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**Sign and Speech in Family Interaction: Language Choices of Deaf Parents and their Hearing Children**

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**Sign and Speech in Family Interaction: Language Choices of Deaf  
Parents and their Hearing Children**

**by**

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# **Sign and Speech in Family Interaction: Language Choices of Deaf Parents and their Hearing Children**

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Hearing children whose parents are deaf live between two linguistic and cultural communities. As in other bilingual families, parents and children make choices in their home language use that influence the children's competence in the minority language—ASL—and language maintenance across generations. This dissertation presents 13 ethnographic interviews of hearing adults with deaf parents and case studies of three families, two with two deaf parents and three hearing sons (ages 3-16) and one with a deaf mother and her hearing 2-year-old daughter. Analysis of the adult interviews reveals that—despite variation in community affiliation and sign language ability and practice—these adult children of deaf parents share a functional language ideology in which family communication potentially involves effort; putting in such effort is appropriate only to the degree that it overcomes communication barriers.

Analysis of the family members' code choices in two hours of videotaped naturalistic interaction at home was supplemented by observation and interviews. The families' children behaved in a manner consistent with the interviewed adults' functional

language ideology, restricting their signing to times of communicative necessity. Using an analytical framework based on Bell's (1984; 2000) theory of audience design, I coded every communicative turn for the role of each family member (speaker/signer, addressee, participant, bystander) and for the communication medium (sign, gesture, mouthing, speech, etc.). The children consistently adjusted their code choices to their addressees, occasionally signing to their siblings, but always for an obvious purpose, e.g., keeping a secret. Only the oldest brother in each family showed any tendency to accompany speech to a sibling with signing when a deaf parent was an unaddressed participant. Between these fluent bilingual children, signing was available as a communicative resource but never the default option. Given that the hearing children even in these culturally Deaf families tended toward speech whenever communicatively possible, it is no surprise that children whose deaf parents have strong skills in spoken English might grow up with limited signing skills—as did some of the interviewed adults—and therefore restricted access to membership in the Deaf community.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

There are likely to be at least 1.5 million hearing people with deaf parents in the United States (Bull 1998), making up about 90% of all children of deaf parents (Schein and Delk 1974). If the parents are signers of American Sign Language and active in the larger Deaf community, those children are regularly exposed to two languages—English and ASL—and two cultural communities—Hearing and Deaf—and must negotiate their own positions and identities with regard to those languages and communities. As in other bilingual families, parents and children make choices in their home language use that influence the children’s competence in the minority language—ASL—and the maintenance of that language across generations. This dissertation presents 13 ethnographic interviews of hearing adults with deaf parents and case studies of three deaf-parented families with young hearing children in order to describe the families’ patterns of language choice at home. I draw connections between these language choice patterns, the hearing children’s sign language fluency, and their adult cultural affiliations. Analysis of the adult interviews reveals a functional language ideology that tends to promote the use of speech whenever communicatively possible. The language choice patterns of the observed children follow this tendency; despite high levels of ASL fluency, these children generally reserve sign for times of communicative necessity.

In spoken language communities, family language choices are central to minority language maintenance. If children stop learning and using their parents’ minority language in favor of a surrounding majority language, the minority language is in danger of disappearing from the community and—if not spoken elsewhere—is in danger of extinction. Signed languages appear never to be the primary language of any hearing population and are therefore always minority languages. Because the majority of deaf

people are born to hearing parents who likely know no sign, the family context may be less central to signed language maintenance than it is to spoken language maintenance. Instead deaf individuals find other routes—often through the schools—to the local signed language.

When sufficient numbers of deaf individuals begin to interact, signed languages can emerge with remarkable speed, as observed for Nicaraguan Sign Language (Senghas, Kita, and Özyürek 2004) and Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language (Sandler et al. 2005). However, factors such as educational and medical practice can threaten the existence of even well-established signed languages such as Australian Sign Language (Johnston 2006) and Mexican Sign Language (Ramsey and Ruíz Bedolla 2004). The risks of language endangerment would loom less large if most families with deaf parents perpetuated the use of signed languages across generations. Although the majority of children born to deaf parents are themselves hearing, the ability to hear obviously does not in itself preclude the acquisition and use of a signed language. If a signed language is a family's heritage language, will it consistently be passed on to hearing children and grandchildren? If not, why not? The results reported in this dissertation address these questions by exploring the mechanics of language choice within families with deaf parents and hearing children in the United States.

Throughout this dissertation I use the term “CODA” to refer to the hearing *children of deaf adults*. This term has wide currency but not universal acceptance among people involved with deafness. Some authors (e.g., Bishop and Hicks 2005; Bull 1998) prefer to write “Coda” or “coda,” reserving the form in all capital letters for the international organization of the same name. All of the participants in this study were aware of the term, but not all of them identified with it. I have chosen to use the term as a matter of convenience and to write it in capital letters because it is an acronym; this usage

is not meant to imply that the term is necessarily a label of group identity for the participants in this study. As is conventional among researchers of sign language and deafness, I make a distinction between uppercase and lowercase “d/Deaf,” using “deaf” to refer to people with hearing loss and “Deaf” to refer to the social and cultural aspects of deafness. I generally do not use “Deaf” to identify individuals, instead reserving it for expressions such as “Deaf community” and “Deaf identity.”

In Chapter 2, I address previous research relevant to CODAs’ language choices, beginning with a discussion of language use among immigrant families. CODAs are similar to second-generation immigrants (i.e., the first native-born generation) in a number of ways. Both groups often grow up with a home language different from the one used in the schools and in the larger community. Although many children acquire their parents’ language when young, they often come to prefer to use the majority language whenever possible, speaking it at home with siblings and with parents whose English skills permit it. Such language choices may impact the children’s competence in the minority language and the likelihood that they will pass that language on to their own children.

Previous research on young CODAs’ language use has focused primarily on the earliest stages of language acquisition, presenting CODAs as natively bilingual in sign and speech (e.g., Petitto et al. 2001). Studies of bimodal bilingual adults have shown them to use their two languages creatively through simultaneous combinations of signs and spoken words and through speech that follows ASL grammar (Bishop and Hicks 2005; Emmorey, Borinstein, and Thompson 2005). Through such language practices, these hearing adults with deaf parents perform and create bilingual, bicultural identities. However, adult CODAs vary widely in signing ability and in community affiliation (Preston 1994). In Chapters 3 and 4 I apply theoretical frameworks from research on

language ideologies (Kroskrity 2004) and audience design (Bell 1984, 2001) to address the question of how the language practices of CODAs in childhood lead to the variation observed among adults.

Chapter 3 presents results from the interviews of 13 adult CODAs. Analysis of the interviewees' moral judgments of their own and others' communicative behavior reveals that—despite variation in community affiliation and sign language ability and practice—these adult children of deaf parents have a language ideology in common. Under this functional language ideology, family communication may involve effort; putting in such effort is seen as appropriate only to the degree that it overcomes communication barriers between speakers/signers and their addressees. Signing is not necessarily seen as effortful; in fact, the interviewed CODAs generally described their own communication with their parents as easy or natural. However, when criticizing hearing grandparents or siblings who lacked signing skills and had trouble communicating with the CODAs' deaf parents, the interviewees framed their criticism in terms of a lack of appropriate effort. Deaf parents who failed to transmit signing skills to their hearing children were similarly seen as having failed to exert appropriate effort. At the same time, a number of the interviewed CODAs rejected prescriptions from ASL instructors or other representatives of the Deaf world concerning the proper way to sign ASL or to interact with deaf people. Having grown up in families where ease of communication could not be assumed, they valued the language practices of their families for their functionality, whatever the views of the outside Hearing and Deaf worlds on the families' combinations of ASL and English, speech and sign.

The context in which such a language ideology develops is in view among the families presented in Chapter 4. This chapter analyzes the language behavior of three deaf-parented families, two with two deaf parents and three hearing sons, and one

consisting of a deaf mother and her young daughter. Analysis of the family members' code choices in a total of two hours of videotaped naturalistic interaction at home was supplemented by observation and interviews. I coded every communicative turn for the role of each family member (speaker/signer, addressee, participant, bystander) and for the communication medium (sign, gesture, mouthing, speech, etc.). The children in the three-child families consistently adjusted their code choices to their addressees, generally speaking to their siblings and signing to their parents. The children in one family behaved differently even to their two parents, signing without voice to their father, but using more voice and less sign to their mother, who has greater receptive skills for spoken English. The children in these families occasionally signed to their siblings, but always for an obvious purpose, e.g., keeping a secret or teaching a sibling a sign. When a deaf parent was an unaddressed participant, only the oldest brother in each family showed any tendency to address a sibling in both speech and sign rather than in speech alone. Observation as well as parental report indicates that ASL competence was not a limiting factor for these CODAs. Between these fluent bilingual children, signing was available as a communicative resource but was never the default option.

Given that the hearing children even in these culturally Deaf families tended toward speech whenever communicatively possible, it is no surprise that children whose deaf parents have strong skills in spoken English might grow up with limited signing skills—as did some of the interviewed adults—and therefore have restricted access to membership in the Deaf community, which places a premium on ASL fluency. Even for those with fluent signing, their patterns of home language choice make it unlikely that their own hearing children will learn to sign if no deaf family members are consistently present in the household. Despite the best efforts of deaf parents to pass on their sign language and the dedication of CODAs to the concept of avoiding communication

barriers, most adult CODAs are likely to end up balancing between their deaf parents and their own hearing children, just as they spent their childhoods balanced between the larger Deaf and Hearing communities.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **1. FAMILY BILINGUALISM, LANGUAGE CHOICE, LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE, AND LANGUAGE SHIFT**

In the United States, the most common source of family bilingualism is immigration. Fishman (1972; 1980) and Veltman (1983) have described the three-generation pattern of language shift that immigrant groups typically go through. The members of the first generation to move to the United States remain more or less monolingual in their native language, with varying degrees of acquisition of English as a second language. Their second-generation children are bilingual, and the members of the third generation are monolingual in English. Within the second generation, competence in the heritage language can vary from full fluency to minimal passive knowledge. Large scale survey studies (e.g., Alba et al. 2002; Portes and Schauffler 1994) give an idea of the speed of language shift—including both acquisition of English and loss of the heritage language—in different communities, as well as some of the community factors that play a role in that shift. However, many such studies refer only to “language used at home” and do not provide any details of home language practices, such as who uses which languages and which combinations of languages to whom and what role codeswitching plays in family communication.

Those surveys or case studies that do address the details of family communication can provide a picture of how family members’ language choices interact with their levels of competence in English and in the heritage language. A number of studies indicate that in families in which the immigrant parents speak little to no English, English first gains entry into the home when used between siblings, even as the children continue to use the heritage language with their parents (Nguyen, Shin, and Krashen 2001; Young and Tran

1999; Zentella 1997). In her study of 20 families of Puerto Rican origin in New York, Zentella (1997) observed the following patterns of language use in the home:

Children's English increased in proportion to the amount of English understood and spoken by their parents.... When they [the parents who had migrated to the US as adolescents or young adults] spoke to their children..., some used English and those who did not allowed their children to respond in English as they came to understand it more. As a result, children's comprehension skills in Spanish and parents' comprehension skills in English outdistanced their ability to speak, read, or write their second language.... After one year in school, young children spoke to each other increasingly in English, even when their primary caretakers had not made any visible improvement in their knowledge of English. (p.78)

Despite this evidence of language shift in these families, the majority of the second-generation children were fluent in Spanish—either as balanced bilinguals or with stronger English—and used both of their languages with their siblings, with frequent codeswitching, rather than English alone. There were six families in Zentella's study whose children used only English with their siblings; however, the parents in those families had either migrated to the continental United States at a young age or been born there, making their children part of the third generation. All of the parents in those six families were bilingual, most of them stronger in English than in Spanish.

A survey of 106 Vietnamese parents in California similarly found significant use of the heritage language between second-generation siblings: 45% of the parents reported that their children used only Vietnamese to each other; 22% English only; and 33% both languages (Young and Tran 1999). The authors argued that these findings demonstrate evidence of language shift in the second generation, and it is true that in over half of the families, the children used some English to each other at home. However, the shift was clearly not complete, in that the children in a still larger majority (78%) of the families used at least some Vietnamese to their siblings.

Although, as reported by Zentella (1997), the degree of parents' fluency in English often affects children's language use at home, a case study by Vihman (1998)

indicated that strict use of the heritage language by bilingual parents living in the United States can influence young children to use that language, if not exclusively. Vihman tape recorded her own children—bilingual in Estonian and English—over a period of four years, when the older child ranged from 5 to 9 years old and the younger child ranged from 2 to 6 years old. Both parents were fluent in English but were careful to use only Estonian at home. Vihman reported that the children responded to their parents' Estonian in the same language, but that they often used English with each other. When they were unaware of the tape recorder, which she reported them seeing as a monitor of Estonian, 55-65% of their turns to each other were in English, and about 10% of their total turns included codeswitching. She analyzed the children's choice to use both languages when playing together as reflecting the combination of their identities both "as playmates and members of the larger community of their English-speaking peers" and "as siblings" in an Estonian-speaking family (pp. 57-8).

To the degree that Vihman's analysis is correct, it would be expected that her children's language choices might change depending on the relative importance of family and peers in their lives as they grew older. Another family case study, this one of a French-English bilingual family, showed this evolution as the children became adolescents. Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002) recorded their family's conversations at dinner over six years, when their son was 9-14 years old and their twin daughters were 7-12 years old. The mother was French Canadian and a fluent second-language speaker of English while the father was from the United States and a fluent second-language speaker of French. The parents spoke almost only French at home, and the family spent every school year in the United States and every summer in Québec. As young children, all of the children consistently used French at the family dinner table. However, at age 11, all three of the children reduced the amount of French that they spoke at dinner almost to

nothing when the family was in the United States, responding to their parents' French with English, knowing that their parents could understand them easily. In contrast, as soon as the family arrived in Québec every summer, the children began speaking almost exclusively French at the dinner table, a pattern that continued throughout the length of the study. The researcher-parents attributed these shifts across age and location to the influence of the children's peers and the increase of that influence as the children entered adolescence.

From these studies, it is clear that consistent parental use of a heritage language at home can foster their children's acquisition and use of that language with all family members when they are young, often with English codeswitching. However, as the children get older, especially as they enter adolescence, when the environment outside the home is consistently English-speaking, the children are likely to use increasing amounts of English when addressing any family members whose comprehension is sufficient. Many of those second-generation children maintain enough heritage language fluency and communicative competence for their interactions with the heritage community, but unless they change again from adolescence to adulthood, their language practices at home are likely to result in their own children becoming monolingual English speakers.

## **2. BILINGUALISM IN SIGN AND SPEECH**

### **2.1 Language Environment and Language Acquisition Among Young CODAs**

Previous research on young CODAs' language use has focused primarily on the earliest stages of language acquisition. In general, hearing children in signing families begin to acquire ASL along the same schedule as deaf children in such families (e.g., Orlansky and Bonvillian 1985). Although some early studies found delays in the

development of spoken English (Sachs, Bard, and Johnson 1981; Schiff and Ventry 1976), most have found unproblematic acquisition of both speech and sign, following norms for bilingual acquisition (e.g., Holowka, Brosseau-Lapre, and Petitto 2002; Jones and Quigley 1979; Mayberry 1976). Like other bilingual children, young CODAs learn early to adjust their language choices to their addressees (Griffith 1985). Despite these portraits of young CODAs as natively bilingual in sign and speech, many adult CODAs report limited signing abilities (Preston 1994). Little information is available about what happens between preschool and adulthood to cause this change and whether this common lack of sign language fluency stems from an initial failure to acquire the language or from later language attrition.

An obvious factor in the development of CODAs' sign language skills is the degree to which ASL is in fact the primary language in households with deaf parents. On the topic of spoken-language bilingualism, Hamers and Blanc (2000) reported that "an estimate of 20 percent of the time spent in interaction in one language is considered as necessary for spontaneous production in that language" (p. 64). Many CODAs may not receive this amount of input in ASL. Orally-educated or mainstreamed deaf parents whose own parents are hearing may not themselves be fluent signers of ASL and may therefore be incapable of presenting their children with fluent input in the language. Even those parents who use ASL with each other may not consistently use it with their hearing children.

Van den Bogaerde and Baker (van den Bogaerde 2000; van den Bogaerde and Baker 2005; van den Bogaerde and Baker in press) have addressed some of the variation in CODAs' language acquisition and language choices through a longitudinal study of four deaf Dutch mothers and their three deaf and three hearing children. Van den Bogaerde (2000) presented results for when the children were between 1 and 3 years old.

During this period, to both deaf and hearing children, the majority of the mothers' utterances (65% to deaf and 70% to hearing) were code-blends; i.e., they included both signs from the Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT) and features of spoken Dutch, either mouthing or spoken words. The mothers used NGT alone with the deaf children in one-third of their utterances but with the hearing children in only 8% of their utterances. Twenty-two percent of the utterances addressed to the hearing children consisted of Dutch only, but only 2% of the utterances addressed to the deaf children did. Grammatically, the code-blended utterances were not uniform: those addressed to the deaf children generally followed the grammar of NGT, while many of those addressed to the hearing children were grammatical for spoken Dutch. The mothers also produced significantly more "mixed code-blended" utterances to their hearing children than to their deaf children (van den Bogaerde and Baker 2005). These are utterances "where both the signs and words are necessary to make up the full proposition" (p. 159). The hearing children produced more code-blended utterances than the deaf children, including many more in the mixed code-blended category. Van den Bogaerde (2000) argued that both groups of children were successfully acquiring NGT and the hearing children were simultaneously acquiring spoken Dutch, but that the development of the hearing children in NGT was somewhat slower, as evidenced in the children's acquisition of both the negation marker and verb agreement.

Study of the same hearing children over a longer timeframe demonstrated how their and their mothers' productive language choices changed over three time periods: when the children were 1 year six months old, 3 years old, and 6 years old (van den Bogaerde and Baker in press). Across that period, the three mothers always used many code-blended utterances; for two of the mothers, code-blends made up the majority of their utterances at all ages. In utterances that were not code-blended, the mothers used

more Dutch alone than NGT alone at age 1;6; as the children got older, the mothers' use of Dutch tended to decrease and their use of NGT tended to increase, such that they used little to no Dutch alone when their children were 6;0. Of their code-blended utterances, the proportion of utterances with NGT as the grammatical base language increased over time. The authors did not speculate on reasons for the mothers' changes but pointed out that the children's language choices could not be directly predicted by the input they received from their mothers. For example, at age 3, two of the mothers significantly increased the amount of NGT that they addressed to their children at the same time that the children decreased their use of non-code-blended NGT almost to nothing.

There was variation between the children in language choice patterns, with two of them tending more toward Dutch than the third, although all three produced large numbers of code-blends. Both of the Dutch-leaning children had one hearing or hard-of-hearing parent and at least one set of hearing grandparents, while the NGT-leaning child had only deaf parents and grandparents. Nevertheless, the authors argued that the number of deaf family members was not the sole determinant of the children's language choices. The child who was most strongly oriented toward Dutch had two younger deaf siblings and a deaf aunt, while the other two children had only hearing siblings. A strong effect was found for the mothers' interactional behavior; i.e., whether they adopted a "monolingual strategy," insisting on fully signed utterances by asking for clarification of code-blended or spoken utterances, or whether they adopted a "bilingual strategy," accepting such utterances as long as they could understand them.

Only one study provides a picture of parent-child interaction when the CODAs are older, between the ages of 7 and 18. Mallory, Zingle, and Schein (1993) conducted interviews with 15 deaf parent-hearing child dyads, finding that although 11 of the parents preferred to use ASL with their spouses, only four parents and one child reported

using ASL in parent-child interaction. All others reported using some combination of spoken English, signed English (signing that parallels English grammar), fingerspelling, and contact sign (signing influenced by English word order, but without many of the grammatical features of either ASL or English). The researchers' recognition of the complex linguistic situation—with ASL grammatically unrelated to English but with other, more English-like forms of signing available—reveals the choices in language use that parents and children have. These choices may reflect not only linguistic competence and the need for communication, but also the family members' attitudes, ideologies, and senses of their own identities and those of their addressees.

