and the corresponding deaf legal parties were less so, if at all.

Toury (1984) resisted equating “translating as a *skill* with mere bilingualism,” insisting on the more “crucial question” of how “the *unfolding* of the skill” develops (Toury, 1984, pp. 245–246). Contemporary expectations, best practices, roles and functions of deaf interpreters have been covered in recent literature (e.g., Adam, Stone, Collins, & Metzger, 2014; Boudreault, 2005; Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Professional Standards Committee, 1997; Rogers, 2016; Russell, 2018; A. Smith, 2015; Stone, 2009; Tester, 2018; The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team, 2010). These describe a range of tasks, from liberal translation that strays into an editorial or consultative posture, work that carries features of re-translation, adaptation or localization, and finally to interlingual transfer or what Jakobson (1959) terms “translation proper” (1959, p. 233). This chapter does not intend to present an interpreting model *per se*, but accounts in this and the following chapter will re-interpret the literature, and add new examples of signing Deaf intermediaries to deepen the historical perspective that informs current training and practice, as called for in Toury (1984):

One thing we need badly, if we wish to exploit the notion of “native translator”, is longitudinal studies [emphasis in original] of the development of human translators under different circumstances and of the effects of the accumulation

of experience on the emergence of translational techniques and strategies. (p. 192)

What follows in this chapter is a the first historical review of how deaf linguistic intermediaries, interpreters and translators emerged from educational contexts to draw the interest of early researchers, and gain recognition in community/civic, legal, and artistic work. I draw new insights from known sources, and add a newly-discovered twentieth-century study of how educated deaf people moved between English and ASL.

Deaf Education

Scholars are unanimous that the foundations of the Deaf-World in the UK and US were laid when educational opportunities for deaf children were made more widely available at the turn of the nineteenth century. Deaf histories treat the pre-cultural period of isolated cases, but generally mark the gathering into physical communities as beginning a body of recognizable and continuously traceable recorded events. Table 3 displays the context necessary to imagine the educational status of historical DIs, relative to the emergence of HIs. The first official legal HIs of record in Chapter Four preceded these milestones, and DI evidence to follow in chapter Six took place *after* them. The former began as an innovation of the common law that was transplanted into the community, and the latter as a community-seeded solution which found purchase in legal venues.

Table 4. Founding Dates at Early Schools for Deaf Children

Location	Scope	Year
Edinburgh	Private	1760
London	Private	1783
Edinburgh	Public	1799
London	Public	1792
Ireland	Protestant	1816
USA	Public	1817
Belfast	Public	1836
Ireland	Catholic (Girls)	1846
Wales	Public	1847
Ireland	Catholic (Boys)	1856

(Volta Bureau, 1902)

Teaching through Translation

Abbé de l'Epée (1784) documented the practice of translation exercises into French and various other languages at l'Institution Nationale des Sourds-Muets à Paris, emphasizing the target renditions were not mechanical transliterations from the signed source. The English translation of the pedagogical manual explained that the deaf pupil, referred to specifically as “the interpreter, without regards to the *order* of the gestures or signs, will take care to put the *ideas* exhibited to him by these signs into proper phraseology of speech and writing” ((Abbé de l'Epée, 1801, p. 174).²²

One of the first published accounts of a “faithful translation” (Pennant, 1776, p. 257) in English by a deaf person could only loosely be deemed as such. Thomas Braidwood’s private pupil Mary Rogers (1762–1810) was likely the girl who performed

²² The original text, a letter to his German counterpart Samuel Heinicke, was written in Latin: “Non gestuum ordo quæreretur, sed ideas per signa methodica exhibitæ juxta propriam dicendi sribendique rationem sed us interpres curaret exprimere” (Abbé de l'Epée, 1784, p. 274).

a paraphrasing exercise in 1772 to demonstrate her literacy, and the visitor also more accurately described how she “could cloth the same thoughts in a new set of words”:

Original passage.

Lord Bacon has divided the whole of human knowledge into history, poetry, and philosophy, which are referred to the three powers of the mind, memory, imagination and reason.

Rogers' Version.

A nobleman has parted the total or all of man's study, or understanding, into an account of the life, manners, religion and customs of any people or country, verse or metre, moral or natural knowledge, which are pointed to the three faculties of the soul or spirit; the faculty of remembering what is past, thought or conception, and right judgment.

(Pennant, 1776, p. 257)

Enough historical transcriptions of other source and target texts from translated signed and written renditions in educational settings exist to warrant an entirely separate project outside the scope of this study. As one example, “The Lord's Prayer” (Matthew 6:9–13, King James Version) would have been a commonly-recited source text in the nineteenth century in both UK and US schools, so in the absence of video, makes a fitting sample of the signed target. Hearing educator of deaf children in New York and Ohio Josiah Addison Cary, who himself could command ASL in “the vernacular language of the deaf mute, with rare perspicuity, impressiveness, and grace” (“Necrology. — VI. J. Addison Cary,” 1852, p. 50) recorded a transliteration of the passage in the “order of natural signs” (Cary, 1851, p. 113) that a deaf native signer might use. It is easily understood and could be reproduced by any ASL or BSL signer today:

Father our heaven in name thy hallowed.

Kingdom thy come.

Will thy be done in heaven, in earth as.

Day this bread daily our give us.

And debts our forgive us, debtors our forgive we as.

And temptation into us lead not, but evil from us deliver.

For the kingdom, power, glory thine, forever, Amen. (Cary, 1851, p. 113)

Such translation exercises in the reverse have long been used at schools for deaf children as a pedagogical tool to teach English through dictation of English-like signing as described in Weld (1851, p. 83), with an approach similar to teaching second languages. Robert Armour (1837–1913) gave a personal recollection of the BSL to English method used at the Liverpool School for the Deaf and Dumb. In “dictating a lesson,” his teacher would “recite each sentence in the sign language, and...direct his pupils to translate the same into written or finger-spelled language accordingly” (Armour et al., 1896, p. 303). Peet (1870a) recognized the differences between written English and varieties of ASL (with greater or lesser adherence to English grammar), and insisted that rather than demonstrate signed translations from printed lessons, instructors apply the method to the pupils, believing “[t]he more we make them translate, the faster they will learn” (p. 78). He also suggested that the teacher also not dictate English lessons with signed representations of English grammar that the students would merely transcribe. Instead, “when the story is told them by signs, in the order in which they are accustomed to talk, they can then translate it into the English language, by considering what is the subject, what is the verb, what is the object, etc.” (p. 78).

Pym (2015) reported that “nineteenth-century textbooks for learning [spoken–written] languages” (p. 5) also relied heavily on translation work by hearing children, and contemporary T/I scholars are increasingly “reconsidering the role of translation in language learning” (p. 3). In a more recent youth literacy context, Quigley and Paul (1990) reported on an earlier study by Ewoldt (1981) that assessed deaf children’s ability “to read and retell stories written in English by interpreting them into their own sign language” (p. 130)²³. Such efforts may have always been inconsistent; Porter (1876) protested “neglect of the discipline,” or “practice and habit” of sight translation, which had resulted in many pupils being “not so well able to apprehend with accuracy what they read” (1876, p. 27).

Deaf Schoolchildren as Proto-DIs

One common pipeline for DIs today is to have “grown up in a home with Deaf family members and sign language, and not infrequently with parents who had limited English proficiency” (The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team, 2009, p. 3). Langholtz (2004) recalls that “[h]istorically, Deaf people have interpreted informally to clarify information for other Deaf people,” such as “difficult-to-understand documents or in situations where there are language barriers” with English. Ad-hoc translation from signed language to written English is also mentioned between school children and among adults who fulfil a type of amanuensis role in Adam, Carty and Stone (2011)—this source being perhaps the sole analysis to offer any novel contribution of lay deaf translators’ experience. The study used ethnographic methods to extend lived memory to the 1930s, but no supporting historical or archival context.

²³ This complex process is well-covered in the work of Samuel Supalla, and laid out in Cripps (2008).

Woodward and Markowicz (1975) made the early observation that while “deaf children of deaf parents are usually the only cultural brokers between the adults and children in the community,” and included the caveat that “a very small number of deaf teachers of the deaf” can also occupy an intermediary role (p. 10). Erting (1980) documented the well-known phenomenon of an adult deaf classroom aide who functioned as language model and interpreter with both deaf children and hearing teachers. If any “questions came up about a particular sign, the teacher and the children asked the assistant first,” and considered her the de facto “Sign Language authority” (pp. 165–166). After the ranks of culturally- and linguistically-affiliated deaf primary and secondary school teachers thinned precipitously toward the end of the nineteenth century following pedagogical shifts from signing to speech and speechreading (Lindquist Bergey, n.d.), support and residential staff commonly fulfilled a similar function.

Most sources repeat the unattributed passages in Bienvenu and Colonomos (1992) which recalls the “delayed consecutive interpretation” after school hours of poorly-signed instruction that “cannot be understood in the classroom” and Boudreault (2005) that similarly describes deaf students who intervene for teachers whose “signed language abilities are quite often underdeveloped,” and act as “facilitator” for their peers, “informally or without expressly being asked” (p. 324). Some more reliably structured findings that grew out of discussions with twenty-six practicing DIs revealed they worked in both directions during their school years:

Participants described early experiences helping peers understand teachers’ and other students’ communications. In oral education programs, they conveyed clarifying instructional information to peers when teachers were not looking. In residential schools, especially in dormitory interactions, they

helped students with fledgling sign language skills understand what others were saying. (The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team, 2009, p. 3)

Deaf Teachers

Contemporary authors interested in DIs have generally ignored earlier cases of deaf classroom teachers, and only re-discovered those peer-to-peer dynamics through personal experience and anecdotes shared by deaf adults in general, and perhaps moreso among professional DIs specifically. Harris (1933) described eleven benefits of a bilingual deaf teacher's instruction, including in language, normative behavior, and coping strategies in a way particularly suited to deaf children—essential skills of managing bilingual–bicultural intermediation.

Even during the throes of the nineteenth-century pedagogical debates that created the environment where deaf children interpreted among each other, deaf teachers who were dwindling in number were still seen as a resource. The school for deaf children in Edinburgh retained one “semi-mute” teacher (one who had some hearing, speech, or both) “in order that he should maintain the conventional system of signs in its integrity,” and that “he should, on account of his affliction, be able to enter more into the psychical condition of the children” (Great Britain Royal Commission on the blind, the deaf and the dumb, 1889a, p. 553). Combined with specialized textbooks that had become more widely available, one deaf American teacher saw “the superior power of communication, through signs, possessed by our deaf-mute teachers” (Angus, 1871, p. 165) as more effective than the proportionately higher number of hearing instructors who had historically filled the ranks. Though “no data for instituting a comparison between early and later years” (ibid.)—or fewer and greater deaf teachers respectively—was available, the sentiment that “guidance” and

modelling provided by educated deaf people, “through their perfect command of the language of signs,” was more effective “in communicating ideas and securing a development of the mental and moral powers, which the best hearing teacher could not have accomplished in the same time” (p. 167).

This may have been a direct outcome of the legacy left by Joseph Watson, a figure in the first dynasty of educators to deaf children in the UK, who *openly deferred to deaf signers* as language models, and advised his colleagues to do the same:

But, never let any thing so chimerical be thought of as an attempt to turn master to the deaf and dumb, in the art of signing. Whatever others may say, I own, I have always found it best to become, in some measure, a learner, instead of teacher, of this mode of expression. (Watson, 1809, pp. 82–83)

He readily admitted his own limitations, and saw leveraging the expertise of a deaf assistant in the service of their peers as a best practice:

I have found, by experience, that one deaf person may be employed to teach another with the happiest effect. So much so, that when I happen to be, for the moment, at a loss to make one of slow apprehension understand a lesson, I turn him over to one of his schoolfellows, who has learnt it; and never without advantage to both... (Watson, 1809, p. xxxviii)

Lee (2004), which has inconsistent attention to source materials but is often cited, names John Creasy (1774–ca. 1855), who had been privately educated elsewhere, as the first deaf teacher to work with Watson to “teach the private pupils” and “train the bright Asylum pupils to become teachers” (p. 29). Creasy reportedly thereafter instructed William Hunter (1785–1861), who became the first *trained* deaf

teacher of deaf children. Hunter is the most likely candidate for a teacher's assistant and bilingual intermediary, as he had been chosen for admittance under Watson in 1792, and stayed on as teaching staff beginning in 1801 (British Deaf History Society, n.d.). He was observed early in his career as “an ingenious young man, himself born deaf and dumb, constantly assists Watson, the master, in instructing others (Medicus, 1807, p. 130). In addition to the ability to sign, Hunter's spoken English was “without any defect in articulation” (Elliott, 1910, p. 381), so he ideally suited Watson's vision of what would come to be known throughout deaf education as a “pupil teacher.”

Research Studies

The natural abilities of deaf people to navigate between signed and written–spoken languages came to the attention of the research community in the twentieth century. Two examples that might qualify as the earliest such studies are highlighted below. One is a summary from heretofore undiscovered archival material, and another taken from a well-known linguistics experiment for which the potential for DI history has been overlooked. One small but significant precursor from the nineteenth century is also introduced.

Burnet–Peet (1853)

According to his extensive eulogy (I. L. Peet, 1875), John Burnet (1808–1874) was deafened by fever aged eight, and his sister (who became his de-facto interpreter) and some friends learned the two-handed alphabet, normally common to BSL, to communicate with him. He first saw ASL and the one-handed alphabet in 1830 at New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. This exposure may have piqued his interest in fingerspelling, as he directed one of the earliest cross-modality quantitative studies (Burnet, 1853) on what was then called

“dactylology.” Burnet requested instructor at the New York school Edward Peet (1826–1862) to time and tabulate the top fourth-year students’ performance at three tasks: fingerspelling, writing, and silent reading of this 100-word passage taken from a textbook authored by Peet’s father.

The English government attempted to tax the Americans without their consent. The Americans flew to arms, and on the 4th of July, 1776, Congress declared this country independent of England. The English sent large armies over the sea in ships to conquer us. Washington, Green, another brave generals led the Americans. The war lasted eight years. Many towns were destroyed by the English. Many thousand men were killed on both sides, and two entire English armies were taken by the Americans, one at Saratoga and one at Yorktown. At last the English made peace and left the country in 1783. (H. P. Peet, 1849, p. 373)

Interestingly, this prompt recounts British–American tensions, but we can be fairly certain that the pupils in the experiment only used the one-handed ASL alphabet. It is unknown, however, whether subjects were permitted to use the cardinal and ordinal number conventions of ASL, or if they spelled out the orthographic versions. The results were as follows:

Table 5. *Burnet-Peet Study: Timed Processing of English Text by Modality*

Subject	Fingerspelled	Written on Slates	Read Mentally
Pupil 1	1:09	4:00	0:23
Pupil 2	1:25	4:08	0:30
Pupil 3	1:40		

Teacher 3:00 ~ “ $\frac{1}{3}$ the time”

Admittedly, the Burnet–Peet study was very rudimentary and scientifically unsound. In the end, Burnet advocated for his own preference of “syllabic dactylology,” and though he admitted that this “contrivance has not yet been tested by experience” (p. 244), that is precisely how many L2 signers are taught to produce and read fingerspelling today.

Fusfield–Crammatte (1932)

At this writing, no other source mentions this pioneering translation project carried out by a researcher who was himself deaf. A class project entitled “How the Deaf Mind Works in Ideation” (Crammatte, 1932) by Gallaudet University student Alan Crammatte (1911–1996) was presumably undertaken for professor Irving Fusfield (1893–1977), who kept private notes about similar themes during this period, and published on them some decades afterward (Fusfield, 1920–1972, 1958). The systematic study was conducted in two parts: 1) a signed prompt was shown to a group of deaf informants, whose handwritten English renditions were catalogued, and 2) a one-sentence written English stimulus elicited responses in ASL, which were recorded in gloss form by the researcher.

For the first experiment, the ASL prompt was not recorded, but the typescript does contain 51 target language sentences in written English, with differing word choices, and varying degrees of detail and fluency. Three examples from the dataset are given below:

The windows on the farmhouse should be cleaned.

The window on the country house, must cleaning.

That window in the old country house must be washed.

In the second experiment, the original English and an explanation is included: “‘The cook’s dress is beginning to show signs of age.’ Recorded by the observer as different individuals sign it” for only 37 glossed items. Because this source has never received attention in any known publications, Figures 14 and 15 below contains selected responses from Crammatte’s notes: three sentences in ASL gloss from part 1 (English to ASL), followed by one response slip from part 2 (ASL to English), both with accompanying transcriptions:

- Her cook er dress start show old.
 Dress her cook er start show ^{signs} years.
 - Cook her dress start show old worn-out.

- Her cook er dress start show old.
- Dress her cook er start show ^{signs} years.
- Cook her dress start show old worn-out.

Figure 15. English to ASL Research Data from Crammatte (1932), Gallaudet University Archives and Deaf Collections.

The windows of that
 old house on the
 farm need washing.

The windows of that
 old house on the
 farm need washing.

Figure 16. Research Subject ASL to English Translation from Crammatte (1932), Gallaudet University Archives and Deaf Collections.

Tervoort (1953)

Decades later, signed language linguists undertook more complex and systematic research projects. Before Stokoe (1960) legitimized the varieties of formal and informal signing observed among deaf adults, Bernard Tervoort (1920–2006) had concluded that deaf schoolchildren were also capable of coining a local system of symbolic gestures that was “governed by its own laws” (Tervoort, 1953b, p. 295). The lack of attention from Anglophone academia, due to “a poor knowledge of Dutch” (Tervoort, 1973, p. 369) on the part of Stokoe and the authors that followed, warrants a thorough treatment of these important findings. The researcher found difference among “sub linguistic (like imitative behavior ad hoc) or paralinguistic (like concomitant expression of emotions), what evidently was borrowed from [Dutch] even in esoteric communication, and, finally, what appeared to be independent features of a visual communication system (Tervoort, 1973, pp. 379–380). The study was expanded with US data and made available to an English readership in Tervoort (1961), with particular emphasis on the socially-motivated and imitative “contact behavior” of “natural gesture” (Tervoort, 1961, p. 439).

The initial findings differentiated “two languages, an *esoteric* and an *exoteric* one; one for mutual intercourse, the other for talk with outsiders” (Tervoort, 1953b, p. 6). In either case, the “identification of the sign with the object is based upon agreement of communicating partners” (Tervoort, 1961, p. 449) who must “be able to recognize the gesture for what it stands for” (Tervoort, 1961, p. 441). McNeill (1992) defines this “conventional code” as an unconscious “prearranged agreement on the gestures (and other means) that allow individuals to coordinate communicative actions” (p. 36). Since the “[i]mitative contact” common to these negotiations “is situation-bound,” the resulting insider talk that relies on specific “natural gesture

requires more knowledge of present situation and context than does the formal sign” (Tervoort, 1961, p. 446). Unlike the situational or narrative context that interpreters of more standardized language either gather or infer, an intermediary of esoteric language would require additional personal knowledge to decode the message. When vocabulary is not predictable, one must have both fluency in the “auxiliary symbolism that serves the need of the moment” when it was coined, *and* the “factual knowledge of the little world roundabout” (Tervoort, 1953b, p. 295).

