The Use of English In American Sign Language Instruction
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Abstract

In this thesis, I consider the question of whether an ASL instructor should use English as[1] a teaching tool. I consider a few studies done on the effect of English use on the acquisition of vocabulary, and various teaching techniques that involve the use of English to teach grammar. I also bring in perspectives from spoken language research, contextualize the issue by discussing the history of the deaf community, and provide the perspective of an ASL instructor currently teaching students. This allows me to examine the issue more fully by considering both the acquisition of the language itself and the cultural impact of language teaching methods.

Introduction

American Sign Language has, over the past couple of decades, become increasingly popular as a foreign language taught in American schools. Rosen 2008 describes the growth of ASL as an option in American high schools, noting that as of 2005, 701 public schools across the country (not including any type of private school), offered ASL as a foreign language. In 38 states, ASL was formally recognized as a foreign language eligible for high school requirements. A 2011 report from the American Council on the teaching of foreign languages reports an increase from about 40,000 K12 learners of ASL in 2005 to around 60,000 learners in 2008 (ACTFL 2011). In colleges and universities, the number of learners increased from 80,000 learners in 2006 to around 110,000 learners in 2016 (Looney & Lusin 2018).

My thesis will examine the role of English, both spoken and written, in the teaching of American Sign Language as a second modality second language. As the number of hearing students of ASL has grown, the way in which it is taught affects a greater number of people and is therefore arguably more relevant. The teaching of ASL is situated historically in the context of the history of the deaf community and the devaluing of sign languages as non-legitimate languages. It is important that ASL programs be accurate and effective not only for the sake of their students, but also for the sake of the community that they are going to interact with, because many deaf people do not have the option of learning to use spoken language easily or well. It is also important to note that many hearing students of ASL will go on to become interpreters, as most if not all English-to-ASL interpreters must be hearing. Deaf native users of ASL would have to be able to lipread to an almost impossibly accurate degree, so there logically cannot be very many deaf interpreters of English. Thus, those hearing learners who become interpreters will often serve as a deaf person's sole point of access to a conversation. The particular issue of the role of the L1 is also specifically of interest, it seems. In researching this paper, I found that the website of the American Sign Language Teachers Association offers two position papers on guidelines for hiring and suggested class sizes, but promises that a position paper on "The Use of The Target Language In The Classroom" will be coming soon. If the central organization that exists to advance and improve the teaching of ASL is concerned with the use of ASL in the classroom, they are probably interested in its use relative to the use of English. Presumably this is also something that teachers of ASL or administrators who hire teachers of ASL are interested in learning about.

As previously discussed, ASL teaching is situated in a unique historical context, so one issue that teachers of American sign language must contend with when deciding on their policy

on spoken English is a sociocultural one. A good number of ASL instructors are deaf people, and a good number also prohibit any use of the voice in the classroom. In a 2004 survey, for example, researchers found that 56.2% of institutions surveyed had a stated policy on the use of voice (Cooper, Reisman, & Wastson 2011: 311). I have unfortunately not been able to find any research that addresses the question of whether or not deaf teachers of ASL are more or less likely than hearing teachers to use English in the classroom. We can assume, however, that the average hearing teacher is more likely than the average deaf teacher to be comfortable using English as their primary language, and therefore more likely to rely on it in their teaching practice. Schornstein (2005: 400), describing her personal practices in teaching ASL, says she "want[s] [her] students to learn respect for [her] as a deaf person, and for the deaf community in general, by not talking in front of [her] in class" as, to her, "An important part of acquiring the language is learning respect for the people who use it."

Aside from sociocultural factors, exclusive use of ASL might affect a student's acquisition of the language in and of itself. Students must learn, at a very basic and simplified level, the grammar and the vocabulary of a language. Many types of vocabulary are relatively easy to teach without relying on the native language, as one can simply point to a chair and sign the corresponding sign in order to get the idea across. Grammar, however, may be more difficult to convey. It is also worthy of note that over the years, there have been different theories of language acquisition, and different recommended methods for language teaching. It might be true that different theories view the use of the first language in different ways.

English as a language has two components, both a spoken and a written component, while ASL does not, having only a sign component. It lacks a popular or widely used system of writing, so that most literate users of ASL use written English. It may be, therefore, that the

question of the use of spoken English in the classroom and the question of the use of written English in the classroom might have two different answers. Most foreign language classes at a high school or college level rely on some form of written communication, be it in the students' native language or in the target language. I would suggest it is implausible, though not impossible, to ask that a teacher use only ASL to communicate with their students inside and out of the classroom.

