Identity Construction in ASL-English Interpreted Interactions

by

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Abstract

Drawing from sociolinguistic literature on identity negotiation and from interpreting research, this study examines how interpreters are implicated in the discursive processes occurring in interpreted interactions. Conversational interactions are sites of identity construction and interpreters actively participate in these dynamics. The data from an interpreted conversation, questionnaires from the interpreters and interlocutors, and playback interviews are analyzed to explore how participants’ identity negotiations are altered by the interpreters. This study found that identity-related dynamics were influenced by the interpreters’ language proficiency, interpreting technique, and personal identity. In particular, the interpreters had an impact on the participants’ ability to construct relations of affinity and on their capacity to accurately attribute interactional dynamics. Recruitment and retention of diverse students and pedagogical practices in interpreter education programs might attend to these issues so ASL-English interpreters can seek professional practices that allow transparency and accountability.
Acknowledgments

This research has been motivated and informed by many conversations with interpreting colleagues and Deaf friends. Their wisdom and insight has been inspiring and I offer this study as a small contribution to the ongoing effort to learn how to better serve the Deaf community through interpretation that is thoughtful, ethical, and accountable.

I am grateful for the generosity of all the participants who were willing to provide a rich and personal language sample for this research. They allowed me to examine their language use, their interactions, and their relationships, and I appreciate their openness and trust.

Furthermore, I am humbled and honoured that my colleagues offered me their work product for this study. I have attempted to be a respectful caretaker of their work, and my analysis is intended to provide insight for our profession to strive toward better service to the communities in which we work.

So many more thanks are due.

To my supervisor, Julie Kerekes, who has guided me wisely.

To my daughters, Johanna and Thea, whose enthusiastic care I have relished and relied on.

And to my partner, Tilman, for holding my hand to the end.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Sociolinguistic literature demonstrates that discursive interactions are sites of identity construction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Davies & Harré, 1999). Emerging interpreting studies research shows that when interactions are mediated by interpretation, the interpreter is a participant in the co-construction and trajectory of the resultant discourse (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008; Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014; S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). Informed by these fields of research, this study investigates an interpreted conversation in order to explore how interpretation affects the identity-constitutive discourses of interlocutors.

1.1 Rationale

Many interpreters are self-employed practitioners who work in a wide variety of settings. The following are typical assignments of a freelance ASL-English interpreter. A Deaf\(^1\) client has a first-time appointment with a new counsellor. A group of college students meets to work on a school project. A workplace has its regular monthly staff meeting. In each of these examples, the participants will be engaging in a variety of discursive acts, with multiple and overlapping purposes.

Clearly, the interpreter must be equipped with the linguistic and sociolinguistic proficiency to render the pragmatic and social meaning (Hoza, 2007a) of the interlocutors. Furthermore, Wilcox and Shaffer (2005) insist that these meanings do not have an objective existence contained in the linguistic form of the utterance, but

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\(^1\) Following conventional practice (see for example, Roy, 2000, p. 6), and in accordance with the recommendations of the Canadian Association of the Deaf, I will capitalize Deaf when it pertains to a culturally Deaf person, or some aspect of the cultural and linguistic minority community. Lowercase “deaf” will be used to refer to the audiological condition (Canadian Association of the Deaf - Association des Sourds du Canada, 2015). There being no equivalent cultural identity, the term “hearing” will not be capitalized.
rather that meaning is “co-constructed in dynamic interplay” among the interlocutors of an interaction and that the interpreters mediating these exchanges are participants in this dynamic interplay of meaning co-construction (p. 47). While this has many implications for interpreted interactions, one particular aspect of this dynamic interplay is the interactional phenomenon of identity negotiation which resides in the intersubjective relations unfolding in linguistic interactions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 608). Although the dynamics of interactions are many, complex, and overlapping, this study will focus narrowly on the discursive construction of identity in an interpreted interaction.

While a “fully conscious thinking interpreter” is required for the “creative, constructive meaning-making process” (S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005, p. 47), the thinking interpreter is also an embodied interpreter with their own set of “personal and cultural resources ... to draw upon in constructing the present moment” (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 44). They are present in the moment, reading and being read in the interplay of “linguistic and other semiotic practices” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588) that contribute to the emergence of the interlocutors’ identities.

Will the counsellor’s use of gender-neutral pronouns be available for the Deaf client to contribute toward a trusting clinical relationship? Can the college students effectively use in-group linguistic forms to construct social cohesion through the mediation of interpretation? Does the Deaf employee’s indexing of shared cultural frameworks effectively construct affinity and contribute to an enhanced professional relationship?

The complexities involved in an interpreter’s reading of the identity-constructing moves made by participants demonstrate how identity theories can inform interpreting practices.

1.2 Researcher stance

This thesis attempts to bring together insights from two bodies of research: Interactional Sociolinguistics and Interpreting Theory. My interest in this topic
emerged from a similar bringing-together. As a professional ASL-English interpreter of twenty-odd years slowly working my way through a Master’s degree, I took a course on sociolinguistics and second language learning. In the readings about discursive construction of identity, I recognized the shape of an idea that has been hovering over my professional practice for some time. I recognized it from conversations with queer colleagues about straight interpreters working at Pride and from requests for interpreting services in communities of colour. It was the idea that who we are matters, that who I am makes a difference to my work.

This may seem like an obvious observation, but in the field of ASL-English interpreting we have only recently wrestled the creed of neutrality out of our theory and vestiges of it still remain in our educational and professional practices. Interpreters have been trained to consider themselves mediators between Deaf and hearing worlds without much thought to the other worlds that we all inhabit. However, because some identities and experiences are socially coded as closer to neutral than others, individuals who are socially privileged in this way can sometimes appear as more effective interpreters; an injustice to the interpreters not so embodied and to the communities who therefore cannot access interpretation that represents their experience, values, and identities.

Queer Deaf people are saying that when it comes time to book ASL interpreters for Pride events, they want queer interpreters on the stage. And even if I am available on the evening of the Black1 History lecture, Deaf people of colour have told me that they cannot really share in the passion of a Black woman when it is articulated by my white hands. It matters who we are—not just how good we are at interpreting—but who we actually are. Unfortunately, as a professional community (at least within

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1 Although APA guidelines now recommend capitalization of racial and ethnic groups, in deference to other suggested usage (see for example Tochluk, 2009, p. vi, or Halley et al., 2010, p. 16), I will capitalize Black, but maintain lowercase for “white” and “whiteness” to decenter whiteness and to recognize the prevalence of a limited social racial awareness or anti-racist white identity.
the Greater Toronto Area), we aren’t adequately diverse to meet the needs of the many communities in which we work.

As a white, straight, cis-female, non-disabled, Canadian born hearing interpreter, I embody much privilege. The topic of privilege and interpreter identity is emerging in numerous community conversations, social media activism, negotiations with employers, and professional exchanges. It is being discussed as an issue of access for Deaf people building relationships within marginalized communities, as a matter of equity for diversely identified interpreting students who struggle to graduate into the field, as a challenge to our evaluation practices that may have normative assumptions embedded in their metrics, and in the questioning of interpreter booking practices that do not attend to interpreters’ lived experiences as a credential for employment.

I am listening to Deaf people and interpreting colleagues who are carving out the shape of this idea, finding its contours and its hard edges. This is a social justice project. It is political and it is radical. It aims to transform.

It is in this context that I offer this study.

1.3 Thesis outline

In this thesis I have explored one phenomenon that occurs within the myriad complex dynamics of sociolinguistic human interaction, the discursive negotiation of identity in interpreted interactions. In this Introductory Chapter I provide a brief description of the organization of the thesis, outline the context and rationale for the study, and introduce the research questions. Chapter 2 reviews the two bodies of research that are brought together in this study: Interactional Sociolinguistics and Interpreting Theory and introduces two frameworks which will inform my analysis. The relevance of this combination of fields is illustrated by examining some potential impacts of interpretation on the discursive identity construction of interlocutors in interpreted interactions. I propose a typology of three distinct, yet overlapping, aspects of identity that are performed simultaneously during the act of
interpretation: *interpreter as interlocutor, interpreter as interpreter, and interpreter as self.* This formulation contributes to an analysis of how an interpreter's identity might be implicated in the navigation and discursive construction of identity. In this way, I provide a description of the problem being addressed by this area of research and a justification for this study. The methodology used in this study is described in Chapter 3. In particular, some of the unique methodological challenges of working with a signed language are explored and I describe how I have addressed these complications. In Chapter 4, I introduce the three categories of participants recruited for this study and provide their profiles. Chapter 5 is an orientation to some relevant information about American Sign Language (ASL) that may not be familiar to readers. I describe four selected ASL features that are relevant to the analysis of identity negotiation. I also provide, in this chapter, an outline of the various transcription conventions that I have used to convey the complex and overlapping linguistic elements contained in an interpreted ASL-English interaction. In Chapter 6, I analyze a number of examples of how the participants in the study oriented themselves relative to one another and to the content of the conversation. Chapter 6 also begins to look at the interpreters' interactional roles and responsibilities in the rendering of these positioning devices. This analysis is continued in Chapter 7, with a close examination of two particular segments taken from the data that trace the consequences of the interpreter impact on the identity negotiations among the interlocutors in the conversation. In Chapter 8, themes are drawn from the examples in the previous two chapters and examined in light of the overlapping interpreter identities being performed in the interpretation. Chapter 9 outlines the limitations of this study, provides a summary of this study’s contributions, and points to possible areas of future research.

In sum, this study investigates how interactants’ identity construction might be interrupted or altered by the interpreter. This perspective can inform student recruitment and retention, curricula, and pedagogical approaches so interpreter education programs can attend to questions of identity along with language proficiency and interpreting technique. Further research in this area can assist
practitioners to seek professional practices that enhance transparency and accountability for their own contributory positions in the interactions that they interpret.

1.4 Research questions

To investigate these issues, I conducted a study of an interpreted conversation among a group of Deaf and hearing interlocutors. It is not suggested that the findings will result in any conclusions about the impact of interpreter identity on interpreted interactions in general. It is hoped, though, that a close analysis of the identity relations that emerged in this single conversation will suggest ways that the interpreter is implicated in this particular aspect of communication.

The primary data take the form of a conversation among a group of two ASL and two English users, who are referred to in this study as the interlocutors. Two professional interpreters provided the interpretation to facilitate this conversation. Questionnaires were then administered to the interlocutors and the interpreters (collectively called participants), to collect additional relevant information. Additionally, after a preliminary analysis, the participants were invited to participate in a follow-up playback interview to discuss the initial findings. The data were analyzed to address these research questions:

1. In what ways did the interlocutors engage in identity negotiation in same-language and interpreted conversational exchanges?
2. What was the impact of the interpreters’ language proficiency and interpreting technique on the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiation?
3. What was the impact of the interpreter’s own identity on the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiation?
In this chapter I review the relevant sociolinguistic literature, and in particular introduce the framework proposed by Bucholtz and Hall for the analysis of interactional identity negotiation. I then turn to the interpreting literature to explore the ways that interpreters have been shown to be non-neutral participants in interpreted interactions. An illustration is offered to show how by combining these fields it is possible to see that interlocutors’ identity construction may be interrupted or altered by the interpreter. This illustration raises the question of how the interpreter’s own identity may be implicated in their performance of the task of interpretation. To further explore this question, a typology of interpreter-performed identities is proposed as a framework for analyzing how interpreters impact identity negotiation in discourse. The chapter closes by defining the problem addressed by this area of study and justifying this research.

2.1 Discursive construction of identity: Relevant theory

A review of sociolinguistic literature on the discursive construction of identity shows that the process of identity construction lies at the conflux of broad social and ideological structures, ethnographic categories and positionings, and local interactional moments (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Davies & Harré, 1999). Within interactions, discursive features are leveraged to negotiate power relations and to construct identity.

Many authors have, from a wide variety of theoretical positions, explored the ways in which language use in discursive interactions is constitutive of individuals’ sense of self, or identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Davies & Harré, 1999; Mason & Ren, 2012; Vázquez, 2011). The concept of identity has been most fruitfully explored as being composed of both internal, subjective sense of oneself, as well as the social ties, categories and affiliations that are externally present (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005;
Hollway, 2010). Drawing on diverse disciplines such as feminist and psychoanalytic theory (Hollway, 2010), and sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis, and social psychology (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), theorists conclude that while theoretical traditions have focused either at the individual or the social level, a more complete understanding of identity constitution "in which internal and external processes are co-constitutive" (Hollway, 2010, p. 217) is facilitated by an interdisciplinary lens.

Continuing this analysis, theorists have located this intersubjective process of identity formation in sites of communicative interaction (Angelelli, 2004; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Bucholtz and Hall conclude that identity is “a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories” (pp. 585-586). Against this backdrop of interactionally negotiated relations, “scholars of language use are particularly well equipped to provide an empirically viable account of the complexities of identity as a social, cultural, and – most fundamentally – interactional phenomenon” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 608). Taking identity as a relational phenomenon, rather than merely a constellation of membership in fixed categories, Bucholtz and Hall define identity as “the social positioning of self and other” (p. 586). This study works from the premise therefore, that the process of interlocutor’s identity negotiation is influenced by phenomena external to their interactions, such as social and ideological categories and structures, as well as by their own and others’ deployment of discursive features and dynamics within conversation. The framework that they propose was used in the analysis of the data collected in this study to detect the linguistic evidence of discursive negotiation of identity.

### 2.2 Identity and interaction: A sociocultural framework

Bucholtz and Hall posit a series of five principles to guide the analysis of identity negotiation in interactions. The emergence principle of the framework emphasizes that identity is both reflected in and constituted by social interaction – it is not just
brought along, but rather it is built, maintained and altered in the social ground of interactions. The positionality principle focuses on the positions assumed by interactants. These can be as members of large demographic categories, or of local ethnographically specific positions, or even temporary roles adopted for the moment of the interaction itself. The indexicality principle shows how linguistic forms are used in constructing identity by creating semiotic links between linguistic forms and social meanings. This might be via overt mentions of identity categories, with or without adjectives and modifiers that reorient the social meaning being indexed, or merely implicatures and presuppositions regarding one’s own or others identity. The relationality principle involves a series of three contrastive sets which Bucholtz and Hall call “tactics of intersubjectivity.” These sets are adequation/distinction, authentication/denaturalization, and authorization/illegitimation. Through these processes of alignment and distancing, speakers manoeuvre through their interactions and negotiate their relations.

The final principle offered in the Bucholtz and Hall framework is the partialness principle, which addresses the extent to which identity construction relies on the speaker’s agency. The interactional approach to identity recognizes that one’s own identity construction, be it conscious or not, is still only partial. It is also subject to processes of co-construction, or the perceptions/representations of other interactants, broad ideological influences and social structures, and other external forces shaping how interactants socially position themselves and others.

These five principles from Bucholtz and Hall create a framework for the identification of identity constitutive linguistic features or dynamics, and the evaluation of the interpreter’s interactional participation in the interlocutors’ discursive identity work.

2.3 Interpreting models: Relevant theory

This interactional sociolinguistic framework, however, was not conceived in the context of interpreted interactions. So while these discursive dynamics are
occurring they are complicated by the fact of interpretation and by the particular interpreter at work. In interpreter-mediated interactions, interpreters, far from being invisible and objective as has traditionally been proposed, in fact make multiple contributions to the interaction (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008; Metzger, 1999; S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). This is evident in the presentation of their role and responsibility (Wadensjö, 1995) and in their institutional authority and interactional power (Angelelli, 2004; Bahadir, 2010; Mason & Ren, 2012) and extends to the meaning that is conveyed (S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005), the assumptions that are deployed (Mason, 2006), and the even to the construction of the participants’ subjectivity and identity (Spivak, 2000; Vázquez, 2011).

### 2.3.1 Interpreters are implicated

Historically, interpreter education has focused largely on the development of linguistic, sociolinguistic and cultural competency, and the acquisition of interpreting technique (Janzen, 2005). Insofar as personal qualities have been examined among the characteristics that comprise professional competence the focus has been informed primarily by psychology (Seal, 2004), and has included attributes such as cognitive ability, and cross-cultural and interpersonal skills (Pöchhacker, 2004).

Discourses of neutrality and invisibility, long embedded in the literature and practices of interpreting, are meant to keep the interpreter at a theoretical distance from the interpretation. “It has been the traditional and persistent view that interpreters should be transparent, invisible, passive, neutral, and detached” (Mason & Ren, 2012, p. 235). Despite the fact that the interpreter is clearly present in the interactions, traditional models of interpreting have re-positioned the interpreter as something other than a living breathing human influence in a human interaction; these models are referred to as “conduit” metaphors, such as interpreter as telephone, voice-box, parrot, or machine (Mason & Ren, 2012, p. 235). "The non-acceptance of the undeniable physical presence of the interpreter leads to the great myth of the impartial, neutral, de-personalized, non-disturbing, thus
invisible interpreter" (Bahadir, 2010, p. 131). This paradigm has been examined and debunked by numerous authors reflecting on the ways in which interpreters contribute to the interpreted texts (Angelelli, 2004; Bahadir, 2010; Janzen & Shaffer, 2008; Mason & Ren, 2012). Studies of interpreters at work demonstrate that interpreters participate by constructing, co-constructing, repairing, and facilitating the interaction (Angelelli, 2004). Janzen and Shaffer summarize the current thinking on interpreter neutrality succinctly; "the interpreter never takes a neutral stance—it simply is not available to her" (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008, p. 352).

The multi-faceted presence of the interpreter has material implications for the trajectory of the interpreted interaction. "The interpreter inscribes herself both in the text of the dominant and that of the Other" (Bahadir, 2010, p. 131). Bahadir points out that the interpreter has a material effect on the interpreted interaction; the fact that much of interpreting work is conducted in contexts of asymmetrical relations of power magnifies this effect. It thus becomes an instance of the "linking macro-structures of power to individual instances of social practice" (Mason & Ren, 2012, p. 242). In fact while interpreters make communication possible, they also function to maintain, reinforce or alter power relations (Angelelli, 2004; Bahadir, 2010; Mason & Ren, 2012; Obasi, 2013).

Viewing interpretation as a discursive and interactive process allows practitioners to shift away from mechanistic models that obscure the realities of interpreters as co-participants in interpreter-mediated interactions. Roy (2000) takes a discourse-based approach to examining interpreter impacts on interaction in her study on turn-taking in a triadic encounter mediated through ASL-English interpretation. Roy explores how "interpreting inherently constructs and is constructed by many of the same elements and strategies as discourse processes, and interpreting has to be investigated while examining the discourse process" (Roy, 2000, p. 21). Interpreters, she argues, are primarily tasked with making sense of what a person means when they say something and then conveying that same sense to someone else. This sense-making is both generalizable, in that there are conventional linguistic and
discursive strategies for making sense recognizable, and also intensely specific, in that meaning is always co-constructed in context (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008; Roy, 2000; S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). In her study she demonstrated the significant role that the interpreter played in the navigation of a conversation between a student and a professor. Roy claims that there are essentially two distinct turn-taking systems in operation and that they are coordinated and managed by the interpreter to create discursively intelligible utterances and turns. The operation of these turn-taking systems was a function of linguistics and culture, but also of the asymmetrical power relations that exist between a student and a professor in an academic interaction. She paid particular attention to the stores of knowledge upon which the interpreter drew to guide the management of conversational flow; two linguistic systems and conventions for language use, the social and relational dynamics of the situation, and the conventionally expected discourse structures within that genre of interaction (Roy, 2000). While Roy explored the functional impact of the interpreter’s interactional management decisions and the way that each participant was perceived as a result of those decisions, she did not extend the interactional analysis into the realm of identity negotiation.

Recent research has moved forward in this area of investigation. Feyne (2015) also took a discursive approach to the examination of interpreter participation in the construction of meaning in interpreted encounters. She considered the content of the utterances and the manner in which they were expressed in interaction, but also extended the analysis to include “the identity of the interlocutor whose communication is received via interpretation” (Feyne, 2015, p. 66). Feyne studied how museumgoers perceived a Deaf docent’s presentation. She concluded that interpreters, when working from ASL into English, made significant choices that impacted the perceptions of the audience about the professional identity of the presenter. These choices extended from the lexical level, such as the selection of terminology deemed appropriate for the genre and register of a professional museum lecturer, to discursive choices such as the literal rendering of constructed
action\(^1\) segments. She further noted that in the absence of a systematic way for audience members to attribute these linguistic and discursive features, they relied on an ideologically informed idea of transparent interpretation and thereby attributed all aspects of the interpreted utterances to the Deaf lecturer (Feyne, 2015). In relation to the use of language as a marker of social identity there is therefore a double footprint of interpretation on each interaction. Can the interpreter effectively read the identity constitutive elements of discourse, and can a socially and culturally intelligible equivalent be read from their interpretation?

These interpreting studies demonstrate clearly the numerous ways in which interpreters are implicated in the work of interpretation. The professional decisions made in determining the appropriate role (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013), managing participant interactions (Angelelli, 2004) such as turn-taking (Roy, 2000), are made by individual interpreters who co-construct meaning with participants (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008), influence participants perceptions of one another (Feyne, 2015), and who are, in turn, subject to the perceptions of participants and colleagues (Obasi, 2013).

2.3.2 Institutional and interactional alignment

The Roy and Feyne studies differ in the way in which the interpreter’s impact was operationalized. The interpreter in the Roy (2000) study exhibited significant control over the interactional management and conversational flow. The museum interpreters in the Feyne (2015) study, however, were associated in the minds of the audience with the institution of the museum and with the professional role of interpreter and thereby were misconstrued as non-participants in the construction of the identity of the Deaf lecturer. Mason and Ren distinguish these two types of control, or power, available to interpreters—institutional and interactional. Institutional power is conferred on interpreters, in part, through some of their common working practices. For instance, institutionally assigned security passes,

\(^1\) “Constructed action,” also referred to as role-shift, is an ASL feature described in Chapter 5.
the choice of professional attire, or evident familiarity with the protocol of the environment all contribute to an interpreters’ affiliation (perceived by themselves and the participants) with the institution structures. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) show how identity can be affirmed, or even imposed, in relation to the structures of institutionalized power and ideology (p. 603). For example, when Deaf people engage in dominant non-Deaf environments ASL interpreters literally *speak* the language of the authority, and are thereby, at least to some degree, relationally aligned with that position of institutional power. In the case of the Feyne study, it was the affiliation of the interpreters as professionals performing in their area of expertise that constructed an institutional power absolving them from attribution of perceived inadequacies of the lecturer’s technical knowledge or performance.

On the other hand, no position or stance in an interaction is fixed. As is demonstrated by the emergence principle of the Bucholtz and Hall (2005) framework, while identity construction in interaction may draw on pre-existing structures, such as ideological or institutional authority, it fundamentally “is constituted through social action, and especially through language” (p. 588). The interpreter in the Roy (2000) study on turn-taking was exercising interactional power in the coordination of conversational turns to manage the flow of talk in the interaction between the student and professor, thereby ensuring that the interactional goals of each participant could be met.

Interpreters, then, exert some controls over the trajectory of the interactions they interpret. The malleability of the stance of the interpreter is visualized in the three dimensional model of Role-Space offered by Llewellyn-Jones and Lee in which they propose a redefinition of the role of the community interpreter. The vast array of assignments undertaken by community interpreters requires that interpreters’ position, or the role-space that they occupy, shifts according to the needs and dynamics of a particular interaction in a particular moment (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014). In their model, the interpreter constructs for themselves a role space that is
circumscribed by a range of factors represented on three axes: participant alignment, interaction management, and presentation of self.

The *alignment* axis reveals the orientation that the interpreter adopts vis-à-vis the consumers of the interpretation. The axis of *interaction management* quantifies the amount of leeway an interpreter has to inject some control over the dynamics of the interpreted interaction. These could be requests for repetition or for clarification, or by regulating turn-taking behaviours. Finally, the *presentation of self* axis is an attempt to describe the various ways that interpreters themselves engage in the interaction with self-authored contributions to the exchange that are not intended as interaction regulators. This could be a greeting, a response to a direct question, a moment of personal conversation, etc. Llewellyn-Jones and Lee exhort interpreters to take a role-based rather than a rule-based approach to the performance of interpretation and to assess the cultural and conventional appropriateness of different behaviours to determine their alignment relative to each participant, the amount of interaction management available to them, and the degree to which they will engage in a presentation of self. They suggest that these deliberately employed positioning maneuvers will lead to more principled practice as interpreters “make decisions and employ strategies to enable successful interactions” (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014, p. 11).

As it pertains to institutional and interactional authority, the alignment axis of their model is a way of capturing the shifting position that the interpreter takes between the interlocutors, sometimes aligning more closely with the Deaf participant and at other times more aligned with the non-Deaf participant. The management of social distance is facilitated through behaviours such as vocabulary use, eye gaze and physical location, language style such as register and the degree of formality, and other linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviours (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014). In this way, interpreters can leverage their orientation to institutional authority through modulating their alignment over the course of an interpretation.
Likewise, in Angelelli’s study of health care settings, she emphasized how interpreters were exercising their professional agency in relation to their positions of power (Angelelli, 2004). Some of these maneuvers were aimed to diminish the perceptions of institutional affiliation and increase solidarity with the patient. For example, her research showed interpreters who chose to open and close medical encounters using their own “voice” rather than translating the lines of the doctor. “In doing so, it seems that the cultural norms of politeness supersede those that transpire from the institutional power” (Angelelli, 2004, p. 85). However, most of the interpreters she studied used interactional moves that reinforced their alignment with the institution, showing that Mason and Ren’s distinction between institutional and interactional power is not a hard line. Despite this, and although institutional power is prevalent and inescapable, it is primarily the dynamics occurring at the interactional level that will be the focus of this study.

2.3.3 Interactional positions and interpretation

The positionality principle from the Bucholtz and Hall framework is instructively viewed in the light of both Llewellyn-Jones and Lee’s Role-Space model and Mason and Ren’s conception of the interactive power of the interpreter. Positionality generally refers to macro-level demographic and local, culturally-specific categories and roles as well as the transitory interactional positions negotiated among participants (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). As interactants, interpreters participate in and are subject to these positioning negotiations. For instance, the insertion of an interpreter, by definition, constructs new interactional roles of interpreter and consumer of interpreting. Furthermore, these roles are often associated with positions that exist prior to the actual interaction; "translation and interpreting are now more closely connected with the rights of certain language speakers and the obligations imposed upon the speakers of other languages" (Bahadir, 2010, p. 126). In this way the specter of interpretation injects new possibilities for positions to be occupied by the participants to the dialogue: consumer, rights holder, and one who
is obligated. Moreover, within the interaction itself, the available interactional roles and dynamics are altered by the introduction of the interpreter.