These observations comport with the deaf–hearing collaborative pattern set forth in Chapter Three. Among the Dutch children, the language community of deaf persons created natural gestures and representations of specific shared experiences that were conventionalized past a layperson’s ability to decode them. The innovation of Tervoort (1953a) was the use of film technology to gather data, and equally vital was the use of native informant–translators, who became the first subjects of formal sign language linguistic analysis. The procedure is summarized by the author of the study:

With the assistance of these two children and their class-fellows the language of the film was decoded, i.e. transposed into acoustic language (See Volume II: “Notering van de Film”). It then appeared that an exhaustive analysis could not be carried through, unless each relevant point in the conversation was understood ; this required that every gesture should have its detailed form described. An account of the attending mimicry also appeared necessary. To make the esoteric language fully comprehensible some conversational fragments have been furnished with a running commentary and translation (See Volume I p. 146 ff.). (Tervoort, 1953b, p. 294)

Examples from these dialogues which the subjects, eighth-grade girls Bea and Everdien, created and helped translate are shown in Figure 14 below. BSL and ASL users alike will recognize familiar linguistic features, such as the handshapes used, the signer's facial markers, and body posture to organize the message. The signs shown are COLD²⁴ and DARK²⁵, describing conditions when a train entered a railway tunnel:

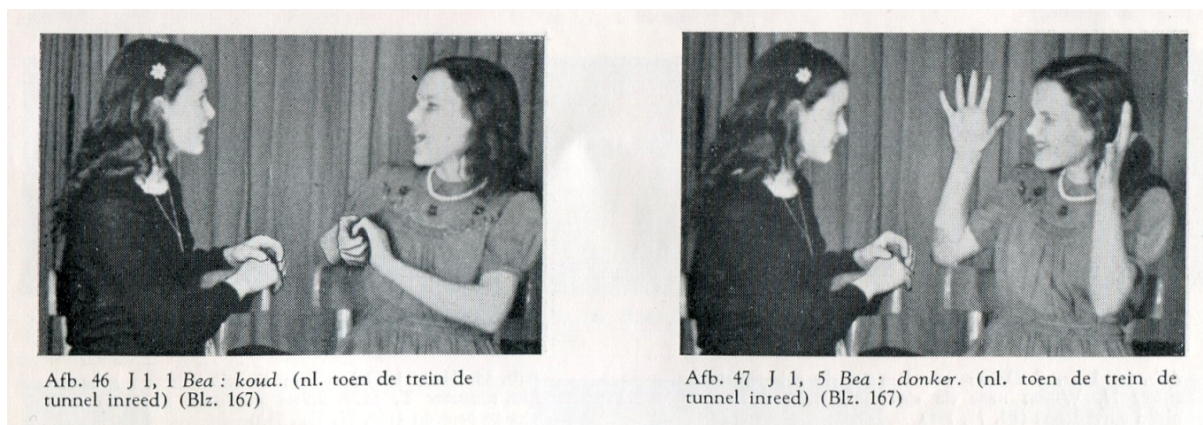


Figure 17. Film Stills Showing Bea Signing COLD and DARK to Everdien (Tervoort, 1953a, vol. 2, p. 141).

The onscreen interlocutors were not the only source that provided commentary to enrich the transcription, so it cannot be considered solely self-translation. Three other informants deserve mention: Dora, Grada and Francien were also credited in assisting the translation of their classmates' nuanced signing. Tervoort (1953b) reports that all five girls were of normal intelligence, and aged between twelve to fourteen years. While not nearly the first example of Deaf intermediaries, the subjects' original signed and later transcribed texts are a richly

²⁴ "de gesloten en gekromde vingers van beide handen haken ineem met de rechternhand boven" (Tervoort, 1953a, vol. 2 p. 30) — place cupped hands together, with the right one on top.

²⁵ "de twee handen, met de vingers gespreid en de palmen naar voren, maken voor de ogen draaibewegingen in het vertical vlak" (Tervoort, 1953a, vol. 2 p. 16) — both hands down a vertical plane, with fingers spread and palms facing away [crossing with slight inward rotation]. (Appreciation to fellow interpreter-academics Maya de Wit and Yvonne Jobse for reviewing and amending the Dutch-English translation.)

documented source. The impact of their contribution to sign linguistics *and* deaf translation history is inestimable, and this thesis may be the first English-language recognition of both of those achievements. In the decades that followed, systematic recruitment, training, and credentialing of deaf adults as translators and interpreters would be included in the movement for professional HIs.

Professional Practice

There is an expanding body of applied research on best practices and working dynamics within DI–HI relay teams, which falls outside the scope of this study. Such scholarship commonly summarizes background information and historical claims as an introductory exercise, in lieu of primary sources, or generating additional evidence or analysis (e.g., Brück & Schaumberger, 2014; Rogers, 2018). I will not attempt a full-scale review of the current literature on DIs in professional practice, but confine the sources to those which make or support historical claims. To adapt a stance from Disability history, Reaume (2018) also tempers any ahistorical zeal to leap to the defense of DIs whose work may have been marginalized within their times:

While individuals have every right to make such a criticism of how disabled people are viewed today, it is worth reflecting on how this critique needs to be reconsidered when placed in historical perspective. There is a lot to be gained by looking with admiration upon the lives and struggles of people in disability history in a way that avoids romanticizing them while also recognizing their usually ignored contributions within their own communities. (Reaume, 2018, p. 31)

Adam and Stone (2011) rightly asserted that “by examining early interpreting work undertaken in the Deaf community, interpreting professionals are better able to understand how they have arrived at this point in their history” (p. 225). That said, the examples listed in this and the following chapter reach past a contemporary conception of a “Deaf *community*,” as some parties with whom HIs and DIs worked were neither culturally-affiliated in a sociolinguistic group, nor even users of the national signed language.

Boudreault (2005) gives illustrative examples of DI logistics in a complex multilingual setting, and is commonly cited as foundational commentary on the professional standing of DIs. Stone and Russell (2014) included selected remembrances of veteran twentieth-century interpreters regarding DI conference interpreting at academic and international gatherings since the 1980s, and made the somewhat fantastic leap to imagine DIs supporting HIs at recurring large-scale French social events from 1834, “although this is not documented” (p. 140). A more productive aside to include in service of interpreter history is that the named HI, journalist François Eugène Garay de Monglave (1796–1878), was a Portuguese–French translator (Haberly, 1987) with a passion for history; he was a founding member and held a lifetime post as secretary of l’Institute Historique (Piroux, 1839).

Pre-professional Roots

Padden and Humphries (2005) offers two illustrative twentieth-century examples from the US that demonstrate how members of the Deaf community called upon hard of hearing people before RID existed. Prior to the legal mandate to provide interpreters in employment environments, Deaf members of the International Typographical Union “relied on hard-of-hearing coworkers to interpret for them” during “chapel meetings of the 1940s and 1950s” (2005, p. 117). Also, when the

Gallaudet Dramatics Club met with Broadway producers of *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1941, Eric Malzkuhn (1922–2008) “brought along a fellow student, Archie Stack (1922–2011), to interpret because he had ‘a lot of hearing’ and ‘used his voice well’” (Padden & Humphries, 2005, p. 105). An inadvertent example caught on film may be the first recorded video of a solo deaf person in an interpreting task. It appeared in the silent biographical film for Thomas Scott Marr (1866–1936), a deaf architect, who for one minute between 7:40–8:40, laboriously speechreads his colleagues and signs ASL for the camera to describe their project (Gallaudet College Alumni Association, 1934).

Consumer–practitioners have also been a sizeable group. Of the 19 deaf respondents to a 1973 survey that ranked the importance of interpreter skills, 15 claimed to be “both deaf consumers of interpreting services, and intermediary interpreters who acted as liaison [sic] agents between regular interpreters for deaf people” (Babbini Brasel et al., 1974, p. 18). This was also the case in Scotland, where in order to accommodate someone with severe dysfluencies in BSL and English who “could be expressing himself in primitive signs or pantomime,” it was recommended that a “deaf interpreter could render the message in a clearer level of sign language in order to allow a third person to speak the message with the minimum of misunderstanding” (The Scottish Association for the Deaf, 1979, p. 16).

One of the first primers on serving deaf clients enrolled in US vocational training programs described the then “important new concepts” (Adler, 1966, p. 77) embedded in the HI role. At the time, hearing interpreters were expected to have ready facility in both “reception and expression of the sign language as normally used by the deaf,” and “interpretation of gross gestures of non-verbal deaf” (ibid.) people. The 1979 revision of the RID Code of Ethics that in some cases, HIs work

directly from “Spoken English to Gesture, Mime, etc” (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 1979) recognized and vice versa with deaf people who did not sign ASL. In the case of a party with physical or mental disabilities, or nonstandard signing, Rinaldi et al (1980) advised that an interpreter who feels out of their depth should request an intermediary interpreter, who could either be “a hearing-impaired person or a hearing person who has very close association with the client...to help clarify communication” (p. 57). The same volume goes on to advise using “other resource persons,” adding that such an “intermediary interpreter should be someone who is familiar with the communication behavior and skills of the consumer” (Dominique DeVries et al., 1980, p. 123). In particular, the personal experiences of family and friends can contribute “important background information” which “may be able to provide the interpreter with specific input” to produce gestural renditions, or decode the responses from the DP (ibid.).

At the workshop that chartered the RID, Schreiber (1964) made it clear that under challenging or complex conditions, deaf laypeople understood the value of relay interpreters, who had already been functioning in the relay interpreter role to great effect:

In extreme cases, where persons of limited education are involved, it might also be necessary to have deaf people available to assist the interpreters since the language of signs is something that can defy interpreting at times, and only a person who has lived with it all his life can make sense of some of the things that are being said. (Schreiber, 1964, p. 37)

Hurwitz (1979) studied this ASL-to-English task specifically, or what had for decades been termed “reverse interpreting,” errantly demarking signing as one’s

primary function. Committing the kind of oversimplification that Smith (2015) claims “heedlessly limits the role of the DI to cleaning up sloppy work,” he unfortunately perpetuates the deficit paradigm that necessitates the DI role:

In certain situations where it is not possible to find an interpreter with strong ASL skills, it is sometimes possible to assign another deaf person who has the ability to understand both ASL and standard English as an intermediary between the deaf speaker and the interpreter. It might in this way be possible to circumvent the American Sign Language deficiencies of reverse interpreters with limited training and experience. (Hurwitz, 1979, p. 75)

Forestal (2014) was not intended as a history, but repeated some commonly-cited although inaccurate assumptions regarding the beginnings of deaf interpreting in the US:

The earliest documentation of a Deaf interpreter interpreting in a courtroom was in 1886 during a case before the Indiana Supreme Court (Mathers, 2009a). In the publication arena, Quigley and Youngs (1965) very briefly discussed Deaf persons who had worked as interpreters in their book, *Interpreting for Deaf People*, which seems to be the earliest known publication that refers to Deaf interpreters. (Forestal, 2014, p. 31)

Newly uncovered data presented in Chapter Six refines the first claim with two definitive cases from 1884: one from a US court in December, one from an Irish court heard in June that same year. The “Quigley and Youngs (1965)” manual, or more precisely, Smith (1965), does mention the value of bilingual deaf “intermediary interpreters” who may be called upon to work with monolingual signers:

In some interpreting situations involving low-verbal deaf persons, [a] knowledgeable deaf individual with above average verbal ability can be used as an intermediary between the client and the interpreter. This intermediary, because of his intimate acquaintance with low-verbal deaf persons and because of the rapport due to the common bond of deafness, can usually achieve comprehension when even the best qualified hearing interpreter is at a loss. (Smith, 1965, p. 41)

This instruction describes conditions similar to the nineteenth-century examples to be shown hereafter. The same source immediately adds the caveat that “in the case of the uneducated deaf adults who have had little contact with the deaf community but who respond well to natural gestures, a hearing acquaintance may sometimes prove the best person to serve as the intermediary” (ibid.). Such a function is considered the sole purview of DI practice today in the UK and US. Ascribing the task of navigating nonstandard form—dialects of signed languages, idiolect, microcommunity vocabulary and gesture—exclusively to the “deaf interpreting processes” (E. Forestal, 2005, p. 255) is a relatively recent shift.

Assessment

When the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the professional body and former credentialing authority for ASL interpreters in the US, was created in 1964, DIs and lay members of the Deaf community were involved from the outset. According to Schein (1984), however, some deaf founding members of the RID in 1964 had joined “as a gesture of support, not intending to be interpreters” (Schein, 1984, p. 113). Bienvenu (1988) recalled that it was predominantly “hard of hearing” people (those who had intelligible speech, useable hearing, and could step into a quasi-HI role) who were numbered among the “deaf” interpreter ranks (1988, p. 1). In

the UK, one of the first pedagogical texts to train hearing interpreters also recognized the signed-to-spoken language interpreting task can be ideal for a DI. Corformat (1953a) observed that speech of deaf people who lose their hearing in later childhood will be “so easy to follow that you will accept him as your interpreter,” and advised trainees to “lean on him” as such (p. 3).

The very title of “Reverse Skills Certificate” offered by the RID from 1972–1988 implied an assessment of working from a source text signed by a deaf model, “Reversing” being the antiquated term of art for rendering a signed utterance into spoken language. The guidance provided at the time did allow Deaf examinees with intelligible speech to do so; alternatively, one could produce an intermediary signed version relayed to a hearing interpreter to render into spoken English, or a written English version to be provided directly to a hearing non-signer (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 1972). The evaluation did not include any verbal or printed English source text to be rendered into a sign language or sign system, but consisted only of the interview, and producing English both from an ASL source, and an English-like signed source (Beale, 1973). In the case of DIs, the reversing assessment emphasized scenarios where they would most likely be called upon, and their ability to work from prompts in non-standard ASL:

...reverse skills also include situations where a deaf person with minimal language skills is expressing himself in very primitive signs or pantomime, and another interpreter is involved in rendering the message in a clearer level of manual communication in order to permit a spoken rendition by a third party. (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 1972, p. 14)

Examples of Deaf Historical Sources

A survey of material relevant to Deaf history reveals examples of deaf intermediaries and T/I pioneers in professional, community, theatrical, legal, and ecclesiastical settings working with both signed and spoken–written languages. The following ten items foreground evidence of translation and interpreting by deaf historical figures that widely-circulated accounts by lay and academic authors have typically disregarded. They fall outside the legal scope, and in some cases time period of the data presented in the following chapter, so are summarized here.

Tilsye

The earliest example of a deaf translation based on an English source text did not use a recognized signed language but a gestural idiolect, and occurred in a religious context. The well-travelled account from 1576 describes how Thomas Tilsye, who was “naturally [from birth] deafe, and also dumbe,” gestured his marriage vows to the bilingual–bimodal Ursula Russel, a hearing woman (Church of England, 1576). This record was previously mentioned in Chapter Three as an illustration of the root of the BSL sign CHURCH. Though commonly cited in histories of Deaf communities and gestural communication by deaf people, no source has highlighted Tilsye as the first known deaf translator. My master’s thesis argued that Tilsye based his signed vow upon *The Boke of Common Praier* (Church of England & Elizabeth I, 1559), the most contemporary sacramental text available to him. An excerpt from a much longer examination of the St. Martin’s, Leicester parish clerk’s detailed transcription is given in Table 5 below:

Table 6. 1559 Anglican Marriage Vow and Thomas Tilsye's 1576 "Translation"

<i>The Boke of Common Praier</i>	St. Martin's Marriage Register
I N. take thee N. to my wedded wyfe, to have and to hold from thys day forward...	first, he embraced her with his arms,
and the man shall geve unto the woman a ring,	and took her by the hand, putt a ring upon her finger,
With this ring I thee wed: with my body I thee worship, & with all my worldly goodes I thee endow. In the name of the Father, & of the Sonne, & of the holy Ghost. Amen.	and layde his hande upon his hearte, and then upon her hearte, and held up his handes toward heaven.

(Excerpted from Leahy, 2015, pp. 50–54)

The transcription was probably originated by the eponymously named Ralph Clerk, who was regularly compensated two shillings for "keeping the Register-book" (Nichols, 1815, p. 574). Clerk—a hearing man who presumably did not sign—would have been familiar with the frozen form of the text, and so discerned Tilsye's gestures with ease. His 18-line rendition far exceeded the 1–2 line standard that normally only listed a date, and the names of the groom and bride, but unfortunately did not include the entirety of Tilsye's "diverse other signes" (Church of England, 1576) he witnessed that day.

Written Texts

A few instances of translation work by multi-lingual, well-educated signing deaf people include *written* source and target texts. Historically, the undergraduate curriculum at Gallaudet College included classics and languages (*Thirtieth Annual Report of the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb*, 1887), which were taught through translation exercises (O. Hanson, 1883). The first Gallaudet graduate

Melville Ballard (profiled in Chapter Five) mastered several European languages, and according to Gallaudet (1882, p. 2), was asked in 1868 by then congressman, later US president, General James A. Garfield to translate the French pamphlet *Le Bilan de l'Empire* by Horn (1868).

The World Congress of the Deaf in 1893 credits translating papers sent from international visitors “from French, German and Italian” into English to Agatha M. Tiegel Hanson, Dudley W. George, George W. Veditz, Amos G. Draper, James L. Smith, and Thomas F. Fox (Fox et al., 1893). Fourteen years later, Olof Hanson, and again George, Fox, and Veditz “translated respectively the Scandinavian, Italian, French and German papers” (*Proceedings of the World's Congress of the Deaf*, 1904, p. 1). These were used both as intermediary translations during the meetings, and became the only version to appear in printed proceedings. A brief background for three deaf translators mentioned above reveals some relevant patterns.

Veditz had been raised in a German-speaking home, and became deaf at age 8 from scarlet fever; with the benefit of a private tutor, he also learned French (Gallagher, 1898a). His English target versions are available in published proceedings, but unfortunately the German source texts were not identified. Tiegel had been deafened aged 7 due to spinal meningitis, and despite fewer educational opportunities in childhood, was drawn to poetry, and became the first female graduate of Gallaudet in 1893 (Gallagher, 1898b). Unfortunately, she is not credited to specific papers in either proceedings, so none of her source or target texts are known. In the case of Swedish-born Olof Hanson, who lost his hearing at roughly the age of thirteen (Gallagher, 1898c), the published English versions, as well as a rare source document are available. A preliminary comparison of an original Swedish manuscript that Hanson worked from (Titze, 1904a) with his English translation

(Titze, 1904b) indicates that both texts reflect a high degree of literacy unmarked by features typical to deaf writers (Ingela Holmström, Personal communication). For all three, the onset of hearing loss later in childhood would have been a factor in access to spoken–written language literacy and speech abilities; not surprisingly, Hanson also read his English translation of Titze (1893) aloud.