## **2.2 Bilingual Language Behavior Among Adult CODAs**

As adults, those CODAs who are bimodal bilinguals can combine their languages creatively in interaction with other bilinguals. In addition to the possibility of codeswitching that bilinguals in spoken languages have, the different modalities of CODAs' two languages allow them to produce elements of both simultaneously, producing code-blends.

Emmorey, Borinstein, and Thompson (2005) analyzed how 11 CODAs retold an animated cartoon; each subject retold the cartoon once to an English monolingual and twice to other ASL-English bilinguals. In retelling the cartoon to ASL-English bilinguals, the CODAs were allowed a free choice of language in one instance, but were instructed to use SimCom in the other, i.e., they were asked to attempt to create a full grammatical message in both languages simultaneously. When communicating freely with other bilinguals, the participants rarely code-switched, producing only 5% of their ASL signs without speech, but often produced code-blends: “Twenty-three percent of English words were accompanied by an ASL sign” (p. 669). Almost all of the code-blends were

semantically equivalent, but the fact that the largest number of them were verbs meant that the participants could add visual-spatial nuances that were not present in the word. Some participants produced occasional examples of ASL-influenced speech with simultaneous signing, and one produced almost the whole narrative that way: “It may be that ASL was actually the base language of production, not English” (p. 668). No ASL-influenced English was used with a monolingual audience, but occasional ASL signs did occur, accompanying 6% of the spoken words. The authors took these results to indicate that the participants’ knowledge of ASL affects their co-speech gesture, likely because the two share a modality. Compared with the other retellings, the participants’ retellings of the cartoon in SimCom contained more frequent speech dysfluencies and a slightly lower degree of semantic equivalence between signs and words, most likely resulting from the difficulty of producing simultaneous utterances from two different grammatical systems. Like many spoken-language bilinguals, these bimodal bilinguals demonstrated skill at integrating their two languages in conversation with other bilinguals, although the artificial task of SimCom created some difficulties.

The ASL-influenced speech noted in the above study was the subject of a study of emails between CODAs (Bishop and Hicks 2005). Along with Preston (1994), Bishop and Hicks credit the development and growth of the CODA organization with the increased use of “CODA-talk” among some of its members. Although originating in simultaneous sign and speech, CODA-talk moved to written form, including both ASL grammatical structures with English words and “visual descriptions of the ASL sign” (p. 208); for example, ORANGE-EYES is used to mean “amazing” because the sign AMAZING looks like the sign ORANGE made in front of the eyes. CODA-talk is one way that some CODAs use their linguistic resources creatively to mark shared identity within a bilingual community.

### **2.3 CODA Identity and Culture**

Many researchers (e.g., Padden 1980; Padden and Humphries 1988; Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan 1996) have discussed the status of deafness as a culture shared by a community. Under this view, hearing ability is a less central definer of Deaf cultural membership than are sign language ability and knowledge of cultural norms. The outsiders' view of deafness, under which identification as "deaf" depends on hearing ability, contrasts with the insiders' view of deafness as a culture. Despite the differences between these views, both set up a dichotomy between h/Hearing and d/Deaf, such that being one means not being the other. Thus, the status of CODAs—hearing people growing up in deaf families—is unclear. Singleton and Tittle (2000) presented this ambiguity by stating both that “Deaf parents are essentially raising ‘foreign’ children” (p. 227) and that these children are “bicultural and bilingual members of the Deaf community” (p. 228). Both Preston (1994) and Bull (1998) described significant variation and uncertainty in CODAs' cultural affiliations, with identities that shift across time and situations: “We are neither deaf nor hearing. We are both deaf and hearing” (Preston 1994, 236). With English symbolically linked to the Hearing world and ASL to the Deaf world, family language choices can both create and reflect family members' cultural affiliations. Under the cultural view of deafness, CODAs are potential members of the Deaf community, in that they are potential native signers who may be socialized into Deaf culture. However, because many do not in fact become fluent signers, this potential community membership is often unrealized.

## **2.4 Other Cases of Sign/Speech Bilingualism**

In the United States of today, CODAs are the only hearing people likely to be natively fluent in a signed language. However, in villages around the world where deaf people make up a relatively high percentage of the population, both deaf and hearing villagers are fluent in the village sign language. Nonaka (in press) explained that in such villages in general, there is little to no distinction between deaf and hearing people in education, occupation, or social identity. Nevertheless, hearing signers in the Thai village where she did her research, Ban Khor, seem to use sign only with deaf people or “when they are unable or unwilling to be heard” (p. 5; footnote 5), for example, when riding a loud tractor or when trying to keep a secret. In a personal conversation, Carol Padden reported to me that based on her observations, the same generalization appeared to hold true for hearing signers of Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language (ABSL) in southern Israel. In Groce’s (1985) description of the use of sign language on Martha’s Vineyard in the nineteenth century, she discussed a number of contexts where hearing people would tend to sign with each other without deaf people present, including communication at a distance, in a noisy environment, or for privacy in public. The hearing Islanders appear to have viewed such switches into sign language as unremarkable; nevertheless, such switches do not seem to have occurred except when the spoken language would be less effective at communicating the message. It is striking that the use of these village sign languages would be so restricted among hearing signers, despite the lack of social distinctions between hearing and deaf people and the widespread sign/speech bilingualism in the hearing population.

### 3. LANGUAGE CHOICE AND AUDIENCE DESIGN

To analyze the language choices in this study's families, I will be using a framework based on Bell's (1984; 2001) theory of audience design. Bell argued that style shifting and language shifting can be accounted for by the ways that speakers design their utterances for their audience. Bell used Goffman's (1981) deconstruction of "speaker" and "hearer" roles to divide audience members into addressees (known to be present, ratified as participants, and addressed by the current utterance), auditors (known, ratified, and unaddressed), overhearers (known, unratified as participants, and unaddressed), and eavesdroppers (unknown, unratified, and unaddressed). According to Bell, people generally design their utterances primarily for the addressee. However, sometimes those peripheral positions do have influence, and that influence is likely to be stronger for language shifting rather than style shifting. Bell (1984) cited examples from Dorian (1981) and Gal (1979) of communities where groups of bilinguals consistently switched languages in the presence of a single monolingual auditor:

The sharper the linguistic differences between codes, the larger the issue of intelligibility looms, the stronger are the pressures to accommodate to the audience, and hence the greater the influence of peripheral members on the speaker. Use of a language which is unintelligible to any interlocutor defines that person out of the audience. It is the ultimate in dissociative behaviour, designating the uncomprehending hearer an unratified eavesdropper, a nonmember, even a nonperson. (p. 176)

Clark (1992), also citing Goffman, looked at audience design from an information-structure perspective, making similar distinctions between the roles of the members of the audience. According to Clark, in a canonical conversation "the speaker is responsible for designing his utterance so that all the parties to the conversation can keep track of what he is saying" (pp. 219-220), and "there is really only one legitimate attitude speakers can take toward other parties in the conversation, and that is to be openly

informative” (p. 255). For overhearers, however, speakers have four options: “1. Indifference... 2. Disclosure... 3. Concealment: ... so that the overhearers cannot grasp [the message] and will recognize that they cannot do so. 4. Disguisement... overhearers will be deceived into thinking that [the message] is something that it is not” (p. 256). For concealment, the speaker can switch to a different code, whether a spy code or a different language; Clark gave the example of immigrant parents using their heritage language to conceal information from their children. Given the strong effect of code choice on comprehension by members of families with deaf parents and hearing children, audience design is a fruitful framework for the analysis of family language choices.

#### **4. LANGUAGE CHOICE AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES**

Language choices may be driven by multiple factors, including accommodation to an audience, discourse topic, setting, and the conversational participants’ social and cultural identities. The ways that speakers/signers explain their own choices to themselves and to others reveal their ideologies concerning the languages in question. *Language ideologies* have been defined as “beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds” (Kroskrity 2004, 498), including “their loading of moral and political interests” (Irvine 1989, 255). Language ideologies arise from the sociolinguistic situation and reinforce or change that situation by framing the ways that speakers think about languages and language behavior. Analytically, language ideologies provide a useful tool for understanding the driving forces behind language behavior and for fitting that behavior into a larger framework that includes interaction with social power structures. For example, Kroskrity (2000, 333) described the role of language ideologies among the Arizona Tewa in “promot[ing] a unifying model for speech behavior that crosscuts clan and class divisions” and in “provid[ing] specific cultural resources for

maintaining maximally distinctive languages that can serve as the symbolic and communicative vehicles for their indexically associated social identities.” Kroskrity pointed out cultural preferences stemming from Arizona Tewa ceremonial practice that have been extended through the community. These include an “ideological preference for convention and precedent” (p. 336), linguistic purism, through which multilingual fluency is valued but language mixing is dispreferred, “strict compartmentalization,” in which linguistic levels or codes are clearly associated with specific situations, and the “linguistic indexing of identity,” through which speakers mark their situational roles through particular language practices. Kroskrity argued that the language ideologies of the Arizona Tewa community have helped foster the maintenance of their language and ethnic identity in a multilingual and multicultural environment despite frequent, necessary, and highly valued interaction with both the Hopi and the American English languages and cultures.

In families with deaf parents and hearing children, all of the family members are likely to develop ideologies about the languages used in the family that play back into those family members’ language choices at home. Language ideologies provide a useful analytical framework for tying together multiple kinds of linguistic data—interviewee reports and narratives as well as observed family behavior—and for finding structure among individual variation. The following chapter introduces a language ideology through which the adult CODAs that I interviewed interpreted and evaluated their own and others’ behaviors.

## **Chapter 3: Hearing Adults Whose Parents Are Deaf**

Hearing adults whose parents are deaf were interviewed on the topic of language use in their families. The goals of these interviews were to sketch 1) the range of variation in language behavior in these families; 2) the range of variation in sign language abilities among these CODAs; and 3) some of the demographic, cultural, ideological, and personal factors that played into this variation. I found a large amount of variation between the interviewees in all of these areas; however, analysis of the interviews revealed a language ideology that they all share, centered around the idea of effort in family communication.

### **1. METHODS**

#### **1.1 Interview Participants**

I interviewed 13 adult CODAs from 11 families. My goal in recruiting participants was to obtain a group that varied in community affiliation and in sign language proficiency and use. I obtained contact information for potential interviewees through friends, colleagues, and personal connections in the Deaf community. All but one of the interviewed CODAs have two deaf or hard-of-hearing parents, and all have only hearing siblings. All of their grandparents are hearing. This combination of deaf and hearing family members is the most common one for families with deaf parents, given that 90-95% of deaf people have hearing parents (Gallaudet Research Institute 2006), and 90-95% of children with deaf parents are hearing (Schein and Delk 1974). Including families with one hearing and one deaf parent or with both deaf and hearing children would clearly have impacted my findings; there nevertheless remained significant

differences between the interviewees. By allowing little variability in family makeup with respect to hearing status, I have cut down on the complexity of finding patterns in family language use. The pseudonyms and basic demographics for the interviewees appear in Table 1. Kevin, Derek, and Craig are brothers; Derek and Craig were interviewed together.

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Description of parents' hearing status</b>	<b>Sign language interpreter?</b>	<b>Birth rank among siblings</b>
Allison	20	both deaf	no	oldest of 2
Daniel	21	F deaf, M hard-of-hearing	no	only child
Tabitha	21	both deaf	no	youngest of 3
April	23	both deaf	yes	second of 5
Kevin	24	both deaf	no	fourth of 5
Derek	26	both deaf	no	third of 5
Craig	28	both deaf	no	second of 5
Rachel	29	M late-deafened, F hearing, not involved with family	no	oldest of 4
Lisa	35	both hard-of-hearing	no	oldest of 2
Bev	40's	both deaf	yes	second of 3
David	56	both deaf	no	oldest of 3
Boyce	61	both deaf	yes	youngest of 3
Sara	66	M deaf, F hard-of-hearing	yes	oldest of 4

Table 1: Interview Participants

## 1.2 Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured: I covered the issues addressed in my list of questions, but I was happy for the participants to add stories or take the conversation in other related directions. The questions covered topics such as the interviewees' experience and skill in sign language, typical interactions within the family, connections to the Deaf community, and interactions between the family and the Hearing world. The interviews tended to last about an hour; the shortest was 25 minutes, and the longest was one hour and 45 minutes. The questions appear in Appendix A. I videotaped the

interviews in order to have a record of any signs that the participants produced. I transcribed the interviews in full, including both spoken and signed productions. IRB approval had been obtained.

## **2. VARIATION IN REPORTED FAMILY LANGUAGE BEHAVIOR**

There was significant variation in the interviewees' reported sign language behavior and fluency. Three of the 13 interviewed CODAs sign ASL fluently enough that they reported deaf people regularly mistaking them for deaf. Of those, Bev and Daniel said they feel more comfortable using ASL than English; Boyce emphasized the balance between his two languages in exposure, use, skill, and emotional connection. April is an ASL interpreter who feels that her English is stronger than her ASL, but who was thrilled the one time a deaf person mistook her for deaf; generally people ask whether her parents are deaf. Six of the others (including three in the same family) described their signing as "English sign language," "Englishy," or "transliterating." Of the final three, Allison and Rachel stated that they are comfortable signing with their parents but self-conscious about signing with deaf strangers, while Lisa said that she is "in no way fluent in any type of sign" but knows enough for basic communication. It is important to note that fluency and type of signing are not the same thing; i.e., it is not the case that interviewees who claim to use ASL are necessarily more comfortable signing than those who say that they use something more English-based. For example, Rachel declared definitely that she signs ASL, but she was one of the two who is somewhat uncomfortable signing with deaf strangers. Although all of the interviewees reported knowing some form of sign, four of them have siblings who do not sign at all, and three have siblings whose signing knowledge is limited to fingerspelling. The differences between these CODAs represent

not just differences in ability, but also in how they use their languages; while language ability and language practice influence each other, they do not determine each other.

Many of the CODAs that I interviewed were in a bilingual environment from birth; nevertheless, all of them reported having learned one language before the other. The gap between the time they learned this first language and the time they learned their second ranged from a few months to many years. As shown in Figure 1 below, eight of the interviewed CODAs (including Craig, Derek, and Kevin from the same family) learned sign first, and five learned speech first. Timing influenced but did not determine which language they were ultimately stronger in. All three interviewees who ended up with ASL at least as strong as spoken English (Bev, Boyce, and Daniel) claimed ASL as their first language. However, five of the ten interviewees who ended up English-dominant also reported learning to sign before learning to talk, while the other five claimed English as both their first and their currently dominant language.

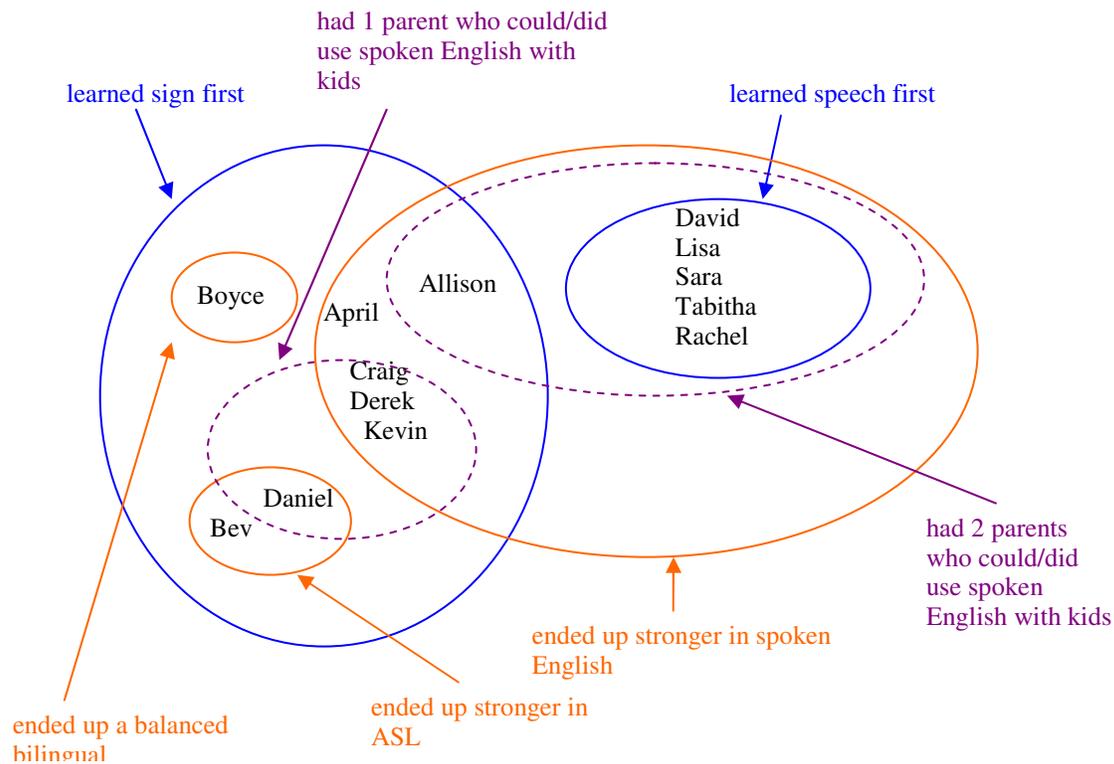


Figure 1: Language Acquisition and Adult Language Dominance

For almost all of these CODAs, ASL is their parents’ preferred language, and spoken English is the language of school and the surrounding community. The pattern of learning ASL first but later becoming more fluent in spoken English is consistent with anecdotal reports of “normal” CODA-ness that circulate in the Deaf community, as well as with common patterns in immigrant communities. Allison and April both located the beginnings of their shift from ASL-dominance to English-dominance at the point at which they started school. For the brothers Craig, Derek, and Kevin, the shift seems to have come earlier: Kevin said that he produced his first signs before his first words, but that “it wasn’t too long before English kinda took over.”

The CODAs who learned sign first and ended up balanced or English-dominant all lived with or near hearing grandparents as young children. Such a living situation is

not necessary for this outcome, however; Bev considers her siblings to be balanced bilinguals, while she herself feels stronger in ASL. The family had no hearing relatives living nearby and learned English from other kids and from TV. Bev's preference for sign was likely influenced by the fact that she was undiagnosed as hard-of-hearing through her childhood (although her hearing was later corrected by surgery); she nevertheless acquired spoken English when very young. Daniel learned English from his hearing aunt around age 3; his feeling of ASL-dominance is perhaps based more on emotional connections than on actual fluency.

The CODAs who had two parents capable of using spoken English with their children were the only interviewees with siblings who sign minimally or not at all. The parents in this group had varying preferences for their children's language use when the children were young; David's and Lisa's parents did not sign even to each other, while Allison's and Rachel's parents much preferred to communicate in sign with everybody. Despite this variation, every CODA in this group reported having at least one sibling with signing skills that are minimal or nonexistent.

