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Authors: Victoria Crawley and Dai O'Brien

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Author contact: d.obrien@yorksj.ac.uk & victoricrawley@yahoo.co.uk

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Multilingual and Multicultural Supervision Meetings: The Case of a Deaf Supervisor and Hearing Postgraduate Researcher

多言語・多文化な指導とは：
聴覚障害を持つ指導教員と持たない院生のケース

Victoria Crawley, York St John University

Dai O'Brien, York St John University

This paper examines the dynamic in a PhD supervision relationship, where the supervisor is deaf and the supervisee hearing. There are four main discussion areas in this paper. The first is English as the lingua franca of academia in the UK, and the subsequent impact this has on the supervision relationship. Secondly the issue of power from the perspective of student and supervisor, but also from the perspective of deaf and hearing, sign and speech, BSL/English interpreter and deaf client. Thirdly the issue of giving feedback, and how the dynamic of the interpreter/client relationship influenced the feedback provided in this supervision. Finally, we discuss the difference between UK deaf cultural norms and academic cultural norms. In conclusion, we suggest that that research with minority culture members should not focus only on subordinate roles such as PhD students, but explore how minority culture members can inhabit senior roles in ways that bring their cultural capital to bear in beneficial ways.

本稿は、博士課程　における聴覚障害のある指導教官と障害のない院生のダイナミクスを４つの側面から検証する。一つ目は、英国における学問の共通言語が英語であることの影響。二つ目は、「指導教官と院生」、「聴覚障害の有無」、「手話と口語」 、「イギリス手話通訳者とクライアント」という視点からの力関係。三つ目は、イギリス手話通訳者とクライアントの関係が、この指導におけるフィードバック及ぼした影響。そして４つ目は、英国の聴覚障害者の文化とアカデミック文化の違い。マイノリティ文化を背景に持つ人々と共に、また、その人々を対象に研究を行う場合、院生など一般的に弱者と捉えられる側だけに焦点を当てるのではなく、マイノリティな人々が、文化資本を有益に利用し、どのように指導的な役割を果たすことが打きるかをも探求すべきことを提唱する。

Keywords

As we move further into the 21st century, more and more of the academics working in the fields of Deaf Studies and Sign Language Linguistics are themselves members of deaf communities[1]. Kusters et al. (2017a) describe the range of academic subjects pertaining to the deaf experience, researched by deaf academics. Deaf Studies itself is attracting more interest from both deaf and hearing scholars, as are interpreting studies and sign

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1. We capitalize the D in Deaf for the field of Deaf Studies. However, in other contexts we use the lower-case d. This is in contrast to the traditional d/D distinction in Deaf Studies, in which Deaf is used to show membership of Deaf communities and deaf is used to show audiological deafness. This distinction has been increasingly problematized in recent years. See Kusters et al. 2017a for in-depth discussion. In this paper, we are talking about signing deaf people who identify as members of deaf communities.

language linguistics. It is important that deaf academics are represented in this growth, and Kusters et al. (2017b) demonstrate how a published volume can be produced by solely deaf academics. These areas of study, therefore, are inevitably becoming multilingual and multicultural. This paper shows the relationship between a minority culture (deaf) supervisor who is supervising a majority culture (hearing) student. We explore how this multilingual, multicultural contact in a PhD supervision relationship can illustrate how deaf and hearing people can work productively together in roles or relative power positions that have been unusual in the past.

The rise in numbers of deaf people working as academics is not only in fields directly related to Deaf Studies or sign language linguistics. Many deaf people work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects[2]. The growing number of deaf academics should therefore be reflected in growing numbers of deaf post-graduate degree supervisors. These opportunities for supervision should not only be in subjects related to deaf lives and sign languages (following the rule of 'nothing about us without us' common in disability studies and related fields) but in whichever field the deaf academic choses to specialise. Hearing British Sign Language/English interpreters who study to doctoral level mostly stay within the field of interpreting. The PhD which is at the centre of this paper is also about interpreting.

While there may be overlaps with the study of World Englishes, or English as a Lingua Franca, when dealing with signed and spoken languages, in that British Sign Language (BSL) users may have differing proficiencies in English, and BSL users when conversing with each other in written English (texting, emailing etc) will create their own version/s of English. However, it remains that a person who is deaf, while able to be fluent in written language, is not able to access spoken language in the same way as a hearing person[3]. A speaker of a different spoken language is able to access the sounds of another language and has the capacity to become fluent in that language. Hearing people, while able to learn signed languages, will never fully understand the deaf lived experience (Sutherland & Rogers 2014, p. 270). Thus, the conjunction of signed and spoken languages is different from spoken to spoken or signed to signed languages. There is the continued need for interpretation by (mostly) majority language speakers.