In one-to-one settings, Bahadir argues, “as soon as the interpreter enters the dyad, the given social entity is transformed into a triad. This process thereby fundamentally and irrevocably changes the relationship of the two original interaction partners” (p. 128). A dialogue between two people is characterized by an intimacy and exclusivity that is ruptured by the entrance of the third so the likely interactional trajectory will be fundamentally shifted (Bahadir, 2010). Furthermore, Roy points out that interpreters are typically engaged in conversations in which the interlocutors’ roles are characterized at different levels of socially conferred power, thereby activating factors such as status and authority and rendering the character of the communication as distinct from casual conversation (Roy, 2000).

In larger group settings interaction is characterized by multiple participants negotiating turn-taking, so overlap and interruption is typically more prevalent. These interactional roles are also altered in the presence of an interpreter who must take on more responsibility for the exchange of talk (a higher point on the interactional management axis of the role-space model) if they are to successfully produce a discursively intelligible interpretation. Some of these impacts occur before the interaction even commences, and others at the point when the interpreter begins to exercise interactional power by employing a constellation of strategies, tactics, and techniques to coordinate the communication among the participants (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014; Mason & Ren, 2012). The interactive power, or role-space configuration, contributes to the capacity (or incapacity) of participants to determine their own positioning maneuvers in interpreted interactions.

The interactional role of interpreter consumer, and the injection of an additional person into interactions, is a more familiar and everyday discursive experience for some people than it is for others. Signing Deaf people, for example, who are users of a minority language in societies, institutions, and systems largely dominated by
spoken-language users frequently engage with the majority non-Deaf, non-signing others through the mediation of interpretation. This disparity in familiarity with the altered interactional roles of conversation may have relevance in the identity formation of the participants. Hollway (2010) points to how a “theoretical focus on embodiment also provides a link to the role of practices in identity formation”; for example, “Bourdieu draws attention to repeated everyday embodied routines and unconscious practices” in the constitution of subjectivity (p. 230). If interpreter-mediated communication is a habitual and every-day practice in the interactive experiences of Deaf people, could the presence of interpreters constitute a “practice in identity formation”? The implications of habitual practices of interpreter-mediated interaction on Deaf subjectivity are beyond the expertise of a hearing researcher but might prove to be a site for future study by Deaf experts and researchers.

2.3.4 Interpreter subjectivity

In her exploration of the interpreter’s entanglement in interactions, Bahadir gives significant regard to power imbalances and the effect of the perceived positioning and alignment in interpreter-mediated discourses. However, she fails to examine the interpreter’s impact at the level of meaning-making. Drawing from theoretical work on meaning co-construction (S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005), Janzen and Shaffer have demonstrated the implications of this perspective for the work of interpreters. “Meaning,” they conclude, “is not something objective found in the words and constructions of language, to be discovered and conveyed, but it is co-constructed between discourse participants in an immediate social context” (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008, p. 343). Mason and Ren (2012), also conscious of the meaning-making contributions to interpreted texts, have further demonstrated that the implications of power are evident at this level of interpretation as well. Vectors of inequity in intercultural exchanges extend to the very ability to understand what is meant when it traverses language and culture. Drawing from Blommaert (2005), they claim that differential access to discursive resources, such as command of the sanctioned
genres and discourses, (which is related to what Angelelli calls institutional power),
the ways in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so,
and the contextualized uses of a text or utterance in a new or different setting are all
examples of discursive strategies that both reflect and constitute the negotiated
relations of power in interaction (Mason & Ren, 2012).

Interpreters, as active co-constructors of these negotiations, are implicated in the
effects of how these discursive strategies are employed. For example, a study by
Janzen and Shaffer examined the use of contextualization in interpreted discourse. It
showed that participants use framing, or contextualization, purposefully as an
intersubjective discursive maneuver to negotiate shared knowledge and
understanding. This strategy not only creates cohesion in texts, but also reflects
speakers’ intersubjectively negotiated perceptions of their co-interlocutors. In their
study of ASL-English interpreters, Janzen and Shaffer found that contextualization is
widely misunderstood and misattributed as a grammatical requirement of ASL. This
has resulted in the interpreter, whose knowledge store is different from that of
either of the participants, making choices about contextualization that may differ
significantly from the intent of the participants. From the perspective of a Deaf
consumer of interpreting, Stratiy, as cited in Janzen and Shaffer, claimed that the
impact of interpreter’s overuse of contextualization “can often block the discourse
participants from their own meaning negotiation, during which they would
otherwise learn about each other and what is shared and not shared between them”
(Janzen & Shaffer, 2008, p. 349).

The learning about what is “shared or not shared” aligns with what Bucholtz and
Hall describe in their principle of relationality as “several, often overlapping,
complementary relations, including similarity/difference…” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005,
p. 598). It is through these negotiations that relations are emergent between
participants in an interaction. In fact, the stakes of interpreters’ impact on emergent
relations are raised by Hollway’s claim that this relationality extends to the
constitution of the self as subject. There is an interdependence, she argued, between
subjectivity and intersubjectivity. She quoted Ogden’s assertion that “the subject cannot create itself,” to argue that that people’s complex relations in intersubjective interactions are “an integral part of this account of identity formation and change” (Hollway, 2010, p. 219).

Drawing from these authors, we can conclude that: there is no message for an interpreter to render until they have participated in its conceptual construction; this co-construction is subject to the structural inequities that exist in circumstances of inter-cultural social interactions; interactional processes are subject to interpreters’ professional decisions and personal attributes; these processes can impact the development of authentic relations among participants; and through the dynamic interplay of intersubjectivity and subjectivity this interpreter influence extends to the very constitution of the participant’s sense of self or identity.

2.3.5 Epistemic territories

Much of this research has examined the dynamics of language use and interpretation at the local level of particular interactions. At a more macro level, the ideological consequences of the unintelligible in translation has been explored by Vázquez (2011) who claimed that translations, existing at the borders of what he described as epistemic territories, stand guard over the content deemed knowable within those borders operating to “render invisible everything that does not fit into the ‘parameters of legibility’” of that territory (Vázquez, 2011, p. 28). Epistemic territories are governed not merely by languages, but by the ways of knowing, particularly the dominant colonial ways of knowing, that are embedded within the epistemologies of those language communities. In this sense, I argue that “English-speaking hearingness” constitutes an epistemic territory, and ASL interpreters, who are aligned (through socialization in the multiple and overlapping systems of relations of power which include audist world-views) with the dominant hearing participant, will find certain Deaf knowledge unintelligible. This broad question of epistemic intelligibility is beyond what can fruitfully be investigated in this
research; however, its exploration would be a valuable addition to the field of interpreting studies.

There is a narrower question, though, that is raised by Vázquez’s notion of epistemic territories that is connected to the questions of interpreter’s participation in the intersubjective construction of the identity of the interlocutors in interpreted discourse. How do interpreters navigate the borders of the multiple and overlapping territories occupied by the interactants and what kinds of knowledges are unintelligible to them?

2.4 Bringing it together: An illustration of interpreter impact

2.4.1 Adequation and distinction

Within their framework for analyzing identity, Bucholtz and Hall propose a model called “Tactics of Intersubjectivity” comprised of three pairs of analytic tools with which to examine salient aspects of a discourse interaction. They use the term intersubjectivity, rather than identity to highlight the degree to which identity does not exist as a fixed social category or individual psychological state, but rather is dependent upon interactive relations. Individuals are simultaneously “the subject of social processes” as well as being “subject to social processes” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004b, pp. 492–493). While I concur with this emphasis, in the interest of consistency I continue to use the term identity.

Each pair in the framework represents polar oppositions along a continuum of a particular relational quality. By presenting continua rather than fixed positions they hope to complicate traditionally understood categories of identity. The three pairs are: adequation and distinction, authentication and denaturalization, and authorization and illegitimation. In any given interaction, participants position themselves and others, fluidly shifting through the matrix of interactional possibilities offered by these relational axes. While there were interactional moments in the data that exemplified each of these dynamics, the first of these pairs,
adequation and distinction, provides a particularly clear illustration of the potential impact of the interpreter on identity negotiation.

By adequation and distinction, Bucholtz and Hall are referring to the mechanisms that are used to perceive and construct sameness and difference. The term *sameness*, however, implies a higher degree of perceived similarity than is required to be placed on the same side of a given social boundary. They argue that "in order for groups to be positioned as alike, they need not—and in any case cannot—be identical, but must merely be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599). Likewise, *distinction*, rather than *difference*, is sufficient for strategically differentiating oneself from another. The determination of adequacy (and distinction) occurs, not a priori, but in the course of interactive encounters. Adequacy is thus determined in social groups and brings the social groups into being as groups of a relevant or meaningful category. For instance, “adequation with others as fellow queers is accomplished through a variety of strategies for presenting information (about history, stereotypes, practices) as shared knowledge” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004b, p. 496). In the absence of this requisite shared knowledge, the intended construction of commonality would fail and the social group could not emerge as a social group with a shared experience of queer identity.

If we place this example in the context of interpreted discourse, given what has been shown regarding co-construction of meaning and the implications that interpretation has, by its very nature, on the relational potential of discourse, it would suggest that the interpreter’s own identity, experience, and knowledge store are at play in the participants’ negotiation of intersubjectivity, or identity.

If the attempt at adequation in the above example were conducted in an interpreted interaction, the strategies that rely on shared experience of a queer identity might not be intelligible to a straight interpreter who might then not make a meaningful translation and therefore not convey the same social invitation to co-construct commonality. “The use of indirect strategies to determine another’s sexual identity
constructs all participants as knowing how to produce and interpret these tropes” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004b, p. 496). The resulting failure at adequation would inhibit the social relationships that were being attempted through these indirect discursive tactics.

Language in interactive discourses is also put to the work of constructing participants’ own subjective experience of their sexuality (and cumulatively of reproducing the ideological social heteronormative hierarchy) (Coates, 2013). Coates cites examples of how gender-specific language, such as pronouns (in English), were used in conversation to position the speaker as heterosexual. The conversational responses to these discursive positions construct in the social group a shared performance of a sexual identity and orientation, or in Bucholtz and Hall’s term, adequation.

In the instance of interpreted interactions this discursive identity construction would become complicated by linguistic differences in obligatory gender marking. ASL, for instance, does not require gender marking in third-person pronouns. Interpreters need to strategize how to address the divergent linguistic demands in the target language. For instance, an ASL signer’s use of a third person singular pronoun presents a range of options to the interpreter, each entailing small but potentially meaningful shifts in the discursive trajectory. If the pronoun use is avoided in the target rendition (by repetition of the referent noun, or use of passive voice constructions, for example), the resulting text may sound awkwardly phrased, or evasive. Alternatively, the interpreter might select a pronoun either deliberately from some known context, or else from a subconscious normative assignation of gender. Or another strategy might be to request information from the signer regarding the gender of the individual in question. This would have the result of spotlighting gender where it had previously been unmarked, and again interrupting the discursive positioning of pronoun use in interaction. Each of these choices would be perceived by, and prompt an intersubjective reaction in, the listeners and
the interaction and emerging interactional relations would be, perhaps ever so subtly, altered.

Likewise, an English speaker’s use of the gender-neutral third person plural *they* in lieu of a gender-specific third person singular may be doing discursive work, positioning either the speaker as comfortable bending grammatical forms in the service of equitable language, or indexing the referent as gender neutral or perhaps gender non-conforming. Both these positions would be erased in an interpretation that didn’t indicate gender in third person pronouns, or highlighted if the interpreter marked it as relevant through the importation of an English pronoun (by fingerspelling “they” for example). Such strategies may be intentional based on some contextual, linguistic, or behavioural cues, or unintentional stemming from unexamined assumptions regarding the participants or social norms, but they undoubtedly impact the interactants’ own process of determining adequacy and distinction in the unfolding interaction.

These scenarios raise the question: Can the interpreter read the identity-constructing discursive moves made by participants? Emerging from this question is the matter of the cultural and linguistic competence of the interpreter. While extensive discussion of interpreters’ language education is outside the scope of this paper, I will say that the majority of ASL-English interpreters are non-native signers and are often limited in their cultural integration with the Deaf community (Cokely, 2005). The pathway to the interpreting profession, argues Cokely (2005), historically originated from within the Deaf community, which ensured that interpreters had a threshold of cultural integration. More recently, however, academic institutions mediate entrance to the field so interpreters often learn language and interpreting at school and emerge as working professionals with limited engagement with language and culture in use. Interpreters therefore may not have access to acquiring the nuanced linguistic proficiency required to recognize the performance of various identity-constructive discursive maneuvers in their second language. This linguistic and cultural limitation as it relates to ASL and Deaf
Culture compounds the challenge of reading the identity related discursive work that is being conducted by interlocutors in spoken English that also may or may not be intelligible to the particular interpreter at work. The interpreter, for these reasons then, may not be in a position to accurately read the linguistic markers that index identity. That being so, we are confronted by another question. What are the consequences of this failure of identity-constitutive discursive tactics to survive translation? To examine this, I turn to a subset of Bucholtz and Hall’s “Tactics of Intersubjectivity” model.

2.4.2 Erasure and highlighting

In the construction of adequation and distinction, they argue, there exists a process of erasure, and its converse, highlighting. Erasure is what permits us to overlook evidence of difference sufficiently for us to construct adequation and thereby develop a social group based on some commonality. Likewise, highlighting makes a particular aspect of sharedness salient or marked. “In identity work,” they suggest, “erasure and highlighting often function in tandem to establish interactionally or situationally sufficient alignments and disalignments” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004b, p. 495). Engaging in interpreted discourse already requires a certain amount of erasure—the obvious differences in language and culture may be “erased” in pursuit of the construction of some aspect of alignment or commonality. Interpretation further adds a layer of intersubjectivity between the participants, and subjects their conversation to the interpreter’s own processes of erasure and highlighting. I suggest that those features (be they linguistic, cultural or sub-cultural) that are unintelligible to the interpreter may be absent in the target message, and therefore become pre-emptively erased, and those that are intelligible become pre-emptively highlighted, by virtue of the interpreter’s own co-constructive process. As in the earlier example, an ASL interpreter, unfamiliar with the use in queer communities of the third person pronoun they as a genderless referent for an individual, may construe it as a plural referent, making it unavailable for negotiation of adequation through the subprocesses of erasure or highlighting and thereby eliminating that
moment’s potential for the Deaf person to construct alignment with their English speaking interlocutor.

This illustration demonstrates how the application of Bucholtz and Hall’s “Tactics of Intersubjectivity” model (with its analytic tools of adequation and distinction, and highlighting and erasure) to an instance of interpreted interaction reveals how the interpreter’s own identity, experience, and knowledge store are implicated in the interlocutor’s ability to negotiate identity.

2.5 Interpreters and identity: A proposed framework

The field of interpreting studies has long grappled with the role of the interpreter, and recent work has ventured to suggest a role-based rather than rule-based model to guide interpreter’s understanding of the scope of their influence in interactions (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014). Research has also explored the impact of interpreter subjectivity on the cognitive process of interpretation (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008; S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). However, to date questions of identity as a contributing factor to the effectiveness of the interpretation work have not been as thoroughly examined. In her study of British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters working in the UK, Chijioke Obasi began to explore questions of the visibility and invisibility of race and ethnicity in the field of sign language interpreting. Interpreter identity is implicated in questions of power and discrimination, but the exploration of these issues “should not end at the deaf/hearing interface” (Obasi, 2013, p. 104). Additional axes of identity are at play in the work of interpretation.

In this section, I will explore how conceptions of identity play out in the work and professional lives of ASL-English interpreters. In particular, I propose a typology of three distinct, yet overlapping, aspects of identity that are performed simultaneously during the act of interpretation: *interpreter as interlocutor, interpreter as interpreter, and interpreter as self*. This formulation of interpreter identity will contribute to the analysis of how interpreters’ identities are implicated
in the navigation and discursive construction of identity by the interlocutors in the interpreted interaction.

I will draw on the concept of habitus from Bourdieu to explore the impact of the interpreter on the interpretation. Habitus is understood as the framework with and through which people are able to navigate life. It is comprised of a set of durable values, practices, and dispositions which allow what has been experienced to both structure and be structured by subsequent experiences (Barker, 2004; Jenkins, 2005). “The habitus are, therefore, our way of representing ourselves in the outside world so that we can participate within it” (Carmen Valero Garcés & Gauthier Blasi, 2010, p. 4). Being neither fully conscious nor fully unconscious, one’s habitus is both subject to volitional change yet can also operate in ways that are not easily apparent. The concept of habitus assists in tracing the impacts that the interpreter identity has on the interpretation.

In this study I propose and utilize a typology of interpreter-performed identities. Informed by the Role-Space model of Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) this understanding of interpreter role will allow for an examination of the multiple identities that are simultaneously enacted during an interpretation.

2.5.1 Typology of interpreter performed identities

Interpreter as interlocutor

In the first aspect of interpreter identity, the interpreter is performing or rather reconstructing the performance of the interlocutors in the interpreted interaction. This is the “role” that we ascribe to interpreters enacting the work of interpretation. In the act of interpretation the interpreter attends to the source language text performed by the interlocutors, and then interprets that text so all its components are legible in the target language. According to the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct, from the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada, “Every interpretation shall be faithful to and render exactly the message of the source text (...) The fidelity of an interpretation includes an adaptation to make
the form, the tone, and the deeper meaning of the source text felt in the target language and culture” (“AVLIC COEGPC,” 2000, sec. 2.2). The goal, then, is not a mere transmission of content but rather a portrayal of the entire message, such that the deeper meaning is “felt” by the recipients of the target text. In this way, interpreters are obliged to read the discursive function of the utterance, including the identity marking aspects of the text, and reconstruct them in the interpretation.

To perform an interpretation, the interpreter must temporarily adopt the identity of each interlocutor in turn and render their utterances in the other language. However, interpreters cannot step outside their own habitus to fully see a text from within the worldview of the participants. The text is always co-constructed from the interplay of the interpreter’s own habitus with those of the interlocutors participating in the interaction. “The habitus manifests itself at that moment when a specific problem is approached and ‘solved’ through a particular set of dispositions” (Barker, 2004, p. 81). When the “problem” is the construction of the meaning of an utterance in the context of a particular social interaction, interpreters access their own habitus, which itself is “the consequence of family, class and educational background but [which] appear to us as natural” (p. 81). The apparent naturalness of the framework within which we make meaning makes it both more difficult and more necessary to attempt to acknowledge that there is no message for an interpreter to render until they have participated in its conceptual construction, and that the performance of the interpretation (which is the re-creation of the performance of the participant) is tied up in the identity of the interpreter.

In addition to the existential impossibility of stepping out of one’s own thought world and into another’s, is the more practical question of the interpreters’ capacity to read and replicate the evidence of that thought world when it is encoded in linguistic form. The interpreters’ proficiency, in particular in their second language, will have a significant impact on the effectiveness of their enactment of the interlocutors’ identity performance.
This fraught reading and rendering of the actual interpreted texts is what I am calling the performance of the identity of the *interpreter as interlocutor*.

*Interpreter as interpreter*

While the preponderance of an interpreter’s working day is spent juggling the multiple identity performances of the interlocutors (albeit as perceived through the interpreter’s own habitus), there are also instances when the interpreter emerges from these roles to perform the role of *interpreter as interpreter*. This is the way that interpreters present themselves as professionals in the capacity of interpreter and can include such acts as: negotiation of assignments, introductions and greetings to consumers, education of novice consumers about interpreting, representation of the interpreting process, description of the scope of the interpreter’s role, interruptions or clarifying questions during the interpretation, etc. These acts, when performed during an interpretation, are often referred to as “stepping out of role,” as a way of emphasizing that the interpreter’s primary function is that of representing the other, and minimizing their own entanglement in the interaction.

Depending on the generation of the interpreting model followed, there are prescribed moments when this type of performance has been deemed permissible. In earlier mechanistic models, once interpreters arrived in the setting, professionalism dictated that their role be circumscribed by their function as a conduit. These practices emerged from an effort to empower Deaf people in the face of patronizing assumptions about the relative positions and status of the Deaf person and the hearing person performing the interpretation. While the goal was to minimize the visibility or “footprint” of the interpreter, these models resulted in behaviours that were socially and conversationally unnatural, thereby undermining the effectiveness of the interpreter as the facilitator of communication (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013). Contemporary models recognize the reality of the presence of the interpreter in the interaction. Still hoping to minimize the visibility, it is argued that “just as the best place to hide a book is in a library,” by employing conventional conversational practices within the interpretation, the interpreter can “blend” and
thereby reduce their footprint (Llewellyn–Jones & Lee, 2013, p. 63). In any model of interpretation practice, however, there are always some moments where the interpreter pauses, or steps out of, the active rendering of the interlocutors’ texts to make a self-authored contribution.

To examine the contours of this interpreter practice, Llewellyn–Jones and Lee “propose that the interpreter’s role not be rules-based but be governed instead by the ‘role-space’ the interpreter creates and inhabits in any given situation” (p. 56). A range of factors represented along the three axes of their model (participant alignment, interaction management and presentation of self) determines the role-space of the interpreter. Their interaction management axis addresses behaviours that I have included in the identity performance of *interpreter as interpreter*. These are the “out of role” contributions necessary for the performance of the interpreting task.

These manifestations of the interpreter’s professional identity are informed by their beliefs and skills in the practice of interpretation. This performance includes the behaviours that are evident to others, such as self-authored comments, but also in the internal processes that the interpreter engages with in the furtherance of their work. They include decisions such as the determination of adequacy in the monitoring of a colleague’s work, the privileging of participant interaction in overlapping utterances or floor getting attempts, or the decision of whether or not to interrupt to clarify possible misunderstandings. The interpreting techniques and strategies enacted in an interpretation, whether visible or not, are part of the performance of *interpreter as interpreter* identity.

Additionally, however, Llewellyn–Jones and Lee’s axis entitled “presentation of self” also still falls into what I am calling *interpreter as interpreter*. Their discussion of the interpreter’s *self* is restricted to the conscious and volitional performance of *interpreter* in the space of the interaction. It includes the conventional social and conversational behaviours that facilitate normalized interactional participation, chosen by the interpreter based on the particular demands of the setting or
interaction. “It is important to recognize,” they conclude, “that how interpreters present themselves in any given situation can have a huge effect on the interaction” (p. 70). This is a tightly circumscribed understanding of self, the acknowledgment of oneself as human and present in the interaction albeit merely to the extent of one’s professional capacity. Their presentation of self axis describes how the interpreters present themselves within the interaction, but not who the interpreter is, and thereby differs from my identity category of *interpreter as self*.

**Interpreter as self**

The *interpreter as self* is the least examined aspect of interpreter identity, and yet, I will argue, is an important element in the effectiveness of interpretations. The field of ASL-English interpreting was formed and developed within a discourse of neutrality (Bahadir, 2010; Mason & Ren, 2012; Metzger, 1999). It was assumed that neutral impartiality was not only possible but was a principle underlying competent and ethical practice. In contrast to that outdated view, Llewellyn-Jones and Lee’s axes model, especially the alignment and presentation of self axes, touch on some of the values that an interpreter brings to an interaction and how values and power might reconfigure the role-space of the interpreter at a given moment. In this conception of interpreter roles we can begin to see the relevance of the particular individual performing the interpretation. But their model still positions the interpreter role as a set of choices made by interpreters as conscious, professional, and ethical responses to the particular demands of an interpreted interaction.

The history of the (non)performance of self has been challenged with recent research looking at co-construction of meaning and the implications for interpreting. However, this research has largely focused on the cognitive and linguistic ramifications of co-construction (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008; S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005), and more recently on the parameters of interpreters’ role (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013), while overlooking the political consequences of interpreter identity. In light of research on identity as negotiated in social interactions, it is clear that in interpreted interactions the construction of the
identity of participants is bound up with the person of the interpreter. In the absence of more research in this area, models of interpreting still assume that the interpreter is capable of reading and reconstructing identities across boundaries of difference irrespective of their own identities.

Interpreters, like everyone else, enter into spaces and perform their function as embodied humans. Not only are they subject to the possibilities and constraints of their own worldview or habitus, but they also experience and are experienced by others within their own embodied, lived reality. Furthermore, the relative visibility or invisibility of the interpreter is necessarily entangled in the “dynamics of power, agency, history and culture that operate at micro and macro levels within and outside the mediated linguistic exchange” (Obasi, 2013, p. 105). In her study of Black sign language interpreters in the UK, Obasi found that the professional dynamics of role negotiation would unfold differently for Black interpreters than they would for their white colleagues. This contrast highlights the necessity of examining this aspect of interpreter as self, not only for interpreters with minority identities, but rather to make visible how those identities are implicated in all work of interpreting.

In their case study on the role of the interpreter in consecutive interpreting, Errico and Ballestrazzi (2014) presented a description of an interpreter navigating various identity demands while performing a close, consecutive Spanish–Italian interpretation for a book launch with a speaker whose communication style was unconventional, entertaining, and even outlandish. His multiple attempts to engage the interpreter as an entertainment resource challenged her capacity to negotiate the interpreting role. The interpreter, in response to the interactional demands (occurring in addition to the ever-present linguistic and paralinguistic demands of performing an interpretation), had to “learn ‘on-line’ to modulate her interventions within the communicative event, in order to alternate between low-profile sequences and high-profile ones, disappearing or emerging during the event depending on the circumstances” (Errico & Ballestrazzi, 2014, p. 379). Again, this
article described these dynamics using different terminology and drew different boundaries between the various role performances, but this description of disappearance/emergence, and high/low profile shows the interaction between Llewellyn–Jones and Lee’s presentation of self and interaction management axes. Emphasis in Errico and Ballestrazzi’s account was put on the interpreter’s professional decisions regarding her response to these fluctuating role demands. However, also present was an engagement of a self beyond, or beneath, the interpreter identity that she was manipulating. While the speaker had explicitly asked the interpreter to render his off-colour remarks literally, she initially “seemed unwilling or unable to discard her own understanding of social appropriateness” (Errico & Ballestrazzi, 2014, p. 375). While the softening of a source text for reasons of cultural mediation is clearly a conscious decision in the construction of a target text (and therefore falls within the parameters of interpreter as interlocutor) and her negotiation of the situation called upon her to respond to the presenter (and therefore engages the role of interpreter as interpreter), it was also informed by her interpreter as self identity that was reluctant to be exposed to the potential unwanted consequences of face-threatening acts. While this aspect of interpreter identity is hinted at in their case study, Errico and Ballestrazzi, like Llewellyn–Jones and Lee, have not explored the ways that personal identity infiltrates, informs, or shapes the interpreter presence in the text.