Theatrical

Staged productions in particular have been a natural creative outlet within Deaf communities all over the world (B. Bragg, 1996), with a longstanding tradition of stage adaptations of original/in-translation English works, whether for Deaf schools, churches and clubs, or as a fundraising scheme among more general audiences. Deaf people in the UK have many such examples, including the nineteenth-century productions organized by Jane Groom: BSL translations of Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* and *The Sorrows of Mr. Snooks* ("Our Illustrations: A Theatrical Performance by Deaf Mutes," 1884, p. 674). In the US, plays in ASL translation began at Gallaudet College in the 1890s (Tadie, 1979), and Panara and Siger (1957) reveals one of the earliest glimpses into the theoretical and practical implications of a written "script for signing" (p. 30) created by deaf people for a campus production. This led to the National Theatre of the Deaf in 1967, where original works as well as in-house translations of classics and popular plays were shown (C. A. Padden & Humphries, 2005).

Armour

The history of deaf lay translators working from written texts into their national signed languages could form an entire thesis. Having been well prepared during his school years as mentioned above, Robert Armour continued using his translation abilities in adulthood, but for entertainments instead of schoolwork, and from English

to BSL—the reverse of his master’s dictation lessons. The Liverpool Adult Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society held regular lectures, which were either delivered directly in BSL, or interpreted by the local headmaster. An average audience of 51 was nearly equal in number to the combined Sunday morning and afternoon church services of 53 attendees, and many times that of any other single event or class. Armour was a regular speaker with too many credits to mention, so two examples are listed here. In 1877 he performed a BSL translation of the “Fidel, the Bohemian Dog” (*The Liverpool Adult Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society Report*, 1877, p. 9), a serialized sentimental tale that had appeared the previous year (“Fidel, the Bohemian Dog: A Story of the Thirty Years’ War,” 1876). Armour was given the stage several times throughout the next series, and presented a run of “Proverbs and Maxims” three times in 1878 (*The Liverpool Adult Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society Report*, 1878, p. 8).

Maginn

In subsequent centuries, the signing congregations that formed around school communities were informed by aims of religious and educational instruction for deaf children and adults. The task of deaf pastoral intermediaries was prompted from outside and within the Deaf-World:

“In many instances this ‘silent preaching’ originated with the deaf and dumb themselves. Some pious young man, more intelligent and better educated than most of his fellow sufferers, sympathising with them in their inability to gain spiritual nourishment from the ordinary preaching, has organised a service and taught his afflicted brethren, and at the present moment several of the missionaries in this field of labour are deaf-mutes. (S. Smith et al., 1875, p. 246)

The life of Francis Maginn (1861–1918), one such Irish missionary and community leader, was celebrated in his own lifetime (e.g., “Our portrait gallery. Mr. F. Maginn,” 1890) and thereafter (Stiles, 2015) has been well-covered in Deaf history literature (P. W. Jackson & Lee, 2010) but his role as a legal and linguistic intermediary is rarely mentioned. Leonard and Leahy (2016) revealed that Maginn advised defense counsel on securing an expert witness for a DP who stood accused of patricide in 1890, and Cormac Leonard’s ongoing research has catalogued his DI work, mainly in ecclesiastical settings. For example, Harris (1893) reported Maginn was the regular interpreter at an annual service in Cork, for “some 30 to 35 deaf mutes come in from the country round about” (p. 76). Whether he worked from a written sermon, via HI relay, or between the distinct varieties of sign languages in use across partisan and religious divides in Ireland is unknown. Maurice Hewson, another deaf Irish missionary who will be featured in a DI–HI team in the following chapter, has also been mentioned several times working in tandem with hearing clergy. In a 1888 wedding, he “assisted” a hearing Church of Ireland officiant in Dublin, and “translated every word into the finger language with grave emphasis and much gesticulation for the benefit of the attentive congregation” (“Church News at Home and Abroad,” 1888).

Macdonald

Thomas Alexander Macdonald (1882–1965) was a well-known figure who participated at large-scale public meetings, whose translations and performances have never been discussed. “Alec” attended the Protestant school for deaf children in Dublin and thereafter emigrated to England. He had a deaf brother, making this an early case of a DI with deaf family, though not intergenerational; the parents would

not have raised him using a signed language, it certainly became one of the languages of the home and extended family.

He met a delegation of French deaf visitors as early as 1908, and thereafter interpreted at the First International Games for the Deaf held in Paris in 1924, likely fluent in one-handed French-derived and two-handed British-derived fingerspelling (Melinda Napier, personal communication). Macdonald returned to France for a Huguenot conference two years later, where he interpreted a sermon delivered in spoken French into “French signs, from a copy of the sermon in English, which he had before him” (“Huguenot Conference at St. Hippolyte Du Fort,” 1926).²⁶

On 18th August, 1935, he was among the deaf and hearing clergy who officiated before “seven hundred people of 14 nationalities” who had assembled for the Fourth International Games for the Deaf being held in London (“Deaf and Dumb Athletes Worship in Silence,” 1935). The majority of athletes did not understand BSL, and would not have been able to rely upon “finger-spelling and lip reading in English” (ibid). This necessitated a spontaneous auxiliary “international language of natural signs—a kind of Esperanto for the deaf” (ibid.) at the various events and the worship service. Alan F. MacKenzie (1911–1997) was the assigned HI, and Macdonald the only named DI among the several deaf churchmen; his assignment was to perform a signed translation of “We Love the Place, O God,” absent any organ accompaniment and therefore freed from the tempo and meter imposed by the sound of the music, or structures in the English lyrics. As an example, the first two verses illustrate simple quatrains of six syllables per line, with each verse introducing a concept, then commenting upon it:

²⁶ Many thanks to Melinda Napier for this source as well.

We love the place, O God,
 wherein thine honour dwells;
 the joy of thine abode
 all earthly joy excels.
 We love the house of prayer,
 wherein thy servants meet;
 and thou, O Lord, art there
 thy chosen flock to greet.

(Julian, 1892)

This structure and content of the text lends itself particularly well to translation into a signed language, and Macdonald's rendition was recalled with great admiration at his retirement in 1949 (Gilby, 1949), and his death in 1965 ("Thomas Alexander Macdonald," 1965).

Hunt–Pratt

The first example of a DI–HI team working between a deaf signer and hearing English speakers appears in the profile of seventeenth-century deaf New England colonist Sarah Hunt Pratt (1640–1729), presented in Carty, Macready and Sayers (2009). This well-researched case study is commonly cited as a rare early example of community interpreting specifically by deaf people, although HIs are also present in the narrative. The piece hinges on the account of her acceptance into a Puritan congregation in 1683, when two female hearing relatives who were "likely...her stepsisters, Abigail and Mary King" (p. 310), and deaf husband Matthew (1628–1713) interpreted her signed remarks to the assembly into spoken and written

English, respectively. The formality of that day stands in some contrast to the Hunt–Pratt wedding twenty-two years earlier, when their banns or intentions to marry were not recorded. According to a fifty-page sample from town records (Foster, 1910), the couple were among ~1% of marriages that either waived or had no written evidence of the legal and religious requirement of advance public notice. Whether this was deliberately pardoned on the basis of perceived competence or logistical obstacles, or simply an oversight, is unknown. Sarah had fallen sick as a toddler and with the resulting deafness lost the beginnings of speech; as an adult, she communicated in signs with both deaf and hearing people. Subsequent attempts to develop her English literacy were not successful, but a contemporary diarist vouches that she demonstrated “notable accuracy and quickness of understanding by the Eye” (Mather, 1684, p. 291). Since Matthew was deafened at age twelve and twelve years older than Sarah, Carty, Macready and Sayers (2009) rightly suppose that he “was literate and educated” (2009, p. 312), and therefore well-positioned to act as intermediary. This comports with data to follow in Chapter Six that suggest deaf legal intermediaries were typically more bilingual in spoken–written and signed language, whereas most DPs had command of a single gestural system, and perhaps rudimentary English fluency.

Massieu

Finally, three examples outside the Anglo–American context, within French civil law, warrant mention. Perhaps the first legal DI–HI team in Europe, the deaf teacher Jean Massieu (1772–1846) and his own former teacher, the Abbé Roch Ambroise Sicard (1742–1822), were listed as the interpreters of record at the robbery trial of a young deaf man in 1795 (“Tribunal Criminel Du Département de

Paris,” 1795). The pair again facilitated a burglary trial (Breton de la Martinière, 1800).²⁷

According to the transcript, Sicard rendered a descriptive interpretation that allowed the judges a window into the strategies Massieu undertook to communicate with the accused, and by so doing, left a rich record of both the HI–DI and DI–DP exchanges. To introduce the examination and ask the prisoner his age, Massieu enters into an extended trial-and-error pantomime, but without success.²⁸ Like countless examples from historical and contemporary practice, such preliminary or abstract questioning can prove the most difficult. The DI's attempt to elicit a response from the more concrete and recent series of events that recount the burglary itself was far more effective, if not somewhat leading in the level of expansion of narrative detail.²⁹

Clerc

Laurent Clerc (1785–1869) was a contemporary of Massieu and the pivotal figure that bridged Deaf education from France to the United States. He moved from Paris to Connecticut in 1816 (Clerc, 1952) and profoundly influenced the vocabulary of ASL, the formation of the first permanent school for deaf children, and a generation of educators, both deaf and hearing, but his role as a DI in France has

²⁷ This latter case was known to me, and after many failed attempts to locate it, I am indebted to Yann Cantin, Maître de Conférences at Université Paris 8 for this document.

²⁸ “Ici Massieu entre en conversation muette avec l'accusé; mais celui-ci intimide, a de la peine à comprendre. Massieu lui demande par gestes, combien d'hivers il a vus, en soufflant sur ses doigts, et en figurant par gestes la croissance. N'obtenant point de réponse satisfaisante, il lui demande successivement combien de moissons, combien d'automne il a vus...” (Breton de la Martinière, 1800, p. 7).

²⁹ Massieu, par son jeu pantomime, figure l'extérieur d'une maison; il joue le personnage d'un homme qui la considérant au dehors, réfléchit qu'il peut y trouver de l'argent: il cherche dans sa poche une clef, feint de l'essayer à la porte; mais ne pouvant l'ouvrir, il se saisit d'un instrument, puis il fait semblant de pratiquer un trou à la muraille. Se tournant ensuite vers le prévenu, il lui demande s'il n'est pas vrai qu'il soit entre dans la maison. Duval: (Signes exprimant qu'en effet il y est entre.) Sicard: Il en fait l'aveu; vous voyez qu'il l'a parfaitement entendu.

gone largely unnoticed. At some point between 1805–1816 while employed at L’Institut National de Jeunes Sourds de Paris, Clerc was approached by a young German-born deaf engraver who could not functionally communicate in written German or French, and so came to the school to enlist an intermediary to assist him. He wished to visit the Viennese ambassador to apply for employment, and Clerc happily agreed to accompany him during his free time (Celliez & Sicard, 1851, p. 16). Though the official was absent, Clerc “calls upon several engravers; by writing he makes known the object of his visit, and...at last succeeds in getting him a place with an engraver” (Akerly, 1821, p. 332). It is notable that Ladd (2003) mentioned a contemporary example of this practice still in operation centuries later, when a job applicant was unable to communicate with an employer, who “called in an old Deaf man who worked there and he became like an interpreter, but all done in writing” (p. 374).

Unnamed Frenchman

In a third French example, Joseph Piroux, a hearing educator who founded L’Institut des Sourds-Muets de Nancy, recorded an unsuccessful attempt by a deaf intermediary in March 1840. Though this brief example occurred outside of the UK/US, and records failed communication between DI and DP, it nevertheless offers interesting insights: a deaf person was *specifically requested* to mediate the case, and it appears the DI and hearing authorities expected the solution to work. A deaf man had attempted the electoral oath in writing, but could not satisfy the tribunal in Narbonne as to his literacy or competence; an unnamed deaf student from the same city was called to interpret, and took questions in writing from the president. He approached the applicant, a fellow deaf man, using “his hand and eyes” but was

mystified by the odd interaction and utterly unable to make himself understood, or elicit a sensible response (Piroux, 1840, p. 77).

Conclusion

This chapter has retraced the foundations of native deaf intermediaries through the lens of deaf education, followed by contemporary views of signed language linguistics and the path to professionalization of SLI. Ten historical examples of DI work illustrated interpretation and translation between written–spoken and signed texts.

Turner (2006) insists the “reason for the non-recognition of the translation and interpreting work done by Deaf people” is in part because such work “happened within the community rather than in the wider public gaze” (p. 286). Using legal venues as a source of reliable data, and recasting the evidence from related domains as T/I history, has expanded the DI story sufficiently so as to draw preliminary conclusions. The assertion that DIs appeared as the Deaf-World *habitus* diverged linguistically and culturally from the Hearing one will be further examined in the cases presented in the following chapter. Also, the longstanding assumption that DIs (just as the culturally-received myth about HIs) were products of signing deaf families will be further disproven, or at best corrected as a more contemporary pattern.

It is well understood that under educational regimes that prohibited the use of signed language, DIs with signing families were linguistically privileged—indeed a dynamic that carries through in today’s interpreter corps. However, under an earlier era that embraced signed language as a pedagogical, social and liturgical tool, the DIs with access to an education, regardless of family status, were similarly

privileged. Deaf people who are educated in an environment where signing is a language of instruction and social discourse regularly interact with others within a wide range of fluency in spoken, written, and signed language, as well as gestural idiolects brought by new pupils. This variety was likely greater at the advent of formal deaf education in the UK during the latter eighteenth century, and in the US during the early nineteenth century, prior to free and compulsory schooling for all children. Deaf immigrants with or without formal signed language from their countries of origin replenish this natural training ground for deaf intermediaries today, and many become intermediaries in their own right. From a longitudinal perspective, DI history has followed the same professional trajectory as HIs: obscurity, isolated instances, legal legitimacy, social and cultural acceptance, training and education, standards, and credentials.

Turner (2006) may be an exaggeration to claim that “social misperceptions of Deaf people as intellectually incapable” have not allowed “the possibility of Deaf people enacting the complex relational and cognitive demands of the interpreting function...they have not traditionally been recognised in any way, and certainly not conceived or formalised as ‘interpreting’” (p. 286). However, the view that DIs appeared via Deaf-World structures only, after HIs had become rooted first in the common law and later as a cultural fixture, creates several implications of historical re-framing for both DI and HI roles. The perception that HIs “may work from a different set of ethical principles” than DIs (The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team, 2009, p. 7) has real-world and potentially dangerous implications for practitioners today. Rather than expecting HIs to adopt a Deaf-centered posture wholesale, the hybrid HI pedigree contains a legal foundation outside of Deaf community and cultural constructs, and later formed

attachments to an emergent Deaf-World. For DIs, the growth has been in the reverse, with Deaf nativist origins that were conscripted into the common law. A more nuanced understanding of this distinction also enriches the debate of how “the skills of a DI working in legal settings can be or should be applied in generalist contexts” (A. Smith, 2015, p. 12) and vice versa. A refined understanding of DI and HI origins positions all interpreters to better balance their respective legal and community obligations to cultural and linguistic transfer, from the courtroom to the village common.

CHAPTER SIX: DEAF INTERMEDIARIES/INTERPRETERS/TRANSLATORS

DATA

...what a great boon it is for the deaf...to have a native speaker to minister to them. What they know he knows, and he can read their minds with intuitive sympathy, and express his own thoughts in the directest and most convincing way.³⁰

The previous chapters examined the historical bases and legal foundations of hearing sign language intermediaries with deaf parties in the UK and US. This chapter extends that role to deaf signers who emerged later to function as expert witnesses and interpreters in courtrooms from 1817-1908. Each case carries unique features, and the data to follow will demonstrate a range of competencies. These include assessing the linguistic and legal competence of a deaf defendant on the record, relay interpreting the DP's sign system to an HI who produces the English rendition, and working solo between the DP and written or spoken English for court personnel.

First, I describe the dataset of eight cases involving nine deaf intermediaries, taken from court transcripts, legal reference texts and contemporary newspaper accounts, which contain a widely varying level of detail. The discussion of historical evidence will include three examples of four deaf expert witnesses, three deaf interpreters who worked with a hearing team, and two solo DIs. All of these individuals were educated, and would have used both written English and a variety of either what is now known as British Sign Language (BSL) or American Sign

³⁰ Anwyl, J. B. (1919). *Glamorgan mission to the deaf and dumb*. Merthyr: Joseph Williams & Sons.

Language (ASL). Many also were able to use nonstandard gestural systems and quickly assimilated the idiolects of culturally unaffiliated and/or uneducated DPs.

The data discussed in this chapter attest that deaf people began to appear as intermediaries in legal contexts in the UK and US only *after* culturally Deaf signing communities were formed. After schools were founded, those deaf adults privileged by greater exposure to signed and written language, or world knowledge were enlisted to mediate for others less prepared linguistically and socially to navigate the legal system. These parties may have had no exposure to formal signed or written language, or although literate in English to some degree, were less bilingual than the DIs.

Data/Method

The story of DIs uses similar types of sources as were presented in Chapter Four to describe the HI role, but differs from earlier analyses by including nearly every available example. Some of these data stem from bare mention in a secondary source, and others carry a wealth of primary documentation. One US case from 1908 for a 1907 assault has been included, given that it took place just after the turn of the century, has ample documentation to warrant inclusion, and both the DP and DI were born in the 1850s.

Table 7 below presents an abstract of all examples of DIs contained in the current dataset. With a limited ability to confirm the relationships between DPs and DIs, the details suggest that both deaf witness–interpreter pairs were known to each other. It is somewhat clearer that perhaps one defendant and two victims were known by their interpreters, and conclusive that none of the expert witnesses knew their deaf defendants beforehand.