The issues to be covered in this paper will highlight the majority/minority dynamic within the supervision relationship. Often research into the supervision of minorities shows the supervisor to be from the majority culture (for example, see Kidman 2007, Berryman et al., 2017, Kidman et al. 2017). Some research describes minorities supervising minorities (for example, see Hohepa, 2010). While these studies are essential to understand the power and cultural dynamics between student and supervisor, they only show part of the picture. They neglect what might happen in situations where the cultural capital brought to bear by the student may outweigh the cultural capital brought to the relationship by the supervisor, either in relative fluency in spoken English, or in different cultural values which may not sit well with academic values. There has been very little research into the way in which this particular supervision context plays out, although we do engage with some of the existing literature below. It is hoped that this article will help to explore this context in more depth.

This is a unique reflection on the status of majority and minority cultural membership within this relationship and as such is an important area for study, not only for the explora-

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2. See https://tinyurl.com/Deaf-Docs for a list of deaf people who hold doctorates. This may not be comprehensive as it is "live" and still being updated, but is indicative of how numbers have increased dramatically over the last two decades.

3. British Sign Language is a full, natural sign language in its own right, and not, as many seem to believe, a manual/visual version of English (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999).

tion of deaf supervisors' relationships with their students, but also for any supervisor who is from a cultural or linguistic minority who is struggling to navigate the potential imbalances of power and capital that their status might cause in the academy.

Who We Are

Vicky—I am a qualified interpreter who has a background in linguistics. My first language is English and I studied French and some Hindi at University. As part of my degree I lived in Rennes for a year. With a Masters in Sign Linguistics, I qualified as a BSL/English interpreter and had a break from academia for 16 years (and had two children). For my PhD, I originally had three supervisors, all of whom had experience of linguistics, but only one who used BSL. When Dai joined the university, he took over from one of the supervisors due to his experience with BSL and English and also as a user of the services of an interpreter. It was felt that a deaf person would be the ideal fit with the PhD, given that it was about BSL/English interpreting. BSL is my fourth, but most fluent language after English and I started to learn when at University in 1989.

Dai—I am a Senior Lecturer in BSL and Deaf Studies at York St John University (YSJU). I am deaf and am bilingual in BSL and English, although I can't hear beyond background noises and my lipreading is rubbish. I hold post-graduate degrees in Deaf Studies, Research Methods and Social Work. While my first language is English, BSL has been my preferred language for almost 20 years. Having passed my PhD in 2012 (with a hearing, non-signing supervision team) and taken up my first academic role in YSJU in 2014, Vicky was my first PhD student. I have since supervised one more PhD student to completion, in a topic unrelated to BSL or Deaf Studies, again as the only signing deaf person in the supervision team.

How We Wrote This Paper

This paper was deliberately written as a dialogue. Much of deaf culture in the UK is based on a notion of collective lives, of sharing of information and status (Ladd, 2003). Deaf cultural spaces, and therefore deaf lives, are therefore often collective, where meanings are created together, in collaboration with one another. Thus, we felt it was culturally appropriate to follow a style which mirrored those values in the writing of this article. Not only that, but as Vicky has now graduated from her PhD and is a fully fledged doctor herself, we felt that writing this article as a conversation between peers would be a productive approach. It is also true that as deaf and hearing people there are some ontological experiences we each have that are unique to ourselves and that would be very difficult to combine into a single, co-authored viewpoint. We follow Lewis and VanGilder (2017) in utilising this dialogic approach to explore our own feelings and responding to one another's points of view. The dialogic approach outlined here is something that is recognised as a useful way of exploring deaf lives and experiences, but as yet has not been explored in an academic form (although see Kusters et al., 2017a). Below we outline how we decided to make this collaborative approach work in practice.

We began by setting five questions for each other to answer in a shared online folder. We also met periodically through the time frame of writing this paper for face to face discussion. The answers to the questions in the shared folder were added to and built on in response to these face to face discussions and these became the foundation of this paper. We edited together the written reflections we had made into themes and restructured them to preserve the dialogic structure in a form condensed to meet the word count for this article. We have used different fonts (as above, Dai uses Open Sans, and Vicky uses Palatino) throughout to show which bits were co-authored and which are the work of a single author. This combination of face-to-face discussion and online co-production of a written text was a mixture of academic and culturally deaf ways of creating knowledge. Deaf cultures often have a way of telling

stories in a cooperative way in order to create and coalesce knowledge about the world in a way that makes collective sense (Young et al., 2018). This is almost always done in a face-to-face context. It is increasingly common now, with the ease and access of the internet and file-sharing technologies, for academics to write papers together without ever communicating face to face or even in real time. This combination of the two approaches brought together its own frustrations, as sometimes issues easily discussed in BSL were very difficult to translate adequately into English, and similarly some academic English terms proved difficult to translate adequately for the BSL version of this article. Hopefully, by releasing a bilingual version of this paper, we have overcome some of those translation issues.