2.5.2 Identity performativity

To sort out the distinctions and boundaries between the various identity performances undertaken in the work of interpretation, I turn to Butler, and questions of volition and performativity.

“Gender,” argues Butler, “is not a performance that a prior subject elects to do, but gender is performative” (Butler, 1993, p. 314). Is there a meaningful difference between performance and performativity in the multiple and shifting identity roles enacted by interpreters? Butler claims that there is no volitional subject
determining the performance of gender but rather the very possibility of the subject capable of performance entails its own prior constitution through gender.

Using the criterion of volition, an interpreter enacting the identity role of interpreter as interlocutor in the course of an interpretation seems to be a prior volitional subject adopting selected characteristics for a particular purpose in the representation of source texts. Informed by professional, cultural, and linguistic experience, the interpreter is co-constructing and re-performing the identity performance of the individuals being interpreted. Likewise, the interpreter as interpreter role is a composite of professional activities, behaviours, and choices selected for their effectiveness in the performance of a professional task. These roles seem ineligible as analogies to the performativity of gender as described by Butler. The interpreter as self, however, encompassing gender as well as other constitutive identity elements, would, insofar as volition is definitive, make the performativity/performance distinction a relevant one in determining the contours and ramifications of this identity performance typology.

But of course these two performances, interpreter as interpreter and interpreter as self are entwined—the capacity for the former is delineated in part by the latter. In their Role-Space model, Llewellyn-Jones and Lee note that conversational behaviours such as turn-taking and overlap are culturally understood. The same conversational behaviour could be viewed as either impolite or cooperative depending on the social situation and cultural or interpersonal dynamics at play (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013, p. 65). The interpreter as interpreter identity performance of interaction management and the regulation of turn-taking in conversation will be effective or dysfunctional based on the interpreter’s ability to assess the norms expected by the individuals involved in the interaction. Inherent in the act of interpretation is the understanding that the goal is “not a mere textual production, but is instead consciously or unconsciously linked to the surrounding environment. This environment is a crucial element, where the importance of habitus would come into play” (Carmen Valero Garcés & Gauthier Blasi, 2010, p. 8).
The interpreter’s cultural literacy therefore must intersect with the habitus derived from the identity of *interpreter as self*.

### 2.5.3 The potential of an expanded repertoire

An obvious solution to the problem of cultural competency in interpretation is to expand one’s repertoire of cultural or social literacies. It is commonplace advice to interpreters that they must “be familiar with the different types of discourse (legal, medical, etc.), know how to navigate within a given field, and make these strategies and conventions part of their habitus so that they may reproduce what is expressed” (Carmen Valero Garcés & Gauthier Blasi, 2010, pp. 8–9). Beyond the realm of setting-specific discourses, interpreters are also enjoined to “have a good knowledge of the cultures, worldviews, and likely world knowledge (shared ‘scripts’) of the interlocutors” (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013, p. 56). To what extent, though, is this possible? Is habitus really a matter of choice or volition? What social/cultural capital can be acquired through repertoire development and what is related to embodiment, or lived experience?

Habitus, being located in embodied individuals, allows for people to be “internally in tune, albeit perhaps nonreflectively, with the external material conditions of their existence” (Jenkins, 2005, p. 353), and so is always and already a shifting landscape of presentation and perception. It is “the messy meanings of identity, of how the self is produced and reproduced through social interactions, daily negotiations, and within particular contexts that are already overburdened with the meanings of others” (Britzman, 1992, p. 23). Capturing this messy incompleteness, the partialness principle of Bucholtz and Hall’s interaction framework challenges the extent to which identity relies on agency, or in Butlerian terms, volition. “It will always be partial, produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of the self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605), producing a “continual slippage of identity as they are reinscribed with the accents of others” (Britzman, 1992, p. 27). In other words, the contextual intermingling of the habitus and performances of all the participants, including the interpreter,
within the context of an interaction contributes to the possibilities of performativity for each. Moreover, each contribution is itself shaped by ideologically informed structures external to and prior to the immediate interactional context, requiring “an awareness of one’s historical context and an acknowledgement of sedimented meanings” (Britzman, 1992, p. 23). Therefore, our habitus and the worldviews that contribute both to our performance of self and our reading of the other selves being performed in any given interaction are, to a large extent, beyond our control.

Furthermore, mere exposure to groups whose linguistic forms differ from our own is insufficient to capture the nuances of identity work that is performed through those forms. Drawing from the sociolinguistic literature on style, Bucholtz and Hall argue that “the social meanings of style often require ethnographic investigation to uncover groups that may seem homogeneous through a wider analytic lens, but become sharply differentiated when ethnographic details are brought into close focus” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 597). The dynamics of insider/outside language use further restrict the possibilities of accessing and learning the social meanings indexed by various linguistic forms. So even an interpreter attentive to broadening their linguistic repertoire may be unable to decipher the meaningful distinctions of socially significant forms and thereby misread and misrepresent them in interpretation. The expansion of an interpreter’s repertoire of cultural and discursive literacies, then, may contribute to a more careful attention to the multiplicity of shifting identity work that is happening in the interpreted texts, but cannot solve the problem of the impact that the interpreter as self has on those interactions.

The interpreter as interpreter identity is shaped by the history of the professionalization of ASL-English interpreting, which was born in the heart of the Deaf community, has been codified through the emergence of professional associations and codes of ethics, and continues to evolve in the educational, commercial and legislative landscape of contemporary interpreting service provision. The interpreter as interlocutor performance is subject to interpreters’
linguistic and cultural competence and continues to be explored in theorizing around meaning co-construction and intersubjectivity. It is timely for the field to begin to see how both these identity performances comingle with the performativity of the *interpreter as self*.

### 2.6 Defining the problem and justifying the research

In the first section of this chapter, I showed that interactions are sites of discursive identity construction and that the interpreter is a non-neutral participant when introduced into an interaction. This study relies on the understandings of interpreter non-neutrality demonstrated in the areas of conceptual co-construction (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008) and the enactment of social power (Bahadir, 2010).

Bucholtz and Hall’s Framework for Identity and Interaction facilitates an analysis of the complexities involved in an interpreter’s reading of the identity constructing moves made by interlocutors. An illustration of the framework applied to an interpreted interaction showed how interlocutors’ identity construction might be interrupted or altered by the interpreter. The consequences of the failure of discursive tactics to survive translation demonstrate how important sites of interpreted discourse are to the discursive construction of identity and conversely how identity theories inform interpreting practices.

The interactional role-space model (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013) is instrumental to my analysis of identity performance. I built on their model to explore the overlapping performances of interpreter identity in interaction and add to it an analysis of interpreter identity that is not intentionally deployed in the service of the interpretation, but impacts it nonetheless. Using Butler to expand on Llewellyn-Jones & Lee’s Role-Space model permitted an exploration of how the proposed *interpreter as self* dimension of identity may complicate the multiple and overlapping implications of the interpreter’s identity on the identity negotiations of interlocutors in interpreted interactions.
The research on interpreter identity begun by Obasi provides some context for the political implications of the dynamics of race in interpreted interactions. Her study interrogated the experience of Black interpreters, and began an investigation into the political and professional impact of the visibility and invisibility of race in the field of sign language interpretation. This study differs from Obasi’s work in that I explore the implications of the work of white interpreters on the negotiations of identity among participants including aspects of similarity and difference.

The interpreter’s impact on particular interactional dynamics, such as turn-taking, has been addressed by Roy (2000), and her study informs some of the work that I undertake in looking at conversational dynamics in this study. However, her research was conducted in a dyadic interaction facilitated by one interpreter where the participants had institutionally mandated roles and relations (student and professor). Her focus was on the functional turn-taking management strategies of the interpreter. In contrast, my study was conducted in a small group setting with four interlocutors and two working interpreters. The interactional dynamics are therefore somewhat more complex and my focus is on how the interpreters’ work influenced the unfolding discursive identity work of participants.

The impact of interpretation on the perception of identity was the focus of Feyne’s 2015 study, providing a model for this new line of inquiry. She concluded that “it is important to recognize that all recipients in interpreter interactions (both the interpreter and the primary recipient) are engaged in an ongoing construction of the originator’s identity” (Feyne, 2015, p. 65). However, her study specifically looked at professional identity in a largely monological lecture, so her focus was on the recipients’ construal of identity. In contrast, this study is investigating the dynamics in a multi-participant interaction that impact on identity construction and negotiation among all parties.

The developing research in the field of interpreting studies is therefore ripe for this study combining the emerging research interests in interpreter role, identity perceptions, social categories such as race, and the interplay of interactional
dynamics in interpreted encounters. Continued research on interpreters’ contributions to interpreted texts, particularly around issues of identity, will have implications for interpreter education, student recruitment and retention, and curricula and pedagogical practices. Such theorizing also allows a space for interpreters with minority or marginalized identities to discuss their experiences of identity in the context of their interpreting role and work, as has been begun by Obasi’s work with Black interpreters in the UK. This identity theorizing is motivated by concern for the maintenance of a space for interpreter's humanity, for consumers’ (especially the Deaf communities) access to interpreters capable of transmitting the identity constitutive elements of discourse, and for the discovery of professional practices that support effective interpreting work in all its multiple dimensions.
Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Participants

This study involved three distinct groups of participants. There were two Deaf, ASL-using interlocutors; two hearing, English-speaking interlocutors; and two ASL-English interpreters. I selected the participants from my pool of personal contacts according to the following criteria. The hearing interlocutors have each had some experience using ASL-English interpreters. This criterion was intended to reduce instances of awkwardness with the interpreting process typical of novice consumers of interpreting. I contacted eight individuals whom I knew from professional encounters or who had been referred to me as potential participants. Two people responded with interest and they became the hearing participants in the study.

I invited Deaf people who do not know one another well in order to have some access to introductory identity work in same-language ASL interactions. I contacted three Deaf people whom I knew from the community. They all responded with interest, and I selected the two people who were available during the time period of the study.

It is interesting to note the different response rate between the hearing (two out of eight) and Deaf people (three out of three). This may have been because I know the Deaf people better than the hearing people, and they were responding to my request. Or it may also have reflected the relative salience of interpretation in the lives of these two communities.

I selected these particular people to contact as I anticipated that they might be interested in investing their time in a study about ASL-English interpretation. This had the effect of narrowing the pool of potential participants to those who might have interest in questions of inclusion, access, and interpretation. As it turned out,
the four participants were all interested in matters of social justice and activism. This may have influenced both their willingness to participate and the nature of their participation. The results of this study might have been different with another group of participants who were less attentive to these questions.

I contacted nine ASL-English interpreter colleagues with whom I have engaged professionally, but with whom I had not discussed my area of research interest. They all responded to my request, and two were interested and available during the time period of the study. They became the interpreter participants.

The interpreter participants were asked to provide interpretation only for the actual conversational data collection phase of the study. For all other elements (welcome, instructions, debrief, discussion etc.) there was another professional interpreter, who was not a study participant, contracted to provide interpretation. It is conventional practice not to provide interpretation while simultaneously participating in an event or activity. This practice was followed in this study to ensure that the interpreters could be fully present as study participants.

I attempted to achieve some diversity along lines of ethnographic categories (as perceived by me) such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity in the group of participants. While I hoped to have a diverse group there was no attempt to achieve representativeness in the pool of participants.

3.2 Instruments and Procedures

The data collection was comprised of four elements: an interpreted conversation based on prompt material, a debriefing session, questionnaires, and playback interviews.

3.2.1 The Prompt material

The goal of the prompt material was to generate adequate content for as natural a conversation as possible. Three possible topics were given to the group from which they were asked to select one. Each topic had a brief paragraph giving some context
for the group to consider as well as several discussion questions to spark ideas and to provide some guidance for the conversation (see Appendix A). The three topics were presented to the group on three separate pages, folded such that only the topic paragraph was visible. The discussion questions were initially concealed so as to prevent the group from spending a significant portion of the allotted time in the reading of the questions during the topic selection phase. Once the topic was selected they were to open the page and proceed with reading the questions.

The topics were:
- The US presidential election campaign
- Black Lives Matter (BLM) and policing
- Social media use for personal, professional, and community connections

A choice was offered so that the group could select the topic that they were most interested in and thereby would be more likely to sustain a conversation. They were chosen to reflect issues of current public interest so that interlocutors might have some shared background on the topic. The topics would likely resonate differently with each participant and that resonance might elicit useful identity-related data. The third topic was designed to be less intense and charged, so that if the group was feeling at all uncomfortable or unsafe, they would be able to select a more neutral topic.

Furthermore, the discussion around the topic selection and the determination of a selection process (vote, consensus, etc.) was intended to allow for interactional roles to emerge in the group, perhaps setting up some of the tone and relational positions that might carry over into the content discussion. It also was intended to create a sense of stakes in the conversation so that the interpreters would be required to draw on strategies to ensure that Deaf and hearing participants both had access to the conversational floor prior to the point of decision.
3.2.2 The Interpreted conversation

Interpreted events

Interpreted events can be categorized by reference to the setting (educational, or medical, etc.), mode (simultaneous or consecutive), number of participants (1:1, conference, etc.), social occasion (wedding, sports event, etc.), primary direction of interpretation (ASL to English, English to ASL), or specialization (such as legal or liaison interpreting) (Roy, 2000, p. 42). Roy has suggested that viewing interpreting as a discourse process focuses on the interactional characteristics and points to a more functional categorization of interpreted events. “Conversational interaction typically occurs in a group composed of a small number of people, in which interaction is characterized by taking turns, utterance pairs, such as questions and answers, responses, changing topics and other discourse features” (Roy, 2000, p. 43). These are some of the very features that Bucholtz and Hall have cited as operational in the interactional negotiation of identity through discourse (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Interpreters in these settings are obliged to attend to the exchange of content but also to manage the interactional dynamics of linguistic and social meanings and relationships that are exchanged and navigated when a group comes together in conversation. For these reasons, a conversation was selected as the type of interpreted event for this study.

A conversation of this type and duration is optimally interpreted by a team of two working interpreters, although it is possible that a single interpreter would be called upon to do this work. Because the research questions pertain to the impact of language proficiency, interpreter technique, and identity characteristics on the effectiveness of the interlocutors’ identity negotiation, it was considered preferable to have two interpreters’ work to examine. Additionally, because the research asks the interpreter to open up their professional product for analysis and critique, it was thought to be a courtesy to allow two interpreters to share this experience.
The interpreters were invited to approach this study as they would any professional assignment. They were provided with preparation materials (the discussion topics and questions) that were not provided in advance to the interlocutors. The provision of material with which to prepare for interpretation is conventional practice to maximize effectiveness in interpretation. Preparation serves to allow interpreters to make predictions about the required work, to become familiar with the content of the discussion and perform additional research that they deem necessary, and to anticipate the interactional and linguistic demands of the interpretation (Demers, 2005).

Other professional decisions related to how the interpreting work would be divided between the team. There are several conventional methods of division that are chosen based on factors such as familiarity with participants, duration of assignment, number of participants, degree of interactivity predicted, and the relative skill sets of the team members. In this case, the interpreters decided to each provide interpretation for one Deaf and one hearing participant.

The conversation

The two Deaf and two hearing interlocutor participants were invited to engage in a conversation exploring their opinions on the prompt material, with the interpreter participants providing the interpretation according to their conventional practices. The participants were informed that the study was looking at conversational dynamics in interpreted interactions. This explanation was close to the real objective of the study without having the participants’ attention drawn to questions of identity, which might have altered their interaction.

I instructed the group to spend some time introducing themselves, and then to select one of the topics, which they were to discuss using the 3-4 questions (provided) as a guide. I advised them that I would leave the room for 45 minutes while they conversed. When I returned, they were to summarize the main points raised in the discussion for 10–15 minutes. I explicitly stated that I had no
preference for how they chose the topic, or how they decided how they would summarize their discussion. These instructions were printed on a page that was left with the group for their reference if needed (See Appendix D).

This approach had several benefits. The time allocated for introductions is a natural conversational segment in a group that is unfamiliar. It also can provide data on how individuals self-identify in a novel social situation. Leaving the topic selection and summarizing processes quite open and flexible allowed for interactional positioning to emerge within the group in a natural context; for example, positions of leadership might be claimed or negotiated. Removing the researcher from the setting was intended to reduce the sense of being observed and facilitate data that replicate as much as possible natural conversational behaviours. Having the summation at the end is a not unfamiliar conversational segment in the context of an organized discussion. It was intended to give another opportunity for interactional roles to be negotiated, but this time at the end of the conversation.

An hour of data seemed like an adequate, yet manageable amount for a study of this scope. Providing several elements (introductions, topic selection, discussion guided by questions, decision about summation, summation) allowed the group to generate conversation sufficient to fill that time.

3.2.3 The debrief

After the conversation, the participants were given a short description of my research interests, highlighting the emphasis on identity negotiation and potential for interpreter implication in this discursive process. The contracted interpreter provided the interpretation so that the interpreter participants were able to participate fully in the debriefing discussion.

It had been my intention that the debrief would be a short discussion to clarify the precise nature of my interest, which had been only generally outlined in the consent process so as to not turn the participants’ attention toward this dynamic and thereby skew the naturalness of their participation.
However, they became very engaged in the material and contributed comments and observations from the conversation that they had just had. I then asked for the group’s permission to record the discussion, as their reflections would assist me in interpreting the meaning of the data. During the analysis of the conversation, I turned to this debriefing discussion to better understand the participants’ perspectives. One hearing participant noted that, upon reflection, she realized that when working with white interpreters while conversing with Deaf people of colour she has self-censored and omitted or rephrased things that she would otherwise have said. One of the interpreter participants shared that in their professional practice they had approached interpreting requests cautiously because of identity-related issues, but has also relied on the “I’m just the interpreter” discourse of professional neutrality to respond to those hesitations. This type of reflection added to my understanding of the dynamics of the conversation.

3.2.4 The questionnaire

Upon completion of the debriefing discussion, all participants were given a questionnaire. There were two versions, one for the interpreters and one for the interlocutors (see Appendices A and B). This was conducted after the debriefing discussion so the participants were able to focus their answers on reflections salient to the research. This approach allowed reflection on the just-performed identity work, thus informing the research on the social meanings being enacted.

Part 1 of the questionnaire pertained to demographic categories, and questions were open-ended to facilitate self-identification. As there was no quantitative data analysis, it was more important that participants were able to articulate their identity in their own way than that the data be quantitatively comparable. Participants were invited (all questions were optional) to self-identify along a number of different social categories of identity using their own descriptors.

Part 2 pertained to their perceptions of the conversation that they had just had. Questions were to encourage self-reflection about their
construction/representation of identity and their reading of the identities of the other interlocutors and the interpreters. The questions in Part 2 were available in written English and in ASL. The ASL version of the questionnaire was a translation of the English questions that had been pre-recorded and could be viewed (and reviewed) by the participants. Part 2 could be answered either in English or in ASL according to the language preference of the participant.

Both Deaf participants opted to answer the questionnaire in ASL. One person used ASL for both Part 1 and 2, whereas the second person answered Part 1 in English and Part 2 in ASL. Neither referenced the ASL version of the questionnaire. All other participants answered in written English.

3.2.5 The playback interview

On the day of the study, all participants indicated willingness to be contacted for follow-up. In the two months following the data collection, after an initial analysis of the data, I contacted each participant for a playback interview to replay key sections of the interaction that were focal points of my analysis. The playback interviews were conducted (without interpretation) in ASL with the Deaf participants and in English with the hearing participants and interpreters. Following Roy (2000), I asked for recollections of their thinking, and their impressions of the meaning of various interactional dynamics. Their reflections assisted in my analysis of the identity-constitutive elements of the conversation. The playback sessions were more like conversations than formal interviews. In the spirit of research transparency, I shared with each participant key sections of interest and we discussed broad-ranging issues in interpretation. Additionally, the playback interviews afforded me an opportunity to correct errors in the interpretation that may have impacted on participants’ understandings of one another. These errors are explored in detail in Chapter 7. Lastly, the playback interviews were an opportunity for me to share my findings with the working interpreters who had generously shared their work product with me. As my research was specifically

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1 I translated the questions and produced the ASL version of the questionnaire.
looking at the impact of interpretation and of particular interpreters, my findings were of tremendous interest to them in their pursuit of professional self-improvement.

During these interviews, I secured the participants’ permission to use specific images in the analysis section of this thesis.

### 3.3 Language protocol

The data were collected in two distinct languages (ASL and English) and two distinct modalities (signed and spoken), which raised practical issues for both the collection and analysis stages in this study. When collecting multi-modal interactive data, a multiple-camera set-up allows for better capturing of each of the signing participants. However, it can also be considerably more intrusive and might compromise the naturalness of the interaction (Dickinson, 2010). The data for this study needed to be available for close examination and linguistic analysis. While an effort was made, therefore, to limit the intrusiveness of the cameras, the priority was to capture maximum data, and so three cameras were stationed for optimal sight lines. One captured the signed contributions of the two Deaf interlocutors, the second was directed at the interpreters, and the third was on the two hearing interlocutors. The spoken contributions, including the English interpretation, were captured on the camera’s microphone. The resulting three videos were compiled and synchronized so that the analysis could be done while viewing all three video frames simultaneously and synchronously.

![Figure 1 - Room configuration](image1.png)

![Figure 2 - Compiled video files](image2.png)
In the analysis phase, some studies have opted for logistical and technological reasons for translation/transcription of signed language contributions before commencing any analysis (Dickinson, 2010). However, given that the interpretation is, in large part, the subject of this investigation, the analysis of the signed language could not merely be conducted on the transcribed, interpreted version of the ASL contributions; the signed source language needed to be available for analysis. Leaving the translation to the last possible stage of analysis minimized the potential skewing of the data through the interpretation.

To address these language issues, I adopted the following protocol. The analysis of the conversation was conducted in the source language using video analysis tools. Two software packages, Transana and Elan, offered different functions that were useful for different stages of analysis. Transana was used to review the entire data sample and identify patterns and themes of interest. Some of these rich segments were then entered into Elan, which offers tools for a very granulated and customized examination of video data.

The ASL data (including the ASL interpretation) were analyzed directly from the video. The English data (including the English interpretation of source ASL) were transcribed and entered into the video transcript and synchronized with the video timeline. It was also audible on the audio track of the video so that prosodic features were available for analysis. The results and discussion are in written English with the ASL data referenced in a glossed and annotated transcription to balance accessibility in text with felicity to the original signed message.

In some of the examples, there is a translation provided as well as the source language text and its interpretation. The translations may not read as idiomatic, or natural sounding English texts. They were intended to be close, literal representations of the ASL (either source ASL from the Deaf participants, or an ASL interpretation of the hearing participants’ English utterance) so that readers can follow the analysis of how the interpretation impacted the unfolding interactional dynamics. It should be noted that translations occur from a documented source (in
this case, video), and can be reviewed multiple times. They are therefore not subject to the stressors of immediacy and transience that constrain the production of a simultaneous interpretation. I produced all translations myself. I am a nationally certified interpreter having earned my Certificate of Interpretation (COI) from AVLIC in 2008, with over twenty years interpreting experience. A second nationally certified interpreter, also with over twenty years of interpreting experience, verified the translations. She watched the source ASL (or ASL interpretation) and then viewed my translation, in several cases making suggestions to improve the accuracy of the wording to best reflect the source message.

An additional challenge was that, due to the simultaneous nature of some acts of interpretation, transcription of interpreted interactions could become unwieldy and difficult to decipher. Moreover, there is complex manual, locative, and non-manual information conveyed simultaneously in an ASL utterance. Therefore, to enhance comprehensibility the transcription of each example marks only the features that are relevant for the illustration in question. These transcription practices were compiled from a variety of sources and adapted to include notation conventions for ASL linguistic features, such as eye gaze or head tilt (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Valli & Lucas, 2002), prosodic features of spoken English such as elongation or emphasis (http://transana.wceruw.org), and the simultaneity of interpreted discourses (Roy, 2000). The complete guide to the transcription conventions adopted for this research can be found in Chapter 5.

I recognize that the reader might wish to refer to a transcript of the entire conversation in order to read the provided examples in their conversational context. However, for several reasons I decided to provide a transcription of only the examples themselves. Logistically, the time required to translate and transcribe signed language data made it impossible to consider providing a complete transcript for the hour-long conversation. Furthermore, as described earlier, the transcriptions of signed languages are inevitably incomplete, so much pertinent detail would be absent from the “complete” transcript. Lastly, while providing only the English
version of the conversation (source English and English interpretation) would avoid
the logistical difficulty of transcribing lengthy samples of ASL, it would privilege the
contributions of the hearing participants, and relegate the Deaf participants’ texts to
representation through an interpretation which is, itself, the subject of this study. It
was therefore decided to render the entire conversation in synopsis, and provide
transcriptions only for the examples.

3.4 Analysis

The video data from the conversation involved three video feeds (for the Deaf
interlocutors, the hearing interlocutors, and the interpreters), which were
synchronized and combined into one video file. This file was entered into Transana
and Elan for transcription and analysis. The data were reviewed to identify patterns
in the variety of linguistic features that are implicated in discursive construction of
identity and to isolate particularly rich conversational segments containing data
salient for the negotiation of identity as determined, in part, by reference to the
Bucholtz and Hall framework.

A review of studies that have based their analysis on this framework demonstrated
the variety of linguistic features that might be implicated such as: overt labeling,
pronoun use, repetition and contextualization, cooperative or competitive overlap,
hesitation and uncertainty, evaluation, intensifiers and modifiers, prosodic marking,
code-switching, humour, idiomatic forms, metaphors, emblematic grammatical
usage, or indexicality (Bailey, 2007; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, 2008; Golden & Lanza,
2013; Hatoss, 2012; Mango, 2010; Williams, 2008). Many of these features were
identified in the data and noted for further analysis. The interpreters’ contributions
in these key segments were additionally analyzed including reference to the model
of identity performance proposed in Chapter 2.5, interpreter as participant,
interpreter as interpreter and interpreter as self. As expected, these analyses were
overlapping and complex.
Taken together with the information collected in the questionnaire, these data were used to inform a discussion about the nature of the discursive construction of identity in interpreted interactions and to address the issues in the research questions: In what ways did the interlocutors engage in identity negotiation in same-language and interpreted conversational exchanges? What was the impact of the interpreters’ language proficiency and interpreting strategies on the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiation? What was the impact of the interpreters’ own identities in the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiation?
Chapter 4
Participant Profiles

The information in the participant profiles came from the questionnaires that were completed after the conversational data had been collected and the purpose of my research discussed. Included in the profiles are the demographic descriptors that each participant disclosed. It was not important to the study to ensure that all parties provided the same categories of information, but rather that they had the opportunity to self-identify according to the axes of identity that were salient to them. All participant names are pseudonyms.