David, Lisa, and Rachel all reported being better productively than receptively in sign. This asymmetry reflects the fact that once learned, spoken language is easier for deaf people to produce than to understand. Only a small percentage of speech sounds are clearly distinguishable visually, meaning that "successful speechreading [lipreading] is due more to good guesses as to which words and phrases are being spoken than to visual recognition of speech sound" (Mayberry and Wodlinger-Cohen 1987, 154). All three of these interviewees have parents who are comfortable producing spoken English and who consistently do so when addressing their children. David's and Lisa's parents depend primarily on lipreading for comprehension. Lisa described her parents as hard-of-hearing; they speak to each other as well as to their hearing children. As a child, her signs were

“more show-and-tell than communication,” used mainly with her parents’ deaf friends. As her parents got older and their hearing worsened, she found signs useful in supplementing her spoken communication with them. David’s parents also spoke to their children and to each other, often without voice, and David’s father did not sign at all. After David learned to sign as an adult and his mother became increasingly involved in the signing Deaf community, David began to use signs with her, along with English mouthing. Rachel’s mother became deaf as an adult, when Rachel herself was ten years old. At home, Rachel’s mother speaks to her children, and they sign back. This kind of interaction illustrates the difficulty of lipreading even for a native speaker of English. All three of these CODAs had much less practice receiving than producing signs, because their parents rarely signed to them; the asymmetry in their skills is thus unsurprising. Sara reported the opposite asymmetry in her early learning of sign. When she was young, her parents spoke to her and her siblings and did not try to teach them signs; the children yelled and/or gestured back. However, the parents signed to each other. In this situation, Sara “learned how to read it, before I really learned how to do it.” In all of these cases, asymmetries in the children’s sign production and comprehension are directly related to the language practices of their parents.

Children’s language acquisition is clearly related to their parents’ language practices at home; however, the children’s own language practices are not necessarily determined by the parents’ preferences. A number of the interviewees reported areas of contestation between parents and children in reference to the children’s language choices. For example, Rachel, Allison, and Tabitha reported that some of their siblings resisted the parents’ desire to be addressed in sign. April and Kevin said that their parents wanted the siblings to sign to each other so that the parents could follow the conversation; such signing almost never occurred. Overall, when growing up, these hearing children seem to

have used speech rather than sign whenever they could get away with it, regardless of their parents' preferences and their own level of sign language competence. Only one interviewee, Boyce, reported that he and his brothers regularly codeswitched without noticing between ASL and English. All others signed with their siblings only for functional purposes such as communicating at a distance or keeping quiet in church.

In six of the eleven families, differences between the two parents in hearing, in language abilities, and/or in language preferences were mentioned as significant. Differences included the related factors of hearing acuity, clarity and comfort with speech, lipreading skill, sign variety, and amount of voicing while signing. This last factor was not necessarily correlated with how Englishy the signing was. For example, April described her father's signing as more ASL and her mother's as more PSE (Pidgin Sign English) but said that her father regularly used his voice when communicating with his children, while her mother never did. These differences between parents led to differences in how the children communicated with them.

When there are differences in the language abilities or preferences of the two parents, individual relationships between parents and children seem to come into play in the children's language practice and language competence. During his interview, Daniel talked much more about his deaf father than his hard-of-hearing mother, a difference that may reflect a closer relationship with that parent. Craig, Derek, and Kevin have a mother who signs ASL and a father with somewhat more hearing who communicates with his children using a combination of spoken English and English-based signing. The youngest child in that family is a sister with stronger ASL than most of her brothers. Significantly younger than her brothers and the only girl, she developed a closer relationship with her mother than did the boys, each one year apart in age, who seem to have spent much of their childhoods hanging out together. Such individual relationships also influenced

differences between siblings in Rachel's family: she attributed her sister's lack of signing to a more difficult relationship with their mother.

The language situation in the families of the interviewed CODAs did not necessarily remain static; changes in the parents' lives influenced language choices for all family members. A number of parents changed in hearing status over time, Rachel's mother most strikingly. Within Rachel's family, only her youngest brother signs with great fluency; reportedly only he feels a strong social connection to the Deaf community. He was 5 years old when his mother became deaf and began developing a career and social life in the Deaf community; Rachel, the oldest, was 10. As mentioned above, Lisa found signs increasingly useful as her previously hard-of-hearing parents aged and their hearing diminished. Tabitha's and David's mothers were educated orally and used significant amounts of spoken English in all areas of their lives. Both of them became increasingly affiliated with the signing Deaf community and increasingly strong signers after divorcing their oral deaf husbands. In David's family, this change occurred after the children were grown, but Tabitha and her siblings were still at home. The timing of her mother's changes in language use and social affiliation likely influenced the fact that among her siblings, only Tabitha, the youngest, learned to sign. Changes in prevalent language attitudes outside the home also influenced family members' language choices. For example, I mentioned above that Sara's parents did not sign to their hearing children when they were young. She noticed a marked contrast in how they communicated with her own hearing children years later: they made a point of teaching ASL to their grandchildren, reacting to a rise in that language's prestige.

At the end of every interview, I asked each of the interviewees to speculate on reasons why CODAs' signing skills vary so much. Among them, they covered all the bases. David, who had grown up never seeing people sign, said that the difference was in

exposure to the signing Deaf community. Tabitha and Allison, whose parents could function in spoken English, said that it depended on the parents' speech and hearing: children who had to sign to communicate with their parents ended up signing as fluently as deaf people, while children who could get along with speech did not. Rachel, observing significant differences between her siblings, said that it depended on each child's relationship to his or her parents. Derek concurred when he described comparing his own signing to that of other CODAs at the Deaf church: "That was something I always judged, about...how close someone was to their parents, and you could tell by how good they could sign." April expressed some bewilderment that children with deaf parents would not naturally learn to sign, but guessed that in those cases, perhaps the parents had not insisted strongly enough that the children learn and use it. Both Bev and Sara raised issues of the parents' social class and education as factors influencing their children's signing. Bev argued that the children of Deaf community leaders grew up with a confidence and self-esteem that was reflected in their signing, in contrast to those who had grown up watching their parents struggle for acceptance and financial stability within a harsher Hearing world. One aspect of that Hearing world consisted of the CODAs' hearing grandparents: "Are Grandma and Grandpa...saying signing's bad, are the kids hearing that?" Regardless of the specific reasons proposed, all of the interviewees were extremely aware of variation between CODAs. In fact, many of them expressed a concern that perhaps they were not the best people for me to interview, as they were not typical of CODAs in general. This impression of their own atypicality was held by CODAs at all degrees of cultural Deafness and ASL fluency. Their consciousness of the differences among hearing children of deaf parents led them to warn the outside observer against assuming that they make up a uniform group.

### **3. THEMES IN THE DISCUSSION OF FAMILY LANGUAGE BEHAVIOR**

During the interviewees' discussions of language use in their families, a number of recurring themes arose, including issues of embarrassment connected to language, the effect of the linguistic situation on the power structure in the family, and relationships between language and identity.

#### **3.1 Language and Embarrassment**

Many of the interviewed CODAs stated that living in a family with deaf parents was simply normal to them; it was the only kind of family they had ever known. However, when they were outside the home, an awareness of their difference from Hearing norms was often forced upon them. A few of the parents demonstrated embarrassment of their language use; when Sara was growing up in the 1950's, her mother was ashamed to sign in public:

- (1) And the funny thing is, we'd go shopping, I'd go with my mother,... and I would sign to her, and she'd go, no, no, no, no, no <repeated downward gesture>, don't sign. So I mean, their concept of signing was really, that they were ashamed of it.

In the case of Rachel's mother, the awareness of difference led her to use sign rather than speech:

- (2) If we're in a restaurant or something, she'll sign. Something where she's self-conscious about her voice. But if we're just home, then she just uses her voice.

More commonly, it was the children who expressed embarrassment about their parents' language use in public. Tabitha contrasted her own fortunate experiences at school with those of other CODAs:

- (3) I was lucky my parents can talk, they sound fairly normal.... But I've had friends ... whose parents really can't talk. Their speech is unintelligible. So they sign. And I've seen them be made fun of, because their parents do sign.

Although she avoided ridicule at school, Tabitha nevertheless faced embarrassment in other public places. Her mother was unimpressed by her daughter's concern:

- (4) When I sign with my mom, everybody looks.... When I was younger, I used to just want to bury my head and like hide. Cause, as a child, you're self-conscious anyway, you don't want everybody looking at you.... She usually would [talk]. Like, the only time she would really sign is if it was something she wanted to tell me that she didn't want to announce to everybody, or ... if it was really loud and noisy.... But she'd only like sign to us, for the embarrassment factor, if we made a big production out of being embarrassed by it, then you were gonna get sign.

Allison dealt with a similar feeling of embarrassment by insisting that she should be the one to interact with the Hearing world:

- (5) I just wanted to like overtake the responsibility of communicating for them whenever we were out in public, cause like speaking was the normal thing to do.... And when you're little, ... you just wanna be like everybody else. And so I was probably pretty forceful at saying, no, Mom, I'll tell them what you want.

Those CODAs who expressed feeling embarrassed by their parents' language use in public generally labeled it as a youthful phase that they overcame as they matured.

In addition to changes dependent on individual CODAs' age and maturity level, historical changes in Hearing attitudes toward sign language were also evident in their interviews. Only the oldest interviewees had parents who were embarrassed to sign in public, and the teasing and bullying that the interviewees reported experiencing as children because of their parents' deafness appeared to be less severe and less frequent—though not nonexistent—among the younger CODAs. Most of the CODAs now in their 20's described the dominant reaction of their peers to their parents' signing as either fascination or indifference: generally, their classmates found sign language cool. In addition, changes in technology and in the availability of professional sign language interpreters meant that as children, the younger CODAs tended to have done less interpreting for their parents, especially in official or business contexts. Nevertheless,

even the youngest had sometimes interpreted for their parents in both face-to-face and telephone interactions. Preston (1994, 1996) has discussed at length the role of CODAs as interpreters between their parents and the Hearing world; I did not address this issue in depth in the current study.

### 3.2 Language and Power/Control/Protection

Not all CODAs expressed feeling embarrassed by their parents; in fact, some of those who faced the harshest ridicule took common cause with them, standing on their side against the world. Part of being on their side was protecting them in choosing what to interpret. Bev told a story about her first day of school; even at that young age she felt a need to protect her mother in that way.

- (6) I remember going to kindergarten my very very very first day, it was a nightmare. My mom was walking me to school, ... and there was a lot of kids walking with us, but they were making fun of her. And my mom, so innocent, she'd look at me and she'd say, you can go with them. Go, go go, you can walk with them, I'll just follow, watch to make sure you get to school okay. And I'm like, oh, no, that's fine. I want to be with you. I want to be with you. And I'm hearing all these kids, (chanting) deaf and dumb, deaf and dumb, na na na, y'know, just, and I just wanted to <clenches fist>, but **I was protecting my mom. I didn't want her to feel bad.**

Lisa acknowledged that such protection was also a play for power in the family. Like a number of the other CODAs, she refrained from letting her parents know when they were being mocked. She also took on extra responsibilities for communicating with the outside world:

- (7) I would interpret what the salespeople said, I would take all the phone calls, I would handle everything.... I definitely took on more of it than they needed me to.

CODAs can use this power to edit and interpret to their own advantage. Daniel said that the only time he would deliberately hide speech from his parents was to withhold some of his interactions with hearing friends:

- (8) My friend would say something that probably would get me in trouble, and I wouldn't sign it, my response back, I would just say it, and if my parents asked me what happened, I'd kinda like generalize as much as I could. And they'd be like, oh, oh, okay.

Lisa, whose parents were strong lipreaders, sometimes similarly controlled the flow of information at parent-teacher conferences:

- (9) I'd sit there and if the teacher was talking and would move away <turns head>, my parents would just sort of sit and wait for the teacher to turn back around, and I would be the one saying, you have to turn around, they can't hear you.... Unless it was something I didn't particularly want heard.

Eight of the 13 interviewed CODAs used the phrase "taking advantage" to refer to such behavior, whether they were admitting to it or denying it. Their access to spoken language gave them an advantage over their parents that they could choose to take or not. Nevertheless, their position was not one of unlimited power, as Daniel described:

- (10) I remember one time I got in trouble [at school], and I was interpreting [between parents and teacher]. And who knows what I was saying.... All my hearing friends would [say],... couldn't you just tell your parents whatever you wanted to? And the truth is no. Because deaf people are able to read people very easily. And so, if, if they're reading the body language of one person, and the person has kind of a demeanor to them, and you're signing something that's totally contradicting that, they know something's up. So,... basically you have to tell the truth, you sign ... what's going on.

In any case, most of the interviewees had a sense of responsibility concerning their ability to hide things from their parents. In April's words,

- (11) I had a very strong, I guess, like, moral rule. It was like, if I had something that I did not want my parents to hear, that I wanted to say to my siblings, then I would act as though they could hear, and I would wait until we were by ourselves. Because I just was like, y'know, even as a very small child I would just, I always knew that that would be a very disrespectful thing, to take advantage of that.

A number of the interviewees compared themselves favorably with wild, disrespectful CODAs that they encountered in the Deaf community. Daniel described such a contrast:

- (12) I noticed that ... some of my <air quotes> fellow CODAs I guess you would say, they would be like me, y'know, ... normal, just helping.... But some, ... they disrespected their parents a lot of times. And would take advantage of them. I'd go to my friend's house, and <headshake> y'know, he would just find a way to take advantage of his parents, and I, I couldn't imagine doing that.

### 3.3 Language and Identity

There was wide variation between the interviewed CODAs in how closely they affiliated themselves with either the Deaf or Hearing communities. Whatever their affiliations, many of the CODAs described their sense of their own identities in terms of their language use. Tabitha felt that as a child of deaf parents, she had to defend her right to a Hearing identity and language practices:

- (13) That was considered a big disgrace, to the deaf kids of deaf parents, that I couldn't sign on their level. And like, there were many times that like, I would tell a deaf child, you know, //I'm hearing, //I'm hearing, //I talk.  
//HEARING //HEARING //TALK

A number of other interviewees described their language skills as a part of who they are. Daniel explained his that ASL is truly his first language:

- (14) 'cause I don't even have to really think— even though, when I speak English I don't have to think, it's still something that I have to *do*. **ASL is just something that I am.**

Boyce made a similar connection between language skill and identity. When asked if his signing ever influences his speech when he uses both at once, he said,

- (15) Every interpreter, most of us think that we're better than what we really are.... **I'm very comfortable with who I am.**

In a later return to this issue, he explained that he would not normally produce both languages at once, even though he is competent at it:

- (16) I know many many hearing people who think that they have to sign and speak all the time. I don't see the value in that, I— **that's not me.**

Similarly, David described his signing as follows:

- (17) I'm a very Englishy signer, I actually feel most comfortable signing along with my speech.... I can communicate well with almost all deaf people, but no one ever looking at me signing is gonna go, oh, native signer.... And I'm, I'm, **it's who I am**, y'know?

A central tenet of Deaf culture is that community membership is not determined by degree of hearing loss, but rather by personal choices, history, behaviors, and sign language skill. This rule appears to be true for the deaf parents of the interviewed CODAs. For example, David's mother had more hearing and clearer speech than his father, but she joined the signing Deaf community after their divorce, while he remained a dedicated oralist until his death. Tabitha reported her two parents having similar hearing, speech, and lipreading skills, but, when the couple divorced, Tabitha's mother deepened her connections with the Deaf world, while her father's social life remained centered on the Hearing world.

However, the details of parental hearing abilities appear to have a strong impact on their children's cultural membership. The language practices of these deaf parents and hearing children at home are influenced by the parents' hearing and lipreading abilities. To the degree that the children can get away with speech, they tend to do so, reserving signs for cases of communicative necessity. (This habit builds into a language ideology, as discussed below.) Those parents with strong speech and lipreading skills, whatever their own cultural affiliations, often end up with children who sign little, or Englishy, or not at all. Adult CODAs who sign like deaf people may be able to prove their loyalty to the Deaf community and become accepted as basically full members. CODAs whose signing marks them indelibly as hearing are less likely achieve this membership, regardless of their parents' affiliations; in fact, it may be that the higher expectations

raised by their status as CODAs make the linguistic bar for cultural acceptance even higher for them than for hearing outsiders.

#### **4. IDEOLOGIES OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION**

This section focuses on the moral stances (Ochs and Capps 2001) that the interviewees took in sections of their narratives where they expressed judgments of their own or others' language behavior in family contexts.

Attention to sections of the interviews where the narrators expressed judgments of their own and others' language practices in family contexts reveals a recurring theme: Communication between deaf people and hearing people potentially involves effort, and family members who fail to put in appropriate effort deserve criticism. This generalization is not meant to imply that family communication is always effortful; in fact, most of the CODAs explicitly stated that their own communication with their parents was generally easy or natural. The point is that ease of communication cannot be assumed in the family situation. Given this situation, when the narrators criticized or praised people for their communicative behavior, they generally framed it as an issue of whether the people in question were putting in appropriate effort. The narrators never stated explicitly how they decide when effort is to be expected, and in fact, they did not always praise communicative effort: sometimes—though less frequently—what they criticized was undue effort. The observation of the theme of effort raised the following research questions: 1) What is the organizing principle around which judgments of appropriate communicative effort are made? and 2) Can we identify a source for this ideology of language and effort?

Analysis of the narratives leads to the conclusion that these narrators determine their judgments based on the principle that effort is appropriate only to the degree that it

overcomes potential communication barriers. Their moral stances are consistent with the following organizing principle of communicative effort:

Appropriate effort functionally overcomes potential communication barriers.  
Undue effort is driven by any other motivation or is too difficult to successfully overcome communication barriers.

Despite the fact that hearing family members tend to be more commonly criticized for failing to put in appropriate effort than deaf family members, this principle applies to all family members, both hearing and deaf. The difference lies in the options that each family member has. Every hearing person can learn to sign, but not every deaf person can learn to speak, and lipreading is inherently difficult. From this perspective, the people with more options have a greater responsibility to adapt to the communicative situation than those with fewer options.

All of the CODAs I interviewed seem to share this principle, although they do not necessarily share assessments of particular language behaviors. For some, for example, if their parents are present when they are talking to their siblings or hearing friends, signing and talking at the same time is seen as appropriate effort. For others, it is seen as undue effort: too difficult to be effective and unnecessary when they are not directly addressing their parents. With the above definitions of appropriate and undue effort, the CODAs' judgments of language behavior can be seen as guided by the following maxims: 1) Put in appropriate effort. 2) Force others to put in appropriate effort. 3) Do not put in undue effort. 4) Do not force others to put in undue effort. The following examples illustrate the narrators' application of these maxims.

#### **4.1 Maxim 1: Put in Appropriate Effort**

The most common targets of criticism for failure to put in appropriate effort were hearing siblings and grandparents who do not sign. In the first example, Allison

attributed her teenage brother's tendency to speak to their parents rather than signing to a preference for what is easier for him:

- (18) My brother is very much opposed...he's, he's opposed to anything that will **put him out**. So it is just **easier** for him to rely on talking to my parents like this [over-enunciated], than to **have to come up with the sign**....It's almost like he **can't be bothered**.

In a similar way, Craig criticized his maternal grandparents for failing to put in enough effort to learn the manual alphabet:

- (19) It's striking to me, I mean...like, even to this day, like my mother's parents, they don't, they **don't even know A**. Like in sign language...I can understand like not knowing, y'know, like "dog." I can understand that. But not to know the alphabet, and **try** to communicate, **just one ounce**.

Craig's use of the letter A and this description of the amount of effort learning it would require—"just one ounce"—illustrate the minimal expectations that he has for his grandparents, expectations that they do not live up to. In contrast, Craig and his brother Derek, interviewed together, praised their paternal grandmother for the amount of effort she put in to communicate with her son:

- (20) *Derek:* I mean like, even my grandmother **went as far as** to teach my father, uh, Indian sign....

*Craig:* And that's what's so mind-blowing, is that she actually **went the extra mile**.

It is important to note that in these CODAs' narratives, not all attempts to put in appropriate effort lead to a satisfactory result. When asked whether she and her siblings signed to each other when their deaf mother was present, Rachel responded as follows:

- (21) That's a really big issue. We [my siblings and I] **try** to always sign...when we're—when she [our mother] is present, but, y'know, it's **difficult**. It's just **not instinctual** sometimes. And so we **try** to really always **make an effort**,...but it doesn't always happen.