The paper is largely organised into four main discussion areas. The first is English as the lingua franca of academia in the UK, and the subsequent impact this has on the supervision relationship. Secondly, we will discuss the issue of power, from the perspective of student and supervisor, but also from the perspective of deaf and hearing, sign and speech, BSL/English interpreter and deaf client. We will talk about the issues of giving feedback, and how the dynamic of the interpreter/client relationship influenced the feedback Dai gave to Vicky. Finally, we will discuss the difference between UK deaf cultural norms and the academic cultural norms we have experienced. We will conclude with a summary of what can be learned from this supervisor/supervisee relationship and renew our call that research with minority culture members should not only focus on subordinate roles such as PhD students, but also how they can inhabit senior roles in ways that bring their own cultural capital to bear in a beneficial way.

While there were other supervisors involved in Vicky's PhD, who all played an essential role in supporting her through the process, they are not the focus of this paper. Dai was the only deaf BSL user on the supervision team, and it was the relationship between deaf supervisor and hearing student that is the focus here. Therefore, Vicky's and Dai's own relationships with the other supervisors are not explored in this paper.

Vicky's PhD Project

The subject of my thesis centred around the phenomenon of clarification in interpreting. Outsiders to the process sometimes believe that knowledge of two languages is enough to be able to interpret between them. Knowledge of both languages is of course vital; however, it is not enough to be able to interpret everything that is being recounted in either language. Context, topic knowledge, geographical knowledge, and grammatical proficiency are all needed in order to interpret well. Goffman (1981) wrote about "talk" having three components; thoughts, structure and performance. A person speaking for themselves has access to all three components. The interpreter only has access to the words/signs which were produced. They behave more like a listener than a speaker in that they must first understand what was said (to the best of their ability) and reproduce that understanding in the second language. The interpreter, therefore, does not directly know what was *meant*, they only know what was *said*, and their understanding of what was said is what they use as the source message. Before the interpreter interprets what they have heard, they must make an interpretation of it to themselves before they interpret it into the target language.

Interpreters are well aware of the difficulty caused by only having access to what was said and use the term "clarification" to encompass all methods used by interpreters to make sure that they have understood what was said in either language as much as anyone can. In conversation analysis, there is a phenomenon called "repair" (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) which overlaps with the processes used by interpreters when they are clarifying. Repair is done by speakers of the same language when something has arisen in a conversation that is not immediately understood by the listener. Schegloff et al. (1977) found that if there is a problem with "speaking, hearing or

understanding" (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 361) the most common way that the problem is resolved is for the speaker to repeat (louder, more accurately, with the correct word this time) the problem source. For interpreters, who are between the speaker and listener (or the producer and receiver) the process of a person misproducing, mishearing/misseeing, or understanding is confounded by the belief that interpreters simply need to listen or see to interpret. Therefore, any misproductions which have been accurately reproduced by the interpreter can be received as if they are correct. An example could be if a hearing person referred to "a fancy cake for a formal party", the image that first comes to mind of the interpreter might be a sheet cake rather than a tiered cake because in her mind that is what a formal, fancy cake looks like. Having used that image of a cake as the translation in BSL of "a fancy cake", the interpreter represents what was in her mind, rather than what was in the mind of the speaker. The deaf client, having seen the reference to a sheet cake, might believe that the cake being spoken about was definitely a sheet cake. The cake had only been referred to as a "fancy" cake. It would come as a surprise to both interpreter and deaf client when the cake in question turns out to be a tiered cake.

My thesis considered real interpreted data and I investigated when and why interpreters most commonly clarified, and also how well their attempts to get a clearer understanding were received by either BSL users or English speakers.

Extracts From the Dialogue

What follows below are extracts from our dialogue that deal with four main topics which arose, and which we felt were particularly significant for this article. Firstly, we discuss the effect of English as the lingua franca in UK higher education institutions, and how this affected our supervision relationship. Secondly, we discuss the power relations within the supervision team. Third, we discuss how our academic and professional identities affected how we gave and received feedback during the supervision process. Fourth and finally, we discuss the culture affects, how the deaf culture that Dai brought to the supervision relationship clashed with or complimented the hearing culture that Vicky brought to the relationship.

English as a Lingua Franca in UK Higher Education Institutions

Vicky—What did you think about English being the main language in supervision sessions, despite the fact that two (myself and one of the supervisors) of the three hearing people were able to sign?