4.1 Deaf interlocutors

4.1.1 Jesse

Jesse is a 49-year-old white, Deaf trans man, who is college educated and works as a Deaf Interpreter¹ (DI). Jesse was the only Deaf member of his family, and he was raised orally until the age of seven when he transferred to a Deaf school. While Jesse shared that he knew several of the participants (without specifying whom), he did indicate that it was the first time that he had met Cassandra, the other Deaf participant. Jesse indicated that he immediately felt very comfortable with Cassandra, adding that they were both Deaf, so interaction was natural and easy, as he finds that it always is when Deaf people meet. Jesse emphasized the connection that he felt with Cassandra, noting that all the other participants (including the interpreters) were hearing and English-speaking, which was emphasized as a

¹ According to the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC), Deaf Interpreters are professional interpreters who “use their expertise in their native sign language ... along with gesture and other communication strategies, to foster culturally and linguistically appropriate interpretation for Deaf consumers that hearing interpreters are generally not able to provide” (Canadian Association of the Deaf - Association des Sourds du Canada, 2015).
salient and significant differentiator, and expressed a strong sense of affiliation with Cassandra as sharing his Deaf identity.

Similarly, Jesse put a lot of emphasis on his professional identity as a DI. Several of Jesse’s comments made mention of his work as a DI, and he drew examples from those interpreting experiences. He reflected on how his experience in this study would be incorporated and beneficial in his interpreting practice. Aside from the explicit mentioning of being a DI, Jesse described himself as someone who aims to be very observant about the dynamics of group interactions and the needs of each individual. This was evident throughout the study, as Jesse frequently was attentive to the interpretation dynamics, checking in that the interpreters were following, directing attention to conversational turns, or commenting on the linguistic form being used in relation to the interpreting.

Jesse’s identity as a trans person was mentioned several times but was not explored in any detail, nor used explicitly as a point of affinity or distinction within the group. When discussing the interpreters, Jesse wondered if the male interpreter was conscious of being the only man in the room, adding, “I’m trans, but still... I did wonder about him”.

Jesse referenced his white identity several times, and racial identity is explored in the topic that is chosen for the discussion. His awareness and attention to racial identity might, therefore, have been heightened by the content of the discussion.

4.1.2 Cassandra

Cassandra is a 36-year-old, college educated, Deaf woman. She is a Canadian citizen and identified herself variously as multi-cultural, Black, or POC, and as Hindu. She identifies as ACE\(^1\) and a member of the LGBTQ community, and is single.

Over the course of the study, Cassandra indicated that she saw significant connections among the communities of which she is a member. She drew parallels

\(^1\) ACE is a term describing the sexual orientation of asexuality
between the experiences of oppression that Black and POC communities face, and that of the LGBTQ community and the Deaf community.

She didn't know the hearing participants well, but had encountered some of them in various community settings related to social justice workshops.

Although Jesse had indicated this was the first time they had met each other, Cassandra says that they had met on several previous occasions. She indicated that she felt supported by and connected to Jesse, both as someone who shares some aspects of her identity, and because he made comments and contributions that indicated a similar orientation toward and evaluation of social groups such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the police.

Cassandra’s sense of connection to others in the study was largely determined by shared group membership. She indicated that she felt distant or disconnected from the interpreters because they were “hearing, white, straight and cis.” However, she also experienced a sense of disconnection stemming from a different orientation toward or evaluation of certain social groups. She indicated a sense of surprise and disorientation when one of the hearing POC participants shared an opinion about Black Lives Matter Toronto (BLMTO) and policing that contradicted Cassandra’s expectation. This interaction is explored in the Chapter 7.

4.2 Hearing interlocutors

4.2.1 Sanaa

Sanaa is 34 years old, hearing, Muslim, and identifies as a queer cis woman. She is a single, university educated, brown South Asian, Canadian citizen. Sanaa works on a university campus for an organization for women and trans people. She indicated that she works on the same university campus as the other hearing participant, Linh, and they have a friendly and respectful working relationship. She has had several friendly encounters with Cassandra at community events, and knew the
researcher and the contracted interpreter who was providing interpretation for the study, but had not met Jesse or the interpreter participants.

She has had contact with members of the Deaf community, and has worked with interpreters fairly regularly for several years and is comfortable with interpreted interactions. She is learning some ASL, and her introduction to the group included her fingerspelling\(^1\) her name, showing her name sign\(^2\), and signing that she is learning but that she signs very slowly.

Sanaa constructed her sense of connection to the group based around identity categories, interactional roles and orientation to socio-political issues. Her sense of connection to the Deaf participants was based primarily on the shared social justice perspectives on the discussion topic. She was conscious of the interpreters as being straight and white, and was constantly aware of the work of the interpreters as mediators of the communication. She adjusted her participation somewhat depending on her assessment of how effectively the interpreters were conveying the content and tone of the participants.

4.2.2 Linh

Linh is a 37-year-old woman with advanced graduate school education. She identifies as having Chinese and Vietnamese background and speaks four languages (English, French, Mandarin Chinese, and Vietnamese). She has a common-law partner and a toddler, and identifies as atheist.

Linh knows Sanaa in a professional capacity, but had not met any of the other participants. She has worked with interpreters in her workplace which is a

\(^1\) Fingerspelling is the use of various handshapes to represent the letters of a spoken language. One of the functions of fingerspelling in ASL is to spell out proper nouns such as names.

\(^2\) Name signs are signs that are used to uniquely identify a person in the Deaf community. There are highly valued cultural norms around name signs. Hearing people being granted name signs by Deaf people is a mark of welcome into the community.
university-based organization involved in research and social justice work. She indicated that she has extensive experience in organizing among exploited and oppressed people, and enjoys engaging in political discussions.

She didn’t feel connected to, or particularly aware of the individual interpreters, but was conscious of the interpretation process throughout the study, and altered her engagement somewhat in response to the interpretation. Although she perceived some discrepancy between her observations of the Deaf participants and the tone of the interpretation, she felt that she was able to connect with the Deaf participants around the content of the discussion and by attending carefully to them visually while listening to the interpretation of their contributions. She viewed the interpretation process as somewhat impeding natural conversation, but saw it is a necessary service being provided and suggested that her lack of connection to the interpreters might have indicated that they were “doing a good job.”

4.3 Interpreter participants

4.3.1 Jeremy

Jeremy is a 33-year-old straight, white man. He identifies as a CODA\(^1\) with Deaf and Italian backgrounds, and his preferred languages are ASL and English. He is married with children, identifies as Christian and is a Canadian citizen.

He had briefly met the two Deaf participants previously, and was aware that they were involved in the LGBTQ community, but had not met the two hearing participants before. He had worked once briefly with the other interpreter previous to this study, but did not know her well. They had connected in advance to discuss and prepare for the interpretation. Jeremy indicated that, of the interlocutors, he felt more connected to the Deaf participants, because he had met them previously, and because of his having been raised and working in the Deaf community.

\(^1\) CODA – Child of Deaf Adult – a hearing person who has Deaf parents.
His considerations in advance of the study focused on his ability to provide an effective interpretation, and he was concerned about issues such as pragmatic equivalence, interaction management, and his own and his colleagues’ prior knowledge and experience relating to the possible discussion topics. During the interpreting work, however, he became conscious of his own identity and the ways in which he was different from the participants in the discussion. He shared that it wasn’t until midway through the study he became “acutely aware of [his] whiteness”. He felt that the participants would also have been conscious of these dynamics, and that his lack of familiarity with concepts and experiences that would have been shared among the group might have been distracting for them.

4.3.2 Lola

Lola is a 37-year-old straight, white, university-educated woman. She has Italian background and knows Italian and ASL as well as English. She is a Canadian citizen, and is married with one child.

Lola indicated that she knows one of the participants casually, and has worked with the other interpreter previously to this study.

She felt that the interpretation was effective in allowing the participants to get to know one another, and that they were honest and forthcoming in their opinions. Reflecting on her work upon learning of the research focus of this study, she acknowledged that her own identity may have influenced her effectiveness and that she may be unaware of the elements of the discussion that were missed in the interpretation.

4.4 Others

In addition to the study participants, I contracted a professional working interpreter to provide interpretation during the data collection, and two volunteers to assist with video recording and other logistics.
The contracted interpreter has sixteen years experience as an ASL-English interpreter. They identify as POC and a member of the LGBTQ community. They are a long time colleague and personal friend of mine, and are known to several of the Deaf and hearing participants. This particular interpreter was asked to provide the interpretation for this event for several reasons. Firstly, because they are a skilled interpreter and were very familiar with the content of this research I was confident in their capacity to interpret the study instructions and debrief session effectively. Also, I was aware that the two participant interpreters and I are white. I was attempting to provide a space that felt safe and comfortable for participants, especially given that identity and personal experience would be activated over the course of this research study. Having a POC person providing the interpretation contributed positively to the dynamics of the study. This was discussed in advance with the interpreter and they agreed to take on the work.

There were two volunteers assisting with the logistics and technology. They are new interpreters known to me through professional contact. They are both women, one is a POC and one is white. They were not directly involved in the study, although they were in the room and their presence would have been noted by the participants.
Chapter 5
Orientation to ASL research

5.1 Noted ASL features

There are several linguistic features in ASL that were relevant to the analysis of these data. Of particular interest were some of the features that contribute to the marking of subject and object positions: pronouns, verb inflection, and role shift. These features were selected because they are significant in the positioning of the signer in relation to others and in the indexing of their own and others’ identity positions. Additionally, the use of non-manual markers is a fundamental aspect of ASL and is of special relevance in the establishment of evaluative or affective orientations to ongoing talk. A cursory overview of the relevant aspects of these complex linguistic features is offered to provide the necessary background for understanding the analysis of the examples that follow.

5.1.1 Pronouns

As with many features of ASL, the location in which the pronoun is articulated is meaningful. Pronominalization occurs by the indexing of particular areas of the signing space. Pronouns located on the signer’s body are first person (singular or plural) and those made toward the addressee are second person (singular or plural). Third person pronouns are more complex. Recent research has complicated traditional understandings of how ASL space is constructed (see for example, the exploration of Real Space, Surrogate Space and Token Space (Lidell, 2003), or blending space with partitionable body zones (Dudis, 2004)). However in very simplified terms, the referent of the index can be ascertained either from the physical location of people or objects in the real life space of the signer, or from its location in the signing space that has been previously established for the referent (Valli & Lucas, 2002, p. 245).
ASL pronouns mark number through variations in the movement (sweep for plurality, point for singularity), or with a number-specifying sign such as THREE-OF-THEM (Valli & Lucas, 2002, p. 244). Unlike English, ASL second person pronouns do mark number, so that you (singular) is made with a pointing index, whereas you (plural) is made with a sweeping index. Third person pronouns in ASL do not mark for gender (Liddell, 2003), there being no difference between he and she, or his and hers\(^1\). Possessive pronouns are articulated in a similar way to personal pronouns, except using a flat B handshape\(^2\) rather than an index. Likewise, reflexive pronouns (myself, yourself) follow the same rules of location and movement, but are made with an A handshape.

5.1.2 Verb inflection

Subject and object information in ASL is sometimes also contained in the inflection of verb forms. This particular class of verbs, variously called indicating verbs, directional verbs, or agreeing verbs, is much researched and contested in the literature (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Liddell, 2003; Lillo-Martin & Meier, 2011; Valli & Lucas, 2002). Verb inflection of this class is affected by transitivity, plurality, verb morphology, tense and duration, adverbial inflection and spatial mapping (Liddell, 2003). However, sufficient for the purposes of this study is the general agreement that the inflection of location and/or palm orientation of these verb forms can indicate subject and object. These locations are typically pre-established in earlier discourse (Wulf, Dudis, Bayley, & Lucas, 2002, p. 55), and presumed to be understood by the addressee. A common example is the sign GIVE, which is made with a flat O handshape. The initial position denotes the subject of the verb and the final position denotes its object (Valli & Lucas, 2002, p. 202). So the sentences ‘I give it to you’, ‘You give it to me’, or ‘He gives it to her’, differ only in the initial and final

\(^1\) Some signers mark gender on ASL third person pronouns by incorporating the mouthing of the English pronoun. More research would be needed to examine whether this is explicitly to mark gender or is related to source language intrusion, and how native and non-native signers differ in its use.

\(^2\) **Handshape** refers to the configuration of the hand in the production of a sign. There are approximately 45 distinct handshapes in ASL (Valli & Lucas, 2002, p. 17).
locations of the single lexical sign GIVE. A subset of directional verbs, reciprocal verbs, can be made reciprocal by the simultaneous articulation with both hands using the relevant locations. For example 'We give them to each other', is made with each hand producing the sign glossed as GIVE, with each hand beginning and ending in the relevant locations for you and me.

5.1.3 Role Shift

A third ASL feature marking subject and object is variously known as role shift, reference shift, direct address, characterization, surrogate space, constructed dialogue or constructed action (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Janzen, O’Dea, & Shaffer, 2001; Liddell, 2003; Valli & Lucas, 2002; Wulf et al., 2002). Like the other ASL features discussed, this is a complex feature that will be greatly simplified for the purpose of this analysis. In general, role shifting refers to the signer’s taking on of the perspective of another character in the narrative. This can be someone else, or themselves at a different time, and the signer relays the person’s actions, thoughts, or conversation in the first person. The shift is conducted through a combination of body shift in the direction of the space assigned for the character, eye gaze, pausing, head movements, and possible change in signing style or register. When not in a role shift segment, the perspective taken is generally a narrator stance, and the orientation can be taken to be that of the signer (or speaker when the text is being rendered from English into ASL).

5.1.4 Non-Manual Markers

ASL, like other sign languages, makes use of the actions of parts of the body other than the hands. These are known as non-manual markers and are typically produced by the head and face, including movements of the mouth, cheeks, eyes, eyebrows, and occur simultaneous to manual signs. Non-manual markers, including those conveyed by facial expression, “express a variety of lexical, morphosyntactic, prosodic, semantic, and pragmatic functions such as attributive, adverbial, and aspectual modification, negation, sentence types, reported speech, constructed
action, and information structuring” (Herrmann & Steinbach, 2011, p. 6). In addition to these grammatical functions, facial expression is also the conveyance mechanism of emotional and affective information that positions the signer in a particular stance in relation to the content. It has been shown that although they use the same facial articulators, the markers with grammatical or syntactic function (yes/no, wh or rhetorical questions, relative clauses, etc.) are produced differently in terms of onset, duration and scope than those used to convey affective orientations (Herrmann & Steinbach, 2011; McCullough & Emmorey, 2009). The movements of the face, eyes, and head used for affect have been described as intonation conveying emotion much as vocal intonation does in spoken languages (Goldstein, Sexton, & Feldman, 2000). Some research has shown that many of these expressions are consistent throughout many cultures and are similarly produced by signers and non-signers in the expression of emotion (for example, expressions of surprise are often accompanied by a dropped jaw and wide eyes) (Bridges & Metzger, 1996, p. 9).

In this study the analysis of non-manual markers will largely focus on the facial expressions conveying affect. Attention will be paid to the facial expressions that are attributed to the signer’s perspective (or the speaker’s perspective when the interpreter is rendering an English utterance into ASL), and the expressions conveyed when the signer is adopting, through role shift, the first person perspective of another character. The facial expressions used during role shift reflect the feelings of that person as perceived by the signer (Bridges & Metzger, 1996, p. 10). These expressions, then, will contribute to the understanding of what the speaker/signer, and the other characters in the narrative, think and feel about their context, and their own and others’ actions or behaviours, thereby being of significance in the construction of identity positioning.
5.2 Transcription

5.2.1 Provenance of language sample

This study entailed English and ASL source messages, English and ASL interpretations, as well as post-hoc translations of both ASL original utterances and ASL interpretations. To assist readers in following the various language samples I will title each sample indicating the provenance of each.

Source English A verbatim transcription of a hearing interlocutor’s original English utterance

Source ASL A transcription of a Deaf interlocutor’s original ASL utterance in English gloss annotated to demonstrate relevant ASL features

English interpretation A verbatim transcription of the working interpreter’s rendition of a Deaf interlocutor’s original ASL utterance

ASL interpretation A transcription of the working interpreter’s ASL rendition of a hearing interlocutor’s original English utterance, in English gloss annotated to demonstrate relevant ASL features

English translation A post-hoc, close translation of either a Deaf interlocutor’s original ASL utterance, or a working interpreter’s ASL rendition of a hearing interlocutor’s original English utterance.

5.2.2 Transcription Conventions

The English transcriptions will adhere to the Jeffersonian Transcription methods as adopted by Transana. A complete transcription notation for English can be found in Appendix E.
ASL has no standard written form. To address the difficulty of researching and writing about a signed language, various approaches have been developed in the fields of linguistics (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Bridges & Metzger, 1996; Valli & Lucas, 2002), sociolinguistics (Hoza, 2007b; Liddell, 2003), and interpreting research (Metzger, 1999; Roy, 2000). The transcription conventions used in this study are compiled from these sources as needed to demonstrate the features relevant to the impact of interpretation on the discursive construction of identity.

Because of the complex manual, locative, and non-manual information conveyed simultaneously in an ASL utterance, the transcription of examples in this study mark only the features that are relevant for the illustration in question. This compromise to completeness is justified to enhance comprehensibility.

Each source utterance will be transcribed with numbered lines. For the ASL source utterances, on each numbered line in the transcription there will be a glossed translation of the manual signs. On the lines immediately above and below the gloss there will be notation of relevant features of ASL such as the use of space, eye gaze, head and body position, and other non-manual markers. ASL transcribed segments will be accompanied by a close, literal translation in English.

For example:

```
Source ASL

1. #ASL PUT-DOWN-ON-PAPER
   non-dom flat on dom B
   neg CAN'T

English translation
ASL cannot be written.
```
**Numbered lines - Gloss**

The numbered lines in the ASL transcripts contain a gloss translation of the manual ASL signs in capital letters. The following conventions are used for glossing particular elements of the ASL signs.

**Table 1 - ASL Gloss**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glossed sign</td>
<td>POLICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fingerspelled word</td>
<td>#GUN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs requiring more than one word gloss</td>
<td>EVERY-DAY, ASK-FOR-ATTENTION,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated sign</td>
<td>WORK++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>PRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td>PRO.1, PRO.2, PRO.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>PRO.3(plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>location</td>
<td>PRO.3 index R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessive</td>
<td>PRO.1(poss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflexive</td>
<td>PRO.2(ref)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Superscript – non-manual markers**

Directly above the gloss will be noted non-manual markers. These will include grammatical and affective facial expressions, eye gaze, head tilt, adverbial inflection, or mouthing behaviour. These will be accompanied by a mark indicating the duration of the feature relative to the manual signs.

---

1 In the interests of clarity only those ASL elements that are relevant to the examples offered in this study are listed in these tables.
### Table 2 - Superscript

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye gaze (e/g)</td>
<td>e/g Jesse DEAF SAME-AS-ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation (neg)</td>
<td>neg DON'T-WANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical question (rh-q)</td>
<td>rh-q NAME WHAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of non-manual</td>
<td>furrowed brow AWFUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective description or</td>
<td>(intense) OPRESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensifier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouthing of an English word</td>
<td>‘she’ PRO.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sta sta</td>
<td>sta sta WORK++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration/frequency marker -</td>
<td>sta sta WORK++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repeatedly for a long time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pah</td>
<td>pah FINALLY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement after long effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Subscript – spatial markers

Directly below the gloss will be noted locative information such as signing in space, directional verbs or role shift. These will be accompanied by a mark indicating the duration of the feature relative to the manual signs.

### Table 3 - Subscript

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role shift (rs)</td>
<td>PROTEST rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directional verb (dv)</td>
<td>LET-YOU-KNOW dv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal verb (rec)</td>
<td>GIVE-TO-EACH-OTHER dv-rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location on horizontal plane</td>
<td>PERSPECTIVE dv R to L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right (R), left (L), central (C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location on vertical plane</td>
<td>PRO.3 (pos) upper R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(upper, equal, lower)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of glossed signs to</td>
<td>ALL-OVER 2H 5 L-C wiggle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specify production which might</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be ambiguous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.3 Transcription of Noted ASL features

Some of the ASL features discussed earlier warrant particular attention in terms of notation, as they will be unfamiliar to non-signers.

Verb inflection

Directional verbs with an explicit subject and object will be glossed with a prefix (indicating the initial location) and a suffix (indicating the final position) in the form x-GIVE-y. Other directional verbs will be glossed and annotated (dv) on the line below with a mark that corresponds to the duration of the verb. The first-person location will be marked as I, and other positions will be specified based on the established spatial location. Reciprocal verbs will be marked with (rec) as in LOOK-AT-EACH-OTHER(rec). It is also possible for a directional verb to be articulated without a subject (i.e. a passive construction) (Janzen et al., 2001). In this case, POLICE-OFFICER upper-right-HIRE-centre (a police officer was brought in), neither initial nor final location indicates the subject of the verb HIRE.

Non-manual adverbial inflection will be noted on the line above the gloss. Conventional notation will be used, such as sta sta, as a duration and frequency marker indicating the performance of a verb repeatedly over a long period of time.

Non-Manual Markers

Affective facial expressions will be annotated, without brackets, on the line above the gloss of the ASL utterance with a line that corresponds to the duration of the expression relative to the manual signs being produced. The features will be noted only in sufficient detail to support the purpose of the illustration. To describe these movements, I follow conventions taken from various ASL linguistics sources (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980; Bridges & Metzger, 1996; Valli & Lucas, 2002), selecting those that are most transparent to a non-signing reader who would be unfamiliar with these subtle differences in facial movements. A word or phrase describing the
emotion being displayed will be written in brackets, also on the line above the ASL gloss.

**Role Shift**

Shifts in the role of the signer will be marked as annotations of the ASL gloss. Evidence of role shift will be entered (rs) on the line below the ASL gloss with a mark that lasts the duration of the manual signs that are produced from that perspective.

To demonstrate these notation conventions, this is a re-telling of a conversation that the signer had with a woman who worked in the prison system. Note that the signer adopted, through alternating role shift positions, her own perspective in the past and that of the woman with whom she was conversing. Directional verbs are marked with initial and final position indicating the subject and object of the verb. Affective non-manuals are indicated on the line above the gloss.

**EXAMPLE 1: Cassandra – EVERY DAY**

*Source ASL*

1. 1-ASK-3*woman* (disbel[ief]) **SERIOUS EVERY-DAY?** (woman) TELL-1 (emphasis) **YES, EVERY #DAY!** rs to l. rs to R

2. **WHAT? EVERY #DAY** YES!! rs to L. rs to R

*English Translation*

So I asked her, "are you serious? Every day?" And she said, "Yes! Every single day!" Shocked, I asked again "What! Every day?" and she said, "Yes!"

Including all the elements present in any signed sample would make the transcriptions unnecessarily cumbersome. For example, the above utterance
included among other features, facial expressions marking sentence type, eye gaze
to both characters in the narrative and addressees in real space, and meaningful
alterations of head and body position. The transcription is focused on the markers
especially relevant to the features in question and at a level of detail sufficient for
the analysis.
Chapter 6  
Linguistic Features of Identity Negotiation

As discussed in earlier chapters, the process of identity construction occurs at the intersections of broad social and ideological structures, ethnographic categories and positionings, and local interactional moments. A close analysis of a single conversation reveals the “complexities of identity as a social, cultural, and—most fundamentally—interactional phenomenon” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 608). This study examined some aspects of the complex discursive and linguistic features that were leveraged as the mechanisms of negotiation of relations and the construction of identity in this interaction.

6.1 Synopsis of the Conversation

Because of the complexities entailed in producing a transcribed form of an interpreted conversation that accurately and respectfully represents the contributions of all participants, it was decided that a complete transcript of the conversation would not be provided. Each example is transcribed in the degree of detail necessary for the point being illustrated. To provide a context for these examples, a synopsis of the conversation is offered here.

At the opening of the conversation, after the cameras had been turned on and I left the room, Jesse suggested that Cassandra read the possible topics\(^1\) out to the group. After Cassandra signed each topic\(^2\), the page was passed around for all group members to read. Sanaa then asked that the group pause for introductions, at which

\(^1\) See Appendix A for a complete list of the topics and discussion questions.

\(^2\) Cassandra translated the topic from the English and signed it to the group. The interpreter then interpreted it back into English. The interpreters had been provided with these topics in advance to prepare but did not have a written text in front of them as they worked. The resulting English text, having been rendered twice through interpretation, differed slightly from the original formation of the topic.
point each of the four interlocutors introduced themselves\textsuperscript{1}. While they all indicated that they were open to any of the three choices, it seemed that the second topic, Black Lives Matter, was slightly preferred. All concurred and Jesse opened the paper containing the discussion questions. He and Cassandra alternated reading and signing the questions to the group and then the paper circulated to the others. Linh expressed interest in the third question and she started off the conversation.

For the next forty minutes the group shared their experiences and reflections on the broad question of racism in policing and the role of BLM in drawing attention to the issues. While they did not refer directly to any of the discussion questions, all of the participants contributed and the conversation was lively and sustained. Much of the discussion consisted of the recounting of encounters with the police. At times these were participants’ own personal experience and at other times they were stories that had been shared in the community or were retold from the news. The stories were frequently offered in support of arguments that participants were making about policing, racism, and social inequality. There were many instances of overlapping contributions endorsing the positions of the others, as well as explicit expressions of agreement. It appeared that the group was in broad consensus on many of the issues they discussed, though there were several instances where finer points were queried and alternate perspectives offered. Over the course of their discussion they addresses issues such as policing in various marginalized communities, inequities and violence in prison and in police custody, problems with access to interpreters for police interactions, the need for increased de-escalation strategies for people in mental health crisis, the impact of video evidence on the conversations around police violence, and the BLMTO protest at Pride Toronto 2016.