Table 7. Roles of Deaf Intermediaries 1817–1908

Date	DI Role	Court	DP Role	DI Knew DP
1817	Expert Witness	UK	Defendant	No
1830s–50s	Expert Witness (2)	US	Victim	No
1849	Expert Witness (2)	UK	Defendant	No
1870	Expert Witness	US	Defendant	No
1871	Interpreter	UK	Defendants	Yes
1876	Interpreter	US	Witness	Yes?
1884	DI–HI Team	UK	Victim	No?
1884	Interpreter	US	Witness	Yes
1885	DI–HI Team	US	Victim	Yes
1908	DI–HI Team	US	Victim	Yes

Except for the three solo DIs, the majority of examples feature relay interpreting, which according to Dollerup (2000) is “a term which is well-established in interpreting, but...largely overlooked in Translation Studies” (19). While this lack may be far less within signed language T/IS where DIs are discussed often, the same author’s definition stands for both signed and spoken–written languages:

...relay can be defined as a mediation from source to target language in which the translational product has been realised in another language than that of the original; the defining feature is that the intermediary translation has an audience, that is consumers, of its own. (Dollerup, 2000, p. 19)

In other words, the product of the first interpreter becomes the source of the second, as shown in Figure 15 below, based on Belsky (2014):

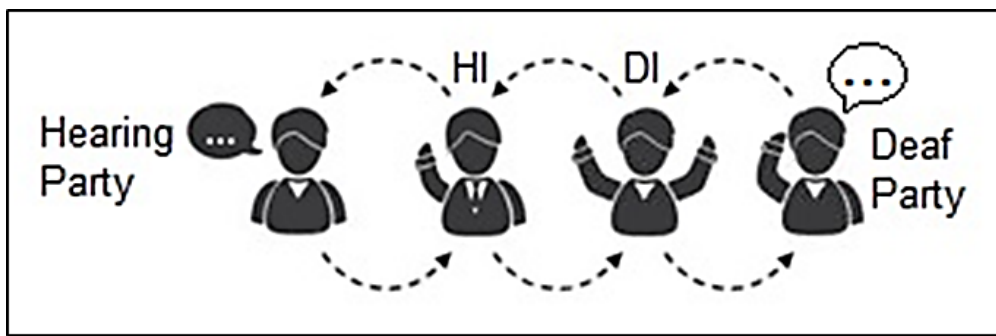


Figure 18. Diagram of a HI–DI Relay Interpreting Team (Belsky, 2014).

The data also contain at least four nineteenth-century examples of hearing associates and family members conversant with the idiolect of isolated deaf individuals who did not have access to education, and primarily operated in the Hearing world. These intermediaries assisted or replaced the HI who was fluent in the a national signed language and familiar with behavioral and cognitive patterns of deaf people in general, but unacquainted with the non-standard signing of the DP. Though not included in this chapter that focuses solely upon the work of DIs, these could provide further analysis of relay interpreting, and draw comparisons to DI–HI work. The practice continued to be recommended relatively recently:

Use of Other Resource Persons. Family members and friends can be valuable resources since they have experience with the consumer and, therefore, may be able to provide the interpreter with specific input relative to the consumer's communication behaviors and skills, as well as important background information (e.g., where the consumer has lived, worked, etc.). (Dominique DeVries et al., 1980, p. 123)

Expert Witnesses

In the US, all interpreters are categorized as witnesses who “must give an oath or affirmation to make a true translation” as an arm of the court (An act: To

establish rules of evidence for certain courts and proceedings, 1975, p. 604).

Mathers (2006) includes the role of expert witness among the functions of a signed language interpreter. Leahy (2015) found that the historical development of the HI role embedded the now-obsolete necessity of vouching for a given DP to appear in court, either as named party or witness. Four deaf expert witnesses who appeared in three cases from the data were similarly called to testify as to a defendant's mental and moral legitimacy, or legal fitness to stand trial.

Heriot–Marsden

The first offers few details, and the only evidence is a brief newspaper report—no records from the Brown Street Borough Court in Manchester seem to have been kept or retained by local or national repositories. In December 1849, a man was brought before magistrate Daniel Maude for a fortune-telling swindling operation, and pretending to be deaf (this was not uncommon at the time, and done in order to add to one's mystique and gain confidence of the public). Head constable Richard Beswick called Heriot and Marsden, two young deaf men affiliated with the local school for the deaf to settle the man's identity. No further information has yet been found on Heriot, but Marsden is probably Alston Marsden, listed as “Deaf–Dumb,” aged 32 in the 1861 UK Census in Bury, Lancashire, and admitted under the name Ailston Marsden to the Manchester School for the Deaf in June 1847 (“Deaf and Dumb School. Election of Children.,” 1847). The two men began “a conversation with the prisoner by means of the finger alphabet,” and “both declared their conviction that the prisoner was an impostor” (“A Fortune-Teller at Fault,” 1849). No hearing interpreter was mentioned; it is unknown whether they communicated their opinion via writing, speech or gesture, but it obviously convinced the court, and along with other witness' corroborating testimony, the prisoner was found guilty.

It is notable that another case of a unsuccessful DP/DI communication occurred at the County Navan Board of Governors in 1887, wherein a deaf workhouse inmate was called to verify the claim that a new arrival was deaf. The unnamed DI “busied himself for some minutes making signs” with a new arrival, but “without effect,” and surprisingly, was then immediately ejected from the interview (“A Stray Deaf Mute,” 1887). I am indebted to Cormac Leonard for this item; consulting the institutional records to verify the interaction, only revealed that the minutes of the legal proceeding were unfortunately not documented.

Reaves

Court records and corroborating secondary sources are fortunately available in the next two examples; in both cases much more information is available than will be given, in the interest of highlighting details of an interpreting story, rather than Deaf history. Henry Dennie Reaves (1844–1911) was born to British and Canadian parents (*Death Certificate: Henry Dennie Reaves*, 1911). He spent his first years in Montréal, and after becoming deafened as a child, was enrolled at the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb (now NYSD), where he later stayed on as a teacher. Sources conflict slightly as to the exact age he contracted typhus and became deaf. The 1880 US census reports that he was deafened aged 5 ½ (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880b), while school records claim he was 4 ½ years of age (*List of Pupils Admitted into the New-York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb*, n.d.). Either of these would indicate early spoken language input and perhaps some facility with English, and could predict greater success with literacy post-illness. He may not have retained the use of his voice in adulthood, asserting he was decidedly a “mute...not a semi-mute” (Reaves, 1870).

It was during that time at NYSD Reaves accompanied hearing superintendent Isaac Peet to assess an uneducated deaf murder suspect in Kingston, New York. Levi Bodine, a young black deaf man, stood accused of murdering Daniel Hasbrouck, his much older white employer, during an argument. Bodine had been removed at age seven from the almshouse where he and his deaf brother were born, and forced to work for Hasbrouck. During those ten years of servitude, he “had run away several times” (“A Mute Murderer on Trial,” 1870), but was always captured and returned. After a decade of isolation with Hasbrouck, effectively enslaved with no formal education, it was suggested the prisoner be sent to NYSD (ibid.) which Peet quickly refuted to avoid public outcry, adding an offer for private tutoring (Peet, 1870).

It stands to reason that Peet, a second-generation educator of the deaf and thereby de-facto interpreter—if not moreso as husband to a deaf woman for over 15 years (Church of the Puritans, 1854)—would have been called in as an authority. He drew praise from one contemporary in his ability to work from ASL to English:

He was the most wonderful interpreter I ever saw, and especially did he excel in this most difficult task of translating· from signs into English...and would give such a perfect reproduction of the argument as to fill me with wonder and admiration. I have never seen his equal in this respect. The words seemed to flow from him without any mental effort at all, and to be the most perfect translation possible. (Caldwell, 1911, p. 176)

It is even more noteworthy, therefore, that he chose to bring Reaves to assist in that task. At NYSD, Peet would have had sufficient exposure to isolated and immigrant deaf children who were either uneducated, or used gestural idiolects, and signed

languages from other countries. His own father published a nuanced essay on the finer points of the “moral and intellectual development” of deaf people who have not yet acquired fluent, formal signing (H. P. Peet, 1855, p. 5). The younger Peet seemed to have been systematically studying translation exercises with deaf faculty, as he described some years later:

I generally take a passage of Scripture and read it...by signs, and they give me the sentences, the words corresponding; they spell them out as they recognize them; and if they cannot recognize the word...I try it again, and get a better sign if I can, and keep on, until finally we get a sign that I am sure they understand, and they give me a corresponding word. It often happens that one of them suggests a sign which is a good deal better than mine, and I accept it. (Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf and Dumb, 1887a, p. 182)

Recognizing the value of a well-educated deaf intermediary at this difficult case, Peet deferred to Reaves as an obvious choice; he was known within the NYSD community to be a master orator, story teller, and interpreter of poetry and drama (*Henry Dennie Reaves Biographical File*, n.d.). Reaves’ linguistic creativity uniquely equipped him to interview the prisoner and offer his opinion as to Bodine’s fitness to stand trial in a capital case. Contemporaneous letters that Reaves was an accomplished illustrator, and had a nuanced and well-developed command of written English (Reaves, 1870, 1875). This likely indicates he had a highly attuned visual sense, and was a balanced ASL–English bilingual, if not polyglot with a smattering of French and Langue des Signes Québécoise.

Peet and Reaves briefly met with Bodine in the jail that had held him for eight months while the Ulster County authorities determined how to proceed. At the grand jury hearing, Peet was first “examined at great length, and...did not consider the prisoner capable of understanding judicial proceedings” (“A Mute Murderer on Trial,” 1870). Reaves was the final witness and corroborated the opinion via Peet, the “interpreter sworn for the purpose” (New York Court of Oyer and Terminer, 1870, p. 266). The men had surely discussed the matter in preparation for that moment, and Peet probably did not struggle to interpret the expert testimony, as can often be the case (Miguélez, 2001); the court transcript is silent on the nature of the Peet–Reaves collaboration, one reporter marveled at the “silent communications, transmitted with almost lightening rapidity, [which] elicited the greatest admiration” (“A Mute Murderer on Trial,” 1870). Their testimonies were compelling enough to override at least thirteen others’ listed in the minutes, including the medical expert who had just opined that Bodine was “capable of a certain degree of comprehension” (ibid.) Believing it “far better that justice should be temporarily delayed than...trampled upon, or that a doubtful result should be arrived at” (ibid), the judge did not allow the trial to proceed.

Though his case occasioned a change to the laws of New York allowing “judicial inquiry as to the sanity of persons indicted for capital offenses” (State of New York, 1871), Bodine remained in legal limbo seven months later, unable to be tried, released, or sent to the New York school (“Exchanges,” 1871). He was thereafter admitted to the New York State Asylum for Insane Criminals (E. Harris, 1872), and after spending the next forty-two years in similar institutions, escaped and drowned himself in an icy pond on the facility grounds (“Matteawan Mute a Suicide,” 1913). The testimony from Peet and Reaves almost certainly prevented a foregone

execution, and also prolonged Bodine's life long enough for him to wrest ultimate control over it.

Wood

The final case discussed in this section came chronologically first, and took place in Scotland. It is by far the most well-known and widely misunderstood in the category, and may have entered the legal literature with Hume (1829), and begun an incomplete and inaccurate journey through countless Deaf-related sources with Kyle, Woll, Pullen and Maddix (1985). Lee (2004) even claimed it is “the first recorded instance anywhere in the world where a court appointed a sign language interpreter” (p. 238), an error of roughly 100 years.³¹ The deaf expert witness was John P. Wood (1762–1838), well-known figure in general (e.g., Campbell, 1811, p. 98) and British Deaf history (e.g., Hay, 1998), was a private pupil of the original Braidwood Academy, where he was trained in speech and speechreading, and also used signs, fingerspelling, and writing (Lee, 2015). Few records from his employment history mentioned in Mitchell (1963) can be located at National Records of Scotland, but there is evidence that later in his career, he had a few hearing assistants and clerks subordinate to him in the Scottish Excise Department (*The Edinburgh Almanack, or Universal Scots and Imperial Register, for 1828*, 1828, p. 268).

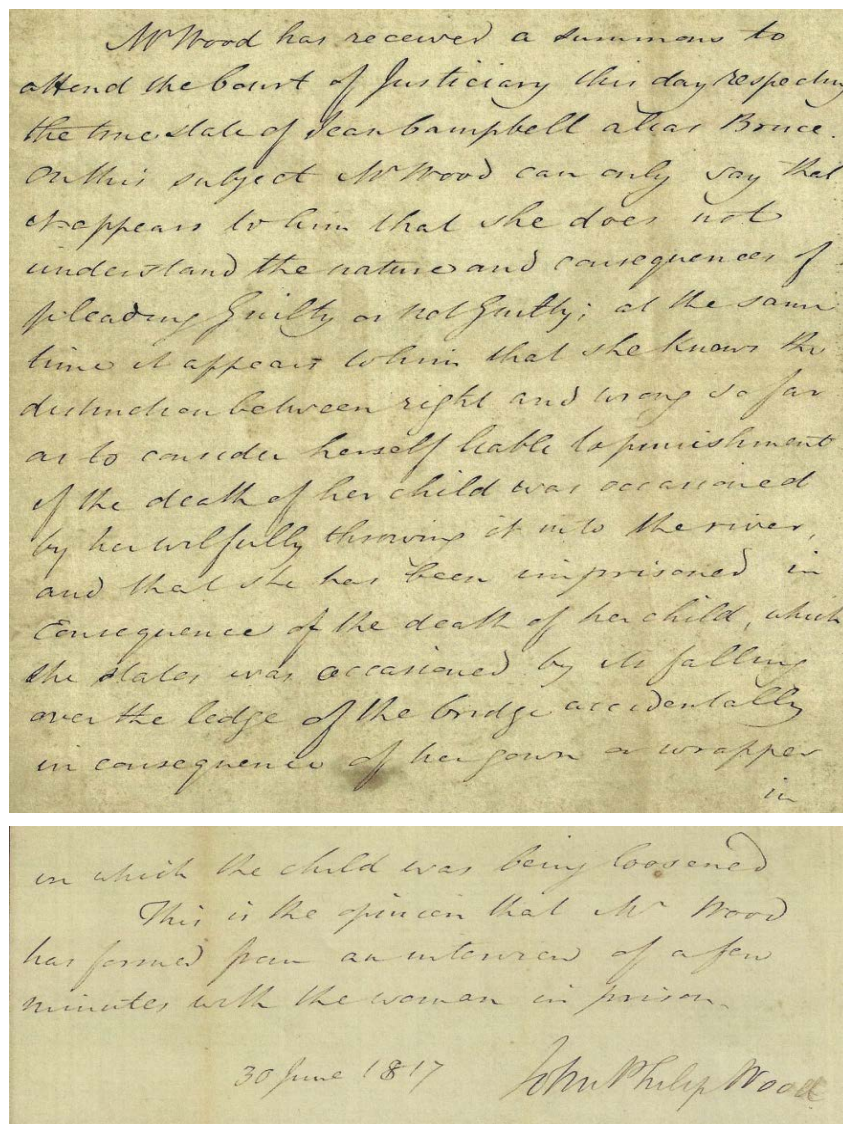
The case to which Wood was called in as an expert witness involved an uneducated deaf mother who stood accused of infanticide. Though Jean Campbell (known also as Jean Bruce) claimed her three-year-old daughter accidentally fell from the Old Glasgow Bridge, she was taken into custody on November 19th, 1816 (“Proceedings before the High Court of Justiciary,” 1817). Like Bodine, the prisoner

³¹ See Griffin v. Ferrers et al. (1720) as discussed in Leahy (2015).

finally appeared in court after months of confinement. The hearing interpreter, Robert Kinniburgh (headmaster at the Institution for Deaf-Mutes, Edinburgh) had modest success communicating with her, and according to the expectations of the day also offered his opinion of her mental and moral capacity to be tried. Those interactions are also documented in primary and secondary sources, but in keeping with the DI focus of this chapter, and given his earlier mentions in Chapter Four, Kinniburgh's work on this case will not be discussed at length. Primary documents ("Proceedings before the High Court of Justiciary," 1817) and secondary news accounts ("High Court of Justiciary," 1817) agree that he conceded Campbell/Bruce had a foundation of right and wrong, as well as a vague notion of a higher power, and could confirm or deny specific acts. However, he did not believe she understood laws such as murder in the abstract, or that she could understand the nuances of a trial, and admitted that he did not understand her in all instances.

It is not known how Wood was invited to add his opinion to the case, or if Kinniburgh suggested or facilitated his involvement. Unlike Peet–Reaves, the pair did not appear in court, and Kinniburgh did not interpret for Wood's testimony. The main source authors have used to cite Wood's involvement has long been an article in the *Caledonian Mercury* from July 3, 1817 which states "Mr Wood, Auditor of Excise, gave in a written statement to the Court...This opinion he formed from a visit to the pannel in prison." While this source cites the affidavit at length, and includes faithful excerpts from the primary documents, no attempt has been made to reference the original case file, at the National Records of Scotland. Wood corroborated Kinniburgh's opinion through a two-page affidavit (*Diligence in Jean Campbell, Alias Bruce Case. Process Papers of the High Court of Justiciary*, 1817).

The entire document is shown in Figure 19, with an accompanying transcription:



Mr Wood has received a summons to attend the Court of Justiciary this day respecting the true state of Jean Campbell alias Bruce. On this subject Mr. Wood can only say that it appears to him that she does not understand the nature and consequence of pleading Guilty or Not Guilty; at the same time it appears to him that she knows the distinction between right and wrong so far as to consider herself liable to punishment if the death of her child was occasioned by her wilfully throwing it into the river and that she has been imprisoned in consequence of the death of her child, which she states was occasioned by its falling over the ledge of the bridge accidentally in consequence of her gown or wrapper in which the child was being loosened.

This is the opinion that Mr Wood has formed after an interview of a few minutes with the woman in prison.

Figure 19. Diligence in Jean Campbell, Alias Bruce, National Records of Scotland. Transcription by Anne Leahy.

Given the difference in handwriting between the body of the text and the signature, it would appear the opinion was dictated, and not entered as a sworn witness in court.

Both Kinniburgh and Wood's nuanced understanding of the crucial point—understanding moral right vs. wrong as opposed to the legal procedure of pleading guilty vs. not guilty—moved the court to order further investigation. The defendant finally plead not guilty that September via Kinniburgh; The verdict returned from the bench to absolve her as a "Simpliciter," and she was dismissed home to Argylehire.

Deaf–Hearing Teams

Moving from expert testimony to the interpreting function proper, I will offer an 1884 example from Ireland of the first known deaf–hearing team at trial throughout the UK or US. I owe thanks to Cormac Leonard for sharing his information about this matter, to which I added only a few additional sources. The second case was the second known DI–HI team, and took place one year later in the state of Indiana in the US.

Hewson–Hewson

In May 1884, a 33-year-old deaf woman named Margaret Gilliland was assaulted by James Coyle, who with his wife Kate had been drinking in her flat. A religious dispute escalated, and Coyle was alleged to have stabbed her in the groin. Margaret began her education at age ten with her younger deaf brother James at a residential school; the headmaster found her to be "an intelligent and mild girl," and she had been apprenticed to a dressmaker (*Claremont Register Book*, 1852). The combination of exposure to language through familial, social and educational ties, as well as sustained employment indicate that Margaret's history was probably relatively stable and not particularly isolating.

The case was heard at the Drogheda, Ireland quarter sessions, and Margaret, who was apparently reasonably bilingual in Irish Sign Language and English, and had given a clear deposition “by means of written questions, to which she gave written replies” (“Serious Stabbing Case in Drogheda,” 1884) the next morning to the local Clerk of Petty Sessions. The primary documents for the petty, magisterial and quarter sessions no longer exist, but local newspapers published ample details which a contemporary practitioner might recognize and find a credible account.