Dai—I found it a bit weird in some ways, but completely expected it in others. When I became part of your supervision team, you had already been on your PhD journey for the best part of a year with three hearing supervisors. Your supervision team and supervision process already felt well established, and I was a late addition to the team. It would have been, on some unspoken level, a disruption of or challenge to the university power and status conferred upon those positions if I'd made a big issue out of the language choice. Or that's how it felt. The first couple of supervision meetings I sat in on had your full, very experienced supervision team present. So, it was a little intimidating in some respects and difficult to break into a supervision pattern and practice established by experienced, senior supervisors (Manathunga et al., 2013).

Following on from those issues of power and breaking into established patterns and traditions, the whole set up of the PhD system in the UK is English dominated. You have to write a thesis in English. It's examined in English. There are some examples of PhD theses being written in BSL and examined in BSL, but these are very much the exception rather than the norm. All the policy and processes we go through on the PhD journey are in English. They could be translated/interpreted into BSL (or another language), but English is always the legitimate language of the academy in the UK. Bourdieu (1992)

writes about the negative effects that a lack of practical mastery over the legitimate language can have on other people's perception of you, whether this mastery is in written or spoken modalities (for English). This filters through everything (including the way we're writing and publishing this article). When the legitimate language of the institution is so firmly established, it's very difficult to even think about challenging it.

Some of this is internalised, I suppose. When you are always the "one who needs interpreters" as the only person using BSL in a hearing environment, it becomes normal for the interpreters to be there for you, and it's sometimes an effort to think critically about the situation, to challenge the taken for granted assumptions and say "hang on a minute, why am I the minority here?" I don't think I did that at all through the supervision process.

But then again, I booked the interpreters, I paid for them out of my Access to Work (AtW) budget[4]. If I hadn't done that, then the non-signing supervisor would not have had access to what was going on. In that sense, there's a pragmatic decision to be made. If everyone needs to have access to the process, I'm the only one who has funding to make that happen. Should I have insisted that we all use BSL and the interpreters would be there for non-signers? I remember one presentation you made very early on in my time as your supervisor where you went to quite extraordinary lengths to make it accessible to me. I was very gratified that you'd made such an effort, but also disappointed in some ways that you had to put such effort in.

Vicky—At the start of the PhD process, I was surprised how the lack of BSL use affected me. For the previous 20 years, every working day included the presence of BSL users. I had made a point not to work as an interpreter with York St John staff. Therefore, after having got used to the lack of BSL users in my first year, the addition of a BSL user as an important part of my team was welcome, but also came with what felt like new conflicting loyalties. For the last two decades, my professional role was to make sure that access was enabled between BSL users and English speakers. Now I was challenged by attending a supervision meeting where I was not only speaking for myself (in either language) but I was torn between aligning myself with three groups of people: my hearing supervisors, only one of whom I could use BSL with; Dai, who despite being a deaf person, in these meetings was not my client, but my superior colleague, which represented a big change in relationship from "client"; and the interpreters, who were people I had been working alongside (and was friends with) in some cases for 20 plus years. . I needed to express myself to all of my supervisors, I needed to not consider whether or not the deaf person in the room was following the conversation (and leave that to my colleagues), and I needed to try to be an easy person to interpret for (clear, finishing sentences I start, not speaking too fast or too slowly, not using language which is too contextually based, and so on). . These conflicting loyalties meant that I was constantly monitoring what I was saying and how I was saying it. My main concern was that our relationship was not growing in the way it could have because I was being interpreted for when I spoke to you in these meetings. I have complete faith that my interpreter colleagues interpreted accurately; it was the eye contact (which is an essential part of BSL) and the direct conversations about my work which were lacking. We got around that by meeting separately, but for me it was an odd way to interact with a deaf person. I understand that for most hearing people, being interpreted for is the only way they would interact with a deaf person. Almost all of my working life has meant being responsible for deaf people being able to understand the hearing people around them. Suddenly, in this situation, I became like one of my hearing clients, who needed to be made clear to a deaf person. That deaf person was also my superior and one of the people I wanted to express my ideas to. Not signing felt like I was being rude and was the reverse of how I would normally interact with a deaf person.

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4. Access to Work is a government funded scheme in the UK in which disabled people can apply for funding to cover access to their workplace. For deaf people, this is often used for, but in no way limited to, paying for BSL/English interpreters and other communication support.

Power

Dai—Did you feel as though the power balance in the supervision team was disrupted through my presence? I'm thinking especially in terms of deaf/hearing, particularly with the insight you have of working with deaf people for so long in different situations?