When I joined the group they briefly summarized their process for selecting the topic. Linh laughed and described their discussion. “It was just a free-for-all!” she

\textsuperscript{1} The interpreter participants did not introduce themselves. There was no pause or awkwardness that is sometimes associated with this interactional moment among individuals unfamiliar with the role of working interpreters.
explained before adding, “I think we all have experiences and have something to say, we all know people involved in the movement.”

6.2 Participant orientation and positioning moves

Throughout the conversation, participants engaged in various linguistic behaviours that marked their orientation to the ongoing dialogue. The social action of using linguistic resources to construct one’s stance, defined as “the display of evaluative, affective, and epistemic orientations to discourse” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 595), was evident in the conversation. According to Hunter and Thompson, evaluation has three discursive functions: expressing the opinion of speaker vis-à-vis the proposition being made, manipulating the audience attitude vis-à-vis that proposition, and organizing the discourse (Johnstone, 2008, p. 137). The first two of these functions were of particular interest in this study. The following analysis shows examples of how participants expressed their opinions, and attempted to influence others’ opinions, in regard to social actors such as BLMTO, police, marginalized communities, dominant white society and others. Their stance is constructed by evaluating the behaviours of these social actors, by demonstrating emotional reactions to those behaviours or actors, and by establishing a framework of perception by claiming membership in particular social categories.

This focus on evaluation is relevant for this research because stance taking, “even in the most fleeting of interactional moves” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 595), builds alignments and disalignments between participants and thereby constructs relations and contributes to the production of identity positions. The findings presented in this section contribute to an understanding of this study’s first research question: In what ways did the interlocutors engage in identity negotiation in same-language and interpreted conversational exchanges?

6.2.1 Orientation to Deaf identity

As part of the round of introductions, Jesse marked his membership in the Deaf community explicitly by labeling himself as Deaf in his introduction to the group.
EXAMPLE 2: Jesse - Introduction

Source ASL

PRO.1 [hag] NAME #JESSE, "I". OF-COURSE OBVIOUS PRO.1 DEAF, KNOW WELL.

English Translation

“My name is Jesse and this is my name sign. Of course it is obvious that I am Deaf, you know that already.”

Despite this being the first time that Jesse had met Cassandra, the other Deaf interlocutor, the entire introductory segment was directed (through body and head position and eye gaze) to the hearing participants. While this may be, in part, because there had been a few minutes before the actual study began where Jesse and Cassandra had an opportunity to engage in small talk, it is also notable that in the context of formal introductions to the group it was markedly to the hearing members of the group that Jesse addressed his comments. This orientation was emphasized in the closing of his introduction when he signed NICE MEET TWO-OF-YOU (It’s nice to meet you both), with eye gaze exclusively made in the direction of the hearing interlocutors. The content of Jesse’s introduction was also oriented to a hearing audience. After mentioning his name and sign name, Jesse identified as Deaf, mentioned his profession, indicated that he had been born deaf, and described his family’s reaction to the diagnosis. He then outlined his schooling experience, explaining his time in mainstream education settings as having focused on oral education until he transitioned to a Deaf school at the age of seven whereupon he adopted a Deaf identity and has been signing ever since. These details focus on explaining Jesse’s experience as a Deaf person, an explanation that would be unnecessary when introducing oneself to another Deaf person. Typically, introductions among culturally Deaf people involve finding mutual connections by identifying the school that they attended and negotiating shared acquaintances in the Deaf community (Mindess, 1999). Jesse’s introduction, in both form and content, indicated that he was orienting towards the hearing participants. In doing so, Jesse marked his relationship with Cassandra as one that does not require introduction,
thereby creating an implied affinity between them. The selection of audience for this introductory remark serves to cement a joint identity between Jesse and Cassandra making the categories of Deaf and hearing relevant for the negotiation of sameness and difference with the emerging interaction of the group.

In her introduction, Sanaa also oriented her identity in relation to the Deaf community. As a hearing person, it would not be assumed that Sanaa would have any knowledge of ASL or Deaf culture. However, while introducing herself in spoken English, Sanaa also made the signs¹ NAME #SANAA LEARN SIGN SLOW. By choosing to incorporate some signs in her introduction, Sanaa indexed a previous relationship with the Deaf community. She exhibited the extent of her linguistic knowledge (knowing how to fingerspell her name and having some vocabulary), as well as the degree of her fluency (signing was produced without grammatical inflection, in English word order, while speaking). While this type and amount of ASL usage could have been acquired through online resources, or learning from a hearing signer, it might also have indexed to the Deaf participants that Sanaa had some connection with the Deaf community. While linguistic knowledge alone might have been an ambiguous marker of alignment to the social group of the Deaf community, the introduction of a sign name would have significant cultural connotations, and increase the likelihood that Sanaa would be perceived as having some community involvement.

During her introduction to the group, Linh also indexed some familiarity with the Deaf community and with interactions mediated through interpretation. This was performed in her first utterance, “I am Linh. It’s spelled L-I-N-H.” As she spelled her name she glanced slightly toward the interpreters, which supports the understanding that this expansion was for their benefit. This indicated that Linh was

¹ Because of the difference in modality, it is often thought to be possible to articulate an utterance in ASL and English simultaneously. However the two languages have markedly different syntactical structures and grammatical forms. Therefore it is impossible to simultaneously produce intact grammatical utterances in both languages. This example of spoken English accompanied by lexical ASL signs is characteristic of a novice hearing ASL learner.
aware that ASL interpreters spell out the names of individuals being introduced, and that she anticipated that they might not know how to spell her name. While the interpreter did fingerspell the name, there was no indication that the spelling had been provided by Linh to facilitate the interpretation. Unlike Sanaa’s demonstration of cultural connectedness, Linh’s performance was not made available to the Deaf participants to be seen as an index to a prior relationship between Linh and the Deaf community.

The marking of connectedness to the Deaf community was an element of the group’s negotiation of adequation and distinction. In a dynamic interplay, the construction of adequation requires, according to the framework offered by Bucholtz and Hall, the active diminishing of areas of difference. The complementary processes of erasure (the diminishing of difference), and highlighting (the foregrounding of similarity), operate to forge commonalities of identity in the interaction and function “in tandem to establish interactionally or situationally sufficient alignments and disalignments” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004b, p. 495). Sanaa’s use of some signs, and her introduction of a sign name served as the performance of a “semiotic act that brings to salience some aspect of the social situation” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004b, p. 495), in this case the highlighting of her implied connection to the Deaf community. In contrast, the interpretation preemptively erased Linh’s identity performance of familiarity with interpreted interactions rendering it ineligible as a contribution in her negotiation of adequation or similarity. These dynamics of highlighting and erasure work in the context of the necessary act of erasure that is inherent when engaging in a conversation through interpretation. The linguistic and cultural differences between Deaf and hearing participants would prohibit the emergence of identity construction as a group were it not for the implied agreement to erase those differences by accepting interpretation as an acceptable medium for interactional exchange.
6.2.2 Orientation to racial identity – Jesse

As well as orienting to the Deaf community when positioning themselves in this conversation, participants also referenced various positions in terms of their orientation towards social constructions of race. In the following segment, Jesse was discussing the Black Lives Matter movement in the context of the local Deaf community. At one point Jesse oriented his own position in relation to the Black Deaf community by establishing in central signing space a hypothetical example of a person who is Black and Deaf.

EXAMPLE 3: Jesse - ALLY

Source ASL

1. DEAF CULTURE PLUS BLACK CULTURE DEPEND
   in L in C in R in C

2. AGENT PRO.1 TRY UNDERSTAND INTERACT HOW
   space C
dv to C

3. PRO.3 (index center) PROCEED SUPPORT+
   ( raise index) dv C lean back

4. PRO.1 #ALLY THAT’S-ALL PROCEED

English Translation

There can be Deaf Culture as well as Black Culture depending on the person. I try to understand and interact with them, (to learn) how they, umm, get along in life, so I can support them in that. Just carefully support, I am only an ally to them. That’s how I do it.

Here, Jesse established a position as ally to an individual representative of a particular intersectional identity that was relevant to the topic under discussion and
is of current interest in the Deaf community. This representative individual was constructed through the use of contrasting space for each identity category, DEAF established in the left signing space, and BLACK on the right. The sign PLUS, as well as the following phrase DEPEND AGENT in central space combined the two identities into an individual with whom Jesse engaged throughout the rest of the utterance. This engagement took the form of central eye gaze, directional verbs (SUPPORT, INTERACT), and lexical choice (#ALLY).

By this point in the conversation, Jesse had claimed his Deaf community membership, so the representative Black Deaf individual in the above comment was someone with whom he shared one salient aspect of identity, being Deaf, and from whom he was marking racial difference. The perspective being taken, then, was from within the Deaf community looking at a sub-community rather than from one community to another.

While reference to pre-established categories of identity membership, such as Deaf identity or racial identity, is clearly relevant in identity negotiation, Bucholtz and Hall emphasized that in the construction of sameness and difference, participants are driven by agency and power in determining and framing the identity categories to leverage (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004a, p. 371). In this example, Jesse’s position as a white Deaf person commenting about a Black Deaf person was framed explicitly as that of an ally seeking to understand and therefore to be able to support the Black Deaf individual (constructed as a representative) in their experience as a Black Deaf person.

The relevance of white identity was heightened, as Jesse was the only white interlocutor in the conversation, perhaps informing his construction of a particular kind of white identity—that of an ally. In differentiating himself from the representative Black Deaf person, Jesse is indexing an identity as white, but framing that identity as that of a supportive ally. Furthermore, the sign THAT’S-ALL was repeated twice in this short section, once after SUPPORT and again after #ALLY. So as well as claiming a particular kind of white identity, Jesse circumscribed his
enactment of that role as not being something else. It is left to the audience to
determine what role or behaviour is excluded by SUPPORT THAT’S-ALL or #ALLY
THAT’S-ALL.

This framing of an identity of *white, but a particular kind of white* is repeated in a
later segment when Jesse again referenced his white identity while discussing his reaction to the police harassment of the Black children of a white friend.

**EXAMPLE 4: Jesse – BURN-INSIDE**

**Source ASL**

1. **PRO.1 BURN-INSIDE WHY? PRO.1 WHITE PRO.1(ref)**

2. **AND-OTHERS PRO.1 EMBARRASS PRO.1.**

3. **THAT HOW PRO.1(plural) WHITE PEOPLE ALL-AROUND in upper L.**

4. **KNOW HAVE GOOD PEOPLE BUT STILL FEEL ---**

5. **THAT PRO1(plural) CAN #BE LIKE THAT in upper L nb: emphasis through eng word order**

6. **ALL-AROUND (intense, disdain) OPPRESS-(lower right) PRO.3(plural) in lower R**

7. **#POC AND-OTHERS. PRO.3(plural) CAN #BE LIKE THAT 5H list index 1-5 nb: emphasis through eng word order**
This excerpt demonstrates some of the complex positioning that was occurring in this conversation. Through the engagement with socially understood categories of identity and the particular discursive negotiations of story-lines and perspectives, participants in conversations “position” themselves and others (Davies & Harré, 1999). As groups in interaction negotiate their relationships as individuals and as a group, their language use operates to construct and reveal areas of sameness and difference.

In this case, the erasure of discordant elements necessary for the creation of affinity within the group can be seen in a two-fold implication of Jesse’s identity in relation to this hypothetical and representative Deaf Black person. On one hand, orienting toward someone who is both Deaf and Black allowed Jesse to highlight their shared Deaf identity, and construct affinity with this person, and others who share that identity (namely Cassandra in this interaction). This diminished, or erased in Bucholtz and Hall’s terms, the salience of racial identity differences. Second, however, a further process of highlighting/erosure was at play, as was exemplified by how Jesse diminished the impact of his whiteness by constructing a certain type of white identity that aligns in ideological terms with the other members of the group. He associated with other white people by explicit identity marking, PRO.1 WHITE PRO.1(ref) and by marking subject and object with pronominalization (PRO.3(plural) WHITE PEOPLE) and with directional verbs ((upper-left)-OPRESS-(lower-right)). Simultaneously, however, Jesse also differentiated himself from that same identity by highlighting a negative affective reaction to it (PRO.1 EMBARRASS PRO.1, and PRO.1 BURN-INSIDE), thereby negotiating a position of adequation with the
conversational group, not as alike, but through erasure and highlighting, as “sufficiently similar for interactional purposes” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599). The presentation of identity is not merely an expression of self, but as a construction that accounts for context, audience and the objectives of the interactional practice. In this case, one interactional purpose was that of constructing a group’s relationship to the topic of police violence. Jesse thereby strengthened his affinity with both identifications of being Deaf as well as those being oriented in certain delineated ways toward whiteness.

6.2.3 Orientation to racial identity – Sanaa

In the previous examples we can observe how Jesse used various linguistic forms and strategies to position himself in relation to the social categories under discussion. This kind of “reflexive positioning,” however, does not do all the work of identity construction. Through the process of “interactive positioning” (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 48), the position that one asserts is engaged with by interlocutors and can be affirmed, contested or further negotiated. Because any given construction of identity is subject to these relational negotiations, one’s own construal of self in interaction is always only partial and “produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605). Jesse’s reference to the category of “white people” and his framing of his relationship to that category was only a partial picture of how whiteness was referenced in the conversation.

The category of white people was also addressed explicitly when Sanaa introduced two distinct groups in society relating to one another in regard to video evidence of police violence.
EXAMPLE 5: Sanaa – “people self-delude”

Source English

1. it’s really (.) um (.) infuriating that people, particularly white people,
2. need to see something on a videotape in order to believe what people
3. have been saying for (.) how many decades, right? like, you= and
4. even seeing it on a videotape, it’s almost like (.) people cannot believe:,
5. that that happens. it’s, it’s shocking right? the amount that people
6. self-delude, that people will just (.) try to find a reason to justify (.) um (.)
7. the police’s actions, right? it’s like, oh, they must have done something,
8. there must have been something that wasn’t caught on the tape,
9. or you know? like this is ridiculous, this is (.) it’s, yeah;
10. like that is racism, that is anti-black racism (.) right there.

The pronominalization within this and the subsequent segment was worthy of some attention in regard to the construction of Sanaa’s orientation toward the topic of policing and the social category of white people. In this first excerpt, she constructed two groups: white people who were reacting to the video evidence, and other people who had been addressing this issue for many years. But she refrained from referencing either group with a pronoun, instead repeating the noun “people” for both groups for much of the utterance. Interestingly, while the noun “people” was used for both groups, the unmarked noun was used for people who “have been saying [this] for how many decades” (Line 3), and the noun modified (in its first mention) with an adjective was the group “white people” (Line 1). The use of the unmarked noun “people” to refer to those who have actively been engaged in resistance against police violence in communities of colour may have served to construct a norm as perceived from Sanaa’s subject position, thereby differentiating her from the position taken by white people.

Sanaa didn’t use a pronoun until she adopted the character of the “white people” oriented toward (presumably) the victim of police violence shown on video who
was identified from within the adopted perspective of the white people as “they”. The phrase “it’s like” (Line 7) opened this direct address segment and then Sanaa shifted intonation patterns adopting a conversational tone; “it’s like, oh, they must have done something, or there must have been something that wasn’t caught on the tape” (Lines 7-8).

In this section, Sanaa’s orientation to these groups was established not by affiliation through pronominalization, but by her construction of an unmarked point of view through adjective use, by the representation of the groups’ relative perspectives on policing and police violence, and by the audience’s accrued understanding of Sanaa’s stance on this issue. Her stance was established throughout the conversation as critical of the police and in solidarity with those affected by police violence by her contributions about #Bluelivesmatter, police brutality, anti-black violence, as well as her affirmations of other interlocutors’ contributions on these topics. The absence of pronoun use in this section called upon the participants’ already-established understanding of Sanaa in order to read how she was positioning herself in this utterance.

By contrast, in the subsequent utterance, Sanaa’s stance shifts, through a change in her pronominalization of the groups in question.

**EXAMPLE 6: Sanaa – “accept reality”**

```source english
1 you cannot see and accept reality, even when it's on ((claps)) a videotape,  
2 in ((claps)) your face (...) you just don't want to see it, right?  
3 'cause what does that mean? Then, it means you have to have a conversation  
4 about (...) how is this system completely flawed completely does not serve  
5 the people (...) so, and that's a big conversation right (...) so, "I don't know,
```
While she began this topic (Example 5) with a pronominally neutral orientation to the groups in question, in the second section (Example 6) she addressed the established category of “white people” directly with a second person pronoun. This shift in pronominal orientation from 3rd person narrator to direct interlocutor constructed alignment between Sanaa’s grammatical and ideological stance as well as her identity as a person of colour.

The discussion topic invited participants to engage on issues of racial identity. White identity was taken up by Jesse and by Sanaa, where each contributed to the intersubjective and interactional construction of their relative orientations to whiteness, to communities of colour, and to policing.

6.3 Interpreter rendering of orientation and positioning moves

There were many instances of apparent success in the transference of identity negotiation through interpretation, but the examples of most interest were those that highlighted various kinds of interpreter impact on these dynamics. The findings presented in this section, as well as in the next chapter, contribute to an understanding of this study’s second and third research questions: what was the impact of the interpreters’ language proficiency and interpreting technique on the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiation, and what was the impact of the interpreter’s own identity on the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiation? The analysis will show that these three factors, language proficiency, interpreting technique, and interpreter identity, are intertwined and overlapping. It is often possible to only point to the impact and suggest ways in which each of these elements may be at play. Further research would be needed to more thoroughly tease apart the relative contribution of each factor to the overall impact that the interpreter has on the interlocutors’ discursive negotiation of identity.

In the interpretation of the particular section described in Examples 5 and 6, the working interpreter needed to identify the discursive position being adopted by Sanaa and make a similar reading available in the target language. Attuned to the
meaning of orientation in the source English text, the interpreter used a variety of ASL features such as role shift, narration, pronominalization, affective facial expression, adverbs, and explicit labeling to replicate the effect of Sanaa’s positioning. The ASL rendition of Sanaa’s opening of this segment reveals some of the choices that the interpreter made regarding Sanaa’s orientation to the topic. These choices were informed by the linguistic evidence contained within the source utterance, the contextual information accrued over the interaction, and the interpreter’s own store of world knowledge and experience.

6.3.1 Metaphor

As an example of reliance on an interpreter’s own identity and experience in the rendering of positioning discourses, in Example 5 the interpreter, Jeremy, was called upon to find an equivalent expression for the phrase *self-delude* with which Sanaa had characterized the behaviour of the white people whom she described as denying the reality of police violence despite seeing the video evidence. As in all acts of ASL-English interpretation, there is no word-for-sign equivalence, so interpreters attend to the meaning of the source utterance and strive, through an active process of co-construction (S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005), for a functionally equivalent meaning in the target language. Jeremy had formed an ASL sentence premised on the interaction between the white people who were confronted with the evidence, the people who had been telling them about it for years, and the narrator stance that represented Sanaa’s assessment of these perspectives. An interpreter always has to determine whether any given attribute or perception will be conveyed by an explicit description, by the embodiment of that attribute in a role shift, or by implication through enacting the response of another character to their perception of that attribute. When Sanaa (Example 5) evaluated the white people’s behaviour as shockingly self-delusional, the interpreter remained in the narrator position, indexed the location of the white people and called them "blind".
EXAMPLE 7: Jeremy (Sanaa) – BLIND

ASL Interpretation

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{(shock) (intense)} \quad \text{PRO.3 index-R} \quad (2H) \text{MOUTH-OPEN} \quad \text{PRO.3 index-R} \quad \text{BLIND}
\end{array}
\]

English Translation

They are so shocked. They are just blind!

By using the metaphor of blindness, Jeremy drew on what he believed to be a widely decipherable equation of physical blindness with the unwillingness to perceive or understand. The use of metaphor in interpretation for the conveyance of content and orientation can be an effective strategy, especially given the immense time constraints imposed by simultaneous interpreting work. Second, the choice of and production of a metaphorical expression can provide the lexical sign that can be modified and inflected to convey the affective and evaluative position of the speaker. In this instance, the interpreter delivered very efficiently what could otherwise have been a complex construction, thereby securing a few moments to process and prepare a rendering of the subsequent source concept.

However, the use of metaphor in language does not serve only to convey an idea or concept. “People use metaphor to think with, to explain themselves to others, to organise their talk, and their choice of metaphor often reveals not only their conceptualisations but also, and perhaps more importantly for human communication, their attitudes and values” (Cameron, 2008, p. 197). The construction of particular metaphors, or the association of particular ideas as meaningfully similar, is a complex cognitive and social phenomenon. Metaphor involves the selection of two disparate ideas, or the mapping of two domains, that are somehow related or connected in our experience of them. While the primary function of metaphor is that of understanding, Golden and Lanza (2013) also suggest that metaphors reveal significant identity-constitutive elements, arguing
that metaphor use “can indicate how speakers evaluate actions and behaviors and thus negotiate their own positions and portray themselves in different manners” (p. 299). Remembering that the negotiation of identity is a constantly emerging process over the course of any given interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), the invocation of a metaphorical connection between blindness and self-delusion contributed to the construction of the speaker's identity as perceived by the participants who were accessing the utterance through this interpretation.

The sight/insight metaphor is so deeply entrenched in dominant society, it has been called the “trope of tropes,” its usage stretching from Aristotle to daily newspaper headlines (Schor, 1999, p. 79). Notwithstanding the question of whether or not this depth of metaphor entrenchment is as keen in the experience of Deaf people, its use served to position Sanaa not only as one asserting a particular assessment of whiteness, but also as one with a particular relationship to that metaphorical device. The impact of the ubiquity of devaluing metaphors such as blindness or disability on the individuals who are literally embodied in those devalued ways has been explored not only in academic but also increasingly in mainstream and social media. “Disability metaphors abound in our culture, and they exist almost entirely as pejoratives,” runs the tagline on a blog discussing ableist language (http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/11/ableist-language-matters/). The disability activist movement has called attention to the way in which people with devalued identities are instrumentalized to provide a metaphorical mapping of wrongness, deficiency, or other undesirable characteristics.

Sanaa is an activist, who identifies as queer, who is engaged in issues of anti-racism, works at a university centre for women and trans people, and has connections with the Deaf community. In her playback interview, Sanaa confirmed that she has been sensitized in her own language use around these kinds of metaphorical devices.

We discussed this instance in Jeremy’s playback interview. In contrast to Sanaa, the anti-ableist discourse that contests the metaphorical mapping of disability and undesirable traits is absent from Jeremy's lived experience or acquired cultural
competence. The habitus with which he understands and navigates social interaction differs in this respect from that of Sanaa, whose words and ideas he is filtering through his own mind in the process of interpretation. In this instance, he needed a strategy to convey the conceptual and affective meaning of Sanaa’s utterance, including the multiple and overlapping features that she used to position herself to the narrative and to the other participants. He drew from his repertoire a linguistic device, the metaphor, which indexes a particular, and contested, correlation of blindness and the undesirable characteristic of self-delusion. In so doing, Sanaa is constructed not only as one who critiques the “white people’s” refutation of evidence of police violence, but also as one who would invoke a disability metaphor to do so. While neither of the Deaf participants explicitly responded to the metaphor, their own habitus would determine the degree to which they would be conscious of its operation in the dynamic, and how they would assimilate the political implications of its use into their contribution to Sanaa’s identity construction. This entire sub-plot of the unfolding story of identity remained unavailable to Sanaa, as it existed solely in the ASL half of the conversation, never being re-rendered into English.

The partialness principle of the Bucholtz and Hall framework reminds that “identity is inherently relational, it will always be partial, produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605). In this example, Sanaa’s perception of her own identity negotiation remained partial, not merely because identity is always relational and co-constructed among interactants, but in a particular way by virtue of the interpretation process. During the playback interview Jeremy was taken aback to consider how this interpreting strategy, which would generally be viewed as an effective rendition of the source utterance, also had the unintended consequence of positioning the speaker in particular relations with a marginalized community without her even having access to that representation. He reflected that in the interpreting moment, he considered blindness to be a pervasive and ubiquitous stand-in for a lack of insight. His consideration of the appropriateness of the
metaphor ended at the linguistic and interpretation question of semantic equivalence and did not extend to the identity-constitutive implications of language use in interaction.

It is notable that Jeremy’s own experience, coming from a Deaf family and working as an ASL interpreter, is such that he would not have drawn on a deafness metaphor in an interpretation. His habitus was formed in the context of personal and professional immersion within the Deaf community. So, while he stated that he would not draw upon an equally common expression such as “falling on deaf ears” in an interpretation, he did not have a similar sensitivity for language use surrounding blindness. He had neither the personal experience nor the connectedness to a community such that the use of this metaphor was ever problematized. The interpreting strategies and linguistic repertoire combined with the experience and world-view of the interpreter directly contributed to the social positioning of an interlocutor. While Sanaa was not aware of this conversational moment as being an enactment of her orientation toward language and disability, that identity was performed by the interpretation. Jeremy’s *interpreter as interlocutor* performance was shaped by his *interpreter as self’s* understanding of the metaphorical mapping of blindness and delusion. This example of metaphor use demonstrates how interpretation complicates the discursive processes of identity negotiation as emergent, indexical and partial.

**6.3.2 Evaluation and role shift: A simplified illustration**

Before turning to the role of affective facial expression in the context of role shift, I will offer a simplified example to show how these features operate. Generally, in ASL the elements produced when not in role shift can be ascribed to the narrator role, or the stance of the signer. In role shift the orientation is constructed and ascribed to that particular character as perceived by the signer. In this way the audience is able to read not only what the narrator is feeling and thinking about their own contributions but what feeling and thoughts they are projecting onto their
characters, which indirectly offers insight into the narrator’s assessment of that character. In a simple example, a signer might utter the following sentence.

**EXAMPLE 8: simplified example of evaluation and role shift**

```
1 STUDENT PRO.1 right-HIRE-center
2 PRO.3center sta sta (intense) WORK+ FIGURE-OUT+ WORK+ rs of student
3 LOOK-AT SATISFY
   rs = self in past narrator
```

This could be literally translated as: “I hired a student and they really work hard, figuring things out and really working hard. I am very satisfied with them”. Or more simply, “The student that I hired is a really hard worker. I am so glad that I hired them”.