Barrister Thomas Hewson (1844–1911) was sworn as interpreter at the trial, but could only fingerspell, and the DP who “did not understand the dumb alphabet, but knew the signs, and conveyed her thoughts by means of signs” was unable to follow him. Hewson then proposed a solution: his deaf older brother Maurice (1842–1919), who understood both signs and fingerspelling, could assist. It is important to note that Maurice Hewson was an earlier graduate of the Claremont Protestant school for deaf children in Dublin—the same Margaret had attended—so they would have shared considerable overlap in their Irish Sign Language, despite generational and gender differences. Then in his early 40s, Maurice was a well-known leader in the deaf community, and had worked as a missionary in Dublin and elsewhere since 1867. Ecclesiastical sources indicate he also functioned as an interpreter in ceremonial contexts with largely frozen text with which he would have been familiar (“The Claremont institution,” 1880; *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*, 1888), and samples of his writing evidence a thorough command of English.

Thomas swore Maurice as the second interpreter at trial “to interpret the signs to him, and he would explain them to the court,” and the brothers became the first known deaf–hearing legal interpreting team of record in Ireland and the UK. Margaret Gilliland was also sworn “to give evidence” without objection or incident,

and Thomas Hewson “then proceeded to examine her, by signs, the questions but by [Crown prosecutor] Mr. Caraher having been conveyed to him by his brother, using the finger alphabet” (“Drogheda Quarter Sessions,” 1884). Thomas then read Maurice’s fingerspelling into spoken English for the court. The Hewsons apparently had practice in this form of communication; not long after, Thomas appeared as prosecutor *and* interpreter of record for Maurice to testify in another case (“Police Intelligence,” 1889), and the men shared a home with their other siblings well into adulthood (*Census of Ireland*, 1901).

Wright–Koon

The case of Henry Skaggs vs. State of Indiana was heard in the Montgomery County, Indiana Circuit Court in August 1885, and has been well known to legal scholars for decades (Macy, 1948; Mathers, 2009; Myers, 1968). The local jury returned a guilty verdict, but due to unusual circumstances, including the appointment of a deaf interpreter, the matter was appealed to the Indiana State Supreme Court. The basic facts were that the deaf prosecuting witness, Mamie Ennis, aged fifteen (Indiana Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, 1877), accused Skaggs, who had been her stepfather for five years, of a violent sexual assault. She was first called to testify through speaking instead of signing, but with “jury not being able to understand her, the court called an interpreter” (“A Sensible Judge,” 1885). It is unclear how Charles W. Wright (1844–1901), a local insurance agent (“Funeral of Chas. W. Wright,” 1901), was pressed into service; he testified that “he did not understand the deaf and dumb language, and was not a competent interpreter (Kern, 1887, p. 56). According to DeVries et al (1980), the recusal was a vigilant and appropriate choice:

...the interpreter should decline an interpreting assignment or replace her/himself if s/he is not comfortable or does not possess the skills for an interpreting assignment. An important alternative to consider is the use of an intermediary interpreter. An intermediary interpreter can often be the needed link to ensure understanding for the hearing-impaired client who has a physical/mental problem. (p. 59)

Much like the Ruston case (see Leahy, 2016) mentioned in Chapter Four, defense counsel John Courtney objected to the very fact of a signing DP testifying through an interpreter, to which the bench returned a firm and spirited overrule:

Your Honor, there is no statute recognizing the deaf and dumb language and I have searched in vain in the books for a precedent for this unusual proceeding.

Judge Snyder.—If you will suggest any other way to get her testimony before the jury, we will adopt it.

Courtney—I have been utterly at a loss, your Honor, to find any legal way out of the dilemma, [sic] and know of no way of her testifying authorized by law.

Judge Snyder.—Very well, Mr. Courtney, if there is no law applicable to this, we will make a little right here that is. Mr. Interpreter, translate her language to the jury so it will be intelligible. (“A Sensible Judge,” 1885)

If attorney and judge had consulted legal reference texts of the day, common law bases permitting Ennis to testify would have been readily available; this banter was probably a double bluff between two men who knew very well what the precedent was. Unfortunately, Ennis’ second attempt through Wright proved re-traumatizing, for when “the shocking question” was put to her, she “fled

precipitately...into an adjoining room” and her older deaf schoolmate, Rosa B. Koon (1867–1931) immediately followed, “without any direction from the court and without any objection” from Courtney (Kern, 1887, p. 57). They remained in the anteroom for “about one minute,” as “Rosie” calmed Mamie, who gave an *ex parte* response privately. The pair returned before the court, and Koon “without having repeated the question to the witness, communicated her answer thereto, obtained from her in such seclusion, to the interpreter Wright, who gave such answer orally” (*ibid.*). The admission of this asynchronous testimony through an interpreter–advocate and the surrounding irregular circumstances formed the basis for Skaggs’ appeal.

We can assume from the above that Rosa Koon was somehow better suited to communicating with both DP Mamie Ennis and the HI Charles Wright. Firstly, she was three years older; more importantly, Koon later found success as a newspaper compositor (Messersmith, 1890), so likely had serviceable English literacy. Before Ennis became deaf around the age of two due to “Brain Fever or cerebro-spinal meningitis” she might have begun to talk, but afterward no longer retained any speech or ability to read lips (Skaggs, 1881). Koon lost her hearing much later to “spinal fever at the age of seven or eight years old,” and at the time of her admission “could and can say some things yet,” having retained the “power of speech...but [couldn’t] exercise it” (Harvey, 1877). At the time of her admission, she was still a young child, and her caretakers naturally reported she was not a reliable lipreader.

Transliteration can serve as an intermediate step for an immature language or an unprepared translator with a limited vocabulary. Delisle and Woodsworth (1995) cite an example, while extremely asynchronous on the order of years, shares some parallels with the interpreting team in *Skaggs*:

Translators also exercised their creativity when it came to producing appropriate terminology. The early Arabic translators were frequently obliged to use transliteration, partly because their command of Arabic was not always sufficient, but also because the language itself had not acquired the necessary philosophical and scientific lexicon. When these early translations were revised—sometimes only a century later—transliterated terms were replaced with neologisms that were more in keeping with the morphological structures of Arabic. (Delisle & Woodsworth, 1995, p. 114)

Wright seemed to have some minimal knowledge of either ASL or a gestural repertoire that allowed for the kinds of details and representations necessary to communicate with Koon, but no evidence has been found to explain how he developed that ability, however meager. It is also likely that she was able to glean some of the English source with a combination of speechreading, augmented by hints in Wright's patchy signed rendition. The location of the original trial in Crawfordsville was roughly fifty miles from the girls' residential school in Indianapolis, negating any possibility that Wright had regular contact with other deaf youths or adults. Koon's home town of New Castle was yet another fifty miles further away from the Montgomery County courthouse. It is unknown whether she accompanied Ennis for emotional support, or intended to act as an intermediary that day, but it is certain she did not have regular contact with Wright.

In response to Skaggs' eight-part appeal of October 1886, the Indiana Supreme Court affirmed HI–DI teams into US caselaw:

Although one may not be an adept in the sign language, he may nevertheless be a competent interpreter in the examination of a deaf and

dumb witness, and the accuracy of the interpretation is a question of fact for the decision of the jury.

The trial court may appoint as many interpreters as it deems necessary to get the facts before the court and jury.

The manner in which examinations through interpreters shall be conducted is a matter to be regulated by the trial court, at its discretion, and will not be reviewed on appeal in the absence of showing an injury. (Kern, 1887)

Yabroff Kolod (1979) used *Skaggs* to support both practical and intangible aspects of a courtroom HI–DI team, and a procedure that was still being followed a century later. The unexamined use of linguistic terminology and pared-down technical description of interpreting likely served to expose the intended audience to a set of circumstances they would have considered unusual. It also illustrates well how practicing interpreters continue to struggle to find an elegant description of an intermediary interpreter some forty years on:

[T]he lawyer or judge speaks and the hearing interpreter signs...then the deaf interpreter translates the formal sign language into a combinations of gestures, mime, and rudimentary ASL. The deaf witness answers in gesture and mime which the deaf interpreter translates into formal sign language. The hearing interpreter, in turn, verbalizes the response in English. (Yabroff Kolod, 1979, p. 24)

The same source offers a personal viewpoint that the presence of the DI can improve the quality of the DP's experience, "not only due to the additional skill and sensitivity of the deaf interpreter but also due to reduction of tension" when there is

“another deaf person in the courtroom who also wears a hearing aid and who uses sign language as his primary mode of communication” (p. 24). Forestal (2014) also cited but slightly misread *Skaggs*, claiming “the earliest documentation of a Deaf interpreter interpreting in a courtroom was in 1886 during a case before the Indiana Supreme Court” (p. 30), who certainly would have reviewed the files, but not personally taken witness testimony.

As mentioned, the criminal trial took place at the county level, but the transcript only survives in lengthy quotations and summarization found in the Indiana Supreme Court materials. A noted dated November 24, 1886 read that the contents of the original Montgomery County file “were loaned for thirty days to John R. Courtney, attorney for the appellant, Crawfordsville, Indiana,” and marked “Lost.” (A. January, Personal communication, Oct 31, 2014) Indeed, the original records are unrecoverable. Some years afterward, Courtney became erratic and violent, and was forcibly taken to an asylum (“A Well Known Lawyer Insane,” 1894), where he died of paresis later that year (*John R. Courtney, 17 Jul 1894, Marion County, Indiana, 1894*).

Williams-Morgan

A 1907 trial in rural Illinois (Clerk of the Court, Franklin County Illinois, 1907), US demonstrated a similar set of circumstances to *Skaggs*, and is included here; though dated in the twentieth century, as the case involves a DP and DI who were born before Ennis and Koon. The victim was Eliza Knight Eason (1853–1921), an uneducated deaf woman in her fifties, who had been dragged from her home at gunpoint into the woods, beaten, and sexually assaulted by three hearing men. At trial, local attorney William H. Williams (1845–1909), stepped forward to act as interpreter, was sworn in to do so, but was unable to establish communication with

Mrs. Eason. Though Williams reportedly could sign “fairly well” (Phillips, 1909, p. 105), Eason had never attended a school for deaf children or learned a standard form of ASL, and “was only able to communicate with other persons by signs of her own, which could be understood by people who were with her a considerable time” (ibid.). Census records across several enumerations confirm that both she and her hearing husband twenty years her junior could neither read nor write.

Eason’s contemporary Nova Z. Morgan (1856–1923) happened to live in the same rural township area, and was also present in the courtroom. Williams “was sworn and interrogated first as to his ability to communicate with and understand” Morgan (I. N. Phillips, 1909, p. 110), who was conscripted to assist in communicating between the Court and Eason. Though Morgan had been kept on the family farm to work until he was fifteen, he eventually received nine years of formal schooling until he aged out of the system at twenty-five (Gillett, 1888, p. 158). Case reports describe him as “partially educated,” and census enumerations indicate he may have been functionally illiterate.

In the confusion of Williams and Eason failing to understand one another, Morgan took the identical relay communication role as has been described in other cases, working between Williams and Eason. Neither Morgan nor the victim were sworn as interpreter or witness respectively, and upon objection from the defense, the examination which followed was ultimately considered a “preliminary” one (I. N. Phillips, 1909, p. 106). Like so many earlier cases, Eason was asked through Morgan and Williams whether she understood the consequences of telling a lie, and the response came that “she said if she should swear to a lie she would go to hell, or down below (I. N. Phillips, 1909, p. 111). Still the dissenting justice to the Illinois Supreme Court opinion declared her statements, though not testimony per se, to be

“manifestly incompetent” (ibid.). It is unknown whether the unusual interpreting scenario colored this perception. The clerk’s transcription of Williams’ spoken English (that such hearing people relied upon) read that he had “answered that Morgan said she said...” etc. could indicate of their discomfort in following the questioning.

The process did not achieve its intended aim, and “Morgan stated that the witness could not understand him very well but that he could understand her signs a little” (I. N. Phillips, 1909, p. 106). It was observed that “Morgan and the witness could communicate with each other so as to be understood to some extent, but not fully,” and even the hearing nonsigning clerk recognized that Morgan did better with the DP receptively than expressively, was able to accommodate Williams’ signing ability and relayed “answers to all questions intelligently” (ibid.) to him. The spoken English rendition of Eason’s testimony was entered as reported speech, but it is unknown whether Morgan or Williams inserted the third person perspective.

The logistical and linguistic uncertainty were grounds for appeal. While the Illinois State Supreme Court decision affirmed the original guilty verdict, the unfortunate caselaw held that the examination did not rise to the level of testimony, as “it was not intended” as such, but instead “for the purpose of ascertaining whether, by means of the interpreters, her testimony could be obtained” (I. N. Phillips, 1909, p. 107). She was never recalled to the stand, as other hearing witnesses testified of her physical condition and gestural statements immediately following the incident. This case builds further evidence of the expectations and protocols of deaf–hearing teams to extend the interpreting process through both language *and* gesture.

Solo DIs

The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (2010) found that the majority of DI practice is in the context of teaming with HIs, and “only 29% report that they may work alone with certain consumers or in certain settings” (p. 2). This section contains a brief and unverified 1871 account from the UK, and a lengthy and well-documented 1883 matter from what was then a territory of the US.

Haddock

Though the sources are scant and the research preliminary, the 1871 Bolton, UK case of a deaf woman interpreting for two deaf defendants warrants a mention. Two newspaper accounts reported that Evan Bratherton and Thomas Fairhurst were accused of shoving an old woman on the street, with one naming the interpreter Mary Ann Haddock as having “attended the Bolton Deaf and Dumb School” (“Borough Court, This Day,” 1871) and another naming all three as co-congregants at the local institute Sunday services (“Assault by Two Deaf and Dumb Men,” 1871). A Mary Ann Haddock (born ca. 1846) who was identified as “Deaf and Dumb from birth” through successive census enumerations, however in County Durham. It has been difficult to trace how this matter was facilitated, either in writing or by some other means. Whether or not it was a clerical error as to Haddock’s identity, Fairhurst appeared in another matter the following September, with the “Miss Briscoe” mentioned in Chapter Four acting as interpreter (“Robbing a Mute,” 1871). Two different groups of magistrates in the same Borough Court within months of each other were empaneled in the cases Haddock and Briscoe interpreted, and reimbursement of expenses was only explicitly mentioned for the HI in the latter. Either there was not a clear policy for payment, or the perception that a solo DI had a

different function or status. These are matters for further research when opportunities are again available.

Lister

The case which enlisted DI Albert E. Lister provides by far the most detail, precisely because no HI team was present at the 1884 trial in question. All communication between Lister and the court was conducted on roughly twenty-four handwritten sheets, comprising roughly 3200 words. The factual and procedural foundations for *Territory of New Mexico v. Carlos Chávez*³², and *Territory of New Mexico v. Abel Durán and Aurelio Lora* are extremely complex, and a high-level summary is as follows.

In February 1883, Luther Carey³³, a ten-year-old uneducated deaf boy, witnessed the murder of three Chinese men by at least three Mexican men near Central City (now Santa Clara), New Mexico. The case was initially heard in Grant County that July, where the boy's mother, Arah Ann "Annie" Carey (1848–1929), functioned as his interpreter through a habituated gestural system the two shared. The guilty verdict for Duran and Lora was appealed soon thereafter, and the case heard at the territorial Supreme Court the following February 1884; the judgment was reversed, and the matter remanded back to the trial court. The unusual decision was taken to send the boy (then aged eleven) "at public expense to the asylum at Austin, Texas, to be educated in the deaf and dumb language, so as to use him as the principal witness" ("Eight prisoners," 1887, quoted in Mullane, 1964, p. 19) for the prosecution at a retrial.

³² Attempting to escape from prison, Chávez was "shot through the head and instantly killed" on March 10, 1884 (Grassé, 2017, p. 178), so the data to follow mainly concerns the case against Durán and Lora.

³³ His legal name was Luther Hyson Weinbrenner, but is here called by his stepfather's surname.

An “L. B. Carey” is listed among the arrivals at the Texas Institution for the Deaf and Dumb on March 2, 1884 (Texas Mute Ranger, 1884), and an admission record was created March 3 using his birth father’s surname of Weinbrenner (Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum, 1884). The age of onset of deafness was given as “14 mo,” indicating he had some early exposure to spoken language, but likely retained little to no memory of it. Luther was assigned to Class 6 under Emily Lewis, and seemed to thrive among the rich linguistic and social atmosphere of 129 (Texas Mute Ranger, Jan 1885 p. 1) fellow pupils. Scholastically, he showed admirable progress. His marks in lessons and conduct were 9 and 10 out of 10 respectively that November (“Report of Lessons and Conduct for the Past Month,” 1884), and 10 and 10 in December (“Report of Lessons and Conduct for the Past Month,” 1885).

Albert Lister had also been a pupil in the school, having been admitted 1868, at roughly sixteen years of age (Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum, 1868). He quickly distinguished himself as reliable and a “good influence over the boys,” and was appointed dormitory supervisor; due to “necessity arising in the school” (Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf and Dumb, 1887b, p. 293), in 1879 he was pulled out of school to become a teacher in the primary department, and never completed his own studies. Lister was also among the male faculty regularly entrusted to deliver children home via long overland rail journeys in a vast area within and outside of Texas (Kinney, 1884, p. 37). Lewis, a single woman, would likely not have been permitted to undertake the trip to New Mexico, and Lister was given charge of the boy. It is not known whether the pair understood or consented to the courtroom interpreting arrangements that awaited them.

Original case documents for Chávez, Durán and Lora, with all the accompanying procedural filings are currently kept in the New Mexico State Records

Center and Archives. Because the matter was heard at the territorial Supreme Court, all related papers have clearly been removed from their original bindings and bundles, and collected into an incomplete file. The loose sheets have been intermingled in a way that is difficult, but not impossible, to discern the specific matter they relate to. After repeated trips and many hours of transcription, I was able to reconstruct a more coherent organization—though the thousands of words currently in my dataset still do not contain the entire case file. The Chávez case resulted in a conviction, jailbreak, and death for the prisoner, so only Territory of New Mexico v. Durán and Lora was discussed at the appeal. All quotations from the transcripts to follow will be from that comprehensive file (New Mexico Supreme Court, 1886), unless otherwise stated. The sitting Judge at the December 1884 retrial, Stephen Fowler Wilson, had only arrived two months previous (U.S. Senate Historical Office, 1998), and was confronted with a case that he instructed the jury “has probably no parallel in the history of American Criminal trials” Given the native languages of the victims, defendants, and other witnesses, Lister was not the only linguistic intermediary:

...all the material evidence has been given in language not understood by the Court or Jury until interpreted. The Chinese language has been received by an interpreter, so has the Mexican and last but not least, the evidence of a deaf mute by language known only to those who understand that certain outward demonstrations convey certain ideas or facts.