Vicky—I think that the power balance had been skewed towards the more senior members of the team. As a professional in my own right, I found it difficult to be as subordinate as a PhD student tends to be in these circumstances (Baptista, 2014). My expertise in the field of interpreting felt unheard/unimportant. When you came onto the team, it felt more "normal". In my first weeks of being a student it felt very odd not to have any contact with a deaf person. After over two decades of being with deaf people every working day it was very odd to be surrounded by hearing people at work. You represented a normality which I needed. Having a deaf person overseeing my work legitimised it in the eyes of the deaf community. When I had told deaf friends/colleagues that I was doing research, the first question was to ask who the deaf person was going to be. You became my safeguard and I was able to be more open with others around me about my work. The fact that you were a sociologist, not a linguist, did not matter. Your presence as a deaf person made my work more legitimate to my non-academic friends. From being a hearing person working on BSL I became a hearing person, with a deaf supervisor, working on BSL.

A big difference was that when you joined the team you were a third male in the supervisory team. The person you replaced was a woman. I did have some trepidation there, as she had felt like an ally in a male dominated (and possibly old-fashioned) academic environment (Smeby, 2000). But soon after I realised that you had read my work, and you asked to borrow some books on Conversation Analysis. You invested in my work from the beginning. Before I started the PhD, I had been advised by other interpreters who had done PhDs that it was better to separate interpreting work from PhD work. As mentioned briefly above, I therefore told the School that I would not be interpreting for any deaf members of the University for the duration of my candidature, so that my role as a student was clear. This became more important when you arrived. It would have been odd to have you as a client as well as a supervisor. It might also have been difficult to refuse interpreting jobs requested by my supervisor.

As for the power balance in the supervisory team, knowledge of BSL became differently important. Before you arrived, I and one other member of the team used BSL, and the other two were happy to trust that I knew what I was doing. When you arrived, and the other member left, we became a majority BSL speaking team. My first thought was that I was going to have to have my BSL/English Interpreter colleagues in my supervision meetings. Whether I signed or I spoke, the meetings (in which I had often felt vulnerable) would be witnessed by my friends. I also felt an allegiance to their needs because my PhD would eventually end, and I would be back working with the people I had been working with for over two decades (see Wellington & Sykes, 2006 for the potential impact of achieving a doctorate on returning to work).

Interpreters are generally reluctant to interpret for hearing people, because the hearing people can hear the spoken English version of what they have said, and can sometimes react (flinching, eyebrows furrowing, shakes of the head, stopping and repeating what was not signed the way they wanted to) to the interpreter's version of what they said. Only people who are very much part of the deaf community and have had experience of being interpreted into English are able to ignore it. Generally, it is considered by interpreters (at least in my area) to be rude when a hearing person signs for themselves when they are going to be interpreted for into English. One of the issues is that the interpreter will be geared up to be ready to use spoken English for the deaf participants and may not include the hearing person in their visual space as a potential contributor in BSL. As an interpreter, I have found myself in a room with silence, and suddenly realising that a hearing person was signing for themselves, and I had not seen them start. It is also true that hear-

ing people may not be as articulate in BSL as they are in English, so are less easy to interpret for accurately. I did not want to appear unhelpful, or awkward to my interpreter colleagues by signing for myself when they were not expecting me to.

By the time you came into the team, I had become very much aware that the English vocabulary I used needed to become more specific. I was being taught how to be more discerning about my language choice, and how a slack use of a term may not only make my work less credible, it might also make it less understandable. The supervision sessions were times when my language in particular was being assessed, and I did not want to be interpreted for, because the words used by the interpreter would not necessarily be an accurate depiction of what I had meant; but they would be the words of the interpreter. I knew that the interpreters would be feeling the pressure of that. They would be worrying about using the right vocabulary, and perhaps feeling out of their depth using terminology from linguistics. They were all fully competent, but they might not have felt that way, so I would in effect become their witness. It became apparent over time that in supervision the words I was using were what the non-BSL user in the team (also the lead supervisor) would be looking for. I did try to sign for myself for a few of the meetings, but it did not work for the interpreters, and I felt that having no control over the English words being used on my behalf was detrimental to my progress. There were times when I wished that the supervisions could be done just in one language, and indeed sometimes I would have sessions with one supervisor who used English and then with you in BSL. These were often better sessions for me.

The fact that you had a PhD, but only recently, meant that although you were definitely my superior, you were more in tune with what I was going through than the other supervisor who was further away from his own PhD or had not gone through the process at all (the BSL interpreters and the third supervisor). Rather than mystify the process, you considered the PhD process as a job to be done, and a possible hoop to jump through. Further, you made it clear that you wanted to be helpful.