As mentioned above, many of the narrators found communication with their parents easy and natural; however, in some cases, they described the family situation as obliging them to engage in behaviors that they found “difficult” and “not instinctual.”

This idea of appropriate effort extends outside the home. According to the CODAs’ functional ideology of communication, other ideologies privileging particular ways of communication over others are negatively viewed. Lisa noticed that “hard-core ASL-only folks...didn’t socialize with my parents,” who she described as hard-of-hearing, using a combination of spoken English, fingerspelling, and some signs.

- (22) [My dad] would talk about, oh well, y’know, Jimmy talks to me but so-and-so doesn’t because I don’t know ASL....I guess my parents have just always accepted everybody, so it was like, it never would have occurred to me to not– if I don’t know ASL, and you want to talk to me, we’ll **find a way to make it work**. Um, if you don’t know sign, and you want to talk to me, we’ll **figure out a way to make it work**...If I was gonna give advice...it would probably just be...to make sure that you’re not excluding any part of the population based on what you want to do.

#### 4.2 Maxim 2: Force Others to Put In Appropriate Effort

Included in the obligation to put in appropriate communicative effort is the obligation to force others to do the same. In the following example, Boyce compared his wife and daughter, both of whom sign well, with his brothers’ wives and children, who do not sign at all. He presented the difference as primarily due to whether the CODAs—himself and his brothers—forced their nearest and dearest to learn to sign:

- (23) An added blessing was, is that my daughter had a mother...who **had no choice** but to either learn the language [ASL],...or she was always going to be an outsider. My two brothers, their spouses... they weren’t **forced** to make that kind of choice....I **refused** to interpret for my wife....My two brothers continued to interpret for their spouses always. Well as long as they had an interpreter, why would they [learn ASL]? And then if the kids had mothers that **didn’t bother** to learn, why would they? The fact that they lost a bridge with their grandparents was never fully appreciated. And I don’t blame the spouses, and I don’t blame the kids. I blame my two **lazy** brothers for **giving in** to the **easier** of the two.

In other excerpts from the interviews, CODAs presented interpreting for their parents and other family members as effortful. In contrast, in this example from Boyce, interpreting is framed as the lazy option. This difference supports the claim made above that it is not particular language behaviors that are judged as good or bad, effortful or easy. Instead, the issue is whether the effort required by those behaviors is seen as appropriate or not in a given situation.

The following example from April similarly presents a situation where the right thing to do in terms of the prevalent ideology is to force others to put in effort. In this case, it is the deaf parents who were judged for not having forced their children to talk and sign at the same time when they were growing up. Previously in the interview, April had described learning as an adult that some of the signs she used were homesigns, not ASL, and that she wished her parents had corrected her signing. I asked her why she thought they had not:

- (24) I think that they didn't want to be, um,...tyrannical...parents, um, and that's— and I know that that's the reason...why they **never forced** us to sign while talking. And I wish that they had,...because I was in high school before my parents finally were like, uh, y'know, it kinda hurts our feelings that you never sign and talk at the same time. Because I think that they kinda thought that we would **just pick up on it, and just do it of our own accord**, but we never did...So, it, it took years for me to get used to doing that....Several times from that time on they'd be like, could you sign and talk at the same time? What are you saying? Y'know. It hurts our feelings. And I felt horrible for years. I was just like, I can't believe we've been doing this all of our lives. And even now, it's **so hard** for me to do it, and I would forget a lot, and I would be like, oh, I'm a horrible person, y'know, and I just would feel so bad.

In this excerpt, April discussed the same behavior as Rachel did in example 4. Once again, signing while talking was represented as difficult but nevertheless something that should be done. However, in this case, April did not place all the blame on herself. Even though she criticized herself for her failure to consistently sign while talking, she placed

part of the responsibility on her parents: If they had put in the appropriate effort to force her to do it when she was younger, it would not be so hard for her now.

The following example, also from April, introduces another responsibility of deaf parents: forcing their children to sign:

- (25) I'm just like shocked at how bad they [CODA acquaintances] are [at signing]. I mean, they are just like, barely just [signs awkwardly]. And I'm like, that's just sad. And, um, I think that maybe the parents don't, um, **enforce** it on the kids? I mean,... you need to **make** your kids speak sign language, I think. If you're, if you're a deaf adult and you are raising your children, y'know, that's like vital for you to be able to understand your kids and for them to be able to understand you. So, and it's not like it can really happen the other way around. Y'know? So it is very essential that you **make** your kids learn sign language, and expose it to them, so that they will learn it.

Later in the discussion, April expressed confusion that this force should be necessary, since it had been her experience that learning sign came naturally. However, to the degree that learning to sign is effortful for hearing children, her feelings were unambiguous that those children should put in the necessary effort and that their parents should force them to do so. Her position on this point assumes that the parents can in fact force their unwilling children to sign, something that many deaf parents would dispute.

#### 4.3 Maxim 3: Do not Put in Undue Effort

Up to this point in the discussion of CODAs' language ideologies, all criticisms have been of people who failed to put in appropriate effort. However, other examples make it clear that it is not effort itself that is valued; rather, appropriate effort is valued, while undue effort is criticized. In the following example, Kevin described a deaf friend who spoke to her hearing 4-year-old son rather than signing to him:

- (26) It almost makes me cringe when she talks to him and doesn't sign, because her speaking is so bad that it's almost like, you're not doing any good....I want to just like say, hey, **just sign** with him, y'know?...I would- I mean, I guess I would say like,...**don't force something that's not gonna work**.

The mother's behavior in this example falls under both of the definitions of undue effort presented above. Although the mother clearly meant well and was putting in significant effort, her language choice was driven by an ideology that connects signing with deafness and speech with hearing, rather than being motivated by functionality. Additionally, because of her own weak speaking skills, the behavior that she chose was simply too difficult to allow successful communication.

Other references to undue effort were introduced by several different CODAs who rejected pictures of deafness or rules for behavior that they encountered in ASL or interpreter training classes. In the following excerpt, Tabitha expressed her view of her ASL teacher's injunction to turn off her voice and sign "pure" ASL:

- (27) If I'm talking while I'm signing, it's always, signing and speaking, like, it's always English. And my ASL teacher hates it, but it's just **easier** than, like, it's **really hard** for me to sit here and be like SIGN [mouth pursed shut]. I don't, I don't like it. **And it doesn't work for me.**

In the artificial context of the language classroom, Tabitha is asked to suppress a way of communicating with deaf people that feels natural to her. CODAs who developed a functional ideology of communicative effort as children at home may understand the value of signing for language practice while still being uncomfortable with it. For example, Kevin described his discomfort when seeing hearing people signing to each other:

- (28) It bothers me when people use sign when there's no one deaf around....I experienced it a lot...being with other people who were in the deaf studies program....They wanted to learn, and they were practicing, and so I understood that. And that was fine, but at the same time, they would like use it with each other, when they were both hearing, and like that always bothered me...and if they did it to me, I just kinda like turned my head and like, don't talk to me like that....I'm like, I can talk to you. It's— to me it's more like,...**whatever it takes to communicate**, and...that's almost like **over-communicating** or **over-compensating**.

In this example, Kevin clearly expressed his philosophy that appropriate communicative behavior is to do as much as necessary and no more.

#### **4.4 Maxim 4: Do not Force Others to Put in Undue Effort**

The fourth maxim (do not force others to put in undue effort) is connected to the first (put in appropriate effort), in that it is often the failure of one family member to put in appropriate effort that forces other family members to put in undue effort. Allison criticized her grandparents on this point:

- (29) I've been kind of frustrated with the fact that my grandparents **never bothered** to learn sign language, and that is a source of contention for me, that they just won't do it, and they'll, they'll only, um, speak to my parents and, and **force them** to read their lips.

Even though Allison reported her parents' lipreading skills to be very strong, she nevertheless considered lipreading to be undue effort: too difficult to successfully overcome communication barriers, especially when appropriate effort on the part of her grandparents would lead them to learn to sign.

In the final example, Sara described herself as being forced to put in undue effort at a family gathering:

- (30) And one time we all got together, and everyone was chit chatting, and my mother's in one ear saying, what is everybody saying, what is— what're they saying? And the other ear, nobody wanted to know what Mom and Dad were saying, and I was trying to interpret, and it was a mess. It was terrible, I just hated it. And I finally just said, Janet [sister], you do the— some of the signing, why don't you interpret what you're talking about, y'know? Why don't you sign and talk at the same time? And I got really mad at them, and I said, y'know, you need to do that, and my brother fi— I think it really took him, took it, took it to heart, when I said that. Um, and so he just decided he needed to get to know my father better, and learned how to sign at that point.

Several other CODAs told similar stories of the person called upon to bear the entire load of interpreting at a family gathering blowing up at the other family members. Interpreting in such a group situation is clearly undue effort—too difficult to be successful—that

could be avoided if all participants put in appropriate effort and shared the responsibility to sign. This excerpt also presents another common situation: significant variation in sign language abilities among the hearing children in one family. At the time of this story, Sara's brother was an adult who did not sign at all. By the time of the interview, Sara reported that her brother signed fluently.

Based on how these CODAs evaluate the effort that family members put in, it appears that they value functionality over other language ideologies of the surrounding Hearing and Deaf communities. How is it that they all came to hold the same language ideology? One possibility would be that they learned it through socialization into the same speech community. However, they share neither the same repertoire of language practices nor the same norms for language behavior, both of which are criteria for membership in a speech community (Labov 1972). They sign in different ways, with different degrees of fluency and different ways of integrating signing and speech, as well as different judgments on the appropriateness of particular language practices in particular situations. In addition, these CODAs have different social networks and different social identities. Their positions with regard to the Deaf and Hearing communities vary widely, considering both patterns of interaction and identification with the social groups. Further, it does not make sense to call CODAs as a group a community of practice, in that they are not mutually engaged in any kind of common endeavor (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999; Wenger 1998). But the idea of the community of practice is nevertheless valuable. Each family can be seen as its own community of practice, with its own repertoire of language behaviors and its own negotiated practices, which are not necessarily shared with other families. Despite these differences between the families, the hearing children of deaf adults are similarly situated within their own families. It is from this similar situation that they each appear to have independently developed a functional

language ideology. The value that these CODAs place on doing what works—no more, and no less—appears to have emerged from their situation as children of deaf parents, rather than being a learned community norm.

## **Chapter 4: Families at Home**

This chapter addresses the details of code choice in videotapes of naturalistic interaction in three families with deaf parents and hearing children. I refer to the families by number, assigned by the order in which I began working with them. It is clear from these videotapes and from parental reports that all the children in these three families are fluently bilingual in English and ASL. As I will describe below, the family members' language choices were primarily driven by the identity of their addressee, rather than by topic or by the presence of other participants in the conversation. Family 2 consisted only of a mother-daughter pair, meaning that there was no variation in addressee. For this reason, most of the discussion of family behavior in this chapter will focus on families 1 and 3, both of which had two parents and three sons.

### **1. METHODS**

#### **1.1 Recruiting Families**

I obtained contact information for potential family participants through friends, colleagues, and personal connections in the Deaf community. Family 1 consists of two deaf parents and three hearing sons, ages 4, 11, and 16. Both of the parents have hearing parents; the mother has a deaf twin sister. Family 2 consists of a deaf mother, the only deaf person in her extended family, and her hearing 2 1/2 year-old daughter. The mother in family 2 also has a 20 year-old hearing son who does not live in town. The little girl's father is fourth generation deaf, but he does not live in town and is not involved in raising her. Family 3 consists of two deaf parents and their three hearing sons, ages 3 (turned 4 during the study), 5 (turned 6), and 9 (turned 10). The mother in family 3 has a deaf older

sister; everyone else in her extended family is hearing. The father in family 3 is fourth-generation deaf; he has three deaf siblings who live in town with their own deaf children.

## **1.2 Recording Family Videotape Data**

I visited each family at home four to five times over the course of several months. During these visits, I videotaped the family members for about an hour as they engaged in their normal daily activities. I did not direct their activities, but I scheduled one visit to coincide with dinnertime for families 1 and 3 in order to record the whole family sitting down together. For the dinnertime recordings, I set up two cameras on tripods around the table in order to have a view of all family members' hands and faces. Once the cameras were running, I left the room until the family had gotten up from the table. For all other recording sessions, I used only one camera, usually hand-held. Having only one camera angle meant that family members' hands, faces, and mouths were sometimes not visible; two camera angles would have been preferable, especially for discerning mouthing and gaze. However, the family members tended to move around so much that the cameras could not be left stationary on tripods, and I judged that having two camera operators would have been overly intrusive. I videotaped all but one of the sessions myself. For one session with family 3, I asked a deaf colleague to act as camera operator in order to judge the effect of the camera operator's hearing status on the family's language choices.

At the end of my last session with each family, I sat down with the parents and videotaped an interview in which I asked them about communication in their families and about their children's sign language skills. The questions for the interviews appear in Appendix B.

### 1.3 Coding and Counting Family Videotape Data

The episodes listed in Tables 2 and 3 were chosen for coding for four main reasons. They provided parallel situations for families 1 and 3, allowing comparison between the two families. Within each family, the participants varied between different episodes; this variation allowed analysis of behavior by and with different family members. For family 3, I chose some episodes that I videotaped myself and some videotaped by a deaf colleague; this choice allowed analysis of the effect of the hearing status of the camera operator. Finally, during these episodes, the family members were engaged in activities that kept them sitting relatively still and consistently in view of the camera (rather than wrestling, swimming, playing baseball, etc.). All but one of the coded episodes took place at least 10 minutes into the recording session. For the dinnertime recording of family 3, the children were already eating when I arrived; that episode was coded from the beginning of the tape.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Camera Operator</b>	<b>Time Coded</b>
dinner	M, F, C1, C2, C3	hearing (out of room)	10 min.
tinkertoys	M, C2, C3	hearing	20 min.

Table 2: Coded Episodes for Family 1 (children ages 4, 11, and 16)

Activity	Participants	Camera Operator	Time Coded
dinner	M, F, C1, C2, C3	hearing (out of room)	20 min.
candyland	M, C2, C3	deaf	5 min.
marble game	M, C1, C2, C3	hearing	15 min. 45 sec.
	C1, C2, C3		6 min. 40 sec.
bingo 1	F, C2, C3	1) hearing 2) C1	20 min.
bingo 2	M, C1	hearing	10 min.
bingo 3	M, C1	deaf	10 min.

Table 3: Coded Episodes for Family 3 (children ages 3-4, 5-6, and 9-10)

For each turn at talk or sign, I coded the role of each person present (speaker/signer, addressee, participant, bystander). I defined the role of *participant* as a person participating in the conversation or activity underway but not directly addressed, similar to Bell's (1984) term *auditor*. *Bystanders* were present and known to be so but were not involved in the conversation or activity underway, parallel to what Bell labeled *overhearer*.

For the speaker/signer, I coded all communicative behavior: **Si**=sign, **Ge**=gesture, **FS**=fingerspelling, **Sp**=speech, **Sh**=shout, **UB**=under breath, **Wh**=whisper, **Mo**=mouthing, **Sing**=singing, **VG**=vocal gesture (i.e., a communicative non-word such as a whine, a shriek, or a sound effect for a toy). I also coded whether the hands or the

mouth were occupied doing something non-communicative. For everyone present other than the speaker/signer, I coded their gaze with reference to the speaker/signer: focused, peripheral, or unable to see. The full coding system appears in Appendix C. I considered a turn to be a continuous linguistic and/or communicative production during which the role relationships of the people present did not change. Turns were coded and counted rather than utterances because 1) utterance boundaries are often unclear, and 2) coding for every utterance would have multiplied the coding time significantly, since the role and gaze of every person present must be coded each time.

Turns from a speaker who was out of the camera frame were generally coded, but they were not included in the statistics, since there was no way to know what the speaker's hands were doing at that time. I did not consistently code or count whether the signing was "English" or "ASL," although I noted it in the comments if an utterance with simultaneous sign and speech was obviously one or the other. If the whole utterance was spoken, whether or not with simultaneous sign, I made notes in the comments only if the speech was clearly *not* English. Making the English versus ASL distinction for both sign and speech would require an additional level of grammatical analysis, with principled criteria for distinguishing levels of Englishness and ASL-ness. Such an analysis would be extremely useful in order to obtain a truly accurate picture of the situation, but it is beyond the scope of the current project.

Mouthing was coded if the oral movement could be identified as representing an English word, whether or not that mouthing can be considered a conventional part of ASL. For example, ASL signers conventionally mouth "fish" when making the sign FINISH. Because this mouth movement originated as a representation of the spoken word "finish," I coded it as "mouthing." With this choice, I avoided making a distinction between "borrowing" and "codeswitching," inasmuch as the development of criteria for

such a distinction would be worthy of its own project. Other mouth movements, including non-manual markers conventionally associated with particular ASL signs or grammatical structures, were not coded as “mouthing” and were not independently accounted for in the coding system; turns consisting only of manual signs combined with such non-manual markers were simply coded as “sign.”

In many cases, the addressee of an utterance was easily determined by the speaker/signer’s use of an attention-getting name, touch, or wave. Otherwise, addressees were determined by the speaker/signer’s gaze direction in combination with the content and context of the utterance. When the speaker/signer was speaking English, pronoun use could distinguish addressee from participant; this distinction was not possible when the speaker/signer was signing ASL, as the same deictic gesture could be interpreted as second or third person, depending on whether the person pointed to is being addressed or not. The speaker/signer’s gaze direction was not always decisive in distinguishing addressees from participants, in that gaze at a referent generally co-occurs with deictic gestures/signs. As I mention later in the results, I did not use code choice to determine the intended addressee, even though as Bell (1984) pointed out, code choice can function that way. I made this decision in order to avoid circular reasoning; for example, I could not reasonably argue that the children never spoke when addressing their parents if, while coding, I automatically rejected the parents as potential addressees for spoken utterances.

The coding system includes a category for movements that were ambiguously signs and gestures (e.g., points, attention-getting waves and touches, headshakes and nods). For counting purposes, these were counted as gestures. These movements play conventionalized roles in the linguistic system of ASL; however, they may also be used in similar or identical forms by hearing non-signers, either in isolation or as co-speech gesture. I decided to count them as gestures rather than signs so as not to over-attribute

signing to the bilingual CODAs. For example, if two children were playing together and one pointed to something while talking about it, it did not seem appropriate to me to count that as an instance of simultaneous sign and speech. It also did not seem appropriate to count the production of an isolated point differently for different speaker/signers or for different addressees. However, points produced within a stream of signing were counted as part of a signed turn. In counting turns, fingerspelling counted as signing. Turns in a single modality were only counted once; e.g., a turn with speech of any volume and a vocal gesture was counted as speech, and a turn with signing, fingerspelling, sign/gesture, and/or gesture was counted as sign. This means that any turn counted as “vocal gesture” included no spoken words, and any turn counted as “gesture” included no lexical signs. However, a turn counted as “speech” could include both words and vocal gestures, and a turn counted as “sign” could include both lexical signs and gestures. In contrast, multimodal turns were counted for all types of productions, because I wanted to know, e.g., how many signed turns included any mouthing, as well as how many signed turns included any spoken words. That means that a signed turn including both mouthing and speech would be identified both as Si+Mo and as Si+Sp. Such a turn would be represented twice in the categories shown in the results graphs, but it would be counted only once in the calculation of the total number of turns.

The numbers presented in this chapter report which language behaviors were included in a given turn at talk or sign. I did code whether, for example, English-based mouthing was continuous or only partial during a signed turn, but such fine-grained analysis has been excluded from the general overview of the family members’ language behavior in order to avoid complicating the bigger picture.

## 2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE ADDRESSEE ON FAMILY LANGUAGE CHOICES

### 2.1 The Children

#### 2.1.1 Family 1 Children

The children in these families generally signed to their deaf parents and spoke to their hearing siblings. The results from family 1 show near complementary distribution in the children's code choices. Figures 2 and 3 show the two younger children's code choices when playing with tinkertoys with their mother.