However, Luther Carey was by far the prosecution’s most essential witness, without whose testimony they lacked sufficient evidence to re-convict Durán and Lora. Defense counsel, therefore, wasted no time in attempting to discredit the witness “for the reason that his own testimony shows him to be an incompetent

witness,” incorrectly assuming “that the defendants have not and could not have the benefit of a crossexamination.” Justice Wilson chose to refute the request to exclude Carey’s testimony on procedural, not substantive grounds, because the defense raised the objection only after “the oath was administered to him through the Interpreter as a witness in the cause” (Mullane, 1964, p. 67).

Like the Ruston case one hundred years prior that hinged on the testimony of a sole deaf bystander, whether a witness can swear to the oath forms “the fulcrum of the entire legal project,” and if the DP “cannot demonstrate understanding and consent via the oath, the testimony to follow would be null and void” (A. M. Leahy, 2016). At the original trial, Mrs. Carey testified that “she could make herself understood to him by signs, and that generally she could understand him,” but she and her son could not establish a connection with regard to the consequences of perjury. Luther was not interested in discussing whether he was telling the truth, but wanted to launch into the facts:

Q: You say you cannot make him understand?

A: No sir; I cannot. He has the idea of the murder fixed in his mind, and he wants to tell that.

Q: Can you convey to him an idea that he will be punished if he does not testify truly?

Here the witness again repeats the signs and gestures to the mute.

A: I can not make him understand me; he is telling how the murder was committed, and what he saw. He thinks he is wanted to tell what took place at the Chineman’s [sic] house that night.

As the interpreter of record, Albert Lister undersigned an improvised interpreter's oath first:

You do solemnly swear in the presence of the everliving God that you will well and truly perform the duties of Interpreter during the trial of this cause so help you God.

The defense challenged Lister's competency, both as a deaf person and an objective interpreter. The court dismissed the former complaint, and referred to the voir dire examination of "proper questions" as "the only way to test the competency of the interpreter. To assuage the latter, the Justice Wilson himself inserted a handwritten instruction:

All you are to do is to interpret the question and not tell him how to answer it. And then interpret in writing the answer he has made to the question. This is your instruction and not to be told to the boy.

The caution to withhold delivering interpretation to the primary participants of one's direct interaction with the Court is familiar to any interpreter—especially in legal venues. Next, Lister began the interpreting task proper: sight translations of the handwritten questions from stenographer John Bell into ASL, and English transcriptions of Carey's responses. In some cases, questions are labelled as Q or Q plus an incremental number, while the answers are not. For the purposes of clarity, I insert Q: and A:. There is no ambiguity whatsoever in the original text as to questions written in ink vs. answers which the reporter introduced as being in Lister's "own hand writing in lead pencil." Unlike the initial testimony, which was admitted despite the incomplete oath and ultimately challenged on appeal, Lister instinctively managed the witness, unlocked the message, and was transparent about both:

Q: Ask him if he knows what God will do to him if he tells a lie?

A: He says, he will do to tell truth. he says he will not tell a lie. He says he will do with God. I ask him if he would go to tell a lie. Says no. he will tell truth.

Q: Ask the boy if he will be punished if he tells a lie?

A: He says he will tell truth. I ask him if he tells a lie, he will be punished. I ask him if he tells truth says yes he tell truth.

The first salient feature of Lister's work to general readers may be non-native English fluency. It is unknown how much literacy instruction he received on his family's ranch before entering residential school around age sixteen, and as mentioned, he never completed a secondary education. The text throughout the transcript comports with well-known attributes common to deaf writers (c.f. (R. Adam et al., 2011; Strong & Prinz, 1997), the specifics and causations behind which are not the focus of this study. Instead, three interesting translatorial features emerge from the data. Firstly, the DI renders the boy's signs into third-person reporting. This could have been an amateurish choice, or simply mirroring the "Ask the boy" and "Ask him" prompts, but it may have also served to ground his neutrality and made his translation strategy more transparent to the court when it necessitated certain modifications. In both of the above answers, Lister makes it clear that he re-stated an altered question ("I ask him...") to direct the witness back to what had gone unanswered at the first responses ("He says he will...tell truth). Secondly, as will be shown, Lister's lack of language inhibition created a visibly foreign target. This allowed structures and strategies from his signed modality to seep through, allowing ASL– or BSL–English bilingual readers to partially reconstruct the unrecorded source, using the English as an intermediary text to create a mental back-translation into the visual conventions of a signed language. Thirdly, also in later examples, his

direct comments inserted to clarify and redirect the court scribe were answered with Bell's overt attempts to accommodate Lister's literacy.

While good Christian fear of retribution was not firmly established, the witness (now aged twelve) did respond affirmatively that he promised to be truthful, a comment he was unable to pause and deliver through his mother seventeen months prior. With the procedural hurdle of an oath crossed, Lister's first exchange yielded a positive result, and both he and the boy undersigned the witness oath:

You do solemnly swear in the presence of the everliving God that the evidence you shall give in the trial of this cause wherein The Territory of New Mexico is Plaintiff and Abel Duran and Aurelio Lora are Defendants shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God

As the examination proceeded to the facts of the case, one example demonstrates how the DI improved his English vocabulary in real time. While neither "chineses" or "Chinamen" would be acceptable today, Lister mirrors the scribe's vocabulary, as a trained interpreter would do:

Q: Ask him if he knows how many Chinamen were there?

A: ~~He saw~~ He says there were 3 chineses.

Q: Ask the boy if the Mexicans that killed the chinamen were in the house or out of doors when they killed them?

A: He says the Mexicans stood in the ground and shot killed the chinamen in their room house.

Perhaps more importantly, the final response reveals Lister's ASL sight translation of the "in the house or out of doors" detail of the murder location. Every ASL or BSL informant I have shown this sample to has understood the signed question to have

been altered to what type of surface Durán and Lora were standing on, not their surrounding environment. Further, the response gives the additional information that the Chinese victims were inside their small dwelling when they were shot by the Mexicans from outside the building.

During cross-examination, the defense's adherence to the linguistic customs of trial examination intended to clarify points of fact served only to confuse both DI and witness:

Q: Ask the boy if he testified on the trial of this case last year when his mother interpreted for him?

A: He says he saw the Mexicans that they killed the chinamen. he got back home and told his mother about them last year. He says he don't know what month or day.

He says about last year. He says he don't know where is the town name.

Please change words.

Though the crux of the perfunctory question was merely to begin the examination by referring to the original trial, this miscommunication reminiscent of Mrs. Carey's exasperation continued to devolve. The factual questions continued to be prefaced by "Ask the boy if he did not testify on the former trial of these defendants, through his mother as interpreter," and both DI and DP couldn't seem to understand why counsel continued to repeat something so obvious. What ensued was a protracted and muddled exchange, which may have been intended to sow doubt among the jurors as to the competence and credibility of pivotal testimony.

By contrast, other sections of the transcript are full of strikethroughs as court personnel try to clarify and simplify their questions and request. For example, when

referring to diagrams labeled Exhibits B, C, and D that the boy created on three separate occasions to either augment or supplant his verbal testimony, the scribe corrects an idiomatic phrase to a more concrete word:

Q: Tell the boy to ~~point this out~~ explain to the Jury? the drawing?

The final detail demonstrates two concluding points. Luther, though a conscientious and earnest witness, was still very young, and unable to comprehend courtroom protocol. Once again, he is eager to testify about what he saw, and does not seem to understand the purpose of overtly obvious, foundational questions:

Q: Ask him if those Mexicans are here, and tell the boy to point them out to the Jury.

A: I ask him to point them out to the jury. He says two of

~~We don't want you to write an answer to this question.~~

them killed chinamen with pistol and [cleaver]. He says he knows them.

The scribe seemed to have detected that the witness was again diverting prematurely into facts, and interrupted. The DI ignored the request to filter, so perhaps the interruption was stricken after the response continued on.

The second point and the final of many more that could be analyzed from the file is a fascinating strategy Lister adopted that was perhaps inspired by the witness' drawings. In the above excerpt, the DI is unable to recall or produce the word "cleaver," and twice inserts a drawing of only that object into his English sentence, shown below in Figure 17:

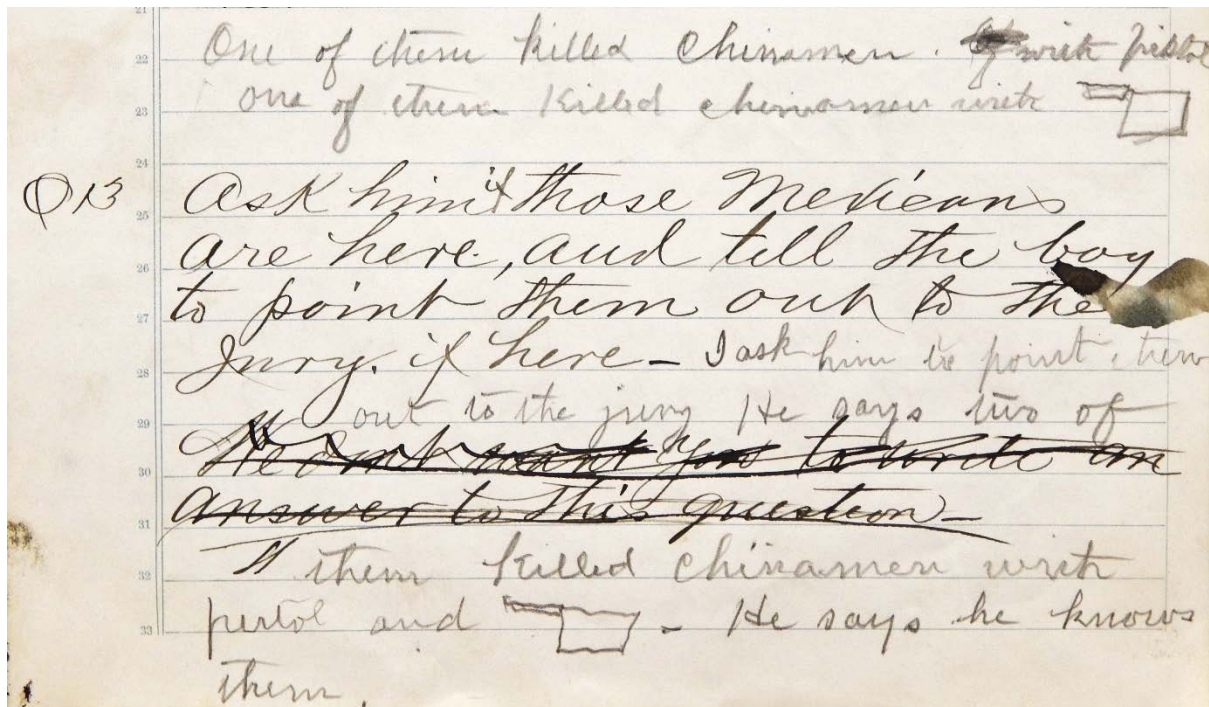


Figure 20. Excerpt from Albert Lister Interpreting Territory v. Durán and Lora (Dec 1884) NM State Archives.

At the previous trial, Mrs. Carey stated, “He says that Lora here use [sic] a cleaver and struck with it and that Duran had a gun and fired.” Not only does this detail corroborate the witness’ own testimony, it demonstrates that Luther was an expert at depicting specific items even before being exposed to ASL, and that the DI was able to discern that exact weapon—not a machete, a hatchet, or a knife, but a *cleaver*.

A brief review is warranted here to describe three additional instances employing a similar strategy of mixing rough illustrations into texts for and by deaf persons in legal, business, and educational contexts. During the 1926 assault trial of deaf defendant Cecil Armitage (1905–1970), “evidence was interpreted in sign language” (“Deaf–Mute Charged: Picture of Chisel Drawn for Detective,” 1926) and “Armitage was given the opportunity to ask questions in court” (“Deaf Mute Charged: Alleged Attack in Sheffield Shop,” 1926) through an unnamed hearing interpreter at the Sheffield Police Court. Nevertheless, the DP opted to submit a handwritten note

to the magistrates, which included “a picture of a chisel onto a piece of paper” (“Deaf–Mute Charged: Picture of Chisel Drawn for Detective,” 1926) and a sorrowful promise to never use such a weapon again. Jeremiah Moore (1755–1834) of Jennerville, Pennsylvania was born before organized education for deaf children in the United States, but kept an account ledger for his farm. One witness who handled the book in 1877 reported, “It was a model of ingenuity; when he had difficulty in spelling a word, as for instance ‘Plow,’ he would make the drawing or representation of it” (Passmore, 1897, pp. 63–64). In earlier centuries, interspersed images and text were features of the first tutors’ methods for instructing deaf pupils in written English. John Wallis favored tables of “explanatory icons” to illustrate features such as quantity or shape (Wallis, 2017, pp. 157–158). The notebooks of Henry Baker, who based his methods on Wallis, demonstrates both teacher and students included intratextual icons to reinforce, but not replace given a word (H. Baker, n.d.). For this example in Figure 20 below, I am grateful to Professor Anna Marie Roos, FLS FSA for generously sharing her research on Henry Baker, FRS conducted at the University of Manchester John Rylands Library:



Figure 21. Excerpt from “Cloths = Drejs” page, Henry Baker Notebooks, John Rylands Library.

In the end, the *Durán & Lora* retrial resulted in another conviction and both Lister and Carey returned to the school in Texas. The October 1885 *Texas Mute Ranger* published the last records of Luther's schoolwork to appear, which included a short essay. The same edition also honors Lister, who, pressed into service had been unable to complete his own education. He passed away July 3 1885 at his family home in Panola County, Texas (Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf and Dumb, 1887b, pp. 293–294) . This came only seven months after the trial, which had been the last great event of his life.

In the exasperated conclusion to his dissenting opinion, the territorial Supreme Court judge Bristol ranted that the law was “at fault” to “nowhere furnish a precedent like this,” “and the sooner it is changed, either by judicial precedent or by legislation, the better” (Johnson, 1890, p. 141). Like Judge Snyder's response to the defense attorney's complaint in *Skaggs* that “if there is no law applicable to this, we will make a little right here that is” (“A Sensible Judge,” 1885), Bristol was uninformed about the validity of the HI role. The common law certainly allowed an uneducated DP to testify through an interpreter, by his own gestures, or in writing. Though not the first instance of a HI with a signing DP, a 1720 case in London also included a display of the DP's artwork to validate his competence to testify in his own behalf, and applied an improvised oath through a named HI (see Leahy 2015). The court accepted the DP's interpreted statements as his own, and set forth “a special rule...for that purpose” (Cooke, 1742, p. 19) on the books.

The problem, as with so many historical DPs, was the ability to swear to an oath. Swearing to the oath is the fulcrum of the legal system, and lays out the intersection of religious authority, and the ethical principles of common law. Bristol consented that perhaps Luther was not “competent as an ordinary witness, because

he cannot be communicated with and made to understand the legal and technical obligations of an oath,” but his testimony could have been downgraded to “circumstantial evidence” (Johnson, 1890, p. 141).

This creative application of the rules of evidence might have been an ill-fated choice on three counts. First, it would have made his mother the legal agent instead of the DP acting independently if his remarks were “considered as having been properly received as, *proven by his mother*, who understands them” (ibid; emphasis mine). Bristol maintained “that it would have been proper for this court to have established a precedent of that kind,” instead of nullifying Luther’s participation entirely. Jacobson (2005) agreed with that assessment, believing that even if it was intermediate to ultimate outcome, the decision created a far more damaging precedent:

A deaf and dumb child, who has never been educated in an institute for deaf mutes, who cannot be made to understand anything of the nature of an oath, and who can do nothing more than give an account of what he saw, without affording any means of examination or cross-examination, is not a competent witness, especially in a capital case. (Johnson, 1890, p. 134)

Though Durán and Lora lost the case, they technically “won the argument,” with US caselaw that is still commonly cited “that comes closest to declaring deaf people *per se* incompetent witnesses” (Jacobson, 2005, p. 15). The second silver lining in Luther’s testimony being invalidated was that he was able to attend school. The third is the record of outstanding work by Albert Lister, now made available to Deaf history and interpreter history.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that deaf intermediaries who were culturally and linguistically affiliated to the Deaf-World began to appear as expert witnesses and interpreters in the nineteenth century, and were generally sanctioned if not directly requested by sitting legal authorities. The duties included validating and vetting prospective deaf legal parties, working with a HI team to facilitate witness testimony, or communicating directly with hearing nonsigner court personnel via writing. For deaf intermediaries, these opportunities came only after the foundation of schools for deaf children in the UK and US, as members of the signing communities that sprang up surrounding them. This rootedness in a Deaf *habitus* differed from the earlier protocols of HIs, which were developed in a wholly Hearing-focused legal system, during the pre-cultural period before national signed languages and Deaf communities were available.

The isolated historical examples that were presented in this chapter form a mere prologue to the story of deaf intermediaries, but one that demands revision of factually inaccurate claims of the first nineteenth-century appearances and incomplete twentieth-century recollections. Unlike the earlier data for HIs in Chapters Three and Four, these DIs do not trace a pedigree line through Anglo–American common law precedent, but do warrant further attention as an expansion of the legal interpreter role as initially founded by HIs. Even seemingly disconnected episodes can build upon the assumption in Adam and Stone (2011) that “the history of Deaf interpreting is a mirror image of that of ‘hearing’ sign language interpreting, with similar milestones” (p. 228), and therefore today’s deaf interpreters are developing within a centuries-long process. Speeding past any of those milestones or

rationalizing any shortcuts would be a disservice to the signed language interpreting profession as a whole, and devaluing to deaf practitioners.

The foregoing chapters introduced the aims and methods of this study, set forth an overview of T&I in signed languages, and signed languages in T&I, and offered historical perspectives and accounts of HI and DI work. The final chapter to follow will consider the impact of an incomplete and inaccurate historical reception of HIs and DIs, how trainees might best be prepared and incoming SLIs assessed on their understanding of our history, lay out areas of further study, and indulge some reflection from the vantage point of a practisearcher.

CONCLUSION

“Interpreting — Herein we have perhaps the most difficult conditions under which the sign language must be employed.”³⁴

This study has inaugurated the analysis of how hearing people entered into centuries of association and later community participation with signing deaf people, leading to the conception and maturation of signed language interpreting within the UK, and through the migration of the common law, on into the US. In this first evidence-based SLI history, a huge cache of primary and archival sources, and literature demonstrated the roots of HI and DI practice within UK and US courts. The more hypothetical argument of the origins of speech–sign bilingual–bimodals was followed by a more empirical exploration of recent history, with the analysis of salient features of hearing and deaf interpreters’ roles, through mostly eighteenth- and nineteenth-century legal cases in the UK and US. In the process, prevailing assumptions were challenged that interpreters, educators and researchers had never thought to question. These additional findings disproved the received notions of HIs and DIs operating from the same historical center, the relatively recent emergence of the practice as a strictly volunteer function, and the earliest HIs being drawn from signing families. Bourdieu’s analysis of anthropologist–informant dynamics was applied to isolate evidence of a behavioral and attitudinal “organizing principle” for HIs and DIs, who may be historically “possessed by their habitus more than they possess it” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 18). The *habitus* or “history turned into

³⁴ Anderson, T. L. (1938). Notes on sign language. Gallaudet University Archives and Deaf Collections.

nature” (ibid., p. 78) inherited by each community of practice within SLI in both the UK and US were found to lay on opposite sides of a critical boundary. Setting the formation of schools for deaf children as marking the beginning of socio-cultural and linguistic traditions that evolved into community and culture, this study validated that HIs emerged *before*, and DIs *within* the patterns built upon a geographically and experientially shared parcel of the wider sphere, or village commons, that came to be conventionalized as the Deaf-World.