In this example, the signer adopts two personas—-that of themselves in the past, and that of the student who had been hired. The student is portrayed in first person through role shift, as diligently working hard with great determination and concentration (eye gaze, intensity marker, repeated signs, non-manual frequency and duration adverb ‘sta’, indicating to do something over and over for a long period of time). It is implied that this portrayal is not objective, but the subjective view of the signer, specifically, the signer in the past observing the student’s work as is characterized in the verb LOOK-AT. Finally, the narrator explicitly offers an assessment in the form of SATISFY.

Imagine, though, if this ASL sample was actually a rendition of the English sentence. The attribution process becomes complicated because the interpreter would not have first hand knowledge of the student’s characteristics or behaviour that warranted the description of being a hard worker. It must be surmised from, in addition to the linguistic evidence of the source utterance, general knowledge of
work-place behaviour, specific knowledge of the case in question from their own experience or from earlier dialogue, and from their assessment of the speaker's perspective. Additionally, the facial expressions, both affective and adverbia, marking both hard work and satisfaction, are more granularly calibrated than the English sentence provides evidence for, even accounting for word choice (hard worker, glad), intensifiers (really, so) or intonation (which we could imagine as having emphasis on certain segments). So, the non-manual expressions accompanying the verb WORK, for example, are also approximations originating with the interpreter.

It is worth noting that, in the above example, if the ASL sentence was actually the source utterance and the interpreter was constructing the English rendition, other types of information would be generated by the interpreter such as the gender of the student in the rendition of the unmarked third person pronoun PRO.3

6.3.3 Evaluation through role shift and vertical space

Researchers on conceptual metaphors in ASL have posited the existence of a vertical space metaphor running through the construction of many lexical signs as well as in the use of spatial loci in ASL, the metaphorical mappings of which include the meaning of “good is up,” and the related “powerful is up” (see for instance Taub, 2001; P. P. Wilcox, 2000). The conceptual metaphor of height in signing space as a mapping for perceived power or status can be manipulated in the furtherance of an identity-negotiating tactic.

There are two examples of participants engaging role shift and the vertical space metaphor to convey their stance relative to some aspect of the utterance. For the first example, I return to Jesse’s ASL texts in Examples 3 and 4. In these instances, Jesse was explicitly acknowledging his whiteness while positioning himself as an ally to people of colour. There was a significant height differential in the locations
designated in signing space to refer to white people in relation to communities of colour, implicitly thereby acknowledging the social dominance of whiteness. However, when he was talking about his own interaction with a Deaf Black person, or when role-shifting into the character of a police officer exhibiting the desirable behaviour of de-escalation in a crisis situation, all characters were established on a neutral plane in the signing space. This shift in the locations designated for the characters in Jesse’s narrative indicated an attribution of metaphorical value. During the playback interview we discussed the role of height differential in ASL. Jesse described his explicit attempts to be viewed as an ally, and while not specifically conscious of using height differently in situations describing systemic social power versus those describing individual equality, he felt that his unconscious manipulation of signing space was consistent with his conscious attempts to position himself as an equity-affirming ally. The conceptual metaphor of vertical space in ASL, therefore, has the potential to mark the recognition of whiteness as a socially dominant force, while maintaining a personal orientation to equity and respect.

This second example of use of the vertical space metaphor to indicate positioning was performed in Jeremy’s interpretation of Sanaa’s text explored earlier in Example 5.

**EXAMPLE 9: Jeremy (Sanaa) - THROW-INFORMATION**

```
Source English
1 it's really (,) um (,) infuriating that people, particularly white people,
2 need to see something on a videotape in order to believe what people
3 have been saying for (,) how many decades, right? like, you= and
4 even seeing it on a videotape, it's almost like (,) people cannot believe (,
5 that that happens. it's, it's shocking right? the amount that people
6 self-delude,
```
When establishing the space to be used as the reference point for "white people" in this example, the interpreter allocated the signing space in his upper right (ASL interpretation, Line 1). The relative height in spatial allocation here is a manifestation of the discourse of white people holding positions of relative status and power. A slight body shift and eye gaze toward this established space.
corresponds with the sign BECOME-ANGRY (ASL interpretation, Line 2) to render Sanaa’s opening phrase “it’s really infuriating that people, particularly white people” (Source English, Line 1). This allocation of status/power is confirmed throughout the interpretation of this segment, for example, when the interpreter entered a role shift conveying the perspective of “what people have been saying for how many decades” (Source English, Lines 2-3) with the eye gaze to the corresponding vertical position. As described in the earlier example, Jesse also established white people in a relatively high location in signing space. This constructs a shared reference to the relative power socially ascribed to whiteness within the interactions of the interpreters and the Deaf interlocutors.

6.3.4 Affective facial expression

The interpreter rendering Sanaa’s utterances about white people was obliged to make numerous decisions that would contribute to the audience’s perception of Sanaa’s orientation to the topic and position vis-à-vis others in the group. In addition to the features already described, in ASL facial expressions are used both as grammatical markers and as affective expressions that mark the signers’ feelings or emotional response to the proposition being signed. The affect and intensity markers conveying the degree of shock and disbelief in the portrayal of the characterized “white people,” the amount and type of frustration and disappointment attributed to the “people who have been saying [this] for how many decades,” the relative height differential in the allocation of space between the social groups, and the choice of lexical signs were all decisions that had to be made by the interpreter in the moment.

As examples, these images demonstrate some of the facial expressions and body movements that were used in the above segment.
EXAMPLE 10: Jeremy (Sanaa) – SHOCKED

Here the interpreter’s face demonstrates the degree of shock felt by the white people confronted with video evidence of police violence. The same sign, glossed here as MOUTH-OPEN (meaning to be amazed, or to be shocked by something), could be modified by a wide range of non-manual markers indicating the range of intensity of the disbelief. The interpreter selected the non-manuals\(^1\) from a range of evidence presented in the texts as well as reliance on external sources.

EXAMPLE 11: Jeremy (Sanaa) – THROW INFORMATION

Here you can see the intensity of expression, and the raised eye gaze performed during the role shift characterization of “people who have been saying this for

\(^1\) It also should be remembered that most ASL interpreters are late learners of ASL and do not have native-like proficiency. This will have an impact on their ability to modulate their non-manual markers with precision and accuracy and to read the intended meaning in the non-manual markers of Deaf signers. The interpreter in this example was raised with ASL as a native language and therefore may have a more calibrated fluency with these ASL features.
decades.” This corresponded with the interpreter’s reading that Sanaa was referencing the relatively dominant position of the white people in her utterance (through the use of vertical space), the frequency and duration of the response of minority communities (repeated signs, sta adverb), and the stance that Sanaa believed that this reflected an unnecessarily long and onerous effort (intensity and despair in affective facial expressions).

The facial expressions and spatial locations conveying orientation to the work of oppressed people in relation to groups in more dominant social positions was also evident in Cassandra’s description of the advocacy done by the trans community, and the demands of a Deaf prisoner for access. Both of these images show that these individuals are oriented (in the perception of the signer) toward a location denoting a more powerful social position.

EXAMPLE 12: Cassandra – space and affect

Cassandra was characterizing individuals advocating for change. In the first example, trans activists are advocating for systemic change in policing; in the second a Deaf prisoner is demanding access to an ASL interpreter. Like the interpreter in Example 11, Cassandra marked the degree of intensity of the advocacy through facial expression (furrowed brow), and used space to mark her perception of relative power. Note the similarity between Jeremy and Cassandra in terms of the degree of intensity and orientation in space. This repetition of discursive devices served to construct affinity among the participants, across the mediation of interpretation.
Although in these examples neither Sanaa nor Cassandra were describing themselves as the activists in question, they were able to construct themselves as similarly oriented to the work of activism. The positioning of themselves to the idea of activism was negotiated through their use of intensifiers, evaluation, markers of relative social status, and affective orientation that was, in this case, made available through the interpretation.

In addition to Sanaa’s use and non-use of pronouns in Examples 5 and 6 to establish membership in and orientation toward various social groups, the interpreter also had access to a number of other linguistic and paralinguistic features that contributed to an understanding of Sanaa’s stance vis-à-vis the police when constructing the interpretation shown in Example 9. These included descriptors such as “infuriating”, “shocking” and “ridiculous”; intensifiers such as “completely”; emphatic intonation; and accompanying nonverbal emphasis, such as the clapping on the words “on” and “in” in the phrase “on a videotape, in your face”.

This evidence supported the interpreter’s decisions regarding the degree and type of affective facial expression with which to inflect the ASL sentence, but only some of these features would have been available to him as he was constructing his rendition. In this instance the interpreter’s lag time was approximately five seconds. The interpretation began at the word “need” in the phrase “white people need to see.” The first five seconds contained insufficient evidence for the interpreter to ascertain the details of Sanaa’s affective orientation toward policing or toward the white people she was describing, or for that matter those white people’s purported orientation toward the video evidence of police violence or the individuals shown on those videos. Interpreters accrue this evidence over the duration of the dialogue, to be relied upon in subsequent constructions, and use the contextual and linguistic cues available throughout the utterance to construct the orientation of speakers to the topic. In addition to the close attention given to the multiplicity of linguistic cues contained in features such as social discourses, pronominalization choices, intonation, word choice, and the recollection of previous features used by that
speaker, it is inevitable that there will be some reliance on their own world knowledge, experience and identity in these constructions.

In this chapter, I demonstrated some instances of discursive features that were used in this conversation to engage in identity negotiation in same-language and interpreted conversational exchanges. I also began to show how, in interpreted interactions, some of those features originate with the interpreter who has to draw on a range of cues to support their decisions. In the next chapter, I will closely examine two instances where the interpreters were unable to accurately reflect the goals of the interlocutors in ways that impacted on their identity relations.
Chapter 7
Identity Negotiation Goes Awry

In this chapter, I will present a close examination of two examples of the impact of interpreter language proficiency, interpreting technique, and interpreter identity on the discursive negotiation of identity among participants.

7.1 Linh’s orientation to Black Lives Matter

In this example, where strong affective facial expressions were present in the interpretation, the interpreter struggled to accurately capture the positioning and orientation work of the speaker. I have included the original source utterance, the transcribed ASL interpretation and a literal back translation of the interpretation to compare with the source message.

EXAMPLE 13: Linh – “the set of demands”

Source English

1 I’m not too familiar with the set of demands that have, ah, been issued?
2 at that particular, um parade. But I know in general, ah yeah, like I support
3 all the investigative and research work, ah... targeted to really question and
4 abolish police carding and, and racism.
ASL Interpretation

1. **PRO.3 (index L (BLM)) WHO #BLM TORONTO PRO.3(index L)

   furrow brow, wide bared teeth (intense negative)
   head and body back (recall) e/g lower L

2. **DEMANDS LIST PRO.1 LOOK-AT**

   head tilt R to L ++, intense (doubtful)
   SO-SO
   team begins to lean in for a feed

3. **NOT SURE**

4. **NOT PRO.3(index L) (holds index)**

   team offers feed
   turns and leans toward team for feed

5. **NOT FINISH DEEP DON'T-KNOW BUT FEEL LOOK-OVER**

   nod ++ (assertion)
   purse lips furrow brow (negative)
   returns to neutral pos

6. **KNOW PRO.3(ref) WORK RESEARCH ALL-OVER**

   e/g lower L
   head tilt R to L ++, intense (doubtful)

7. **PRO.1 LOOK-AT**

   body, head back R

8. **PRO.1 1-AGREE-WITH-(Lower R) NOW POLICE PRO.3(poss) TEND**

9. **APPROACH HEY PRO.2 (poss) CARD COME-ON LET-ME-SEE**

   dv, 2H 1CL
   rs - police
   pursed lips

10. **THAT APPROACH PRO.1 AGREE DISAPPEAR SHOULD**

    dv, 2H B
In this section, Linh, although qualifying her endorsement of the demands made by BLMTO to Pride Toronto\(^1\) based on her lack of detailed knowledge, positioned herself as aligned with the group’s objectives. As this utterance occurred near the beginning of the discussion, it would have been a foundational introduction to index her evaluation of the topic at hand. Subsequent utterances would be understood in relation to her original position.

A close look at some of the affective facial expressions selected in the representation of Linh’s orientation to the BLM demands shows how the representation of positioning moves can be skewed by interpreter’s assumptions, brought-along experiences, and linguistic proficiency. In the literal back translation of the interpretation of this segment, the repeated phrase “I didn’t like it” was rendered in the ASL interpretation through the use of non-manual affective facial expressions. There is no evidence in the source English for this affective orientation.

Many affective expressions conveying emotional states, such as those used when signing ASL, are considered to be largely be universal (although cultural groups may vary as to what prompt those emotions) (Bridges & Metzger, 1996; von dem Hagen et al., 2009). Among the facial signals with strong cross-cultural usage are the nose wrinkle and lip curl which are described as the canonical disgust expression (von

\(^1\) At the 2016 Toronto Pride parade BLMTO staged a protest and issued a set of demands to the Pride organizers.
dem Hagen et al., 2009, p. 380). While a furrowed brow is associated with particular grammatical forms in ASL such as wh-questions or negation (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980), it is also used as an affective facial expression indicating dislike, distaste or anger.

**EXAMPLE 14: Lola (Linh) – Non-manual markers**

These three examples, containing these affective facial expressions, were associated with the demands made by BLMTO, the first while introducing the idea of “demands,” and the other two while in role shift depicting Linh evaluating those demands. Because affective orientation produced during a role shift is attributable to the person being characterized (Bridges & Metzger, 1996, p. 10), this intensely negative affect would be read as the feelings of Linh toward the BLMTO demands. Throughout this introductory segment from Linh regarding her orientation toward the police there were several more examples of these negative affect facial expressions in the interpretation.

Lines 4 and 5 on the transcript show that Jeremy, who is monitoring the interpretation, leaned in toward the working interpreter indicating that a feed, a repair or addition to the interpretation, was required. This is conventional professional practice and would be used and understood by both interpreters. Lola, as the working interpreter, held the sign that she had been producing when the feed was initiated (PRO.3(index L)) and leaned toward the teamer for a brief exchange. Upon her return to neutral signing space, she continued with the interpretation, presumably incorporating the repair.
As with the earlier example, this utterance itself may not have conveyed an adequate amount of linguistic detail to fully satisfy the interpreter’s need when selecting the appropriate non-manual modifiers and intensifiers in the interpretation. This utterance was made early in the conversation so the interpreter would not have had access to a cumulative look at Linh’s contributions to the conversation which would support the presumption of a positive orientation toward BLMTO in general – a stance which would inform the interpretation of her evaluation of their demands. For example, subsequent contributions include Linh’s back channeling endorsement of other participants’ comments critical of the police and supportive of activist communities, and her critiques of police behaviour in relation to trans people, Deaf people and those in mental health crisis who are arrested or detained. Therefore, at the point of this utterance, the interpreter would have had to rely on the linguistic evidence available to her in the source message, the limited context she had accrued at that point in the interaction, her interpreting strategies, the range of ASL features that she has proficiency with, and her own brought-along world knowledge and experience.

During her playback interview Lola reflected on her interpreting process of this section. She acknowledged and expressed concern about the impact of her non-manual marking on the way that the Deaf participants perceived Linh.

As we together traced the source of the error, Lola suggested that it might be an indication of inadequate facility with the complexity of non-manual marking in ASL. She is aware in her professional practice that non-manual accuracy is sometimes a weakness, although she was taken aback to observe the impact of that error in this instance. Issues of language proficiency, such as evidenced in this example, had a deleterious effect on the performance of interpreter as interlocutor role of the interpreter. The identity performance of Linh in her evaluation of BLMTO was not equivalently available in the interpretation for the Deaf participants to accurately construct relations of similarity and difference. Lola felt that, in the moment of the interpretation, she had considered that facial expression to be the appropriate
equivalent to Linh’s statement. Upon reviewing it, however, she acknowledged that she had misread the function of Linh’s introductory statement, “I’m not too familiar with ...” (Source English, Line 1), as being indicative of an equivocal endorsement of the demands. The interpreting function of text analysis, the initial comprehension of the content and function of a source text, was impaired in this example. Additionally, Lola explained that her general practice in interpretation is to rely on her own experiences and world-knowledge to determine the appropriate affective facial expressions. She described her strong Italian identity as being a contributing factor to her personal habits of expressiveness that in turn inform her interpreting work. In particular, she described her struggles to achieve specificity of degree when conveying affect through facial expression. She felt that, at times, she lacked nuance in this regard. When Jeremy attempted to repair the interpretation, the team was unable to identify the element of the interpretation that was skewing the message. This further contributed to the misinterpretation, and the final message would have appeared to have the endorsement of both members of the team. The interruption to repair the interpretation, or the team’s enactment of interpreter as interpreter role performance, contributed to the participants’ altered perceptions of identity.

The content of the feed was not audible on the tape but during Jeremy’s playback interview he recalled that he had fed a repetition of the source words, “not too familiar.” Upon reviewing this segment Lola remembered assuming that the feed was referencing lexically based information that had been missing from her interpretation. She had originally rendered “not too familiar” with the signs “NOT SURE” (ASL interpretation, Line 3), and so responded to the feed by adding a more specific sign choice “NOT FINISH DEEP [look into]” (ASL interpretation, Line 5). Because Lola had held the third person pronoun (indexed to BLMTO) during the team exchange (ASL interpretation, Line 4), and returned to signing space with this lexical addition, it could conceivably appear that Linh was saying that BLMTO had not deeply looked into the demands, an unlikely and potentially confusing proposition. Both Lola and Jeremy described how difficult it is to monitor and correct errors that are introduced into interpretation through facial expression—
both grammatical and affective. Feedback between colleagues and on-the-job corrective feeds tend to focus on the manual aspects of the interpretation. Lola added that in her recollection, her interpreter education did not focus on affective facial expression to any significant degree. This may be because grammatical non-manual markers are so unfamiliar to hearing non-signers and are a particularly difficult aspect of ASL to acquire, whereas affective facial expressions are deemed to be more universal in nature and therefore not require as much intense curricular attention. Both interpreters indicated that they had not been taught about or considered the potential identity-related impact of these types of errors.

In sum, Lola struggled to achieve a functionally equivalent interpretation because of the combination of inadequate fluency with ASL non-manual markers (language proficiency in the performance of interpreter as interlocutor), inaccuracies in the text analysis stage of interpretation and in error repair (interpreting technique in the performance of interpreter as interpreter), and the over-application of personal habitual facial expression behaviours and the possible importation of personal beliefs or world knowledge (interpreter identity in the performativity of interpreter as self).

The source utterance, in this example, positioned the speaker in a positive orientation towards BLMTO despite an acknowledged limitation in her detailed knowledge of the particular demands. In contrast, the interpreter conveyed a repeatedly negative orientation to the demands set out by BLMTO, which would be attributed by the recipients of the interpretation to the speaker Linh. In fact, Cassandra specifically mentioned this particular segment in her questionnaire. Her response is striking in that she explicitly described her impression of the whole interaction as being disconcerting because of her assessment of Linh as being unsupportive of BLMTO, and “against her own people.”

These comments warrant a closer inspection, and so will be presented here in translation.
EXAMPLE 15: Cassandra – “on the fence”

English Translation

Question #4

Also, one of the hearing participants ... I felt like ... well, she told me she was on the fence about the police, BLMTO, and Pride. That made me feel pretty disconnected from that person.

Question #6

There were two POC hearing participants ... but it was interesting that one of them, one of the hearing POC participants, wasn’t really, fully in support of the thing with the police and BLMTO and all that. I just felt, like wow, like she was totally against her own people.

These comments were explored more fully in Cassandra’s playback interview where she expressed that she had been considerably upset by the conversation, in particular, as a result of her understanding of Linh’s orientation toward BLMTO. She described feeling a sense of confusion and contradiction because of conflicting statements made by Linh in her positioning of herself relative to the demands made by BLMTO. Upon review of the video, Cassandra pointed specifically to the affective facial expression in Lola’s interpretation, in the above example as well as other segments, as evidence that Linh was suspicious of the activist agenda of BLMTO. She was surprised and confused because in other sections the interpretation was clear that Linh was aligned with the struggles of BLMTO and minority communities to achieve justice and equity.

The interactional consequences of this confusion were significant. Cassandra revealed that her own contributions to the conversation were primarily directed at convincing Linh that the demands of BLMTO were legitimate and well founded. As described earlier, the functions of evaluative talk in interaction can include the expression of the opinion of speaker vis-à-vis the propositions being made, and the manipulation of the audience attitude vis-à-vis those propositions. This is evidenced in Cassandra’s lengthy turn, which immediately followed Linh’s initial evaluation of
BLMTO (a segment of which was contained in Example 13), in which she laid out the instances of injustice in policing in several communities. Here, Cassandra’s understanding of Linh’s evaluation of the actions of BLMTO and the police engaged a desire to express her own ostensibly contradicting evaluation, and thereby influence Linh to change her mind.

In this turn, Cassandra opened her comments with an explicit positioning of her relationship with various communities, indicating that she had been involved in the LGBTQ community in Toronto for over seven years, and had attended numerous events, presentations, and workshops pertaining to queer, trans and Black community issues. She then went on to outline an extensive argument supporting the reasonableness of the BLMTO demands, first citing specific instances of oppressive police interactions in the trans community. Next, she described the injustice of differential police tactics, referencing the recent police shooting of an unarmed Black personal support worker who had been assisting a white client with autism as compared with the de-escalation methods that she argued are prevalent in police interactions with armed white men. She moved on to identify herself as a Deaf Black woman and transitioned to describing multiple instances of Deaf prisoners who are denied access to ASL interpreters, which has resulted in extraordinarily extended periods of incarceration. Lastly, she outlined instances of extreme sexual violence and exploitation experienced by women prisoners. In each of these cases, Cassandra referenced her source of information (personal knowledge, community presentations, news reports, etc.). At the close of each example, she connected the evidence that she had related to the demand that the police not be represented in the Pride parade. She argued that these instances of oppressive police behaviour indicate significant systemic problems that create fear and trauma for individuals in the community and justify the demand for the exclusion of an official police presence at Pride. This extensive argument was made with considerable passion and was supported by specific evidence.
It was not until the playback interview that I recognized that this entire segment had been a specific and particular response to the (misinterpreted) position that Linh had taken in regard to the BLMTO demands. Cassandra described feeling that she needed to make the case for the demands as she felt that Linh’s position was ambivalent and unsupportive.

These two turns, Linh’s initial orientation toward BLMTO and Cassandra’s lengthy argument, occurred near the beginning of the conversation but Cassandra felt the effect throughout. In her questionnaire, Cassandra attempted to describe her feeling during the conversation through an extended analogy. She said that the conversation felt like she was in a game of marbles. Other marbles would come at her from every direction, sometimes landing close to her. Then suddenly she would be sent reeling by another marble coming from out of nowhere. She found it hard to gauge how her comments would be taken, and couldn’t predict how other people would react. She described feeling disconnected and unsure, and being kept off balance as though she didn’t know where she stood in relation to the others. Specifically she was very troubled by the apparent contradictions and ambivalence in Linh’s evaluation of the activism of BLMTO. Linh’s contributions were disconcerting, as Cassandra could not predict if she would feel aligned or disaligned with her at any given moment.

Cassandra described doubting her own reading of the entire interaction. In the playback, she noted how she frequently had had a furrowed brow when watching the other participants’ contributions, and indicated that she had been troubled by her inability to figure out where they were coming from. Cassandra’s assessment of Linh’s contradictory stance on an issue about which she felt so passionately affected her interactional responses, her assessment of Linh, and her own sense of self in the context of the interaction.
7.2 Sanaa and Jesse negotiate whiteness

This next example of the impact of interpreter language proficiency, interpreting technique, and interpreter identity on the discursive negotiation of identity among interlocutors, involved two separate segments of the conversation.

In the first segment, Jesse was responding to a contribution made by Cassandra, in which she had described an instance of police violence against a young Black man that had been widely reported in the media.
EXAMPLE 16: Jesse – CALM-DOWN

Source ASL

1. RIGHT, THAT (index to C’s signing space)  THAT L-VIEW-center
dv

(stern), (authoritative)  furrow brow, wrinkle nose (negative)

2. GRAB-AHOLD-OF  THAT PRO.3(pass)  APPROACH
rs = police  high, central

3. THAT HOW WE VIEW POLICE ALL-AROUND= MOST ONTARIO=
larger, central

4. SO-FAR STRONG, ABUSIVE,
rs = police

(intense - making significant effort)

5. NOT SOOTHE/MANAGE ENGAGE-BACK-AND-FORTH
body shift - contrast  rs = police

(intense - making significant effort)

6. (index-centre) NO #GUN?  TRY GUN-ON-HIP PUT-AWAY
rs = police (emphasis)

7. ENGAGE-WITH, NEGOTIATE, CALM-DOWN, NEGOTIATE
rs = police

8. WHY NOT USE THAT, COMMUNICATION?  CALM-DOWN ENGAGE-WITH
(intense)

9. NO,  MUST SHOW POWER, MUST SHOW OPPRESS,
body shift - contrast

10. WILL OUT-OF-CONTROL, OF COURSE (...) ANYWAY,

11. THAT (index to C’s signing space) GRAB-AHOLD-OF, OUT-OF-CONTROL
English Interpretation

Yeah, that’s the different perspective. So we have a different perspective of how the police treat people. You know, it used to be before that we saw them as strong, as capable, you don’t need to use your gun, use your words to calm people down, use communication to calm people down. But that’s not the perspective that we have now. It’s almost like they’re using their power to oppress people.

English Translation

Right, what Cassandra said, that is the view that we have of police interactions, that they are violent and authoritarian. That is the approach that the police take. At least that is what we see them do, all over, well, mostly anyway, across Ontario, that is what we have seen so far. They have used their power and authority to abuse, instead of engaging with the person, and trying to talk them down. If they can see that the person has no gun, they should put aside their own gun, and try to negotiate with them, really try to calm them down and engage with them. Why don’t the police do that, use communication to calm a person down? But, no, they have to show how powerful they are, to show that they can oppress people, so of course things will get out of control. Just like Cassandra was saying, that went out of control.