Dai—It's interesting that you picked up on the fact I seemed to ally myself more with you, as a student, than with the other supervisors, as academics. Being deaf in academia can really reinforce any sort of imposter syndrome feelings you have, because there is often no-one else like you in your workplace. It really makes you feel different and makes it difficult to question the taken for granted assumptions of what's going on, because you don't really feel you have a right to be there. If you feel like this, you're more likely to believe you're in the wrong and you need to adapt to the situation rather than vice versa (Parkman, 2016, Kets de Vries, 2005). This fed into the sort of attitude towards English we discussed above. So, the fact that we could engage in academic discourse in BSL and that I could contribute to your PhD studies effectively helped to reassure me that I did belong in that context. However, in terms of power relations within the supervision team, I think this would be tricky to deconstruct. I was very much the junior supervisor in the team, simply through seniority rather than anything else. It would be difficult to argue that being deaf played any part in that status.

I'm not sure how it worked between us as student/supervisor. Maybe it unconsciously lessened the hierarchical divide a little in my mind? Of course, as a supervisor I had some institutional power over you in the relationship. We can't escape that, no matter how we dress it up (Manathunga, 2007). However, I think the seniority thing comes into play here. By the time I started supervising your PhD I'd only finished my own PhD three years previously, so I was more able to empathise with what you were going through, I think, because my own experience was so recent. Having said that, my own expertise that I could bring to the project was solely as a deaf person who spoke BSL and who worked with interpreters. I didn't have any academic knowledge of the project, of the methods or the background (although I picked up as much as I could as I went along). As a result, I did feel that I should focus on bringing as much empathy as I could to the situation, so that I was engaged and responsive to the situation you were in (Bastalich, 2017, p. 1150). I think I deliberately worked on that basis, as I felt it was the most important contribution I could make at the time. That was a deliberate effort to level the imbalance.

You mentioned the difficulty you had in having interpreters present in the supervision meeting and the added vulnerability that brought, as a researcher of interpreting, as someone being interpreted and as an interpreter yourself. I think many people struggle with being interpreted into different languages, because you are never sure whether the interpretation is accurate or not. But having access to both the source and target languages and understanding the process that is involved in interpreting must have been very difficult!

Interpreters hold a great deal of power in the client/interpreter relationship because they control who has access to what information. They are gatekeepers to the hearing world, particularly in a context like higher education, where so few interpreters are capable or confident in interpreting at the required level. You can't afford to annoy or scare off the interpreters who are happy to work in this context, so that power is amplified.

There has been some published work on "trust" being important for deaf professionals when choosing which interpreters to work with (Haug et al., 2017), but for me that's the wrong word. It's more about knowing that the interpreter has the technical ability to work at the required level. Having seen your initial analysis of the project data, which was in BSL, and having a couple of lightbulb moments of my own from this analysis, I knew that you understood the BSL in the data videos and had no doubts about your ability to work in BSL. From the conclusions you had drawn from this analysis, I also had a belief in your technical ability as an academic. That meant that any criticism or feedback I would give you would be about your academic work, not your ability as an interpreter, which was a really important distinction considering the topic of your research. Your insights into interpreting practice in your research, and the interactions we had in BSL also gave me confidence that you knew what you were talking about as an interpreter. That gave me confidence in you as an interpreter as well.

It was really important for me to be able to distinguish between those two roles: Vicky as interpreter and Vicky as post-graduate researcher. Once I was able to make that distinction, I felt much better about giving you feedback because I knew that it was meant, and hopefully would be taken, in the right way.

Because of my faith in your ability, I was able to keep both of your identities in mind when we worked together. However, if I had not had that faith in your ability in either role, I think this would have been very difficult and our relationship would have changed. This could have gone one of two ways. If I felt that your understanding of BSL was not very good, I may have decided that no matter what happened in the PhD, I would never work with you as an interpreter because my faith in your ability had been shaken. But would that have been fair? Allowing your professional identity to impinge on our academic relationship?

Alternatively, if I was more impressed with your interpreting ability than your academic ability, I might have felt the need to hold back from criticising your work or analysis too much because I had in the back of my mind that I would need to keep you onside in case I needed to work with you as an interpreter once the PhD was over.

This is potentially a difficult situation for deaf supervisors with interpreters as students, particularly if the students work in the same area and field as their supervisors. Being able to separate roles as interpreters and clients from students and supervisors is essential, but extremely difficult when considering the potential small size of different fields where it would be difficult not to run into one another as either academics or as interpreters/clients.

Feedback

Dai—I think that our situation was complicated somewhat by the fact that we both had dual roles, me as supervisor, but also a client of interpreters; and you as post graduate researcher but also a professional interpreter. I know that getting and giving feedback to one another as an interpreter/client can

be something fraught with difficulties due to capital inequality, particularly linguistic capital. Do you think this was something we were very careful of initially when I joined your supervision team and we began a new relationship as supervisor/supervisee?