In this final chapter, I will summarize the preceding six chapters, spotlight the unique contributions of the findings, and recommend how to reify a revised and expanded understanding of signed language interpreter history into practical applications. Lastly, I will acknowledge the weaknesses and limitations of my work, and lay out possible next steps for myself and those who will hopefully follow as interpreter historians.

The introductory chapter laid out the main predicaments that necessitate the expansion of translation and interpreting history to include signed language practitioners, whose story has been overlooked by both T/IS and Deaf studies. Firstly, BSL and ASL interpreters share a shallow understanding of their common legal pedigree. Concentrating cultural memory and pedagogy on the twentieth century has reinforced a narrative in both US and UK traditions of a recent dissociation from deaf people, instead of a complex interaction of socio-cultural, scientific, legal, and linguistic forces over a longer period. Secondly, the slightly more longstanding field of Deaf History has concentrated on the story of educational systems and trends. Responses to unequal opportunities relative to hearing children, and language deprivation resulting from the battle to allow deaf children to access and be taught through signed language “weave in and out of nearly every study of

deaf history” (Kudlick, 2003, p. 782). Interpreters, who encounter deaf people who embody a complex and fraught history have naturally adopted that sociolinguistic crisis state as their own, and wholly in place of any distinct domain of SLI history. While the history of Deaf education is common knowledge, there is a scarcity of well-executed research or recognition of what gains in SLI have been achieved over the *longue durée* before or since the founding of schools for deaf children. As a result, interpreters are ill-equipped to position ourselves for inevitable future shifts in our professional posture with respect to Deaf communities, and adapt our role accordingly. Mainstream generalist and historical translation and interpreting studies have also found few lines of enquiry to intersect with signed languages, and this study is positioned to contribute to the recent acceleration of output in spoken–written work. The first venture of its kind of a necessity pursues an interdisciplinary approach, covering SLI, Deaf studies, history, law, and linguistics, with a wide net for examples in context, and an opportunistic stride through various theoretical camps, availing the guidance of foundational authors.

The survey of existing literature positioned signed language practitioners as inheritors of the tradition from translation and interpreting studies, and the historical turn within it, and offered points of connection available to follow-on work in SLI. The importance of interpreter–historians trained in both disciplines was emphasized through the work of Gile, Delisle, Pym, Pöchhacker, Baigorri-Jalón and others. With respect to SLI material, a review of hundreds of sources was distilled into presenting the few that attempt historical treatment, concluding that while some have produced moments of valid historical research, no strong candidate emerges by a SLI “histerpreter.” Contemporary nostalgia and memoir have circulated unquestioned, and the recollections of a single previous generation who witnessed the period of

organizing the practice toward a profession have overshadowed any meaningful research that reaches past lived experience.

Chapter Three aimed to trace the linguistic and cultural DNA left by bilingual–bimodals as a backdrop to examples of untrained hearing interpreters of prior centuries. The image of a village common was applied to the forces that organized gestural traditions among the general population, which fed into signing repertoires shared among families and neighbors. The transition to distinct language communities was illustrated by several historical deaf figures' recollections, with particular notice of Melville Ballard. Evidence was brought forward to suggest that signed languages generally develop in contact with spoken languages, and hearing and deaf signers continue to share a conceptual and gestural substrate. The next frontier to recruit and refine gestural practice into a conventionalized communication system was posited as International Sign, an auxiliary communication system used among deaf and hearing signers from different linguistic traditions.

Selected data that built upon the pedigree of HIs was laid out in Chapter Four, and a small quantitative sample from the UK offered a sense of the prevalence of missionary–interpreter efforts from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries. The assumed transition from volunteerism to a paid occupation was enriched by evidence that contradicts the widely-held belief that payment was instituted only after the period of professionalization. Cases demonstrated selected features of the data, such as neutrality, compulsion by the court vs. recusal, and isolated examples of teamed interpreting. Family members, friends, clergy and teachers were shown acting in a dual role, with specific attention devoted to the latter as interpreters.

To establish the background of interpreters native to the Deaf-World, Chapter Five introduced the roots of bilingualism among deaf members of signing communities, and deaf educational structures. The earliest DIs were shown to not be products of intergenerational deaf families, but those with privilege in opportunities to learn, through formal schooling, religious environments, and mobility within the broader society. Three interesting nineteenth-century examples from France were also given. Overlooked accounts drawn from early linguistics studies involving deaf researchers and subjects, and a re-casting of figures in Deaf History revealed and deepened the tradition of DIs in the twentieth century, prior to the period of professionalization alongside HIs. It was reinforced that DIs were centered in a Deaf-World *habitus* that was created by signing communities. This is in contrast to HIs, who emerged as an earlier innovation of the common law; once Deaf-World structures became the repositories for SLI expertise, protocols shifted from legal bases to cultural ones.

Eight legal cases wherein a DI appeared as an expert witness or linguistic intermediary were explored in Chapter Six. The earlier three cases called upon educated deaf people to comment on the mental, moral, and spiritual fitness of deaf defendants. The remainder of the data traced the interpreting function performed in DI–HI relay teams, and solo DIs who used written or spoken English with court personnel. Particular attention was given to a US case for which there was no HI, thereby allowing a rich written record of original documents to have survived.

Impact

The foregoing thesis has challenged the main fallacy of many authors' claim to the "beginnings" of the practice or a particular aspect of signed language interpreting, to adjust that supposed "first" instance as progress along a longer

durée. This is especially true with respect to the work of hearing intermediaries, to recover a deeper relationship to gestural communication. Circumstances of those forebears' connections with deaf people placed them into interlocutor roles, and deaf signers in turn planted those shared early gestures into the rich linguistic ground of schools and signing communities. Interpreting pre-dated and facilitated the entry of DPs into mainstream legal interactions, which, one could argue, advanced the ultimate journey toward parallel Deaf-World structures, which necessitate mediation between those spheres. This interdependence has continued, and was recognized by a deaf scholar in possibly the first doctoral study of signed language interpreting. At the early stages of professionalization for ASL interpreters, the late Larry Fleischer, a leader in deaf education and interpreter education believed that "widespread use of qualified interpreters for the deaf has brought the deaf to exercise their privileges as citizens to a greater extent" and "advance[d] the welfare of deaf people...by closing the gap of communication" (L. R. Fleischer, 1975, p. 55). An equally legendary figure stated that deaf people's potential "must be developed, not permitted to lie unused for want of an interpreter," and "as rough as it has been just keeping up with the 'hearies', it is the best thing that ever happened to me" (Sanderson, 1966, p. 4). These may be seen as quaint and unfashionable today. It was by no means the beginning of the story, but taken in proper historical context as it must be, this observation documented the turning point of professional and academic recognition for SLI. Any treatment of twentieth-century progress is well within the bounds of allowing that interpreters have integrated and intersected deaf and hearing lives, if sometimes for worse, *and* also for the better.

This study provides ample evidence for the difference in the historical posture of HIs and DIs. Isolated cases of hearing and deaf interpreters' work have coalesced

into complimentary roles, and these distinctions can be traced to different periods in legal and cultural history. If hearing interpreters' *habitus* has spanned the centuries prior to and since the founding of schools for deaf children, they claim a dual legal–cultural pedigree: HIs operating in legal settings evolved under the common law, and pivoted their allegiances thereafter to sociolinguistic environments that bred signing communities. Contrary to contemporary claims, such cultural institutions did not dispatch the first interpreters, but they did recast the role out of the common law, into the human services domain, and grafted interpreters into Deaf communities by the nineteenth century (e.g., Buxton, 1890). A more scholarly understanding of interpreter history sheds light on this legal–cultural duality in the HI pedigree and challenges the hasty problematization of the SLI's task to broker equitable experiences for hearing–deaf encounters. A refined understanding of the historical HI role suggests that the solely deaf-centric approach was not an original stance that has been “lost,” but represented a trend within a larger historical process. The perceived impasse between interpreters and deaf people, and resulting political rifts among interpreters who gained linguistic exposure and acculturation via interpersonal vs educational exposure, can now be examined with evidence.

Deaf practitioners and thought leaders who advocate for the DI position today gathered “memories, thoughts, and insights” to describe “Deaf Interpreting developmental experiences and current practices” (National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team, 2009, p. 5). While “no standard definition of Deaf interpreting” (p. 22) was found, the discussants identified the most important training topics as “Role and Responsibilities; Professional Ethics; Theories of Interpretation and Translation; Dynamics of Cross Cultural Interaction; and Subject Matter Knowledge (e.g. medical, mental health, and legal)” (pp. 22–23).

These knowledge areas did not differ from HI curricula, nor did the top “proficiencies” of ethical decision making, a “range of language and communication skills...to meet the diverse needs of clients,” a repertoire of consecutive, simultaneous and sight methods, self care/boundaries, and ongoing professional education (p. 23). These parallels notwithstanding, the recurring theme of strained if not adversarial dynamics between DIs and HIs echo throughout the more recent literature, continuing education content, and of course impromptu discussions among colleagues. Forestal (2014) crystalizes the sentiments of many that the competencies distilled from The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers Deaf Interpreter Work Team report (2010) initiate a “social transformation” of signed language interpreting to “a Deafcentric community-based model” where DIs lead in “coordinating the [DI–HI] team processes” (p. 46). This stands to reason, given the historical roots of DI practice, which emerged after HIs were begotten under the common law and adopted into Deaf communities, and wholly within a socio-linguistically and culturally imbued Deaf-World *habitus*.

As regards the work of DIs in legal settings today, a recurring theme in Mathers (2012) pointed toward weakness in HIs’ linguistic and cultural competencies, which can be mitigated by a DI team. By contrast, Tester (2018) found a pattern among HI respondents who reported DIs with and without generalist or specialist legal credentials may bring a lack of “sufficient training or legal knowledge” (p. 18) to the task. Clearly, there is a demonstrated need for DI–HI teams, but deficit-based arguments, while perhaps objectively or anecdotally true, have not served the profession. In their worst forms, DI–HI power struggles can descend into erroneous and reductive arguments, creating a “‘culture of fear’ that prevents open dialogue” (Russell, 2018, p. 152). To paraphrase Adam and Stone

(2011), “by examining early interpreting work undertaken [before and after there was a] Deaf community, interpreting professionals are better able to understand how they have arrived at this point in their history” (p. 225). Communities of practice of both deaf and hearing interpreters who work in the UK and US can now decouple their separate (if more recently convergent) historical bases and understand how those origins inform professional expectations today.

Without acknowledging this complexity, it would be impossible for anyone who purports a legal interpreting specialty to reach the expectation to fully understand and “clearly and logically articulate” the “historical legal basis supporting a court and legal interpreters’ role” (Mathers, 2012, p. 11). For generalists and trainee DIs and HIs, the technical and ethical bases of how an interpreted encounter is carried out are derived from the same tradition, and of equal importance in preparation and historically-informed practice. Correcting a misremembered received narrative may, challenge politics and in turn policies which evolved out of short-sighted and simplistic historical assumptions.

Historical Reception of DIs vs. HIs

After examining available evidence of HIs and DIs in the foregoing four chapters, a consideration of how contemporary readers look differently upon historical DIs vs HIs is in order. Contemporary literature specific to SLIs tends to agree that Deaf-World (H. L. Lane et al., 1996) *habitus* reflective of culturally-Deaf language, behaviors and even partiality is the preferred but commonly perceived as unmet expectation for HIs (Grbić, 2014) and the assumed and unquestioned default DI posture (R. Adam, Aro, et al., 2014).

Nineteenth-century transnational meetings between deaf signers of different languages in Murray (2007) captures interpreting demands that while unusual, exemplify well the political tension embedded in the person performing the task. One example stems from a report that participants at the Congrès International des Sourds-muets in Paris had varying degrees of success in communicating across national signed languages. Between deaf Britons and Americans, the “services of an interpreter were therefore necessary” (Gaston, 1889), and two Anglophone hearing men used spoken English as an intermediary bridge between their relaying of BSL and ASL to the respective audiences. Maginn, who was raised with English and BSL, and had acquired ASL after attending Gallaudet College in the United States for the previous three years, also “acted in that capacity” (ibid.). When Maginn took the floor as a speaker, he delivered an appeal for assistance to improve the educational “condition of the deaf in Great Britain and Ireland” (ibid.). Douglas Tilden (1850–1935), a deaf American expat who had arrived in Paris a year and a half previous, in turn “explained the request so that it could be understood by the French,” and the president of the congress asked the pair “to put the sentiments expressed in writing” (Gaston, 1889). Maginn and Tilden therefore provided signed and written translations.

This mediation of two DIs between two mutually unintelligible signed languages went unchallenged in Murray (2007). The same source faulted “the insertion of two [hearing] interpreters” for breaking both groups’ “bonds” of kinship, and dividing American and British deaf people who experienced a similar communication barrier the following year in London. In such an analysis, DIs were celebrated, and their status as members of the Deaf-World seems to override any

content losses or social separation created by their work, while HIs were condemned as an obstacle that widened the divide.

Though an intermediary implicated in the process, Tilden himself did not temper his opinion of widespread regional variation in BSL (disputed by the *British Deaf Times* editor who printed it) creating the lack of a coherent “national sign language” (Tilden, 1890). He brashly refused to grant that it was even “much of a sign language,” because he was compelled to communicate in writing with English deaf signers who were otherwise his “own blood cousins” (ibid.). Despite implicating the HIs in imposing the barrier, Murray (2007) was also correct that Tilden “put the blame squarely on the British,” that “despite coming from different countries and despite having different signed languages,” the transatlantic audience should have had, but failed to enjoy direct communication.

Murray (2007) presumed Tilden’s irreconcilable disgust at “the spectacle when an American had to interpret an address for the benefit of the Americans, and an Englishman for the benefit of the English audience” (ibid.) was directed solely at the presence of two HIs. Tilden’s lament on the “irony of fate” that he believed had “separated us deaf-mutes” might have as easily been a call for the “proposed national association and sign language” (ibid.) that would strengthen and unite the British Deaf community—as the editorial’s own title suggested. This is confirmed by Tilden’s closing hope that a “new era seems to be dawning for the deaf of Great Britain,” presumably to realize the mobilizing benefits of political and linguistic solidarity such as he claimed the Americans already enjoyed, and the development of which would ultimately move them into closer discourse.

Contemporary Reception of DIs vs. HIs

Though historical HI–DI relay teams mentioned in this chapter (and additional examples not included here) were constituted to mediate linguistic limitations of an unfamiliar or underprepared HI, this does not reflect all current practices or attitudes in the professional corps. The two camps are approximated by the comparisons in Pym (2015):

Cicero (46 CE) said one translates either *ut interpres* (like an interpreter in a business agreement) or *ut orator* (like an orator, with all attendant rhetorical devices)...and Jerome: you could translate sense-for-sense or word-for-word. This runs right through to Schleiermacher in 1813: *verfremdend* (foreignizing) vs. *verdeutschend* (domesticating).

At the risk of oversimplification, these binaries illustrate the prevailing cultural and professional perceptions: HIs produce bland, verbatim, foreignisms of an intermediate text, and DIs liberate the target audience with flair, flexibility, and domestic fluency in the final product.

In addition, essays that problematize the HI function at its core (e.g., Broecker, 2001; Hall, 2018) are supported in Gertz (2003), which concluded that native English users in the HI corps “take advantage of deaf people” and are “rarely are accepted in the Deaf World no matter what good intentions they have,” and their involvement “will always be questioned” (p. 220). This level of candor is rarely documented and reflects what interpreters are often told both implicitly and explicitly. Rather than to categorically accuse HIs of treason, it is more effective to reconceive a more nuanced citizenship.

Future scholars should take care to provide ample context for distinct DI and HI role and function, and avoid fueling the “logical fallacy in assuming that the solution to the inadequate skills of hearing interpreters is to fill the gap with Deaf interpreters” as rebutted in Smith (2015, p. 19). Such an “‘Us against Them’ mentality” (E. Johnston, 2005, p. 9) between DIs and HIs that continues to play out in lay and academic discourse.

Recommendations

There is immense ground left to cover in signed language interpreting history, and many more ways to scrutinize the sources, and further develop the findings. The transferability of this study, or “the lessons learned which might provide rich learning experiences for those working in similar contexts” (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013, p. 37) is far-reaching, given the interplay of Deaf/disability history, Deaf cultural studies, signed language linguistics, legal studies, and of course T/IS. In this section, I lay claim to several ideas to pursue further that hold the most interest for me, and describe others for those in adjacent disciplines with complimentary goals that expand their scholarship, present possible touchpoints for collaboration, or stimulate debate.

Curricula

The immediate need is for compulsory modules to be included in any Anglophone SLI training program to ensure graduates are prepared to transition our field to a deeper understanding of our roots. It is heartening that the accreditation standards SLI education programs may choose to adopt places “historical foundations of the profession” second only to T/I theories in the curriculum requirements (Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education, 2017, sec. 6.1).

Due to nineteenth-century educational politics, ASL and BSL evolved very differently, and do not even share a common representation for the letters of the English alphabet. Mutually unintelligible signed languages may keep British and North American communities of practice at arm's length from one another, and obscure the deeper shared origins under Anglo–American common law. While country-specific histories are the most valuable to practitioners, situating one's community within a professional pedigree is essential. Interpreters in the UK, who organized after their US colleagues, ought to appreciate the earlier developments in their legal tradition that seeded the Americans' efforts. In turn, ASL interpreters should recognize this inheritance that might be more obvious to interpreters within Commonwealth countries with closer linguistic ties among their respective signed languages.

In addition to initiating the domain of legal SLI history, it is a principal aim of this study that prospective interpreters, rising scholars and interested academics be more than consumers of historical T/I studies; Baigorri-Jalón (2006) encouraged projects to “be carried out above all at the doctoral or postdoctoral level” (p. 105). In addition to emphasizing the place for all T/I histories within the curricula of preparation programs, remarkably, general and country-specific signed language interpreting history was the final entry on a list of suggested research proposals (p. 107). These displayed a commendable familiarity with that domain, noting possible sources in institutional archives, records of associations, and the lived experiences of both practitioners and Deaf consumers, recognizing that sign language systems differ between and within communities.