The interpretation in this section erred in the rendering of the point of contrast that Jesse had intended. He described the behaviour that the public has seen from police, and contrasted that with a preferable dynamic. Where we have seen violence and aggression, we should see engagement and de-escalation. After introducing his comment as a response to Cassandra’s example (Line 1), Jesse set out the current conditions of police interactions (Lines 2-4). There is a negative evaluation of these conditions conveyed in the non-manual facial expressions (stern, authoritative, negative) and sign choices used in the role shift depicting the interaction between the police and an individual in crisis (GRAB-AHOLD-OF, ABUSE). The police are established in high central signing space (Line 2), a location that supports the portrayal of social authority. In Lines 3 and 4, Jesse offered two qualifications of the
certainty of his condemnation of the police. The first is a geographic qualification, after ALL-AROUND in a large central signing space, he added the qualifier MOST and ONTARIO. Secondly, he added the temporal qualification of SO-FAR. These qualifiers do not contradict the portrayal of police as violent, but delimit the extent of Jesse’s claim. At Line 5, he initiated the contrast with a body shift, as well as the lexical sign NOT. The contrastive nature of this section was emphasized, when he repeated a role shift into the perspective of the police, but with a significant change in non-manual markers (intense effort), sign choices (ENGAGE-WITH, SOOTHE, CALM-DOWN), and reduced height differential in signing space (even vertical plane between police and the individual). A qualifier was introduced through the use of a conditional structure (Lines 6 and 7), indicating that if the individual is unarmed, the police ought to proceed with non-violent de-escalation techniques. To reinforce the comparison, Jesse re-iterated the current, negative, portrayal with a discourse shift (NO, head-shake, body shift) and a repetition of the role shift with negative affect and intense lexical production (POWER, OPRESS). The segment is closed with an assessment in the narrator voice, providing direct access to Jesse’s evaluation of the proposition (WILL OUT-OF-CONTROL OF-COURSE), indicating the inevitability of the violence that ensues from that style of policing as was exemplified in Cassandra’s previous utterance. The intent of the utterance, as confirmed by Jesse in the playback interview, was to endorse the opinion that the evidence supports an assessment of current police practices as violent and aggressive, and to suggest that there is an alternative, preferable dynamic emphasizing non-violence and de-escalation, especially in instances where the individual is unarmed.

In the interpretation of this utterance, there was an error in the rendering of the point of contrast. Remembering that communication, and therefore interpretation, is an act, not of taking meaning from the words or signs or even other linguistic features of a source utterance, but rather of actively making meaning (S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005), the interpreter in this case was constructing sense from the linguistic and contextual evidence available to her. The active meaning-making process resulted in her seeing various elements of the source utterance and attempting to
construct sense. However, the compiled meaning was, in fact, erroneous in ways that affected the meaning of the utterance available for the hearing participants, and their concomitant understanding of Jesse’s identity positioning relative to policing.

During the playback interview with Lola, the source of the misunderstanding was reviewed and discussed. She had understood and captured in the interpretation that there were two distinct modes of policing, a preferred and a dispreferred mode. However, several misunderstandings contributed to a misinterpretation regarding the nature of the contrast. First, the orientation of the directional verb VIEW in Line 1 was a somewhat atypical production of the sign. Jesse is right hand dominant, so the sign VIEW was produced on his right hand. An uninflected production of this directional verb would have the initial position in the right or central signing space. However, he oriented the directionality such that the initial location was in the left of his signing space. The intent of this locational marking was to align Jesse’s comment with the previous utterance that was made by Cassandra, who was sitting to Jesse’s left, so he originated the verb VIEW near to her signing space. Lola misunderstood the function of this inflection. It was rendered as a distinction in the subject of the verb VIEW, “Yeah, that's the different perspective. So we have a different perspective of how the police treat people.” Secondly, the qualifier SO-FAR in Line 4 was taken as a temporal contrastive turn, thereby further confusing the basis of the comparison and injecting the idea of a chronological comparison “... it used to be before that we saw them...” Lastly, the characteristics attributed to the two modes of policing were incorrectly combined in the interpretation. Strength, an attribute associated in the source message with the negative, current tenor of police interactions (Line 4), was rendered in the interpretation as associated with being capable and not relying on violence, but rather on communication “we saw them as strong, as capable, you don't need to use your gun, use your words to calm people down, use communication to calm people down.” Lola employed her communicative competence to make sense of what she had seen, and constructed a plausible rendition containing many of the elements of the source utterance. This rendition, like all interpretations in their varying degrees of equivalence and accuracy, was the
interpreter’s own, “not the product of an extractive process but of a creative, constructive meaning-making process” (S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005, p. 47). However, the cumulative effect of this constructive process was a misrepresentation of Jesse’s position relative to policing.

Evidence of the interactional impact on identity negotiation that stemmed from this inaccuracy is available in the following example taken from three minutes later in the conversation. The discussion about de-escalation had continued, with several intervening turns, and Sanaa was expressing an opinion about the climate of criminalization of certain behaviour deemed to be unacceptable. After a brief pause, she continued her turn with the following utterance.

EXAMPLE 17: Sanaa – “that thing of”

Source English

1. I think, like, that thing of before we saw police with authority, or something,
2. to be a good force in the community, I think that's actually, that hasn't been
3. the perspective for so many people, to have that perspective of police.
4. Because it's always been a violent interaction,
5. it's always been something of surveillance.

In opening this segment of her utterance (Line 1), Sanaa made an intertextual reference to a previous moment in the discussion, with the phrase “that thing of...” She paraphrased Jesse’s representation of a particular, though now past, understanding of the police as being “a good force in the community” (Line 2). The referent text that Sanaa was indexing was Jesse’s earlier comment from the interpretation in Example 16 "we saw them as strong, as capable."

Sanaa went on to contest this evaluation of police, and suggested, moreover, that it was an assessment premised on a particular identity: “actually, that hasn’t been the perspective for so many people” (Lines 2-3). So while allowing that it might have been the perspective of Jesse, Sanaa was arguing that for many other people, policing has “always been a violent interaction” (Line 4). Given the context of the discussion, and Sanaa and
Jesse’s prior positioning relative to racialized communities, the implication might have been that Jesse, as a white person, was making a generalization about policing that stemmed from that position of relative privilege. This interchange between Jesse and Sanaa became a negotiation of whiteness. In particular, Sanaa may have been contesting Jesse’s construction of a white ally identity, by pointing to an instance of his obliviousness to the implications of race in policing.

Referencing the framework offered for these analyses by Bucholtz and Hall, there are multiple, complex and overlapping features of identity negotiation at play in this exchange. For instance, the emergence principle holds that it is in the social ground of interactions that identity is “built, maintained and altered” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 587), and the partialness principle emphasizes that despite seemingly coherent displays of identity, any given construction of identity is actually in part derived from the perceptions and representations of others (p. 605). While Jesse may have entered the space of this interaction with a sense of himself as an ally to racialized communities, that aspect of identity is not simply a question of self-classification, but is reliant on the interactional dynamics to be made manifest, and is subject to the representations of others. Of course, as reviewed earlier, this understanding of Jesse’s perspective on police was constructed via an interpretation that had misconstrued a fundamental discursive feature—the contrast structure—and thereby altered the positioning work that Jesse was doing.

In her questionnaire Sanaa noted that she was quite conscious of the interpreters’ presence in the interaction, saying that the interpretation “didn’t ever fully leave my mind.” She was particularly attentive, and sometimes frustrated, when she felt that “they said something that I didn’t feel fully captured what the person was trying to express or the depth of how they were trying to express it.” Her observations about the interpretation were focussed on two aspects of the communication, affect and knowledge base. Sanaa noted that, particularly when Cassandra was sharing, the interpretation lacked the depth of passion that she felt was evident in Cassandra’s face and body. Secondly, she noted that there were aspects of the
interpretation that made evident that the interpreters lacked certain knowledge about socio-political issues such as prison injustice or racialized police violence. In response to these concerns, Sanaa explicitly “focused [her] attention more emphatically on the other participants.” In other words, she attempted to compensate for potential misinterpretation. However, some kinds of errors would not have been available for her observation. The statement by Jesse about a changing perspective of police was a plausible statement. There was no indication of faltering due to a lack of knowledge about the context, or any evidence that the affect was significantly mismatched. Therefore there would have been no clue available to Sanaa that this perspective was not attributable to Jesse. A misconstrual of a nuanced contrastive structure would not be directly available by someone with Sanaa’s novice appreciation of ASL. Moreover, because Sanaa’s intertextual reference indexed a text that did not, in fact, originate with him, Jesse was unable to recognize the identity negotiation that Sanaa was undertaking in this exchange. It was thereby unavailable for him to dispute this reading of his identity.

To further complicate matters, the initial phrase used by Sanaa to connect her comment to the previous text, “I think, like, that thing of...” was not recognized by the working interpreter as an intertextual, indexical discourse marker. Jeremy, having not recognized this function, did not mark the interpretation of Sanaa’s comment as having any particular connection to previous discourse. This contributed to masking the intertextual nature of Sanaa’s comment, making it unavailable for Jesse to recognize as a rejoinder to his earlier comment. Had Jeremy recognized the indexicality of “that thing of”, as a reference to Jesse’s earlier comment, he could have made that connection available in the interpretation, and thereby provide an opportunity for Jesse to contest Sanaa’s paraphrase of his earlier comment, and allow for the earlier interpreting error to come to light and to be repaired by the interlocutors.

In his playback interview, Jeremy suggested that had the same interpreter been responsible for both of these segments, they might have recognized the indexicality
of Sanaa’s opening phrase. If, for example, Jeremy had interpreted Jesse’s comment about the view of policing, even if he had made the same error in identifying the point of contrast that Lola had made, he might have had that utterance active in his mind and so when Sanaa’s paraphrase was uttered he might have been more likely to understand the discursive connection. This indicates that the interpreter’s professional decisions about the distribution of the interpreting work, an interpreter as interpreter decision, also may have contributed to the negotiation of identity in this exchange.

These examples are two instances of how various aspects of interpreters’ presence can combine to disturb the identity work occurring in the unfolding interaction. The interpreters’ co-constructed conceptualization of the source utterances, their proficiency with various linguistic features, the features that are available for the participants to attribute potential errors, their attention to the function of nuanced discursive markers, and the impact of their professional decisions, all contributed to how these interlocutors were negotiating their own and each others identity at cross purposes. Taken together with the examples in the previous chapter, themes emerge and will be discussed as they pertain to the consequences of interpretation on identity construction.
Chapter 8
Tracing the Consequences

In Chapter 6, I gave examples of how participants in this study were engaged in identity negotiations through interpreted discourse, using features such as orientation to social categories, metaphor, role shift, and affective facial expression. In Chapter 7, I unpacked two situations in which the interpretation, through the dynamics of the simultaneous performances of interpreter as interlocutor, interpreter and self, impacted the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiations. These examples point to a number of themes concerning the impact of interpreters on the identity negotiation of participants in interpreted interaction. In this chapter, I will explore some of the consequences for identity and relationships among participants as they pertain to questions of affiliation and attribution, and for interpreters’ capacity to enhance the efficacy of their interpretations in this area of discourse.

8.1 Affiliation

One aspect of identity negotiation is the perception and construction of affiliations and disaffiliations within an interactional group.

The relationality principle of the Bucholtz and Hall framework, in particular, emphasizes that rather than oversimplifying relations as being merely about sameness and difference, the analysis of identity construction in discourse must attend to how identities “always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and other social actors” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 598). This approach complicates the Role-Space model offered by Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2013) in which they identify the alignment axis as primarily pertaining to the participants’ cultural, linguistic, and interactional identities as either Deaf or hearing. They primarily view the positioning of the interpreter as aligning or disaligning as it relates to this aspect of identity.
However, there is more than one aspect of identity at play in any interaction, and the participants will experience various affiliations as predominant at any given moment. Obasi identified the question of race as being significant in her study of Black BSL interpreters and cautioned that “consideration of power differentials at play between deaf and hearing minority/majority group members could also be extended to include closer examination of similar issues at play not just for black interpreters but also when interpreting for black deaf people or deaf people from other minority ethnic groups” (Obasi, 2013, p. 110).

In this study, there were multiple and contradictory alignments perceived at the onset, and negotiated throughout the interaction. For example, Jeremy as a CODA and a professional interpreter entered this interaction with a perceived affiliation with the Deaf participants. Although he didn't know them well personally, their shared language and cultural framework offered a common point of reference for relations. The Deaf participants however perceived alternate identity categories as significant when assessing their perceived alignments. Cassandra emphasized in her ASL questionnaire responses and in her playback interview that she had immediately noted that the interpreters were hearing, white, and were not members of the LGBTQ community. Although in answering the other questions Cassandra took some time to formulate a response, when answering the question about participants with whom she felt a sense of distance or disconnection, she immediately responded “the ASL interpreters, obviously!” She went on to say, “They are white, they aren’t members of the LGBT [community], they’re not ACE, so I felt totally disconnected from them. [...] Would they really understand the Black life experience? Not really. Or people’s POC lived experience? Not really.” She viewed these differences as relevant in her consideration of their capacity to really understand and represent her perspective. Whereas Jeremy felt a sense of affinity with the Deaf participants based upon their shared alignment with the Deaf community, Cassandra’s characterization of that relationship was one of distance and difference.
Likewise, while Jeremy perceived affiliation with Jesse as a Deaf person, Jesse viewed his sense of alignment quite differently. Jesse noted that he felt affiliation with Cassandra as having shared Deaf identity. "Although it was the first time we met, we interacted so naturally, I didn't even think about it. We're both Deaf, so we just chatted. It's like that with Deaf people, we just don't think about it." He also noted that although they had different backgrounds and cultures, the two other interlocutors and the two interpreters were all hearing English speakers. This category of difference was significant and contrasted with his strong sense of affiliation with Cassandra, which he articulated with the culturally powerful formulation DEAF SAME. While he did note other areas of difference, these distinctions were subordinate to the overriding sense of Deaf cultural affinity. “She and I are both Deaf, we’re the same. Now, she is POC and Deaf, and I am trans and Deaf. But we have that in common. We are Deaf. We both sign ASL, and the way that we engage, the way that we express ourselves, it’s the same!”

Jesse went on to say that he felt fairly connected with all the participants. While Cassandra had racial identity foregrounded as a reason for feeling disconnected with certain people, race did not feature in Jesse’s sense of affiliation. Gender, however, was offered as a basis for alignment with Jeremy. Jesse wondered how Jeremy felt being the only man in the group. In his playback interview, Jesse added that he felt a sense of affiliation with Jeremy as male, but because he was trans, Jesse speculated that Jeremy might not have felt the same sense of affinity that he did around gender. This was confirmed in Jeremy’s playback interview when he was surprised to note that Jesse felt a gender-based affiliation with him. Jeremy is not personally acquainted with the trans community and has not given significant thought to these questions of gender identity. So for Jesse, being male identified provided a basis of sameness, but for Jeremy it did not.

While membership in ethnographic categories, both as personally experienced and as perceived in others, is one aspect of the negotiation of identity, even this is neither straightforward nor uncontested. Membership in the identity categories of
race, gender, and Deaf culture were all variously employed in the perception of affiliation and alignment in this study. These broad sociological categories are, in part, given social meaning from ideological processes and material structures external to the interaction in which they are leveraged to negotiate identity. These examples, however, demonstrate the limitations of using sameness and difference as measures of affiliation. The perceptions of affiliation between self and other are only ever partial. People’s perception of the other is subject to the other's perception of them. In this study, even before the interaction began, there were multiple, overlapping, and contradictory perceptions of affiliation and alignment among the participants.

Further to the partialness of the brought-along perceptions of affiliation, these affiliations are also never fixed or stable. Rather they shift and emerge in the context of the particular interaction.

As we saw earlier, for Cassandra the axis of racial identity was foregrounded in her construction of affiliation. Also, in her questionnaire, she noted the importance of shared values to her perception of alignment and disalignment. When discussing participants that she felt particularly connected with, Cassandra mentioned Jesse, saying that he “was very respectful of me, and agreed with my feelings about the police. He added to what I was saying from his own experience and shared his opinions, as evidence that it was not a good idea to have the police involved in Pride.” She relied on both ethnographic categories and on emergent interactional positionings to construct her perceptions of affiliation.

This is seen in a more complicated form in the segment described earlier, when Cassandra’s perception of affinity with Linh as a person of colour was disrupted over the course of the interaction. Her emphatic surprise at Linh’s positioning relative to policing and BLMTO indicated that Cassandra had an expectation of affiliation with Linh around socio-political values and lived experience based on their shared identity as POC. This expectation was confirmed in some aspects of Linh’s comments and unsettled in others. In places where it was clear to her that
Linh was aligned with the struggles of minority communities to achieve justice and equity, Cassandra perceived confirmation of her expectation. She was surprised and confused because in other sections her ability to construct alignment with Linh was based on the affective facial expression in Lola's interpretation, which evidenced to Cassandra that Linh was negatively oriented toward the activist agenda of BLMTO. The interactional dynamics shifted her brought-along assumptions around sameness and difference.

This study demonstrated that participants used socially meaningful ethnographic categories to begin to construct a sense of their alignment with others. These were only partial, though, because each participant had various identity categories that predominated in their perception of affiliation. In addition to the impact of category membership, affiliation was also constructed by interactional positioning which was being made available through the mediation of interpretation. Although the interpreters were not participants in the interaction, they did, in their performance of *interpreter as self* identity, participate in the various shifting perceptions of affiliation. This affiliation raised questions from interlocutors about whether they would be able to accurately read and portray the identity constitutive discourse. The examples examined so far have demonstrated how errors in the interpretation can impact on interlocutors’ identity negotiation. The element of affiliation as it contributes to the construction of identity through the reading of membership in social categories and as emergent through interactional discourse was impacted by the interpreters’ language fluency, interpreter technique, and personal identity.

### 8.2 Attribution

The second significant theme that emerged in this analysis was around the question of attribution. In what ways were the participants able to attribute the identity-constitutive discourses to the other participants or as originating in the interpretation?
Although interpreting theory has largely embraced the co-constructive lens and rejected models that presuppose interpreter neutrality, many professional practices still imply that the interpreter is not really present in the interaction. Llewellyn-Jones and Lee have critiqued rule-based proscriptions about such professional interpreter practices. For instance, interpreters often choose to not introduce themselves by name to the participants, decline to acknowledge or answer direct questions, position themselves outside the normal conversational space, and avoid making eye contact. These behaviours are intended to reduce the social distance among participants and draw attention away from the interpreter. However, Llewellyn-Jones and Lee suggest the impact is quite the reverse. By refusing to cooperate with conventional conversational practices interpreters can actually “inhibit rather than encourage communicative interaction” among the interlocutors (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014, p. 61). In advocating for a more nuanced and transparent account of interpreter impact on discourse, they suggest participants will have more authentically shared social interactions. To this, I would add that a more thorough and transparent acknowledgement of the presence and participation of the interpreter would contribute to participants’ capacity to accurately attribute meaning to interlocutors and/or to interpreters. An expansion of the role-space model, such as was suggested in the typology of interpreter as interlocutor, interpreter as interpreter, and interpreter as self, would allow for questions to be raised and interpreter errors repaired thereby preserving a more accurate exchange of identity-constitutive discourse.

It is commonly thought that Deaf people, who are more experienced consumers of interpreting than most hearing people, would be more likely to accurately attribute errors or a lack of clarity to the interpreter rather than to assume it originated with the hearing person. This may be because, as non-native language users, interpreters’ accent in ASL is very apparent to those watching, or because deference is given to the hearing person as a member of a socially powerful group. The converse is also often assumed to be true, that hearing people will accept that the interpretation is an accurate reflection of the comments of the Deaf person. This was supported in
the study of the Deaf museum docents (Feyne, 2015), in which the hearing audience assumed that the interpreters were rendering into English the Deaf person’s lecture verbatim. They therefore “not only attributed interpreted utterances directly to the Deaf originators, but also relied upon those utterances as the basis for assessments of the Deaf docents’ professionalism and institutional knowledge” (Feyne, 2015, p. 66). Feyne concluded that audience members who relied on an ideology of transparency of interpretation had no systematic way of attributing comments or communicative competence accurately, and that interpretation contributed to the construction of the Deaf lecturer’s situated identity.

In this study, there were several examples of how interpretation complicated the attribution of discursive features. When she was reflecting on her perception of Linh’s statements in Example 13, Cassandra said, “She told me she was on the fence about the police, BLMTO, and Pride. That made me feel pretty disconnected.”

EXAMPLE 18: Cassandra – ON-THE-FENCE

She didn’t say that she had got the impression, or that the interpretation made it seem as if, or that she’d like to check that she got the right understanding. There was no doubt in Cassandra’s mind that what she had seen in the interpretation was what Linh had said. In the playback interview, Cassandra paused the video to point out specific signs and facial expressions of the interpreter to support her argument that Linh had “told” her. There was no mechanism for Cassandra to differentiate the message that was accurately portraying Linh’s orientation toward police
(intermediate as interlocutor), and the injection of unclaimed, interpreter-authored contributions to the message (interpreter as self).

This had an impact on Cassandra in several ways. First, she developed a significantly negative impression of Linh, believing her to be evaluating negatively the activism of BLMTO, and ambivalent in her condemnation of police violence against racialized communities. This was particularly troubling to Cassandra, as she had initially affiliated with Linh and they claimed shared membership in the community of people of colour. Secondly, Cassandra’s interactional role was affected by Linh’s apparent ambivalence as she took an extended conversational turn to make an impassioned defense of BLMTO’s demands to exclude the police from Pride. Lastly, her subjectivity was affected, as she began to question her own reading of her identity relative to others. In her questionnaire and playback interview, Cassandra repeatedly drew on a metaphor of a game of marbles to describe how she felt off-balance by the contradictory positioning of Linh, and second-guessed her own reading of the other participants and the situation. This remained with her throughout the interaction.

Cassandra’s layered responses to her perception of Linh, as constructed through the mediation of interpretation, demonstrate several of the principles in the Bucholtz and Hall framework. Although Linh may have perceived herself as occupying a particular identity position vis-à-vis the discussion topic, the social ground of interaction shifted that position and a less stable identity emerged. Linh’s representation of her identity was performed, in part, through the indexing of a particular orientation toward social categories via the evaluation of the police and BLMTO’s actions. The proffering of an identity position, however, remains partial until it is read and understood by the co-interlocutors who are contributing toward the construction. In this case, Lola drew on her own affective experience, which in combination with her level of proficiency with non-manual markers, pre-emptively participated in co-constructing Linh identity. However, Lola’s participation in Cassandra’s contribution to Linh’s partial identity construction is not attributable to
Lola. Rather it was shielded from notice by the enactment of a conventional professional identity as performed by Lola, the non-contributing, absent presence of the interpreter.

In this instance, like in the Feyne study (2015, p. 53), the audience of the interpretation accepted the enacted professional identity of the interpreter, and attributed all manifestations of identity positioning to the originator of the utterance. In contrast, the hearing participants responded quite differently to questions of attribution. Both mentioned that they were acutely aware of the interpretation process throughout; “it didn’t ever fully leave my mind,” wrote Sanaa in her questionnaire. Particularly when Cassandra shared, Sanaa doubted that the full message was being rendered in the interpretation, especially the passionate delivery of Cassandra’s contributions. Linh noted, “there was some disparity between Cassandra’s responses and the soft-spoken almost too neutral interpretation.” These observations were made possible by the hearing participants’ access to two versions of the message, the visual information observable from the Deaf participants, and the auditory input from the spoken English interpretation. Their observations regarding the attribution of some features of identity negotiation led to an alteration in their interactional behaviour. Although they were unable to access the conceptual meaning of the ASL, they were both intentionally attentive to the paralinguistic, affective, and interactional contributions of the Deaf people directly.

ASL is a visual language and therefore requires visual attention to apprehend. The Deaf participants then were able to primarily only access one source of identity constitutive information – the interpreters. Furthermore, hearing English speakers are typically less expressive in their delivery than are Deaf signers, so there are fewer visual manifestations of identity available for observation. As a result, the hearing participants in this study had more opportunities for accurate attribution than did the Deaf participants.
8.3 Expanded repertoire

Identifying what is shared and not among participants is a key element in the interactional negotiation of identity. Janzen and Shaffer (2008) remind us that communication is always situated pragmatically and so utterances, to be understood, must be contextualized to some extent. The degree of contextualization offered by the speaker will be determined by their assessment of the knowledge and experience shared by their interlocutors. This cognitive co-construction among interactants entails an assessment of one another’s cultural framework and concomitant knowledge store.

For this reason among others, interpreters have long integrated the expansion of their repertoire of cultural or social literacies into their professional learning. For example, in the lead-up to Pride week there have been trans and queer workshops offered to interpreters to assist in their acquisition and understanding of queer community lexicon and norms. Likewise, Global Deaf Muslim Canada has provided orientation workshops to share vocabulary and cultural context with non-Muslim interpreters to facilitate better service for their community. It is conventional interpreter practice when accepting assignments to assess the linguistic demands of the setting and one’s one knowledge of and competence in that area. Upon receiving the preparation information for the interpretation in this study, Jeremy described feeling uneasy about the potential content of the discussion. He felt potentially ill equipped to manage the content of the Black Lives Matter conversation, for example. Acquired knowledge and vocabulary through authentic community engagement can certainly assist interpreters to read and render the messages conveyed in the conversations among members of diverse communities. However, lexicon is not enough.

In the segment where Cassandra was articulating an argument about police injustice towards trans people (remember that this was an argument passionately offered to convince Linh of the merits of BLMTO’s demands), Jeremy struggled to render Cassandra’s contributions. Although he knew some of the relevant phraseology he
lacked the idiomatic usage that reflects community membership. Sanaa noted that she could identify the interpreters’ lack of comfort and familiarity with the socio-political discourse of minority communities such as the LGBT community. Furthermore, there were two instances where the interpreter’s knowledge store was not adequate to decipher the ASL utterance. When Cassandra mentioned the name of a man who had been shot by police, Abdi, and the name of an organization serving women prisoners, PASAN, the interpreter was unable to recognize those items. Both hearing participants recognized that the knowledge gap was with the interpreter (shift in eye gaze toward interpreter, smile, provision of the correct form, and return of eye gaze to Cassandra), and were able to attribute the error correctly. The interpreter acknowledged this attribution (shift of eye gaze to hearing participants, nod, repetition of the correct form, self-authored “thank you,” and return of eye gaze to Cassandra). This reciprocal acknowledgement created transparency and accountability in the interpretation and supported the distinction between interpreter and interpreted participant. The interpreter as interlocutor was not conflated with the interpreter as self and the interpreter as interpreter was actively moderating the perceptions and contributions of the various aspects of identify performance. The participants were more able to glean identity-constitutive discourses directly from one another, and to eliminate those that are interpreter originating.