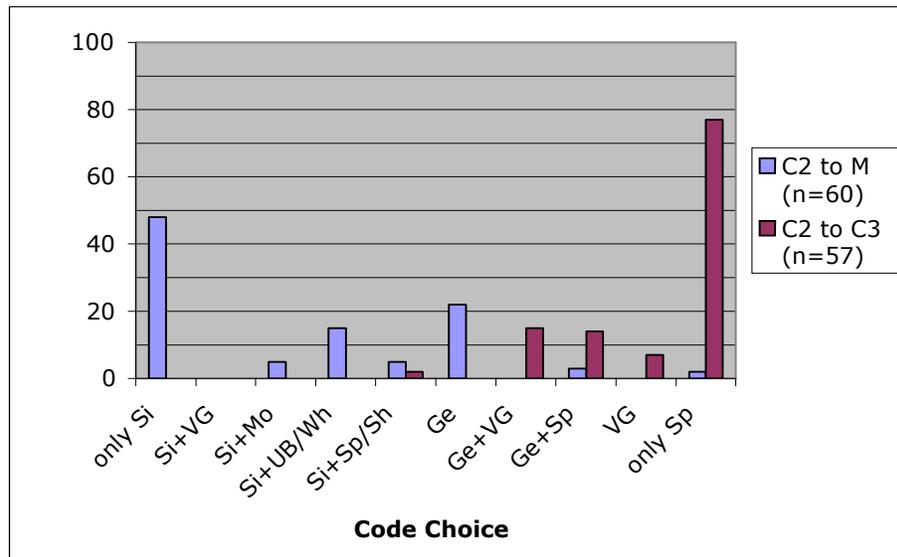


Figure 2: Family 1 Tinkertoys: Middle Child

During this episode, the middle child of family 1 (age 12) addressed his younger brother using only speech in 77% of the 57 turns he addressed to him. Fourteen percent of his turns to his brother included co-speech gesture, 7% consisted of a vocal gesture (a wordless vocalization such as a scream or a sound effect), and one turn consisted of simultaneous sign and speech. This production occurred during a time of conflict: the

middle brother had taken one of the younger brother's tinkertoys, and the younger brother, upset, had refused their mother's offer of a replacement. The middle brother signed SAME while saying, "It's the same thing." This utterance was addressed to the younger brother, but the production of the sign kept the mother informed of the status of the conflict and allowed her to help negotiate a resolution.

When addressing his mother, this child almost always communicated manually, half the time in sign only, 22% of the time only with gestures that were not necessarily lexical signs (e.g., nods, points, shrugs), and sometimes including simultaneous English mouthing (5%), whispering (15%), or speech (5% with signs, 3% with gestures). With his hands occupied with the tinkertoys, he once responded to his mother's attention-getting wave with a one-word turn in speech only: "What?"

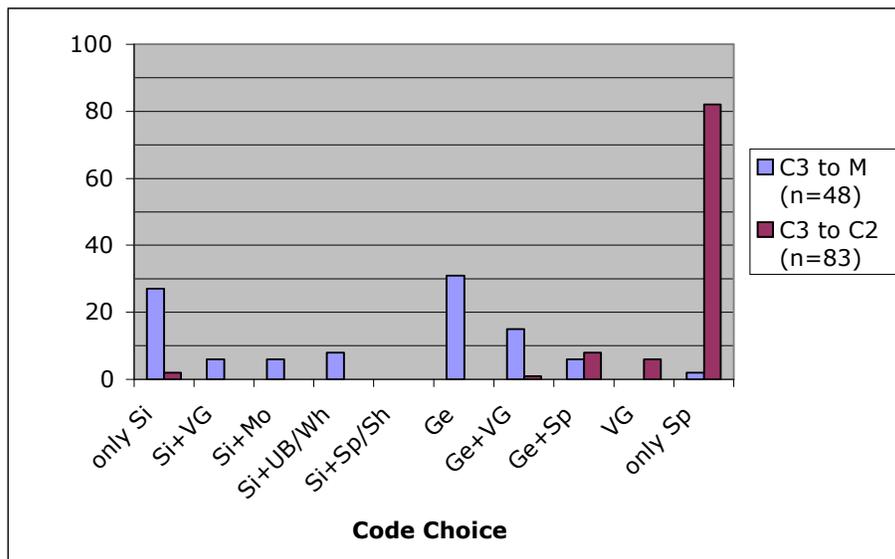


Figure 3: Family 1 Tinkertoys: Youngest Child

The youngest child in family 1 (age 4) behaved similarly to his brother during the tinkertoy episode. Eighty-two percent of his turns to the middle brother consisted of

speech only. Eight percent included co-speech gesture, and two turns consisted of sign only. Both signed turns were addressed to both the mother and the brother during the same period of conflict mentioned above, as he expressed his desire for the tinkertoy that had been taken from him. He almost always communicated manually (signs or gestures) with his mother, with occasional simultaneous mouthing, whispering, speech, and vocal gestures. He once addressed his mother in speech alone, responding to her instructions with “Okay.”

The two younger children made similar language choices at dinnertime with the whole family as they did when playing with tinkertoys with their mother. Figures 4 and 5 show their dinnertime language behavior, with addressees grouped into parents and children to allow for the smaller number of turns to each family member, given the larger number of people present.

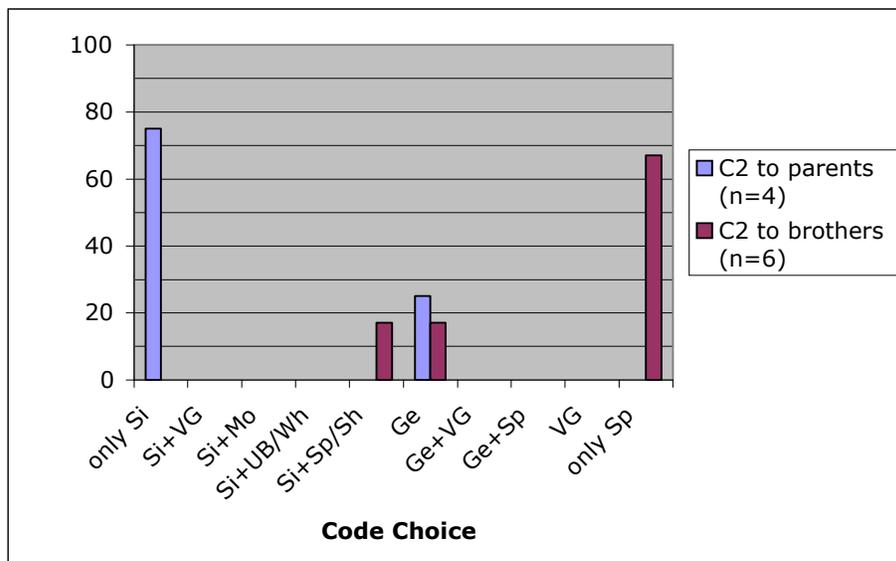


Figure 4: Family 1 Dinner: Middle Child

The middle child hardly spoke or signed during dinner: he produced only four turns to the parents, all in sign or gesture, and six turns to his brothers, mostly spoken, with one turn gestured and one turn including both sign and speech, both to his younger brother. This sign production was metalinguistic: after the oldest child instructed the youngest child that he needed to sign “excuse me,” the two older brothers taught the youngest the sign EXCUSE.

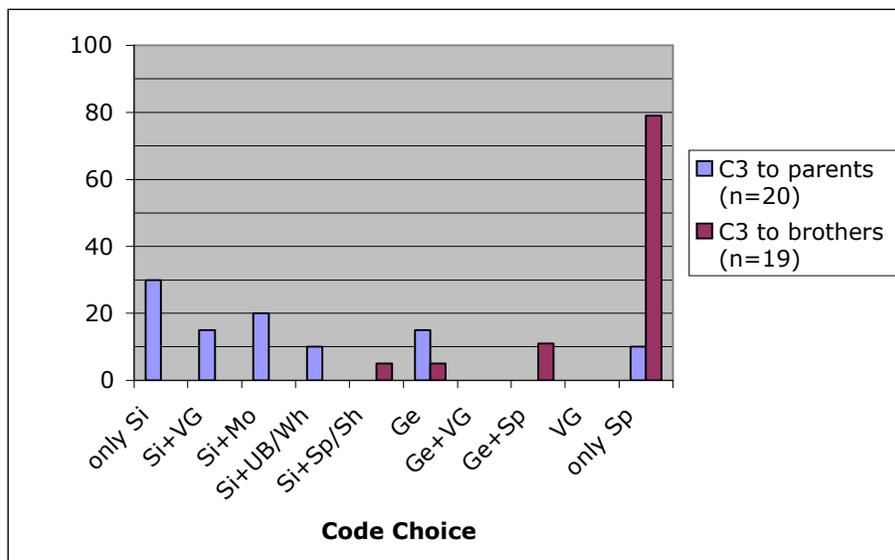


Figure 5: Family 1 Dinner: Youngest Child

Aside from the occasional headshake without spoken accompaniment, all of the turns that the youngest child addressed to his brothers were in spoken English. He included a sign in one metalinguistic turn to his oldest brother, asking what the English word for the sign BUTTER was:

- (1) //Is this jelly?  
//BUTTER

He signed or gestured without fully-voiced speech in almost every turn he addressed to his parents; some turns included mouthing, whispering, or vocal gestures. He produced two spoken turns potentially addressed to the whole table: two tokens of “scuse me.”

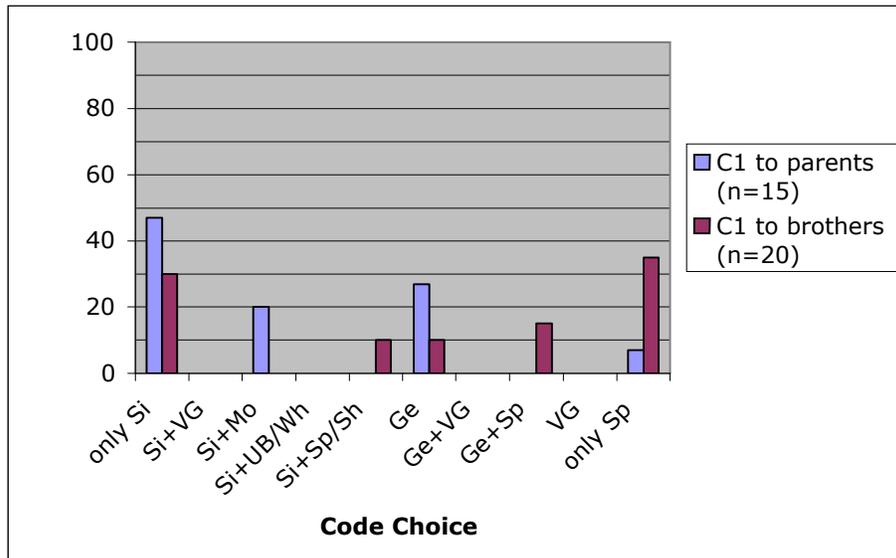


Figure 6: Family 1 Dinner: Oldest Child

The 16 year-old also tended to follow the pattern of addressing the deaf parents in sign and his hearing brothers in speech. Ninety-four percent of the turns he addressed to the parents were signed or gestured, some including English-based mouthing, and the one spoken turn that he addressed to them was a politeness formula—“Excuse me”—addressed to the entire table. However, while half of the turns he addressed to his brothers consisted of speech—alone or with co-speech gesture—he also produced six turns in sign only and two with both sign and speech to his youngest brother. All of these turns involved socialization or instruction of the four year-old. As mentioned above, the two older brothers together taught the youngest the sign EXCUSE. Immediately beforehand, the oldest and the youngest engaged in a relatively long exchange that produced all of the turns consisting of sign only:

(2) C1: What do you say?  
 C3: Sorry 'n 'scuse me.  
 C1: [chewing] SIGN  
 C3: //Sorry 'scuse me.  
 C1: //SIGN  
 C3: [headshake]  
 C1: //YES  
 C3: //[headshake continuing]  
 C1: YES  
 C3: [large headshake]  
 ...  
 C3: No.  
 C1: SIGN  
 C3: No.  
 C1: YES  
 C3: //No.  
 //[headshake]

This exchange led to the mother asking the youngest child what was going on and eventually to the youngest child learning how to sign EXCUSE ME. Perhaps the older brother signed here in an attempt to influence the youngest by example, or perhaps he signed in order to draw the mother into the exchange. Producing the utterances in sign also meant that the language did not interfere with him chewing his meal; however, this fact is a less likely motivation given the lack of other signed utterances between the children during the meal. Overall, in family 1, the children signed to the parents and

spoke to each other, with occasional easily-explained overlap in languages and modalities.

### 2.1.2 Family 3 Children

When the children in family 3 interacted with their father, their language choices were like those of the younger children in family 1, showing near complementary distribution between the language varieties they used with their father and those they used with each other. Figures 7 and 8 present the behavior of the six year-old middle child and the four year-old youngest child as they played a game of picture bingo with their father. Their oldest brother (age 10) was operating one of the two cameras videotaping the game.

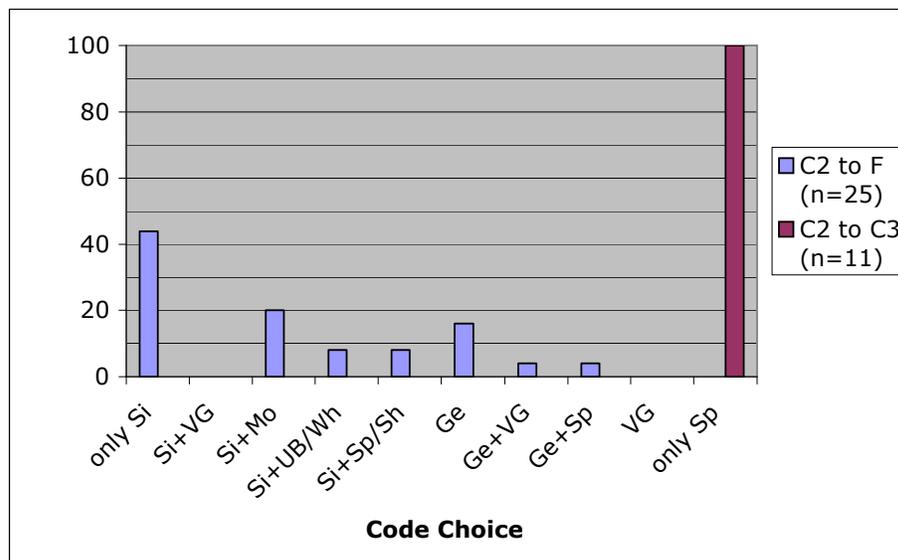


Figure 7: Family 3 Bingo with Father: Middle Child

All eleven turns that the middle child addressed to his little brother were in speech only. When addressing his father, he always signed or gestured, most of the time (60%)

without spoken accompaniment, but sometimes with mouthing, whispering, speech, or vocal gesture.

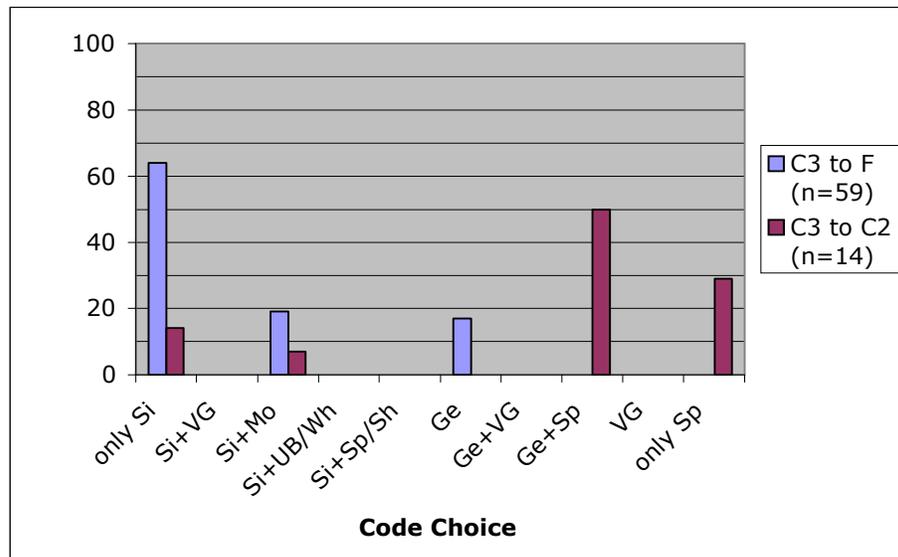


Figure 8: Family 3 Bingo with Father: Youngest Child

Like his brother, the youngest child always addressed his father in sign or gesture. Eighty-one percent of the turns he addressed to his father consisted of only sign or gesture; the remaining 19% were signed with some English-based mouthing. During this episode, this child used more co-speech gesture when addressing his brother than his brother did to him. His three signed turns to his brother were jointly addressed to the father as well.

Based on interaction during this bingo game, the children in families 1 and 3 appear quite similar in their language use. However, when the three children in family 3 played a marble guessing game with their mother, their language behavior was very different, as is evident in Figures 9 and 10, showing the behavior of the two younger children. I will discuss the oldest child’s language choices during this game in section 2.

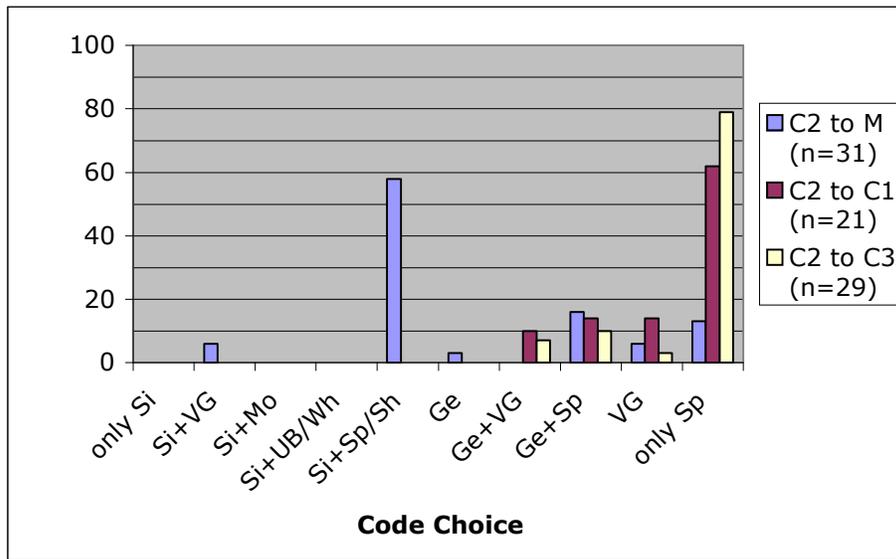


Figure 9: Family 3 Marbles: Middle Child

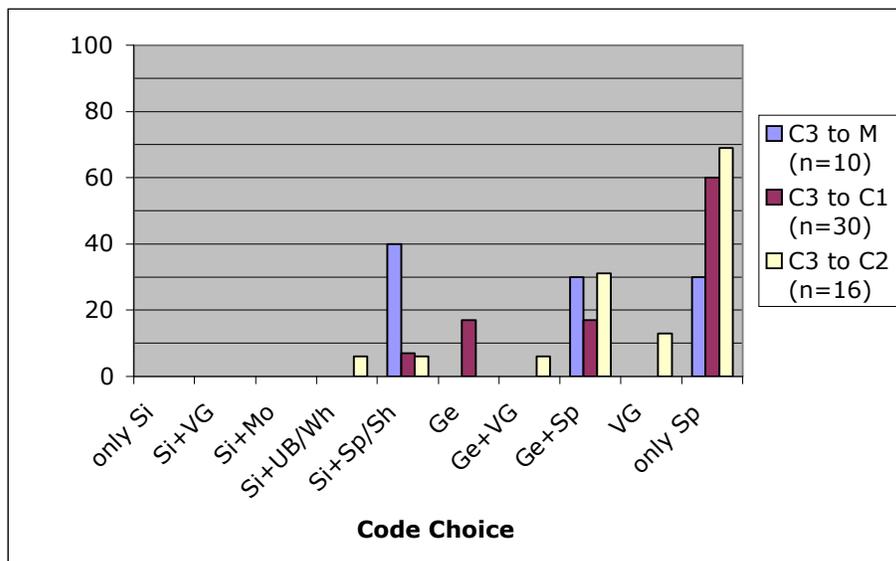


Figure 10: Family 3 Marbles: Youngest Child

When addressing their mother during the marble game, both of the younger children most frequently used both sign and speech, which they rarely did with their father playing bingo, and never used sign alone, which they most frequently did with

their father. Both also addressed a number of turns to their mother using only speech. This difference in language choice is most likely motivated by the fact that the mother in this family has more hearing than the father and is skilled at supplementing that hearing with lipreading. Knowing that these language choices could be communicatively successful, the children sometimes shouted to get her attention and often used speech—with or without sign—when addressing her.