This study provides the bases to elevate T/IS history within the curriculum, and continue to challenge and correct past scholarship. Martino Alba (2013)

suggested beginning T/I preparation with a culturally contemporary discussion about what students already know, invoking their curiosity, and promoting further research. The five-step program suggests concrete ways to transfer research to pedagogy that apply particularly well to the structure and content of this thesis:

1. use images to begin the discussion
2. mark broad chronological periods in proper context
3. analyze historical T/I biographies
4. text analysis
5. draw conclusions that impact the students' self-conception in a broader and richer story

Assessment

Both within the context of formal interpreter education, as well as credentialing exams to follow, there is a place for SLI history in the qualification and certification processes. As mentioned earlier, both classroom- and community-trained interpreters universally learn the importance of Deaf historical studies, particularly with respect to education for deaf people. When the knowledge portion of the examination administered by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf was under discussion in 1988, one interpreter was somewhat incensed that the history of RID itself would be a compulsory subject (Pierce, 1988). Similar sentiments were held in 1916, when the National Training College for Teachers of the Deaf (now British Association of Teachers of the Deaf) discontinued the requirement on the history of deaf education from the syllabus (National Training College for Teachers of the Deaf, 1917). The paper was made optional, and all examinees declined to sit for that portion of the credential over three years, which caused grave concern to one member that the history of his field “all along its course, is identified with and is

inseparable from, the vexed question as to the relative merits of divergent lines of procedure” (Townsend, 1918). In other words, he feared closing the door on the past would impoverish future practitioners’ ability to think critically about their current choices, much less the tides that formed and presented them in the first place. There can be no better argument for signed language interpreter history, when at this writing, these very processes are under revision in the United States and Ireland.

Weaknesses

In several ways, considered choices in approaches, arguments, assumptions, methods, scope, and organization can be seen as compromises, taken at a price. I have sought to explain what could serviceable, and justify what may have been lost. The obvious problem of finding and accessing primary data will be a welcomed lifelong pursuit. The barriers to consulting older documents that I cannot find or read due to language and paleography can be breached by hiring experts for specific searches. These unique finds can have a large impact because of their rarity, but as isolated cases, may not be neatly ascribed to a direct lineage of legal precedents.

As the first study of its kind, there has been a liberal scope of intersectionality in content, time period and geography. Two of the main conflation were the aggregation of UK and US cases, and an imprecise interchange between the concepts of translation vs. interpreting. Laying so vast a foundation risks shallow patches, but also provides context to deeper and more narrowly-defined follow-on studies. I take encouragement from Pym (1998) to “start with one object in mind, go beyond it just to make sure, then redefine your object in terms of whatever you discover. Inclusive definitions are followed by exclusive definitions” (p. 57). What this thesis lacks in specialization of T/IS, linguistics, or legal and cultural history, I believe

it more than compensates with an indispensable, if broad overview that guides those next steps.

Future Work

One of the most exciting and cathartic impacts of completing this thesis is considering what paths lay open for the *next* level of research and analysis. In striving to keep focus in a vast interdisciplinary and longitudinal preliminary study, such opportunities had been set aside and germinated with ideas, notes, and possible sources as they surfaced. Edgar Lowell, a psychologist who was instrumental in the organization of professional interpreting in the US and the first recipient of an honorary membership to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (“Honorary Members Nominations,” 1981) described such a moment:

“I am thinking about the ideal researcher as an inspired, dedicated individual who is thoroughly grounded in an academic discipline, who is trained in the appropriate research techniques and methodology, who conceives of a relevant problem, either theoretical or applied, and who pursues the answer to that problem for as long as necessary to solve it—including an entire career.”
(Lowell, 1980, p. 39)

This study surely has laid a foundation for a lifetime of work, and the ongoing dataset will doubtless have explosive growth as electronic searches allow for greater specificity and speed in an ever-expanding field of available records. I expand below on a selection of those I intend to pursue in a continuing project to document evidence of signed language interpreting history. Additional topics are suggested as collaborations, or to be taken on wholly by other scholars, with an offer of support in sharing material I have gathered, or may find in the future.

An option that would expand and deepen the centuries-long transatlantic scope is a corpus of signed utterances that have been transcribed into English, such as the bill-hook murder victim described in the Introduction of this study (*St. Mary the Virgin, High Ongar, Essex: Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials 1743-1812, 1786*). These renditions will have undoubtedly been asynchronously recorded, and often quite latent. Such “reported signs” could approximate the meaning and in some cases, forms of what DPs might have said, depending on how trustworthy the description of the original delivery, and level of intrusion from the source text. An entire thesis could be constructed to gather and analyze a corpus of historical transcriptions and ex parte reports of deaf signing in and out of the legal system. Like the appearance of deaf interpreters, such instances greatly accelerated after deaf education took hold.

Perhaps the richest such example for Anglophone readers was created in 1904 by deaf bilinguals: “The Adventures of Joseph C. Waddle, Deaf-Mute Inventor,” from the editors and journalists of *The British Deaf Times*. Though fictional caricature, the serialized tales present dialogues between the scrappy and naïve monolingual signer Waddle and the bilingual narrator, his longsuffering if not highly entertained foil. In the stories, Waddle’s voice is presented in transcribed BSL, with no attempt to explain or translate his meaning:

“Oh Waddle, you’re killing me! I managed to say.

“Nothing me!” signed Waddle, hurt. “You fun make, me tease.”

(“The Adventures of Joseph C. Waddle, Deaf-Mute Inventor: Waddle’s Farm Colony,” 1904)

The unnamed authors pivot easily between English and BSL gloss, with a clear appreciation for both. What could read as ungrammatical nonsense to a non-

signer easily conjures a three-dimensional message in the mind of the bilingual reader who understands BSL, ASL, or most likely any signed language, and offers a snapshot into turn-of-the-century BSL grammar as seen by an educated Deaf elite.

Stevens (1966) first recognized the wealth of historical linguistic data contained in the convention proceedings of the American Instructors of the Deaf from 1850–1856. Many references to and examples of translations by both deaf and hearing participants at those meetings, or others reported in the context of schoolwork, churches, theater, and elsewhere throughout the literature could form a separate thesis. With respect to BSL vocabulary, the actual sign for INTERPRETER seems a relatively modern invention. In a recent video, one deaf informant who began to become active in leadership circles in the UK still used a fingerspelled abbreviation “I-N-T,” indicating that when she came of age, there was no distinct lexical item (British Deaf Association, n.d.). The history presented earlier of the Joint Examination Board and Deaf Welfare Examination Board in the UK (and some Commonwealth nations) only scratched the surface of the history behind why the BSL sign for INTERPRETER used to be MISSIONER (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999, p. 33), and the memory of tightly-packed cultural baggage that still freights the profession today.

As a category of interpreters to pursue, the Christian clergy and laity whose outreach extended to Deaf communities forged a natural pathway into a dual role as described earlier. The clerical vocation might be the first practice profession in history, and certainly gave rise to others, such as teaching, medicine, and social services. In this context, the professional status of ordained and lay churchmen vitalized and lent credence to the role of signed language interpreter, particularly in the UK. I respectfully disagree with pioneering BSL interpreting scholar Llewellyn-

Jones (1981) that it would be “neither possible or particularly profitable to try to compare the interpreting services of today with those of 15 or 20 years ago,” except that “demands upon interpreters are increasing” (p. 89). Casting into the 1960s—even much further back as this thesis has proven—is a relevant exercise to step back from the myopia of remembered experience and view present progress within a historically-created set of conditions. The clerical tradition of spoken–written language interpreters has been well documented, but few specific histories of interpreting within and across faiths exist. According to Dasgupta (2010), the uncomfortable origins and “legacy of [those] missionary enterprises themselves can be recycled, in a swords-to-plowshares transformation, if we post-missionary translators agree to play these enterprises off against each other as we reconfigure the field” (p. 1).

Additional focus on this group will also open up a gateway to study women in the field, who served in their capacities as wives and “lady workers.” Historical trends introduced women during in the pre-cultural appearance of isolated intermediaries, until the mostly male pipelines of the nineteenth century. By 1930, they numbered roughly 10% of the total hearing and deaf interpreters published in the first nationwide register in the UK (National Institute for the Deaf & British Deaf and Dumb Association, 1930). Later in the twentieth century the field was seen as largely female in both the UK and US. The percentage of self-reported female members of RID hovered around 85-86% in the early 1990s (Stauffer et al., 1999), and has remained peculiarly and steadily fixed at that level through the most recent reports (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2015a, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

The dissemination of interpreting—through broadcast and transnational channels—would open two lines of inquiry that would develop additional resources

for both HI and DI history in particular. Broadcast interpreting began roughly on a regional basis in the 1950s in the United States (“Those Who Only See,” 1958) and in national distribution in the UK in 1964 (BBC Press Office, 2004). There has never been a comprehensive collection of the changing standards, technologies, and techniques in that subspecialty, and no shortage of claims to have been the “first” to provide it. The main risk in such a project would be overlapping with living subjects and navigating competing memories in the absence of primary, archived footage. The much older expansion and connection of transnational exchanges among Deaf communities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries leaves a rich tradition that also requires a nuanced perspective of the interpreters’ task. Padden (1999) describes a “global geography of sign languages is linked by national and international associations of deaf people who share ways of talking about themselves, their languages, and their condition (p. 58). Interpreters working with international institutions and organizations affiliated to the Deaf-World, or those within the mainstream who interact with Deaf structures have perhaps the shallowest understanding of their position in history. Leahy (2019) was one of the first such projects I undertook to begin a response to that gap in earnest.

Lastly, the history of SLI registration and credentialing can be examined apart from the history of the practice, or educational trends—especially in the US, where there has been a complex evolution of test materials used and certifications offered since 1972. As discussed in the previous Recommendations section, the addition of “general RID history” (Renzulli, 1987, p. 8) to study materials was not universally welcomed in the US. In the forty years since Vidrine (1979), the brief section in the Fant (1990) memoir and a smattering of other sources have not filled in the decades. The need is urgent, given the newly-launched subsidiary of RID, the Center for the

Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation, is once again revising the test for hearing and deaf ASL interpreters.

There are many other angles that other researchers with complimentary areas of expertise could undertake to challenge and expand upon the foundations laid in this study. The relatively recent era of lived memory and witnesses to the dwindling twentieth-century pioneers of professionalization holds interest for many lay and academic researchers. Oral histories, video interviews, digitizing projects, and curatorial work in personal and local archives lay generally outside the scope of my current aims, but they are a crucial compliment to them. For example, popular histories such as the “Pictorial History of Interpreting” suggested in Bailey (2006) that was unfortunately abandoned (Personal communication) could amass an invaluable visual archive. Identification of people and events depicted in personal collections will become increasingly difficult as firsthand knowledge disappears with participants, and unlabeled materials pass from stewards to the care of heirs, who may dispose of unknown treasures.

Possible extensions of this project could develop additional research questions and expertise to include more non-English sources. For example, deaf German community advocate Eduard Fürstenberg went to court repeatedly and petitioned to be appointed legal guardian for fifty-seven deaf orphans. As he “acquired some judicial knowledge,” he was “able to help and advise” the wards on legal matters, and in “completing the administrative paperwork” (Muhs, 2007). While several biographers have written about Fürstenberg’s activities, no source mentions original court documents that could confirm the courtroom communication protocols, and whether he was also a real-time linguistic intermediary during the guardianship hearings.

Also, further documentation is needed to trace the growth of work between matured signed languages, with and without spoken–written source and target texts. Adam (2017) called his study of Australian Irish Sign Language–Australian Sign Language and Irish Sign Language–Northern Ireland BSL “unimodal bilingualism in the Deaf community.” To Boudreault’s (2005) focus on *Langue des Signes Québécoise*–ASL interpreting could be added any number of border contact environments, e.g., *Lengua de Señas Mexicana*–ASL. The studies named were conducted by deaf interpreter–academics who were raised in a polyglot environment with multiple signed and spoken–written languages. It remains, however, for any researcher to identify the first DIs who were linguistically privileged by their upbringing within signing deaf families of two or more generations; there are no such persons as yet in the available nineteenth-century DI data.

Also, a profile could be written of the vanishing cadre of skilled deaf and hard-of-hearing lipreaders who may or may not sign. These “oral transliterators” have assisted in communicating the mouth movements of hearing palliative or critical care patients, or attempt forensic work, either through video recordings or in-person observation. The Oral Transliteration Certificate offered in the US 1999–2016 was rescued from complete “sunset” by the RID membership, but remains in moratorium status (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, n.d.).

The case of localized high-density genetically deaf populations create a unique cohort of hearing lay bilinguals who, by virtue of many connections to deaf family and neighbors, also become extremely fluent signers. This study specifically omitted such examples, leaving room to analyze sign-conversant communities where interpreting happens naturally both among the residents, and for non-signing visitors.

Researchers who work in signed languages generally agree there is a triple mandate to disseminate their findings to laypeople in deaf communities, professional deaf and hearing peers, and the larger, mostly hearing academic audience from adjacent or parent disciplines. Therefore, lastly, portions of this thesis could be translated into BSL, ASL, Auslan, etc. for public engagement, or to produce assets for use in curricula.

Final Reflection

Planck confessed that “one of the most painful experiences” of his career was never “gaining universal recognition for a new result, the truth of which I could demonstrate by a conclusive, albeit only theoretical proof” (Planck, 1949, p. 30). This disappointment is not unfamiliar, and the findings of this study may take several academic generations to find purchase, if indeed paradigms of knowledge change only through attrition as “new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it” (Planck, 1949, pp. 33–34). Reprogramming signed language interpreter history to be about interpreters (distinct from Deaf histories) and history (rather than lived memories) will come with time.

Interpreters are practiced at drawing inferences and connections from incomplete or difficult input and applying personal knowledge and skill to wrest a single coherent product from untold possibilities. This is ideal preparation for the work of a historian: creating new texts that describe, interpret, and contextualize older ones. Academia and SLI communities of practice create the forum for each respective angle of such an exchange, both with occasional steps into the colosseum. As a group, signed language interpreters have done a poor job of

presenting ourselves within our own historical context, and that failing lies at the root of the struggles with identity politics, outward-facing public relations crises, and inwardly-directed factionalism. Quoting Durkheim (1938), Bourdieu (1977b) warned that “the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result” (p. 79). The enemy of this unconscious memory is the new and the now—our “most recent attainments” that overtake our attention with that which has “not yet had time to settle into our unconscious” (ibid).

This study has begun that conversation and described the ancestries of HIs and DIs in BSL and ASL language communities, in order to challenge how their respective histories conflict with received narratives to shape current practices and professional positionality. It has also called into question any monolithic community of practice model wherein all are expected to identify as “an interpreter” first, and overlay other affiliations and characteristics as secondary.

The longitudinal view of SLI history guarantees moments of crises and creativity. Following global debates in the best practices for deaf education which were codified into a declaration of the primacy of speech/speechreading over signed languages (Kinsey, 1880), signing fell out of favor in the US and to a greater and longer extent in the UK. The interpreting corps felt that crisis as acutely as the Deaf community and absorbed the effects of their longstanding language deprivation when sign languages largely went underground. Lamenting his times, Caldwell (1911) suggested that preserving interpreter history could be the answer:

What is to become of the interpreter under the new dispensation? When the sign language shall have been consigned to (and permanently confined in) that limbo wherein are gathered the odds and ends of outgrown methods,

means, and processes... might it not be well for representatives...to make some record of personal experiences characteristic of the old regime?

(Caldwell, 1911, p. 172)

Caldwell had already inherited fingerspelling to represent the letters of the alphabet, and a variety of signing merged with the grammar and structure of spoken–written language, which was made popular a century earlier in France (Abbé de l'Épée, 1776). Still he saw the stark and wholesale change as apocalyptic. The 1880 decision to ban educational practices that supported any signing at all unleashed a kind of pandemic, or more appropriately an endemic that settled within the boundaries of the Deaf World. In practice, those intentions toward assimilation through English fluency and speech ability created a profound isolation. As a result of all of these forces, SLIs have always navigated language usage along a spectrum of infinite combinations of contact between signed and spoken–written language. So too, linguists have recognized the effects of L2 signers on signed languages, and studies no longer confine their data to canonical native, intergenerational signers (e.g., Schönström, 2021). Until 2008, ASL interpreters could sit for a test of “Transliteration” skills, intended for deaf people who were either not fluent or did not prefer ASL; this credential was available separately from or in addition to the interpreting certification (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2015b).

The back-to-the-land reaction has taken hold, and recently ASL signers have begun to purposefully extract habitual and canonically-used English influences from their vocabulary (justacunninglinguist, 2018). This happens with little predictability, no settled standards, and in many cases without mastery of the ways an ASL message would otherwise make sense of itself. In this crowdsourced and self-selected ASL Academy, new coinages appear, with some taking hold, and others

not; Caldwell would be stunned at the interpreter's mandate in this landscape, but for reasons he could not possibly have predicted.

At the risk of allowing the momentary to enter into this conclusion, a global quarantine and mass migration to what had been a relatively small island of video remote interpreting is the modern analogue and irreversible shift for today's SLIs. A delineation marking the rising generation of digital SLI natives is inevitable. This follows decades of onscreen call center work driven by legal requirements for people of all abilities to access the telephony network—a setting which has already somewhat negatively impacted SLIs (Bower, 2015; Napier et al., 2017). Since Keating and Mirus (2003), researchers have recognized how signed language articulation *must* adapt to a two-dimensional format in order to accommodate the viewer. Video remote interpreting settings will continue to influence the perception of video interpreters: real-time comparison to captions enabled by automatic speech recognition, the varying quality of audio and video source input, the practicalities of eye muscle strain for both SLIs and deaf participants, and countless other known and as-yet-undiscovered factors.

The international meeting in Milan (Kinsey, 1880) codified and granted primacy to one specific model of the existing educational practices, and sent shockwaves through Caldwell's time that compounded and reverberated into our own. SLI practice today has similarly been flattened and re-made into a two-dimensional image of its former incarnation. While the choice of in-person, online or hybrid formats will surely return, the "old regime" will not, and the need for interpreter–historians to preserve, document, and memorialize signed language interpreting has never been more dire.

Philippi (1989) called translation itself “the organization of memory traces” or engrams, recorded bits “of the psychic functioning of two entire ancestral lines: the accumulated experiences of two linguistic groups” (p. 685). This study has begun that task of gathering the source texts: the pedigrees and evidence of hearing and deaf SLIs. The foregoing chapters have demonstrated that what began as deaf–hearing gestural intermingling formed the bases for signed language and necessitated a role for hearing bilingual–bimodals who could span the gap to spoken language. The common territory where these groups first met was staked out of the Hearing World; as educational and social structures developed, it seceded to a Deaf-World, and deaf intermediaries were necessary to traverse that boundary. As these worlds become digital, virtual, global, and at once both expanded and foreshortened, isolated and hyper-available, interpreter–historians are the wayfinders along that frontier who translate the longitudinal past, inform the present moment, and recognize the signs of the future.

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