I will be focusing mainly on English and ASL, but I will bring in evidence from other sign languages, as there has been comparatively little research done on the topic of teaching sign languages. I also assume that in most cases the interaction between sign language and spoken language endemic to the area will be largely the same. At the very least, I assume they are not different enough to suggest that I should not consider the data, as I am specifically interested in the interaction between sign and spoken language, rather than any particular, unique aspect of ASL.

I will begin with a consideration of fingerspelling, which may somewhat blur the line between using ASL in the classroom and using English, then move onto the evidence available regarding the use of English in teaching vocabulary and grammar, which suggest that though the use of written English may be beneficial, the use of spoken English is largely unnecessary. Then, I will broaden my focus to include the research into the use of the first language in spoken language teaching, and how that may apply to sign language teaching. I will provide a more in-depth explanation of the historical context of the relationship between ASL and English, in order to then examine the role of student motivation and student bias in the ASL classroom, and contextualize the idea of prohibiting English entirely in the classroom and what motivations

might exist for suggesting it. Finally, I provide data from an interview and observation with a professor of ASL to examine how the theoretical questions play out in a real classroom setting.

Fingerspelling

One other tool besides spoken and written English that represents a potential usage of English in the classroom is fingerspelling. Fingerspelling refers to a system in which each letter of English is assigned a simple sign, generally just a handshape and orientation, although a few signs, such as the sign for Z, involve movement (Keane & Brentari 2016). Generally, the signs that correspond to the letters also resemble the letters. For example the letter "L" is formed by extending the thumb and first finger. A few signs, such as the letter "S," a closed fist with the thumb resting on the knuckles, do not. It's easy to see how this system, which is always used for words that exist in a spoken language, could be considered an example of the usage of English in the ASL classroom. However, fingerspelling is a tool genuinely used by signers, and it doesn't necessarily make sense to consider something that is an integral part of ASL an intrusion of English into the classroom.

Fingerspelling is fully integrated into ASL, and must be considered part of the language. The percent of ASL vocabulary usually rendered in fingerspelling depends on the signer, but can be anywhere from 12% to 35% of output (Padden & Gunsallus 2003: 15). Mulrooney (2002: 4), arguing against the idea that fingerspelling is merely a "derived, secondary gestural system," points out that this amount of spelling out of words would be extremely noticeable and odd in spoken English. In ASL, however it is not considered odd, because these signs are simply part of the lexicon. Fingerspelling also follows the phonological rules of ASL, and is subject to the same phenomena. For example, research has shown that certain fingerspelled letters without an extended pinky are realized with the pinky extended when they are preceded or followed by a

letter that has an extended pinky (Keane, Brentari & Riggle 2013 cited in Keane & Brentari 2016). Coarticulation also occurs in non-fingerspelling signs in ASL. It's also possible for certain fingerspelled items to become lexicalized, a process by which the individual letter signs that make up the word lose their individual characteristics, and function as one unified sign representing the concept (Mulrooney 2002). We can take from this phenomenon the fact that fingerspellings are not necessarily instance-by-instance translations of words from English to ASL.

One could argue that the type of fingerspelling that occurs naturally in deaf communities is different from the type of fingerspelling that is often used in the ASL classroom. Fingerspelling in ASL has a variety of uses. One primary use, that can be confused for its only use, is borrowing from English in instances where there is not a sign for the concept that one wants to express. However, some signers may use fingerspelling to express concepts for which signs do exist in ASL, as did a 74-year-old native signer who fingerspelled items such as "weeks" and "restroom" (Padden & Gunsallus 2003). Fingerspelling can also contrast the meaning of a sign in ASL and a word in English, as the two don't always overlap perfectly. An example given is of a teacher both fingerspelling and signing 'problem,' and using the fingerspelling to talk about a mathematical or scientific problem, in order to contrast it with the ASL sign, which carries the meaning of difficulty or personal issues (Padden & Gunsallus 2003). It's also true that fingerspelling is used more by native signers. Padden and Gunsallus (2003), comparing the differences between native and non-native speakers' use of fingerspelling, based on samples of 150 signs from 36 signers, found that the average percent of signs fingerspelled for native signers was 18%, compared to 15% for non-native signers. Presumably, if fingerspelling were used mostly as a tool when the signer was not aware of a sign that expressed

what they wanted to communicate, it would be the non-native signers who would have a greater need to use it.