As in other episodes, both of the younger children tended to use speech to their brothers, sometimes with gestural accompaniment. As seen in Figure 10, the youngest child also addressed his brothers with a few turns that included sign. The one such turn that included both sign and fully-voiced speech was an announcement to the whole table, including his mother. His mother's attention was not needed for two other signed utterances, however. While he and the middle brother were collaborating to set up the marbles for their oldest brother to guess, he produced two utterances of a single signed color name paired with the whispered word. (Only one of these utterances is represented in Figure 10, which shows results for the time period that the mother was present. The other utterance occurred while the mother was briefly out of the room.) When producing these utterances, this child was likely trying to keep the colors secret from his oldest brother, who would be guessing them. This attempt at secret-keeping was not particularly skillful; it appears from the videotape that the oldest brother would have been capable of seeing the signs and overhearing the whispered words. However, given that the oldest brother did not immediately guess correctly, it seems that the secret-keeping was in fact successful.

The language choices that the children in family 3 made when dealing with each of their parents individually carried over to dinnertime with both parents present. In Figures 11-13, for all three children, the bars for turns addressed to the father cluster on

the left, “sign” side of the graph, the bars for turns addressed to their brothers cluster on the right, “speech” side of the graph, and the bars for turns addressed to the mother span a wider spectrum, with the oldest child often signing or gesturing to her without speech and the younger two children most commonly addressing her with combinations of sign and speech.

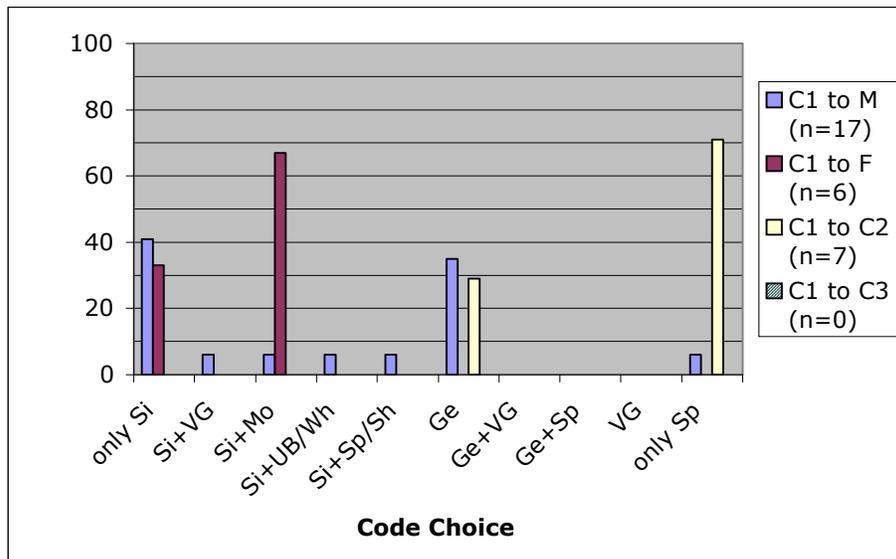


Figure 11: Family 3 Dinner: Oldest Child

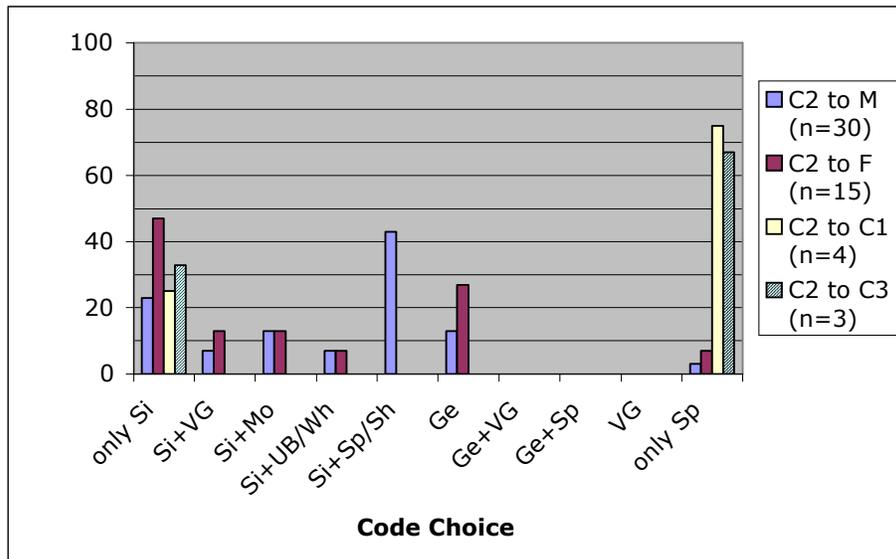


Figure 12: Family 3 Dinner: Middle Child

The middle child produced one turn in sign only—WHERE, while looking for his fork—that was arguably either jointly addressed to his father and both brothers or addressed only to himself; his gaze direction during the production was ambiguous. The small number of total turns that he addressed to his brothers during dinner gives this one turn a misleading impression of significance. Similarly, the one turn in speech only that he addressed to his parents was in fact a general announcement—“I’m full”—produced while getting up and wiping his mouth. The youngest child produced a similar jointly-addressed announcement—“I’m done”—accounting for the one speech-only turn that he addressed to his father; his two speech-only turns addressed to his mother were unclear exclamations that could arguably be considered unaddressed.

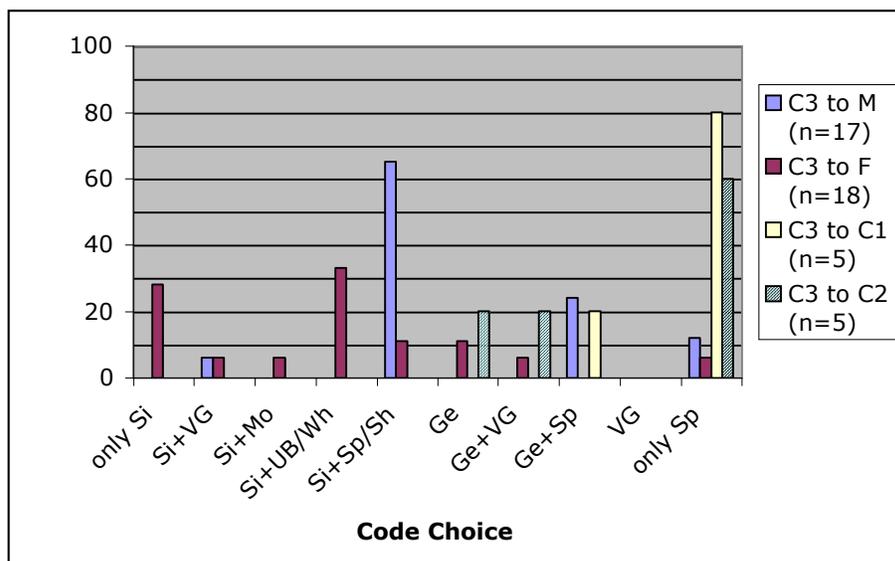


Figure 13: Family 3 Dinner: Youngest Child

The children of family 3 were skilled at adjusting their language use not only between deaf and hearing addressees, but also between their two parents. They used more speech along with their signing to their mother and addressed more sign-only turns to their father. Their language behavior to their father was similar to that of the family 1 children to both parents, but because their turns addressed to their mother often included speech, the family 3 children produced many more turns that included both speech and sign than did the family 1 children.

In both families, exceptions to the general patterns often came from utterances directed at both deaf and hearing addressees. It could be argued that the choice of speech alone for a general announcement in itself indicates that the deaf parents were not intended addressees; however, I chose to code addressees based only on content, context, and the speaker/signer's gaze direction in order to avoid prejudicing the numbers by circular reasoning.

In both families, the children occasionally signed to each other, but this signing was almost always for an easily-identified purpose, such as keeping a secret or teaching a sibling a sign. Between these bilingual children, signing was available as a communicative resource, but it appears never to have been the default option. In these two families, the children's competence in ASL does not appear to have been a limiting factor, given the ease with which they signed with their parents and the fluency that the parents reported them demonstrating when interacting with the larger Deaf community. I asked the 16 year-old in family 1 whether he signed with his brothers when their parents were not there, and—after he said no—why not. His response, in a very isn't-it-obvious tone of voice, was, “We can hear.” This answer could be interpreted as reflecting the practicality of spoken language for hearing people, in that—unlike sign—it does not require speakers to get their addressees' visual attention before beginning to speak. It could also be seen as reflecting a link that the children felt between their identity as hearing people and the spoken language. These children's sense of such a hearing identity would have been formed in the context of significant interaction with a Deaf community that for family 3 included many local deaf members of their extended family: they are the first and only hearing children in five generations on their father's side of the family. I will discuss these issues of practicality and identity at greater length in chapter 5.

## **2.2 The Parents**

Like their children, the parents in these families adjusted their language choices depending on their addressees. The mother in family 3 demonstrated such adjustment at dinner, as shown in Figure 14.

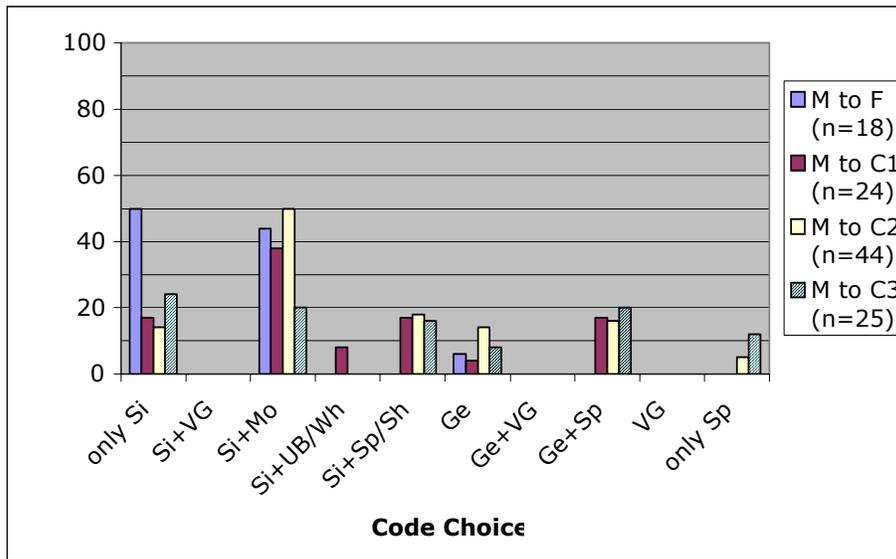


Figure 14: Family 3 Dinner: Mother

This mother always signed or gestured to her husband, signing without accompaniment half the time and with some mouthing almost as much (44% of the time). She addressed her children using only sign much less frequently (14-24%) than she did when addressing her husband. The percentage of turns that she produced with mouthing were similar when she addressed the father and the children, but more than a third of her turns to each child contained fully voiced speech, including two turns in speech only to the middle child and three to the youngest. All but one of these five spoken turns consisted of calling the child's name to get his attention. An attention-getting name was also the only speech in about one-third of the turns combining speech with sign or gesture. Most of her other turns that included speech were disciplinary or regulatory, e.g., trying to get the children to come back and sit down after they had left the table. Although the mother restricted the functions for which she used speech with her children, saving it mainly for occasions when she needed to demand their attention or obedience,

her use of speech with them most likely played into the children’s language choices when addressing her.

The father in family 3 also adjusted his language somewhat depending on his addressee, but to a lesser degree than his wife.

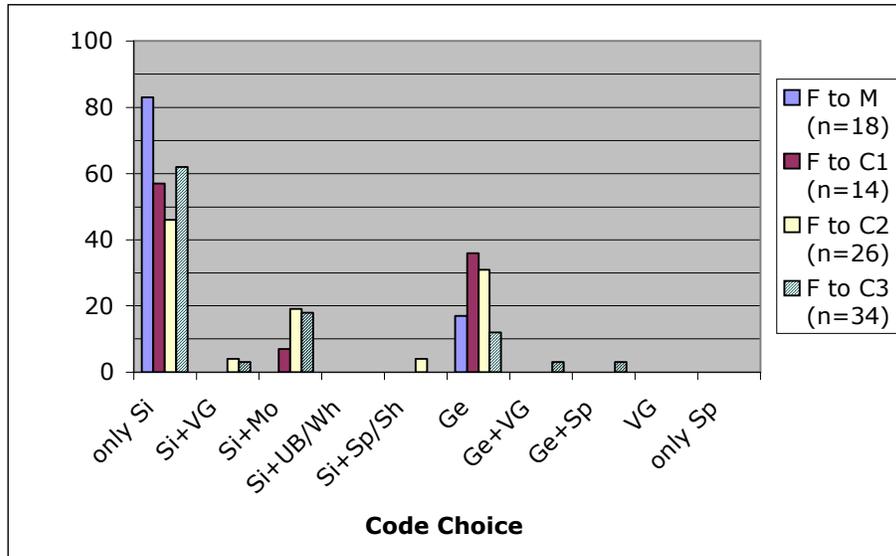


Figure 15: Family 3 Dinner: Father

The father used only sign or gesture the vast majority of the time, regardless of whom he was addressing. When addressing his children, he sometimes added some English-based mouthing and occasionally a spoken word or vocal gesture.

Like the father in family 3, the mother in family 1 made only small adjustments to her language choices depending on addressee, as shown in Figure 16.

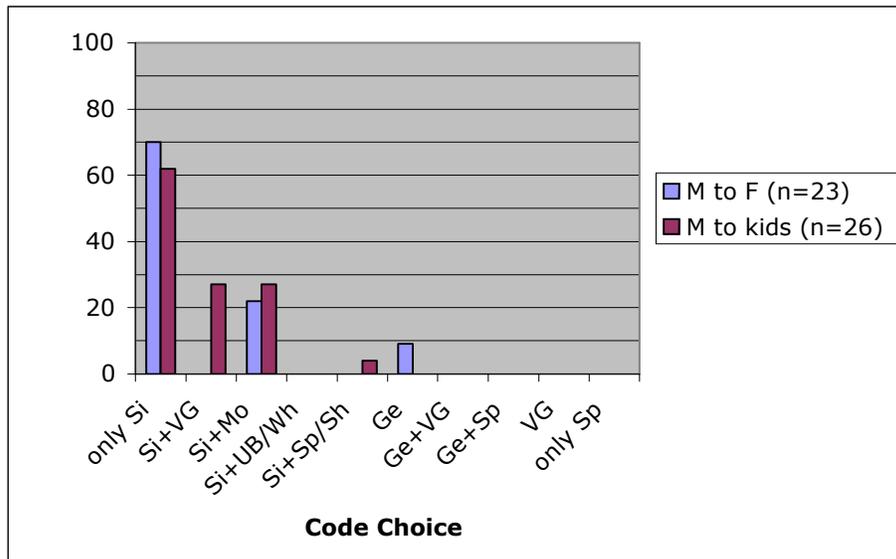


Figure 16: Family 1 Dinner: Mother

Regardless of her addressee, the mother in family 1 produced turns in sign alone the majority of the time and included some mouthing in her turns less than a quarter of the time. She produced one utterance with both sign and speech, offering her oldest child another helping by saying “You want?” simultaneously with the sign WANT before he had shifted his gaze to look at her. All of her vocal gestures were attention-getting vocalizations, generally produced after the addressed child had failed to look at her in response to a wave.

The father in family 1 showed greater differences between how he addressed the children and how he addressed his wife.

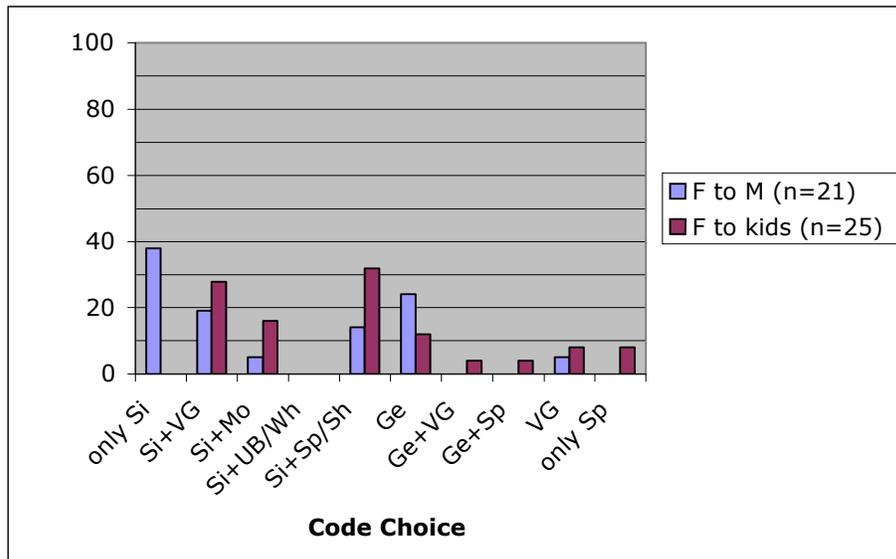


Figure 17: Family 1 Dinner: Father

During this dinner, the father tended to use sign alone to address the mother but never to address the children, although he did use some gestures to the children without accompanying voicing. His largest category of child-addressed turns consisted of both signs and speech, followed by signs with vocal gestures. He also produced two turns to the youngest child that consisted only of speech. However, unlike the mother in family 3, his voicing was almost always supplementary to a more complete message in sign, and he sometimes used his voice while signing to his wife. He did not tend to use speech or voicing to carry significant communicative tasks, and the children do not appear to have taken the differences in the parents' linguistic behavior as motivation to communicate differently to each of them.

### 3. THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPANTS AND BYSTANDERS ON FAMILY LANGUAGE CHOICES

When both deaf and hearing family members are involved in an activity together, the deaf parents have full access to the progress of the activity only if the children choose to sign to their bilingual siblings. The results presented in section 1 indicate that most of the children in these two families did not make this choice. In family 3, only the oldest child appears to have been significantly influenced by having a deaf parent present as an unaddressed participant. As shown in Figure 18, during the marble game, fully half of the time that he addressed his youngest brother when their mother was present, his turns consisted of signs with simultaneous speech. These turns were directly related to the progress of the game, occurring when the youngest child was trying to guess the marbles that the oldest child had hidden.