Vicky—It is very difficult for both the interpreter and the deaf client to give each other feedback because of the implications it may have either way. The deaf community often vote with their feet. Living a life where so many things are a fight, avoidance as an emblem of dissent is understandable. An interpreter may end up with no work, and the client may end up with no interpreter. Sometimes the feedback may be given in a form of a parable, "I knew this interpreter once who …". It is important to always listen to that and look honestly at my own behaviours. Sometimes it is appropriate to say to the deaf client using this parable that I am aware that I have also made the same mistake. This could end up with an open discussion about the "right" way to behave whilst enabling everyone to save face. But not many interpreters would tell a deaf person that their hearing aid is very noisy with feedback or tell them that the reason they keep making mistakes in their voiceover is because the deaf person is wearing a really loud shirt. The first instance is a demonstration of hearing privilege (only the hearing person can hear the feedback from the hearing aid), and the second could be construed as the interpreter dictating what the deaf person should wear.

When you joined the team, we did not have a relationship as client/interpreter, but only as supervisor/supervisee. The feedback you gave me was detailed and specific. You gave me suggested ways to rephrase, and so the emphasis of the feedback was on what I had done, not what I had thought. Discussions in the supervision sessions were often more about my thinking, and therefore I could defend my decisions face to face and we could work together to produce English versions of my ideas. There was only one time when we disagreed with each other completely, and that was about my including issues of power in my thesis. It is an area of theory that I am not well versed in and I did not want to weave a new thread into the thesis so late in the day. You understandably wanted me to talk about the power relations between deaf and hearing people and interpreters and their clients. I decided not to include it, but we agreed that it might be one of the things I would need to add in the corrections.

On a related note, it was odd at first to be corrected on my English by a deaf person. As an interpreter, I am often asked by deaf clients to check over their English, and part of my understanding of an interpreter's role is to be good at English. Although it is becoming more common for deaf people to be fully bilingual, my experience of working with deaf people so far has been that they may well be cleverer than me, certainly more articulate in BSL than me, but never better at written English than me. Going to a deaf person for help with my English felt strange at first.

Dai—How does the reluctance of deaf people and interpreters to give each other honest straightforward feedback influence the giving of feedback on written work/research work in this situation? There's the assumption again that you, as an interpreter, knew what you were doing. As a deaf person, I had some uncertainty about what I could offer. That also overlaps with the power consideration, I think. Interpreters are often seen as experts in everything, because you appear to know/be able to talk about everything and anything, even though we know you're just "saying what they said". I've had conversations with interpreters where they have explained this appearance of knowledge is all part of giving a good interpretation, but it's difficult to separate the appearance from the fact at a gut level. This assumption that you were the expert already made it quite difficult for me to see what I could offer in terms of feedback.

This assumption of expertise leads to many deaf people (I think) being unwilling to criticise or give feedback to interpreters in a constructive way for fear of being caught out. We don't actually know whether the information that has been passed on to us is correct, or if the way the interpreter is behaving is appropriate for the situation (Huag et al., 2017). I think that following from this, instead of giving feedback on how/why something was signed or how/why the interpreter behaved in a certain way,

deaf people can be reluctant to give detailed, specific feedback, because we are never sure whether we're right or not. This comes as well from the interpreter being the gatekeeper of knowledge. If they missed out, or mis-interpreted some important information, we would never know. If they didn't interpret something, was it even said?

Being asked for feedback on someone's performance as a sign language interpreter can be especially tricky, because the language is embodied to such an extent that sometimes it does become a personal criticism or comment on their physical appearance or abilities. How people sign is affected by their body size and shape, their mobility and so on, so it can be difficult to separate that from their language skills. I'm not sure exactly how much that applies to what we are talking about here, but it adds to the insecurity or uncertainty around giving and receiving feedback.

So put all that together and it can be very difficult to offer criticism to someone who works as a BSL interpreter. That's not very helpful when you have a PhD student who needs your feedback! So, I think it was with some trepidation that I started to give feedback on your work. Initially I think I focused mainly on your writing style, the grammar, the structure of your written work, but later on I started to give more feedback on content like, as discussed above, how power relations between interpreters and clients can affect their performance.

I think having clearly defined roles, without also working as interpreter/client during this period, really helped as well, because that avoided any sort of confusion. I was offering feedback on your written PhD work, and your academic interpretation of what was going on in your data, not on your professional practice as an interpreter.

Culture

Dai—Information sharing is so important to deaf people because there's so little access to incidental learning/word of mouth and so on. Anything you learn has to be shared. A lot of what is shared is personal experience. I mean, of course it must be, because there has traditionally not been any access to literature or other written records in deaf communities. If a student went to their supervisor with a question about something not directly linked to their PhD, a hearing supervisor might flag up some resources for them to read and leave it at that. But a deaf person wouldn't be able to leave it there. We might say, read this blog because it mentions something that happened to me in my PhD and then we'd launch into a big story about exactly what happened, how we felt, what we did, and so on. We illustrate the point with personal examples. It's definitely a deaf culture thing.