When interpreters attempt to integrate more than mere vocabulary into their performance of interlocutor identity, different issues can arise. As one example, in Cassandra’s introduction to the group, she shared her name and her name sign. Because of the inevitable delay inherent in the interpreting process the hearing participants would not have been able to ascertain which of the signs that Cassandra had used was her name. Jeremy employed an interpreting technique commonly used in these situations, and when he came to the point in his English interpretation where he mentioned the name sign, he repeated the sign himself so that the hearing people would be able to connect that particular sign to Cassandra. Cassandra had also included in her introduction an etymological basis for her name sign, her curly
hair (HAIR CURLY). Jeremy continued to sign during this segment of his interpretation using a different variant (CURLY-HAIR).

EXAMPLE 19: Cassandra and Jeremy – CURLY HAIR

In the production of CURLY-HAIR Jeremy incorporated certain non-manual markers, such as head tilt, brow raise, closed eyes, and a slight smile. His vocal production of “because of my curly hair” was inflected with a raised pitch. In this brief moment, Jeremy performed a kind of stereotypical, coy femininity. In his playback interview, we discussed this moment of the interpretation. Jeremy indicated that while this performance was not intentional, it was his practice to be mindful when interpreting for women and to try to incorporate what he perceived to be more female-associated linguistic traits. In our discussion, he allowed that his repertoire of these traits would have been accrued through personal interactions and social representations. Furthermore, he speculated that perhaps it was the association of Cassandra’s name sign with hair, a highly gendered (and racialized) physical trait that led him to subconsciously incorporate a gender performance into that moment of the interpretation. He felt that a name sign with a different etymology, or a man’s
hair-related name sign would not have prompted a similar attention to gender. As an out-group member, Jeremy’s access to the palette of “female-associated” linguistic traits proved, in this instance, to be rudimentary. In the terminology of the typology of interpreter identity performance, an interpreter as interpreter choice in the performance of the interpreter as interlocutor introduction was inflected with the out-group accent of the interpreter as self. The moment selected as being salient for gender performance, and the type of gender identity performed in that moment, both originated with the interpreter.

The implications of examining gender performance/performativity enacted in interpretation are, of course, more complex than this simple and binary example might suggest. The emergence of gender as a salient identity category in discourse, and the negotiation of the shape and nuance of that identity will impact contributors, both interlocutors and interpreters, of all genders.

As seen by the examples of Jeremy’s navigation of the language use marking community membership and his subconscious performance of a certain kind of femininity, not all identity-constitutive features of language are equally available through the acquisition of cultural competence. Neither are all features equally attributable to the interpreter’s influence over the message. The absence of vocabulary or cultural knowledge (for example, PASAN, or appropriate trans vocabulary) is more easily attributable to the interpreters, and therefore not necessarily contributory to the emergence of identity relations among participants. Other features, such as evaluation through affect (in Example 13), and discursive intertextual indexing (in Example 17) may be less transparent and have significant repercussions on participants’ relational identity negotiations.

In his reflection, Jeremy likened his observations about representing a speaker or signer’s gender identity to a similar dilemma in conveying emotion. He reflected on some recent interpreting work at a funeral when he wanted to make manifest the eulogist’s intensely emotional delivery while not making a parody of their grief. This captures some of the difficulties inherent in enacting the perspective of another
through the act of interpretation. Some of the interpreter influences in this study could theoretically be avoided with careful attention, increased language proficiency, interpreter technique, and expanded cultural repertoire. However, are some identity-constitutive features unlike other qualities of utterances such as register, affect, or style? Can a man’s interpreter as interlocutor ever adequately recreate a woman’s gender performativity? Or will he always, by necessity, resort to a gender performance? And what of racial identity?

There are variations in language use in the Black Deaf community that Obasi (2013) argues parallel “the way that black hearing people can vary from the use of standard English to assert their cultural and racial identity” (p. 110). In her 2015 thesis, Shambourger undertook a study of how ASL interpreters transfer meaning “when the African American/Black Deaf user incorporated African American English into their signing” (Shambourger, 2015, p. 55). Her study was motivated by the dearth of research in this area and the hope to provide some initial findings to promote further research. She endorsed the cultural competency approach, arguing that “becoming aware of cultural and linguistic features of African American/Black Deaf people will better equip interpreters to fully serve the interpreting needs of this subset of the Deaf community” (p. 60). Likewise, Obasi supports greater “engagement with issues of race and ethnicity” (p. 111) pointing to situations where “white interpreters showed their lack of understanding and, in one case, insensitivity of the issues or the passion with which they were delivered” (p. 110-111).

However, Obasi also found instances where, apart from their engagement with race as a political and social issue, or their sensitivity to and proficiency with linguistic variations enacted by racialized community members, the racial embodiment of the interpreter was problematic. Some Black Deaf participants in her study reported being dissatisfied in certain circumstances with “cultural mismatches” and some Black interpreters claimed that there are “issues of representation which they saw as an ‘added qualification’ which was often overlooked by the mainstream (p. 111).
Among Shambourger’s interpreter participants were those who expressed hesitancy in “adopting African American/Black centric vocabulary, tone, and inflection when interpreting into spoken English (...) due to audience perception and sounding offensive as well as responses or reactions from their team interpreters whether African American/Black or not” (p. 59). These concerns raise questions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of interpreting work being done, or certain linguistic forms being employed in interpretation by interpreters who are not from those communities.

8.4 Embodiment

The Black interpreters in the Obasi (2013) study identified the “lack of representation within the professional body as a very significant issue” (p. 111). For some of the participants in this study, alignment was constructed not only on interactional positioning, but also on membership in socially meaningful categories such as race. This is particularly true because interpreters’ interactional participation is largely subsumed under and disguised by their professional role as interpreter. Cassandra, for instance, felt an immediate disalignment with both the interpreters based on race. Her alignment with the other white person, Jesse, was also influenced by their shared Deaf identity, and further emerged through their interactional alignment of positions and orientations relative to the discussion topic. With interactional alignment with interpreters being less available to mitigate initial impressions, Cassandra based her identity relations with them on the question of embodiment. This impacted on her interactional participation as she questioned whether they could “really understand the Black life experience? Not really. Or people’s POC lived experience? Not really.” This is of particular importance in the relations between an interpreter and consumer of interpretation, as “understanding” is a sine qua non for effective interpretation.

Likewise, the hearing participants’ recognition of the racial identity of the interpreters was a factor in their participation. Sanaa and Linh both described self-censoring their contributions because of their perceptions of the interpreters’
embodied presence in the interaction. In particular, Linh explained, “you want to talk as a racialized person about something that is internal to the experience of being racialized, and then you have someone white there.” In these instances, she “will self-censor, so you just lose something as a result.” These impacts are extraneous to questions of interpreting skill or proficiency in language or culture. There are instances where the interpreter’s identity is of paramount significance, and white interpreters may be “told by the black deaf and hearing participants that they wanted a black interpreter on that occasion” (Obasi, 2013, p. 111), if identity alignment is a particularly salient function of the interaction.

Sanaa noted how a “mismatch” between the embodied identities of the interpreter and the interpreted raises a matter of trust. She described that when she is conversing with Deaf people of colour, she questions, “What is getting translated right now? Because I don’t sometimes know, or to be honest, trust, that the same understanding of what I am saying, and what I imagine would be a shared understanding, is being translated.” While trust in interpretation can be accrued through demonstrated linguistic, technical and cultural proficiency, Sanaa went on to note the inalienability of embodiment in the conveyance of true understanding. “It’s like you are standing in for me in this moment,” she said, “but there is something in the way I am saying something, or there is something in the fact that I am saying it to you, that is being lost. You are now saying it.”

These questions of embodiment, identity, and interpretation warrant considerable more research to explore the impact that the embodied identity of the interpreter has on the dynamics of interpreted interactions.
Chapter 9
Conclusion

People’s identity and sense of self is built and negotiated in the arena of interpersonal interactions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Davies & Harré, 1999). When these people do not have a common language and their interactions are mediated by interpretation, the interpreter becomes a participant in the co-construction of the resultant discourse (Janzen & Shaffer, 2008; Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014; S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). Taking seriously these two conclusions, this study investigated an interpreted conversation to investigate in what ways the interpretation had an impact on the identity-constitutive discourses of interlocutors.

9.1 Limitations

There are limitations inherent in this research. Some of these limitations result from the logistical necessities of data collection, but ought to be noted nonetheless because of their potential impact on the data. The participants were selected from a pool of people known to me personally. The elicited conversation was prompted in the context of manipulated interactional dynamics and not fully natural. Context and setting of interactions are central to understanding their meaning (Rees-Miller, 2011), and the setting in this study was contrived rather than a naturally occurring setting for conversations between these interactants.

The multi-language, multi-modal nature of the data collected in this study offered some particular limitations. It is hoped that the language protocol adopted for this study offers a transparent mechanism for addressing the ironies of working through translation on a study about the impacts of translation.

The conversation may have been skewed by the participants’ awareness of the video cameras. Furthermore, the necessity to capture all participants clearly on video, while also attending to sightlines for visual access to the signed language during the conversation, required a particular physical seating arrangement. Unfortunately,
this meant that the interpreters were located slightly further away from the hearing people than would have been optimal under natural conversational conditions. It is preferable practice to locate the interpreters as close as possible to the speakers so that Deaf people are able to observe the speakers’ paralinguistic behaviours directly while simultaneously reading the interpretation. In this instance, Jesse felt that he was unable to observe the hearing people as closely as he would have liked. This may have altered the natural dynamics of relational identity construction.

Follow-up questions for all participants relied on reconstructed reflections at a time distant from the conversations themselves and therefore may have been subject to memory loss or skewed recollection. Having access to the video of the conversation during playback conversations was an attempt to mitigate this concern. Furthermore, the questionnaires captured reflections more proximate in time to the actual conversation.

While the interpreters were encouraged to adopt their conventional professional practices, there were constraints in their work that were inherent in the nature of the study. Jeremy indicated that upon receipt of the preparation materials, which included the potential discussion topics and prompt questions, he questioned his appropriateness for the work. It is incumbent on professional interpreters to assess the demands of work and to decline work for which one is not qualified (“AVLIC COEGPC,” 2000). Had Jeremy not already agreed to be part of the study, he said that he might have needed to recuse himself from the work. Another limitation pertained to the working practice of the interpreters. Lola indicated that she had speculated on the particular research interests driving the study, and that she deliberately altered her usual practices in response to that speculation. For example, she had guessed that the research was investigating turn-taking and floor-getting behaviours in interpreted interactions. This resulted in her visual attention orienting primarily toward the Deaf interlocutors to ensure that no comment was overlooked. This alteration to her conventional practice limited her attention to her
teamer’s work, which may have effected her monitoring for accuracy and for team consistency.

A more substantive limitation was the reliance on the researcher to determine the social meaning of the linguistic features performed in conversation by the interlocutors. The authors of the framework which forms the basis of this analysis themselves offered such a caution, urging researchers to resist the temptation to approach their data with the intent to find interactional manifestations of predetermined social structures or theoretical constructs. They caution researchers not to force the data to “fit into the structures, categories, and concepts available to us rather than discovering the ways in which they do not fit and thus developing new structures, categories, and concepts and refining or revising the existing ones” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008, p. 159). The playback interviews were used to verify and enrich my initial interpretations of the data, offering the participants’ own analysis of their interaction. However, I took this caution to heart as I approached this project.

In addition to the limitations of the study design itself, I would like to acknowledge some broader concerns about the theoretical direction of this work as it pertains to the giving of consideration to the \textit{interpreter as self}. The relationship between certain experiences of habitus and their concomitant social capital can be viewed as advantageous to members of a marginalized community, like the Deaf community, in their navigation through the structures of a dominant society. For example, some Deaf people may have a preference not to work with an interpreter with non-native accented English, or who are themselves otherwise marginalized, out of concern that possible negative responses will be attributed via the interpreter to the Deaf person thereby amplifying the degree of their marginalization from the habitus of power. Examinations of the impact of \textit{interpreter as self} may exacerbate these concerns thereby even further homogenizing the demographics of the profession.

Secondly, there runs the risk of essentializing the embodied interpreter along specific axes of identity, making certain bodies appropriate for certain types of work
in which particular identity experiences have been deemed salient. Obasi raised this danger. Although she suggested there should be “greater representation of black interpreters working on assignments where the issues and cultures of black people are the central focus”, Obasi cautioned that “the research showed that some black interpreters also felt overlooked in this area with more ‘high profile’ jobs being offered to their white colleagues” (Obasi, 2013, p. 110). This type of thinking distinguishes between identities perceived as marked and those that are seen as blank canvases capable of reflecting any content. This perception has implications for the distribution of work and the interactions that interpreters have in various interpreting encounters.

Awareness of these misapplications of identity theorizing needs to guide the work such that rather than entrenching the marginalization of certain interpreter as self identities, the work supports the goal of destabilizing the assumptions around the unmarked interpreter and explores the possibilities and limitations of identity performativity of all interpreters.

9.2 Contributions

All acts of interpretation are complex and multi-faceted. Interpreters must be equipped with the proficiency to represent the meanings of the interlocutors in the conceptual as well as pragmatic and social aspects (Hoza, 2007a). These meanings do not have an objective existence contained in the linguistic form of the utterance, but rather are co-constructed among the interlocutors of an interaction including the active participation of the interpreters mediating these exchanges (S. Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). Furthermore, professional strategies such as the navigation of role-space can contribute to or impede effective interpretations (Llewellyn–Jones & Lee, 2013). While these complexities have many implications for interpreted interactions, and the dynamics of interactions are many, complex, and overlapping, this study focused narrowly on the discursive construction of identity in an interpreted interaction.
In this study, I explored how interactions are sites of discursive identity construction, and how an interpreter is a non-neutral interactant. The data from the work of interpreters during a video-recorded conversation, questionnaires, and playback interviews revealed how interlocutors’ identity negotiation was interrupted or altered by the interpreter. The interactional Role-Space model (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013) was instrumental to my analysis of identity performance. I explored the overlapping performances of interpreter identity in interaction and built on their model to propose a typology of interpreter identity performances that include; *interpreter as interlocutor, interpreter as interpreter,* and *interpreter as self.* With this perspective, an analysis is possible of interpreter identity that is not intentionally deployed in the service of the interpretation, but impacts it nonetheless.

The first research question set out in this study asked how interlocutors attempt to engage in identity negotiations through the mediation of interpretation. The examples in this study looked primarily at how participants used particular linguistic features to position themselves to the content of the discussion. This evaluative orientation created opportunities for interlocutors to construct relations of alignment or disalignment and to negotiate their orientation to others through their interactional responses. Commonality in certain linguistic features, such as metaphorical vertical space, allowed participants to construct alignment in their discursive orientation to external social relations of power. There were many such examples of success in the transference of identity negotiation through interpretation.

The second research question addressed the impact of the interpreters’ language proficiency and interpreting strategies on the interlocutors’ ability to engage in identity negotiations. The examples demonstrated that these impacts were often entangled and overlapping with the impact addressed in the third question, that of the interpreters’ own identity. Errors with non-manual marking and affective facial expression, traced to issues of the interpreter’s proficiency with this feature as well
as her own personal history and values, proved to have a impact on how participants perceived each other’s orientation to significant propositions and continued to affect their interactional dynamics. Issues with text and discourse analysis in the correct identification of contrastive structure and in the recognition of an intertextual indexing reference, contributed to participants communicating at cross purposes while negotiating identity relations pertaining to race. The interpreting strategy of using a target language metaphor to render a source language concept successfully facilitated the transfer of meaning, but also unintentionally oriented the originator in particular ways to the metaphorical mapping domain of disability. Interpreters’ attempts to enhance their cultural competency proved to be effective at times, especially when demonstrated through familiarity with vocabulary and knowledge stores and supported by transparency of interpreter role. However, the performance of gender in an interpretation, across boundaries of identity difference between the interpreter and the originator, seemed to reveal some limitations to the interpreters’ capacity to re-enact certain types of identity characteristics. Participants were differentially able to attribute these identity constitutive features as originating with the interpreter or with an interlocutor.

Another aspect of the interpreters’ identity is their embodied presence, which was read and responded to by participants. Participants were aware of and responded to the interpreters as embodied presence in the interaction as well as their enactment of the professional role. Some participants modified or even censored their contributions because of the particular interpreter’s non-membership in a salient identity category, namely people of colour.

In these examples, the interpreter’s own identity, as well as their language and interpreting skills, contributed to how they participated in the interaction. There is no claim to the generalizability of these examples. However, they raise interesting questions about how interpreters impact or alter the negotiation of identity relations among participants in an interpreted interaction.
9.3 Future research

The instances of interpreter impact on identity negotiation observed in this small study point to areas for future research.

Language proficiency is a key element of effective interpretation. Further research supporting effective second-language learning for interpreting students and working interpreters will contribute to their capacity in all aspects of interpreting work, including the facilitation of participants’ discursive identity negotiations.

Interpreters select professional practices that attempt to balance the multiple demands inherent in successful work. The effect of these practices may support some aspects of communication and have inadvertent implications for other areas, such as the participants’ identity construction. Further research would assist interpreters to hone their repertoire of professional practices to attend to these demands.

One aspect of identity that appeared to be underlying the performance of identity in this study is the question of interpreter embodiment. This was only hinted at in the data in this study, but calls for further study. Research in this area could explore how interactional settings and dynamics are impacted by the embodied identity of the interpreters.

The data from this study show that the effect of these three factors (language proficiency, interpreting technique, and interpreter identity), are intertwined and overlapping. Further research could investigate the relative contribution of each factor to the overall impact that the interpreter has on the interlocutors’ discursive negotiation of identity.

Accurate attribution of various linguistic features might assist participants to navigate their interactional relations with each other. Further research could explore how important attribution is, and what practices best support transparency.
This future research can build on the work of interpreters such as Feyne's study of the impact of interpreter performance on perceptions of professional identity, by expanding the scope to interactional dialogues in which participants’ personal identity positions emerge and are relationally negotiated. Likewise, Obasi’s initial work on how race and ethnicity complicate the Deaf-hearing identity interface can support further research on the implications of these issues on identity construction.

All ongoing research on identity and interpreting should attend to the dynamics of power and marginalization inherent in the work of interpretation and be mindful “to incorporate the intersection between wider structural historical and social issues of race and racism” (Obasi, 2013, p. 105), as well as other identity positions in the exploration of how these systems overlay onto the role of sign language interpreters. Identity theorizing in interpreting studies should also be cautious of essentializing identities and be mindful of the implications for the distribution of work and the interactions that interpreters have in various interpreting encounters.

This work will assist developments in recruitment practices to broaden the demographic representativeness of the interpreting profession. Interpreter education programs can ensure that curricula and pedagogical practices address these issues. Practicing interpreters will be able to enhance their self-reflection on the salience of identity in interpreted interactions and have it inform their discretion when accepting interpreting assignments. This will support professional practices that make the interpreter’s own contributory position in the interaction transparent to the interactants and thereby enhance their accountability for their impact on the interactions they interpret.
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Appendices

Appendix A – Prompt topics and discussion questions

1. The United States presidential campaign is currently underway. In this topic, the group can explore how the Democratic and Republican primaries, conventions, and candidates have been represented in the media and what impact the November election may have on the US and the world.

   a. Donald Trump has surprised many people by remaining popular and securing the Republican nomination for president, despite his controversial statements about immigrants, Muslims, women, Mexicans and other minority groups. Discuss what might account for his appeal to so many Americans and what this reveals about US society.

   b. On the Democratic side, Hilary Clinton has become the first woman to secure a presidential nomination. Is it important to see diverse representation in positions of political power? Why?

   c. What differences do you see between the two candidates’ visions for the future of the US? What impact might this have on the relationship between the US and the rest of the world?

2. Black Lives Matter has sparked public conversations about policing and the Black community. In this topic the group can explore various dimensions of this issue.

   a. BLM has drawn attention to the numerous incidents when contact with police has led to the deaths of Black people. Many of these have been documented on video. Discuss how this evidence has shifted the public conversation about policing.

   b. In reaction to the spread of the #BlackLivesMatter message on social media, some people have responded with the message #AllLivesMatter, and #BlueLivesMatter. Discuss what this reaction reveals about the dynamics of confronting racism in policing.

   c. At this year’s Toronto Pride festival, BLMTO were selected as the honoured guests in recognition of their activism against anti-black racism and police violence. During the Parade, BLMTO staged a protest to draw attention to issues within the Pride organization, especially about the presence of the police at Pride. There was some backlash against BLMTO, including from within the LGBTQ community. What does this incident reveal about tensions within the communities?
3. A recent survey showed that 25% of Canadians’ total internet time was spent social networking. This is equal to about an hour and a half per day spent on social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat and LinkedIn. In this topic the group can discuss how they use social media for personal, professional, and community connections.

(http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Social-Networking-Domina...1010023)

a. Do you regularly use social media as a way to connect with people? How does this connection feel different than with face-to-face relationships?

b. Social networks can:

- reflect peoples’ own social and political values resulting in an ‘echo chamber’ effect where opinions are reinforced and not challenged,
- provide a safe community for like-minded people to come together to become socially and politically engaged,
- be a forum for personal entertainment.

Do you see these dynamics or others in your own use of social networking?

c. The comments feature of many social networking sites allows for both support and criticism of posts. Have you found your social media activity to be a generally positive experience, or has trolling and negativity affected your online experience?
Appendix B – Interlocutor questionnaire

**Part 1**

These questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential. Fill out as many of these questions as you are comfortable answering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred name:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred language:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other languages that you know:</td>
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<td>Age:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial, ethnic or cultural background:</td>
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<td>Gender identity:</td>
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<td>Sexual Orientation:</td>
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<td>Religion:</td>
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<td>Status in Canada:</td>
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<td>Level of Education:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Status:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience working with interpreters:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other aspects of your identity that you’d like to share:</td>
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</table>
Part 2

1. Describe your experience of the interpretation.

   For example: How conscious were you of the interpretation during the conversation? What parts of the interpretation drew your attention? Did you ever change how you were participating because of the interpretation?

2. Reflect on your awareness of the interpreters themselves.

   For example: How conscious were you about the interpreters as individuals? Did you think about who they were, what their background was, or their thoughts about the issue? Did you think differently about the two interpreters? Why or why not?

3. Reflect on the other participants in the conversation.

   For example: Did you feel that you got to know them? Did you feel that they got to know you? Is your answer the same for the Deaf and non-Deaf participants?

4. Were there some people in the group that you particularly felt a sense of connection to? If so, why do you think that was?

5. Other comments that you’d like to share
# Appendix C - Interpreter questionnaire

**Part 1**

**Fill out as many of these questions as you are comfortable answering.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferred name:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred language:</td>
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<td>Other languages that you know:</td>
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<td>Religion:</td>
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<td>Status in Canada:</td>
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<td>Level of Education:</td>
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<td>Family Status:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience working with interpreters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects of your identity that you’d like to share:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2

1. Did you know any of the other participants, or interpreters before today? If so, how well did you know them?

2. Reflect on the participants in the conversation.
   For example: Did you feel that participants got to know each other? Did you feel that the participants were forthcoming with their opinions, or did they hesitate to comment? What gave you that impression? Is your answer the same for the Deaf and non-Deaf participants?

3. Were there some people in the group that you particularly felt a sense of connection to? If so, why do you think that was?

4. Describe your experience of the interpretation.
   For example: How effective do you feel the interpretation was in conveying the participants' pragmatic and social meaning? How conscious do you think participants were of the interpretation? What influenced your decisions about how you performed the interpretation (team division of work, interaction management, clarifying etc)? Were there aspects of the work that were particularly challenging, or particularly effective?

5. Reflect on your awareness of yourselves as individual interpreters.
   For example: How conscious were you about yourselves as individuals interpreting this conversation? Do you think that your own identity influenced your ability to be effective? How did your strategies and/or challenges compare with your teamer's? Did you each bring something different to the work?

6. Other comments that you’d like to share. For example, about the discussion you just had, your experience with interpretation in general, about this research project, or anything else that you’d like to share.
Appendix D – Study design description

- Once the cameras are turned on I will leave the room with the interpreter and the 2 volunteers (they may return to check cameras).
- The 4 participants (Cassandra, Jesse, Sanaa, and Linh) will have a conversation, which will be interpreted by Jeremy and Lola, according to their conventional professional practices.
- After about 45 - 50 minutes, I will return and the group can summarize the main parts of the conversation.
- The conversation should include several parts:
  - Introduce yourselves.
    - you can include whatever information you feel comfortable sharing with the group. You can take your time with this – could be up to 10 min or so – whatever feels right.
  - Select a topic.
    - There are 3 topics to choose from.
    - The group can decide how you’d like to choose the topic.
    - Take as long as you need to pick the topic.
  - Start the discussion.
    - Once you have selected which topic you’d like to discuss, you can go ahead with the conversation. There are 3 prompt questions to help with the conversation. You can spend as much time as you like on each question. If there are other ideas or comments that come up that are unrelated to the questions – that is fine, too. The questions are just to help get/keep the conversation going.
  - Decide how to summarize.
    - You may want to take a few minutes to decide how you’d like summarize your discussion.
- Summary
  - I will return to the room and the group can summarize the main points of the discussion (interpreted by Jeremy and Lola)

• Then the cameras will be turned off, and I will give you some more information about my research (see Prezi)
• Then I will describe the second part of the study, the questionnaire, and you will have time to fill it out (either in writing or in ASL)
Appendix E – Transcription protocol for English

TRANSANA

Jeffersonian Transcription Notation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ text ]</td>
<td>Brackets</td>
<td>Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equal Sign</td>
<td>Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(# of seconds)</td>
<td>Timed Pause</td>
<td>A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>Micropause</td>
<td>A brief pause, usually less that 0.2 seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. or ↓</td>
<td>Period or Down Arrow</td>
<td>Indicates falling pitch or intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? or ↑</td>
<td>Question Mark or Up Arrow</td>
<td>Indicates rising pitch or intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hyphen</td>
<td>Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;text&lt;</td>
<td>Greater than / Less than symbols</td>
<td>Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;text&gt;</td>
<td>Less than / Greater than symbols</td>
<td>Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>º</td>
<td>Degree symbol</td>
<td>Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL CAPS</td>
<td>Capitalized text</td>
<td>Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underline</td>
<td>Underlined text</td>
<td>Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:::</td>
<td>Colon(s)</td>
<td>Indicates prolongation of a sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hhh)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Audible exhalation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• or (.hhh)</td>
<td>High Dot</td>
<td>Audible inhalation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( text )</td>
<td>Parentheses</td>
<td>Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(( italic text ))</td>
<td>Double Parentheses</td>
<td>Annotation of non-verbal activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>