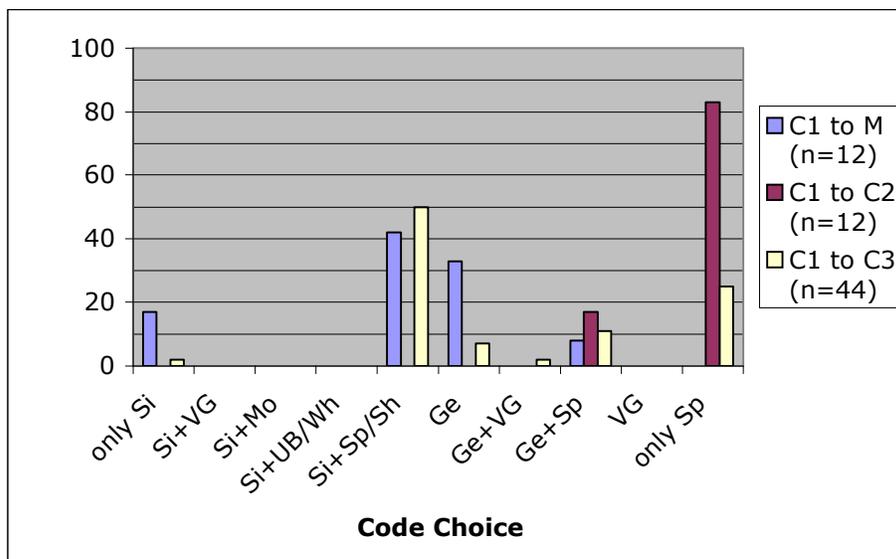


Figure 18: Family 3 Marbles: Oldest Child

As mentioned in the previous section, all three of the children in this family made different language choices when addressing their father than when addressing their

mother, with more sign-only turns to their father and more turns with simultaneous sign and speech to their mother. However, when the parents were unaddressed participants, the children did not distinguish between them in their language choices. The two younger children were no more likely to sign to each other with their father as a participant in the bingo game than they were with their mother as a participant in the marble game.

In family 1 as well, the oldest child appears to have been somewhat influenced by the presence of the deaf parents as unaddressed participants. In the dinnertime exchange with his youngest brother quoted above in example (2), his socialization of the four year-old to sign his politeness formulas was likely motivated by the presence of the parents, and his choice to sign his instructions resulted in drawing both parents into the interaction. (However, the 16 year-old did not practice what he preached; later in the dinner, he addressed a general “excuse me” to the table for an offense not evident from the video, and he did not sign it.) As discussed in the previous section, the younger children in this family rarely signed to each other. However, the presence of their mother as a participant in the tinkertoy game may have influenced their choice to include signs when addressing each other during a time of conflict over a tinkertoy that both wanted. Using signs in that situation drew the mother in as a potential negotiator of the conflict. In both families, with very rare exceptions, the maximum effect of an unaddressed parent participant was to influence the children to add signs to the speech that they addressed to each other, rather than causing them to address each other only in sign.

The presence of an unaddressed parent participant can also lead to a choice to speak in order to hide what is being said; there is at least an awareness that the parents cannot monitor everything. During family 3’s marble game, when the oldest child was placing the marbles that the mother would guess, the middle brother spoke out loud to him, telling him which marble to use. Their mother was present but not looking at the

speaker; he knew that his speech would not give away the location of the marble. A number of times children said things that their parents probably would not have liked. While sitting next to his mother during the tinkertoy game, family 1's middle child muttered to his younger brother to "shut up." Family 3's oldest child swore—"damn"—during the marble game, and his 4 year-old brother announced at the end of dinner, "I'm freaking done!" Despite these examples, the videotapes revealed no egregious cases of children hiding communication from their parents.

The principles of audience design would indicate that speakers/signers may be influenced in their language choices not only by addressees and participants, but also by bystanders: people present but not participating in the activity at hand. During most of these videotaped interactions, a camera operator was present as a bystander. After one session with family 3 in which I videotaped the mother and the youngest child playing one-on-one, the mother told me that the child had been voicing more than normal. She said that normally, when the two of them are home alone, he turns off his voice and just signs. In order to test the effect of the hearing status of the camera operator, I asked a deaf colleague to videotape this family. Figure 19 shows the code choices of the mother and youngest child playing bingo during the session with the hearing camera operator, and Figure 20 shows their code choices when playing bingo during the session with the deaf camera operator.

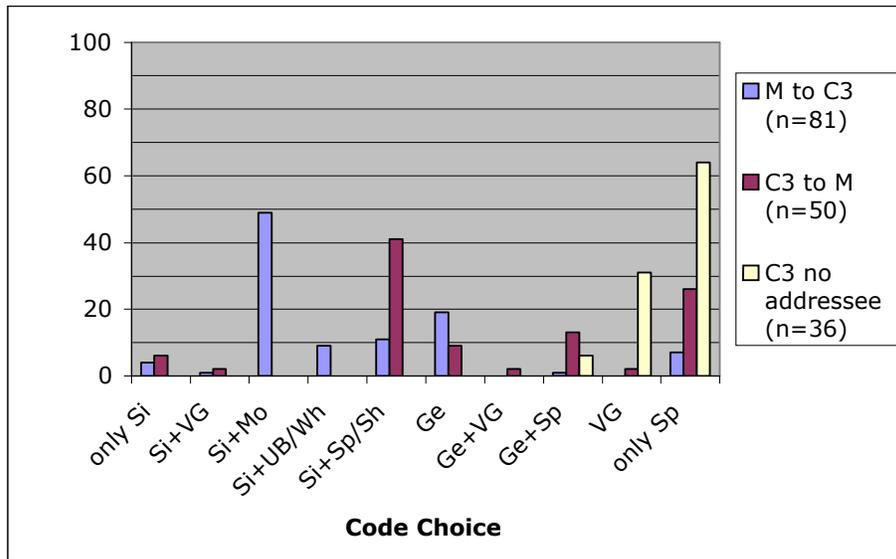


Figure 19: Family 3 Bingo: Mother and Youngest Child with Hearing Camera Operator

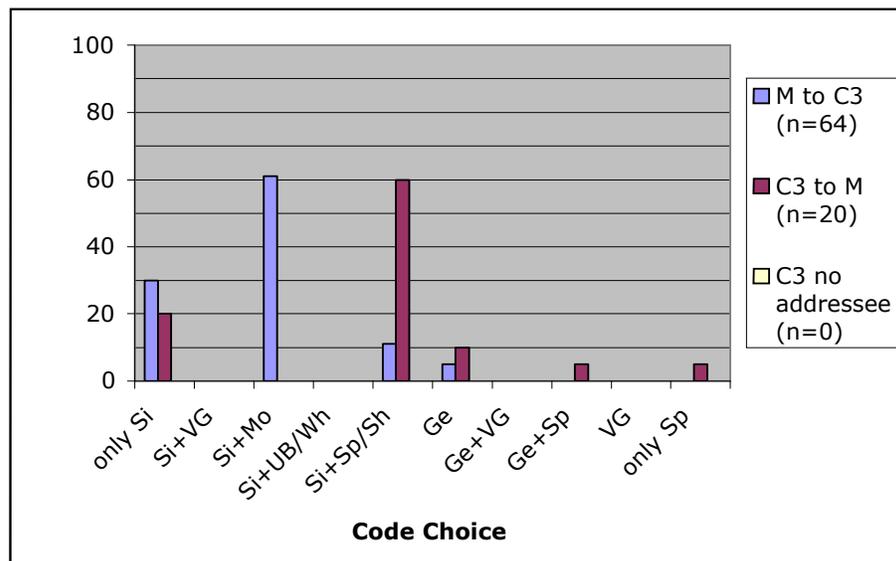


Figure 20: Family 3 Bingo: Mother and Youngest Child with Deaf Camera Operator

The youngest child's code choices when addressing his mother were overall quite similar in the two sessions. In both sessions, he most frequently addressed her using combinations of sign and speech. An effect of the camera operator may be evident in the

larger percentage of turns in sign only that he addressed to her with the deaf camera operator and the larger percentage of turns in speech only that he addressed to her with the hearing camera operator. A more striking difference between the two sessions is in the turns that he produced that were addressed to no one, i.e., talking or singing to himself or making sound effects as he moved around.<sup>1</sup> The child produced 36 unaddressed turns during the bingo game videotaped by the hearing camera operator, all in speech or vocal gesture with a few simultaneous manual gestures. He produced no unaddressed turns during the bingo game videotaped by the deaf camera operator. His mother's observation appears to be accurate: when playing one-on-one with her, the youngest child used his voice more in the presence of a hearing bystander than in the presence of a deaf bystander. However, the difference in his code choices was less evident in the turns that he addressed to his mother than in the turns that he addressed to no one.

The deaf camera operator also videotaped the two younger children playing a game of Candyland with their mother; her presence did not seem to influence either of the younger two children toward sign during that episode, shown in Figures 21 and 22. Their language choices here resemble those they made during the game of marbles. It appears that the code choices of the youngest child were affected by whether he was the only hearing person in the room. When he was playing one-on-one with his deaf mother, the hearing status of a bystander could influence how much he used his voice. If his hearing brothers were present as participants or addressees, the hearing status of the camera operator does not seem to have affected his code choices.

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<sup>1</sup> The young children in both families 1 and 3 produced such unaddressed turns; for the sake of simplicity, I did not include those turns in the graphs showing the effect of the addressee.

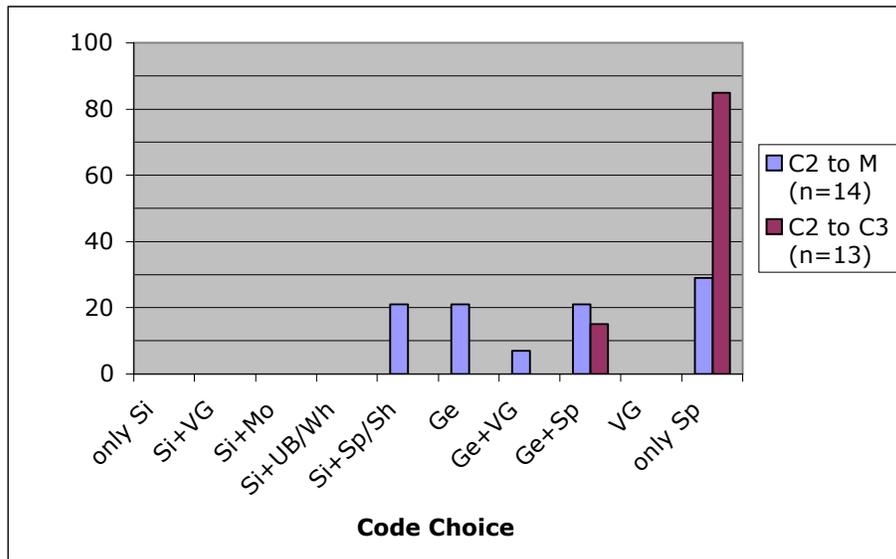


Figure 21: Family 3 Candyland: Middle Child

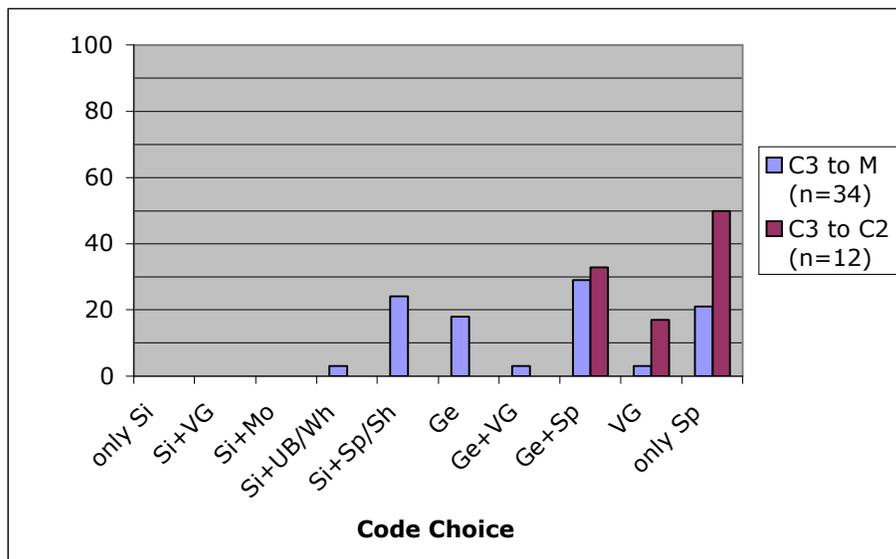


Figure 22: Family 3 Candyland: Youngest Child

In the dinner episodes in both families, the cameras were set up on tripods, and I left the room for the duration of the dinner. For both families, whenever more than one

sibling was present, there was no evident difference between the children's behavior with the hearing researcher in the room (marbles, bingo with father, tinkertoys) and that when I was out of the room (dinner). It appears that the hearing status of a bystander has little effect on the family members' code choices unless a child would otherwise be the only hearing person present.

#### **4. THE INFLUENCE OF AGE AND BIRTH ORDER ON FAMILY LANGUAGE CHOICES**

In both families, the oldest children demonstrated somewhat more complex language choices than their younger brothers, including more signing to their siblings when the parents were participants. Additionally, both at dinner and during the marble game, the oldest child in family 3 addressed his mother more in turns using only sign, while his younger brothers were more likely to include speech as well. The fact that the 16 year-old in family 1 and the 9 year-old in family 3 both behaved differently from their younger siblings—even the 11 year-old in family 1—suggests that birth order may play a stronger role than age. The oldest children spent their earliest years as the only hearing members of a signing family, while their younger brothers always had other hearing, speaking people in the family. However, because I have more videotaped interactions from the younger siblings than from the oldest in either family, firm conclusions on this question must await more data.

#### **5. EXPLICIT DIRECTION OF LANGUAGE CHOICE**

During the videotaped interactions, both mothers directly instructed their children a number of times to sign, 1) to get the information about what was being said; 2) to socialize the children into more consistently providing them with this information; and 3)

to get the children to show off their signing skills for the camera. They sometimes explicitly mentioned the camera or UT in their instructions. However, both mothers said in their interviews that they frequently tell the kids to sign in their daily lives away from the cameras. The mother in family 3 said that she tells her children to turn off their voices and sign ASL to her, e.g., when they're telling her about their day at school. She finds that they communicate much more understandably to her in sign only than in simultaneous speech and sign.

At dinnertime, as reported above, the oldest child in family 1 instructed the youngest to sign for the benefit of the parents, and the oldest child in family 3 instructed the two younger children to sign for the camera a number of times when he was one of the camera operators during their bingo game with their father. These instances of direction of language choice were generally successful for the specific episode when they happened—the children generally did switch languages and provide a translation when requested—but given the continuing minimal effect of the presence of a deaf parent as an unaddressed participant, they do not appear to influence the children beyond that particular turn.

## **6. OTHER BILINGUAL LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS: TRANSLATING AND CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE**

While analyzing the videotapes from these bilingual families, I kept an eye out for utterances that showed the influence of one language on the other. No detailed grammatical analysis is possible without full transcription of the family interactions, but there were a few examples of possible cross-linguistic influence in both directions. The first example is an error in sign selection. During the tinkertoy game, the 11 year-old in family 1 warned his younger brother away from his construction, saying, “No, [child’s

name], you're gonna break it like always." After his mother asked what he had said, he translated his utterance word-for-word into signs with a whispered accompaniment, but he used the sign for the verb LIKE rather than the appropriate sign SAME. His mother promptly corrected his sign choice. It is likely that the act of translating his just-spoken utterance and the choice to whisper while signing led this child to make a sign selection error that he would not have made if he had created the signed utterance from scratch.

The 4 year-old in the same family made a translation error in the opposite direction while talking on the phone to his hearing grandmother. Misunderstanding his mother's signed prompt to ask his grandmother how old she was, he told his grandmother, "I'm old four" and then—after further prompting—asked, "What you're old?" In the first sentence, the child added a copula but otherwise mirrored the grammar of the ASL construction for reporting age that his mother was signing to him. In the second, he applied English rules of wh-question formation to that construction. This child was attending simultaneously to his grandmother's speech and his mother's signs in a situation where neither could perceive the other's utterances in order to time their own. He was translating between his two languages and at the same time exercising newly-learned norms for carrying on a telephone conversation. This complex task resulted in an instance of grammatical influence from ASL to spoken English.

The oldest child in family 3 provided two examples of deleting grammatical morphemes from his spoken English when he was signing simultaneously. During the marble game, he informed his youngest brother that one of his marble choices was correct and signed his message simultaneously for his mother's benefit:

- (3) //We have a black. We have a black. Have black.  
//HAVE BLACK. HAVE BLACK. HAVE BLACK.

The grammar of ASL includes neither articles nor a copula; he left out the definite article and perhaps the copula from the spoken part of his utterance when signing and speaking to his mother:

- (4) //Oh, where('s) scissors?  
// WHERE SCISSORS

Grammatical influence between the two languages was evident only when both were in active use in the conversation, often used simultaneously or in translation. I would expect a detailed transcription and analysis of these interactions to reveal significant simplification or ungrammatical signing when signs were used with simultaneous speech, given the grammatical differences between ASL and English. These anecdotes provide evidence that translating between two languages or producing both at once can lead to grammatical influence of one language on the other. This conclusion is neither surprising nor an indictment of the language skills of these children; in fact, these episodes show the process through which they learn to deal skillfully with their bilingual environment.

## **7. REPRESENTATIVENESS OF RESULTS**

In the attempt to analyze “natural” behavior, the question arises of how representative these videotaped results are likely to be of how the family members behave without researchers or cameras present. As discussed above, the presence of a hearing researcher—even one who knows how to sign—could influence the children toward speech. The mother in family 3 felt that the presence of the hearing researcher influenced her youngest child toward speech when the two of them were otherwise alone in the house. However, when there is more than one hearing child already present, the environment is already partly “hearing”; adding another hearing person is not likely to

make a big difference simply by the fact of hearing status. This idea is strengthened by the lack of effect of the researcher being in or out of the room or being replaced by a deaf camera operator.

The presence of the camera is likely to be an influence in the other direction, as it may encourage the children to be on their best behavior. The parents reported that they regularly encourage their children to sign to allow the parents to follow their conversations; given this prior socialization, the children would most likely interpret “best behavior” to mean increased signing. The parents certainly interpreted it that way, with a number of explicit statements to the children that they needed to be signing for the camera. This effect is likely to be most pronounced on the older children, who are likely to be more consciously aware of the communicative norms of the Deaf community and to feel that they have a role in representing that community. If this influence is real, at least the older children may in fact tend to sign less under normal conditions than they did on videotape.

During interviews after all naturalistic videotaping had been completed, the parents reported that—with the exception of the one episode discussed earlier—family communication during the videotaping had been normal, as it generally occurred without cameras. It was clear that the family members were often aware of the camera—family 3’s middle child performed a music video for its benefit—but it seems unlikely that its presence fundamentally altered the family members’ code choices.

The analyses in this chapter have focused primarily on modality choices (sign or speech) rather than language choices per se (ASL or English). The two types of choices are by no means identical; it is possible to sign in an Englishy manner or to speak following ASL word order. Choice of modality determines which family members have access to the conversation, while choice of language is likely to be related in some way to

the social identities of the speakers/signers. While leaving an in-depth analysis of CODA identity to future research, I discuss this interplay of access and identity among CODAs in the concluding chapter that follows.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

The analyses of the adult interviews in Chapter 3 and of the family interactions in Chapter 4 together painted a picture of hearing children who generally communicate easily and comfortably with their parents in whatever combination of languages and modalities has been developed in their own family habitus, but who communicate with their hearing siblings and friends almost exclusively in spoken English, whether or not their parents are present and interested in following the conversation. These hearing children of deaf parents seem to share a language ideology that valorizes the expenditure of communicative effort to get a message across to an addressee but rejects such effort given any other motivation. These family language practices and the language ideology that has developed from them and that reinforces them can be seen as the result of CODAs' attempts to reconcile the practices and ideologies of the two communities between which they live; to reconcile their identities as hearing people with their understanding of their obligation, as members of a Deaf family, to provide communicative access to the deaf members of that family.