There is certainly a feeling sometimes, in common to a lot of other minority cultures, that your cultural identity is something that you should leave at the door "like a wet umbrella" (Kidman, 2007, p. 165), and you should appear as an unclassed, ungendered, unmarked academic body in a supervision meeting. However, this is something I've found impossible. As Manathunga (2011) says, "culture, politics and history matter in supervision" (p. 368).

It sometimes feels like there is a kind of secrecy around the process of completing a PhD. There is a feeling that much of the time supervisors like to preserve the hallowed mists of academia, making it into some kind of secret masonic rite of passage (see Lee & Green, 2009 for example), so that only those with the requisite cultural capital can navigate the process. That's anathema to the values of the deaf community. Sometimes you'll get deaf people who go through a process of becoming some sort of "elite" (not just a PhD, but becoming management, for example) and they "become hearing" by embracing these values. They can be seen as becoming a sort of "petit bourgeois" deaf who stop behaving like deaf people (Ladd, 2003). It's been a deliberate choice on my part to try and avoid being like that.

I think this is something that is positive about deaf values, the egalitarian ethos that everyone is equal, everyone deserves access to information, and it's something that I've tried to bring to my work in a hearing environment. I do the same with my other PhD students, and I've done the same with my

tutees and dissertation students and will do again. I don't talk down to them, and I value the information that they can share with me.

Did you find that there was conflict between the more deaf-centred culture I brought to the relationship and the academic-centred culture the other supervisors brought?

Vicky—All of the supervision team shared their knowledge with me, but certainly the manner in which it was shared differed. Culturally, the dissemination of information is done in a collegial way in the deaf community. No one is blamed for having missed information, rather the onus is on the informed to pass information to others. Academic success is premised on an individual finding things out for themselves. The deaf community aim for the *collective* to be informed. Equally, academic-centred culture appears to mystify the process of a PhD, with the end point being very vague and never definite. Your, more deaf-centred approach was to look at the main criteria (is it publishable, is it original, and so on) in order to judge if the work was of a PhD standard. I found this a more practical and accessible approach.

Conclusion

This is a short snapshot into a student–supervisor relationship that lasted two years, which has continued to evolve now into a relationship of academic peers, a relationship between client and interpreter, and between friends. It is not always easy to keep each of those strands of the relationship separate and we are not certain it is desirable to do so. Outside the pedagogic restrictions of the student–supervisor relationship this complexity is no longer problematic.

There are other deaf PhD supervisors working in academia who have supervised more hearing students than Dai has, but their expertise does not seem to have been committed to paper. Of course, there are many more deaf students who struggle with cultural and linguistic differences with hearing supervisors for their post–graduate qualifications and it is only fair that the focus is on them to develop skills and frameworks to ensure that their different cultural capital is recognised and does not get treated as a burden. However, there needs to be attention paid to how to create a hospitable, functional environment for them once they have reached an academic position in the university so that they can continue to be valued professionals in their field and in the wider scope of academia, working with other hearing colleagues, different conventions, ideas, processes and so on.

This article has outlined some of the issues and challenges, as well as the opportunities and learning experiences, that arose from this particular supervision context. Both Vicky and Dai were pushed out of their comfort zones and into their respective and collective zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) in several different aspects of their academic and professional practice. Learning on Vicky's part was not limited to her academic development as a doctoral candidate, but also as an interpreter and as an academic colleague. For Dai, learning was not just about how to develop his supervision, but also how to navigate and build relationships in the largely hearing world of academia.

The issues covered in this paper are not restricted only to deaf academics. There are many minority academics who wish to value and preserve their own identities and cultures within the academy and not hang them up at the door when they arrive at work. Examining how such academics can thrive while retaining the integrity of their identities and affiliations, whether this be heritage, gender, sexuality, disability or class–based, is vitally important work to ensure that diversity is respected and encouraged in higher education.

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Author Bios

Vicky Crawley is a researcher-practitioner British Sign Language / English interpreter. With an early interest in spoken languages, Vicky discovered British Sign Language at York University when studying French and Linguistics. She has been an interpreter for nearly 30 years, and currently specialises in mental health interpreting and VRS/VRI, her academic work centres around interpreting studies and linguistics.

Dai O'Brien is a Senior Lecturer in BSL and Deaf Studies in York St John University. He is deaf and uses BSL as his primary academic language, alongside written English. Dai's research currently focuses on deaf space—how deaf people navigate the largely hearing society in which they live. When not working he enjoys being with his family and thinking about doing yoga.