The generalizability of this study's results is limited by the small subject pool; further interview studies are needed to investigate whether the language ideology of communicative effort is truly widespread among CODAs. Only two families have as yet been analyzed for their language choice patterns, and that analysis addressed only which codes were present in what percentage of communicative turns, ignoring the grammatical details of how the codes were combined. Future family research should be both broader and narrower, including more types of families—for example, families with both deaf and hearing children—and including transcription and grammatical analysis of the family members' utterances. The current study has demonstrated the utility of the theoretical

frameworks of audience design and language ideologies in the analysis of the communicative behavior of families with deaf parents and hearing children. In proposing the idea of a language ideology of communicative effort, I have taken a first step in making sense of the wide variation in language behavior and signing ability found among CODAs. Further steps will determine how widely applicable this ideology is and what refinements are needed.

When the 16 year-old son in family 1 explained his choice to use speech when addressing his brothers with a matter-of-fact “We can hear,” he did not mention the fact that they can also see. Having one sense available for language does not automatically rule out use of the other. However, it is possible that the non-directional nature of sound perception—in contrast to vision—might make spoken language somewhat more efficient than signed language for hearing people, in that they do not have to ensure that they have their addressee’s visual attention before beginning their message. The deaf parents also took advantage of this feature of sound: their primary use of vocalizations was to get their children’s attention. In her interview, the mother in family 2 pointed to her ability to get her daughter’s attention by calling her name as the only difference between her actual communicative practices and the way in which she would communicate if her daughter were deaf. This difference between sign and speech for the hearing children could place sign in the “undue effort” category with regard to their functional language ideology and could also play into the similar code choices observed among hearing signers of village sign languages (e.g., Nonaka in press). On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent the children from behaving as their parents often do: that is, using their voices to get each other’s attention and then switching to sign, especially given that even hearing people tend to look at each other when talking to each other. The efficiency of speech is likely not the whole story in these children’s language choices.

To the degree that these CODAs have greater competence in spoken English than in ASL—as is true of the majority of the adult interviewees—this greater fluency could play into their choice to speak whenever communicatively possible. This choice and the asymmetry in language skills would be mutually reinforcing. Among the interviewees, Allison expressed frustration that “I like to talk a lot, and it does take, I think, longer to say things in sign language than it does just to say it outright.”<sup>2</sup> She specifically mentioned situations when she wanted to talk about complex concepts from school or when she and her brother were fighting:

If we’re having a disagreement...we’re going so fast back and forth trading our thoughts that we...don’t really have to stop and like sign so my parents can get in on it....Arguments are usually pretty heated things, and they don’t usually involve a lot of, like, slow thoughtfulness, taking the time to sign this out just for your benefit.

Derek also brought up the role of emotion and speed in choices to avoid sign: “Like if we’re really excited, we can’t sign that fast.” For these CODAs, finding signs simply seems harder than finding words. Nevertheless, it is not the case that speech is consistently connected with ease and sign with effort. For all the CODAs whose parents sign, the easiest way to communicate clearly to their parents is to address them in sign. Craig continued his brother’s thought: “Yeah, if we’re really excited, we talk a lot, and then if it’s really serious, we sign. So like if I need to talk to my dad heart-to-heart, we do a lot of signing. Y’know, so everything’s real clear.”

These differences in competence play a role for a number of CODAs, but they do not explain why those who are fluently bilingual, like those in the observed families, so rarely sign to their siblings, even though their skill in ASL should keep signing from being effortful for them. The fact that they default to spoken English is likely connected

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<sup>2</sup> Studies comparing rates of signing ASL and speaking English have shown no difference between the two languages in the rate of producing propositions, despite the fact that signs are produced at a slower rate than words due to the larger movements required (Kilma and Bellugi 1979).

to their social identities as Hearing people. Like the spoken-language bilingual children who are strongly influenced by the language of their peers and the community outside the home, even those CODAs whose families are deeply connected to the wider Deaf community have mostly hearing friends and schoolmates and spend much of their time in the Hearing world. Those interviewed adults who reported a shift from ASL-dominance to English-dominance in their own language competence generally pointed to entrance into school as the time of the shift. The mother in family 1 observed a change in her children's signing when they entered school, saying that they then started signing to her in English word order. She reported that, after her children entered school, they signed more pure ASL when playing with deaf friends than they did at home, demonstrating a linguistic influence of peers over family. One interviewed CODA, Boyce, said that in his childhood he and his siblings codeswitched effortlessly and without noticing between ASL and English; it is not surprising that the one interviewee who reported such behavior lived only a block from the state school for the deaf and had many deaf children and other CODAs as playmates.

The push to develop a Hearing identity is not likely to come only from the Hearing world. Despite the principle that Deaf community membership depends more on language skills and cultural affiliation than on hearing ability, the distinction between deaf and hearing is very salient in the American Deaf world. Any introduction or description of one's family members includes mention of which are deaf and which are hearing. One interviewed CODA, Bev, recalled seeing her mother's deaf friends lament the fact of having hearing children. Once when Bev's mother was going through a difficult time, she rejected Bev's attempts to comfort her, saying that Bev could never truly understand her: "YOU HEARING. DIFFERENT." The mother in family 2 volunteered her respect for her daughter's world, the Hearing world. Sara's parents

originally did not teach their children to sign, believing that the children's natural language was spoken English. Changed views of ASL both inside and outside the Deaf community make that parental language choice unlikely today: all of the interviewed parents emphasized the importance of deaf parents signing to their hearing babies to allow family communication. Nevertheless, even in the most culturally Deaf household, a hearing child is likely well aware of being hearing and of a link between hearing status and language. Although actual audiological acuity varies on a continuum for the entire population, within the Deaf community, Hearing and Deaf identities are generally framed as distinct categories. Hearing children without significant contact with the Deaf community may not necessarily be aware of a distinction between Hearing and Deaf as social categories; in those cases, the children are likely to simply accept the hearing world as normative.

The combined influence of hearing peers and Deaf world distinctions is likely to influence many CODAs to develop an unquestioned assumption that the normal language choice when addressing a hearing person is spoken English. If this strong connection between the hearing status of the addressee and language choice extends to hearing siblings or if the person being addressed is a hearing playmate, the only way not to exclude a deaf parent who is an unaddressed participant in the interaction is to sign and speak at the same time. Given the major grammatical differences between ASL and English, creating a complete message in both at once is a challenge even for fluent bilinguals. As quoted in chapter 3, Sara described putting her mother off when she wanted to know what was being said between her and her hearing friend. April agonized over how hard it was to remember to sign and speak at home and how bad she felt about not doing it. Kevin also expressed unease with the status quo that excluded his parents

but—finding it too difficult to consistently use both speech and sign—gave up on the issue:

We [Kevin and his siblings] only spoke, and that actually caused some controversy.... It was a problem that we would...speak to each other, we would never sign, so at dinner, ...if anyone was talking to my parents, then we'd sign, but if we were talking to each other, we wouldn't, and they would want to know what was going on, ... and it was like almost too hard to do both....It's just like being in two conversations at the same time, it just didn't work, and we just didn't do it. I mean, we never thought it was rude. Our parents never, I mean, they would ask us to do it,...but it wasn't like a constant battle, it was just kinda like, fine, this is the way it is, and so then of course when I studied sign language and started being more conscious of it, then I was like, man, that's kinda crappy, and so I would try to do it, and it still wouldn't work. So then I just said, y'know, some things are the way they are, and you know they suck, and you just do it.

It does not seem to have occurred to any of these CODAs that the way around this impasse would be to sign to each other without speech. Their functional ideology of expending effort to avoid communication barriers seems to apply only to addressees, not to unaddressed participants. Although many of them were aware that their parents were being excluded, their desire to prevent that exclusion could not overcome their sense that the natural way to address a hearing person was in speech. Once more than one hearing sibling is present in the home, it becomes a bilingual, bicultural environment. Kevin stated that he would never just stand around talking at the Deaf Club—the prototypical Deaf environment—but his own home was different.

It appears that CODAs who identify with cultural Deafness to different degrees and who use different amounts of ASL in their daily lives do not differ fundamentally in their acceptance of a functional ideology for language choice or in their tendency to speak to hearing people. Rather, those adult CODAs who connect with a Deaf identity tend to put themselves more frequently into positions where signing is functionally appropriate, working and/or socializing in the Deaf world. CODAs with strong connections to the Deaf community are highly visible in representations of CODAs in the

sign language linguistics literature, in part because they are easy to identify as potential research subjects, for example, through organizations of sign language interpreters. However, these CODAs are not necessarily representative of CODAs in general. Although the selection of subjects in the current study was not truly random, there was nevertheless wide variation in the language practices and community affiliations of the adult interviewees, with the majority working and socializing primarily in the Hearing community. This variation makes the finding of a shared language ideology all the more striking.

The home language choice patterns of the CODAs in this study raise significant questions about whether sign language can be maintained in the family into the next generation. A number of the interviewed CODAs who have no children stated confidently that their children would learn to sign. A few of the older CODAs do have children who sign; the deaf grandparents had been involved as caregivers for some, and others had grown up in a family with deaf foster children. CODAs who have no deaf people in their adult households will have to consciously change their behavior if they want ASL to be a presence in their children's lives. The primary reason that the interviewed CODAs gave for wanting their children to sign was to avoid communication barriers between the children and their deaf grandparents. Neither CODAs nor the Deaf community at large appear to view cross-generational language maintenance among hearing descendants of deaf people as an important site for the preservation of a potentially endangered sign language. Instead, Deaf community attention tends to focus on ensuring that deaf children of hearing parents have access to the sign language. Sign language does not seem to be considered the heritage language of CODAs and their children in the same way as immigrants' languages are considered the heritage languages of their descendants across generations.

Despite this difference, CODAs seem to be overall more similar to than different from second-generation immigrant children. Like the immigrant children, they gain fluency in their parents' language to the degree required for family communication, and all tend to prefer spoken English when surrounded by a larger English-speaking community. Immigrant children are likely to have grandparents who are monolingual in the heritage language, giving them another reason to use it, while CODAs are likely to have hearing grandparents. The difficulty of understanding spoken language without hearing it may lead CODAs to develop better productive skills in ASL; in contrast, immigrant children may be better passively than actively. It seems that those CODAs who are fluent signers may tend to use less codeswitching with their siblings than do many similarly fluent second-generation immigrants, whether for reasons of functionality or identity. Despite slight differences in situation, both groups of children must learn to reconcile the languages and cultures that they learn at home with those they find in the outside world, creating their own bilingual identities and language ideologies.

## Appendices

### APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWS OF ADULT CODAS

#### Language Assessment

1. How would you characterize your variety of sign (ASL, Signed English, etc.)?
2. What was your first language?
3. What is your dominant language? If it's changed, when did it change?
4. When seeing you sign, do Deaf people ever mistake you for Deaf?
5. Can you comfortably discuss professional or academic topics in sign?
6. In a professional or academic discussion carried out in sign, how often do you have to paraphrase, pantomime, or fingerspell to make up for not knowing a sign?
7. Can you easily have a casual conversation with someone you don't know?
8. Can you easily have a casual conversation with someone you know?
9. Can you easily have a casual conversation with your parents?
10. In a casual conversation carried out in sign, how often do you have to paraphrase, pantomime, or fingerspell to make up for not knowing a sign?
11. Can you tell an anecdote or story most easily, quickly, and completely in sign or in speech, or are the two the same?
12. Can you comfortably communicate basic information to people you don't know?
13. Can you comfortably communicate basic information to people you know?
14. When signing with a Deaf person, if you don't know or can't think of a sign, what do you do most often? (paraphrase/pantomime/fingerspell/other/give up on trying to communicate that concept)
15. When Deaf people you don't know sign to you, how much do you understand?
16. When Deaf people you know sign to you, how much do you understand?
17. When your parents sign to you, how much do you understand?

#### Main Interview

1. How do you and your parents communicate? How much speech do your parents use? Has this changed across your lifetime?
2. Parents' education? How did they learn sign?
3. When you were growing up, did your parents sign to you the same way that they did to each other? Do you think your being hearing affected they way the signed to you?
4. When you were growing up, did you interpret for your parents? If so, in what kinds of situations? Describe one.
5. Do you think that technologies like TTY, captions, etc., made a difference in how/how much you /your sibling(s) interpret(ed) for your parents? Did you interpret TV programs?
6. Are there deaf people in your extended family? Grandparents?

7. If you have siblings, would you say you all sign the same way, or are there differences? If differences, can you think of reasons for them?
8. Do you and your siblings have a similar degree of connection to the Deaf community?
9. Was learning English ever an issue for you? Where did you hear spoken English as a very young child?
10. Now, or as a child, does your sign affect your English, or vice versa?
11. Do you feel like you're part of the Deaf community? Why/why not? Feel accepted by?
12. Would you describe yourself as hearing or Deaf or both or neither or something else?
13. How strongly would you say you identify with Deaf culture?
14. How important is it to you to be able to sign well? How would you define "signing well"?
15. Do you work in/with the Deaf community? Why did you make this job choice?
16. Do you have contact with other CODAs (besides your siblings)?
17. How do you feel about the term CODA? Does it describe who you are? When did you first hear the term?
18. Do you know other families with Deaf parents and hearing children? How do those families compare to yours?
19. Did/do you sign with anyone other than your parents?
20. Do you and your sibling usually sign or talk to each other? In which situations do you do which? Are you likely to sign in noisy situations, or at a distance? Is this the same as when you were growing up, or has it changed?
21. When you signed outside the home, did you ever feel like people were watching you? Did it bother you, or didn't you care? Did you ever sign outside the home so other people couldn't understand you? Same now, or changes over time?
22. Did you and your sibling ever talk to each other so your parents wouldn't know what you were saying? If so, did it work?
23. When you were growing up, did you have deaf friends your age? Do you have deaf friends now?
24. Do you (often) sign and speak at the same time? In what kind of situations? Ever when the person you're talking to doesn't know sign? If signing and speaking simultaneously, do the sign and speech influence each other?
25. Do you ever talk with ASL-like word order/grammar? If so, is this just for a short time (say, one sentence), or might you have a whole conversation this way?
26. Was language use (either sign or speech) ever an area of conflict in your home? Did people (parents, grandparents, etc.) explicitly tell you to sign or to speak, or how to do either?
27. How did your teachers react to your having deaf parents? Reaction of hearing friends?
28. If/when you have children, do/will they learn to sign? Why/why not?
29. Could you imagine marrying a Deaf person? Or another CODA? Would connection to deafness make any difference?

30. What advice would you give to young deaf parents with a new hearing baby?
31. I've noticed that there's a lot of variation in how well CODAs sign – why do you think this is?

## **APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWS OF THE DEAF PARENTS**

1. Can you tell me about your background? Do you have deaf parents or other deaf family members? If not, where did you learn to sign? What is your educational background?
2. How do you and your children usually communicate with each other?
3. When your kid(s) were little, did you think about what language you were going to use with them, or was it just automatic?
4. Has language choice ever been an issue or problem in the family, e.g., with extended family members?
5. Do you have to remind your kids to sign?
6. If you sign with your kids, where did they learn English? Were there ever any issues or problems with their English, e.g., when starting school?
7. Has the way that you communicate with your children changed as they have gotten older?
8. Do you think the way you communicate with your children would be different if they were deaf?
9. How would you characterize the sign language skills of your child(ren)? Do they sign like deaf people?
10. Are there differences between your children in how they sign? If so, why do you think that is?
11. I noticed that [in an observed situation] you [communicated this way]. Is that typical for that kind of situation?
12. Do you think that everyone behaved pretty normally when I was videotaping? Is the videotaped interaction typical of how your family communicates when you're not being taped?
13. What is communication like between you and your children's teachers? Have there ever been any problems in how they react to your being deaf?
14. Do your children sometimes interpret for you? If so, in what kinds of situations would you like them to interpret, and in what kinds of situations do you not ask them to? Why?
15. Is communication in your family like that in other families you know with deaf parents and hearing kids? How would you compare them?
16. If you had deaf friends who had just had a hearing baby who asked you for advice on raising hearing kids, what would you tell them?
17. I've noticed that there's a lot of variation in how well CODAs sign – why do you think this is?

## APPENDIX C: CODING SYSTEM FOR FAMILY VIDEOTAPES

for each person, for each turn:

1. Role. Code for everyone.

speaker/signer = **s/s**

addressee = **add**

participant = **part** = person participating in the activity or conversation underway but not directly addressed. parallel to what Bell (1984) calls *auditor*.

bystander = **by** = person known by speaker/signer to be present, not participating in the activity or conversation. parallel to what Bell (1984) calls *overhearer*.

If a person has two simultaneous roles, mark both, with continuing role first; e.g., **add & s/s**. If a person has the same role with regard to two different simultaneous utterances, code with **x2**; e.g., **part x2**.

If the role is unclear, mark the possibilities; e.g., **part/by**.

2. Hands/Body. Code for speaker/signer.

sign = **Si**

sign/gesture = **Si/Ge** = unclear whether sign or gesture (e.g., point, wave)

gesture = **Ge**

fingerspelling = **FS**

occupied = **HOcc** = hands occupied doing something non-communicative

3. Mouth. Code for speaker/signer.

speech = **Sp** = full voice

shout = **Sh**

under breath = **UB** = more than whisper, less than full voice

whisper = **Wh**

mouthing = **Mo**

singing = **Sing**

vocal gesture = **VG** = communicative vocal sound without words

occupied = **MOcc** = mouth occupied doing something non-communicative

not visible = **NV** = nothing audible; can't tell whether or not mouthing

4. Gaze. Code for non-speaker/signer.

focus = **foC** = focused on speaker/signer

periphery = **per** = speaker/signer visible in peripheral vision

away from speaker/signer = **no** = can't see speaker/signer

can't tell = ?? = person out of frame or gaze otherwise undeterminable

If exact point of focus is unclear, code possible range; e.g., **foc/per; per/no**.

If more than one utterance is ongoing (i.e., each person has more than one role), code gaze with reference to each speaker/signer; e.g., (for C2, if both C1 and C3 are s/s)  
**foc C1; no C3**

#### 5. Comments.

Note when people leave or enter frame.

Note all attention-getters; e.g., **attn-getting name, attn-getting wave, attn-getting VG**

Note when one person corrects/instructs another (socialization); e.g., **C1 soc C3**

Note any possible influence of one language on the other. In this case, note influence in comments (e.g., **sign infl speech?**) and transcribe relevant utterance in quotes on Mouth and/or Hands tier, after code (e.g., Mouth: **Sp "Have black?"**). Otherwise, no need to transcribe utterances.

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## Vita

Ginger Bianca Pizer was born in Durham, N.C. on April 3, 1972, the daughter of Stephen and Marilyn Pizer. She graduated from Chapel Hill High School, Chapel Hill, N.C. in 1990. In 1994 she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts Magna Cum Laude from Brown University. During the following year, she lived in Bad Ischl, Austria and taught English at the Bundeshandelsakademie and the Bundeslehranstalt für wirtschaftliche berufe. Returning to the United States, she lived for three years in Northern Virginia and studied American Sign Language at Gallaudet University's College of Continuing Education in Washington, D.C. She entered graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin in the fall of 1998 and earned her Master of Arts in Linguistics in 2002. While in graduate school, she taught *Introduction to the Study of Language* for three semesters and *Family Ties: Language at Home* for three semesters in the Linguistics Department at the University of Texas. In 2006 and 2007 she taught *Introduction to Linguistics* for two semesters at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. Her publications include articles in the conference proceedings for the 32nd Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD) (online supplement) with Kathleen M. Shaw and Richard P. Meier, the 11th and the 15th Annual Symposium About Language and Society–Austin (SALSA), and the 9th International Conference on Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research (TISLR) with Richard P. Meier. She has published one journal article with Keith Walters and Richard P. Meier, “Bringing Up Baby with Baby Signs: Language Ideologies and Socialization in Hearing Families,” which appeared in volume 7 of *Sign Language Studies* in 2007.

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