Thus, fingerspelling is slightly ambiguous as a use of English in the classroom, but as genuine part of ASL it cannot truly be considered on the same level as spoken or written English. While it cannot be ignored that it is a way for students to translate directly and easily from English to ASL, it also must be acknowledged that prohibiting fingerspelling would prohibiting the use of an integral part of the language. Researchers also do not seem to consider fingerspelling as an example of English in the ASL classroom, for obvious reasons. For this reason, it is not considered one way or another in the following sections, which focus on vocabulary and grammar. However, I will consider it wherever possible and reasonable to do so.

Vocabulary

In terms of the use of English in teaching vocabulary, research seems to suggest that as a default, teaching without the use of voice is more effective. Rosen et al. 2014 summarizes three studies done on the use of the target language (TL) versus the native language (NL) to teach vocabulary to students learning ASL. The first study, done with a group of 75 junior high school students from a level 1 ASL class, is set up such that there are three groups of students being taught vocabulary in three different ways: a native language (NL) group, a target language (TL) group, and a group that was called "Mixed Methods." The TL group learned the vocabulary using only ASL with no English usage of any type, while NL group learned the vocabulary through English, both spoken and written. The "Mixed Methods" group was taught using both ASL-only teaching strategies such as the use of pictures rather than words, as well as written and spoken English explanations. Teachers and students also "used voice simultaneously with signs when they asked and answered questions and conducted receptive and expressive activities"

(Rosen et al. 2014: 149). In all groups, the language of instruction was used for all classroom communication; this included instructions, transitions, and any explanations or clarifications in response to students' questions. Student progress was measured using a test halfway through the unit and a test after the students had completed the unit. The tests were tests of vocabulary, which were not described fully in the first study. In the second, very similar study, they were described as tests wherein the professor signed a list of vocabulary and the students wrote down the English translation of the sign. The results, broadly speaking, were that the TL group performed significantly better than the NL group, although the "mixed methods" group scored in the middle and was not significantly distinct from either group. The design of the second study, conducted with 25 students from a level 1 ASL class at a high school, was similar to the first, except it did not include a "mixed methods" group. It found, similarly to the first study, that the TL group scored significantly better on a vocabulary assessment than the NL group. Both of these studies support the idea that teaching ASL vocabulary can be done effectively without the use of any English at all and that teaching it this way is superior to teaching it through the almost exclusive use of English. The "mixed methods" group of the first study, whose results were not significantly different from either of the other two groups, appears to confuse the results some. As Rosen suggests, however, the fact that the TL group performed better than the NL group would suggest that the use of ASL in the classroom was the factor that improved students' performance, while the use of English was not (Rosen et al. 2014: 168). Thus, in the absence of other compelling reasons to use or prohibit English, one could be completely confident in prohibiting English, and somewhat confident in using a combined English/ASL approach.

The third study involved a group of 10 students with learning disabilities, specifically in the area of language processing. Some of these students had language processing issues that were

auditory-verbal and some of them had visual-manual processing difficulties. After an initial test of a vocabulary list that had previously been taught in a TL environment, those who scored over 85% continued to be taught in a TL environment, aka "voice off," while those who scored lower were taught in a NL environment, aka "voice on." Those who were taught in a "voice on" environment were able to improve their scores. They were also formally tested to see whether they had difficulties verbally or visual-manually. It appeared that those who had visual-manual difficulties were largely in the group that benefited from the voice on instruction, and those who had issues processing verbal language were more likely to be in the group that learned well in the voice-off environment. This study does not necessarily show, nor was it designed to test the absolute superiority of one method over the other. The researchers were more interested in determining which group of students would benefits most from which method. The groups that were instructed using the two different methods were not randomly selected, but rather based on performance under the "voice-off" condition. This meant that there was one group of students who were instructed using both methods, but another who were instructed using only the "voice-off" method because they succeeded under those conditions. Therefore, there can be no direct comparisons of the final scores of each of the groups.

However, what the scores can show us is that each method is viable for a particular group of students. The students in the voice-off condition each scored 100% on all three of their vocabulary retention tests during the testing period, except for one student who was "managing personal difficulties at the time of the assessment." In the other group, 3 students scored 100% on all tests, while the two others managed 90+ average scores. So we cannot say that using a "voice-on" condition would be harmful to the learning of those with auditory-verbal difficulties (although it would certainly follow), since those students were never taught under that condition.

It would, however, be harmful to the learning students with visual-manual processing difficulties to stick religiously to a "voice-off" teaching condition.

Overall, what we can take from these three studies is the idea that for most students, teaching using a "voice-off" instructional method is useful and preferable, though there may be those students for whom the use of voice is in fact a necessity for them to learn effectively. However, these students are probably the exception, not the rule, as ASL is a visual-manual language, and so those students with verbal-auditory language processing difficulties most likely mirror the experiences of students without language processing difficulties, as the language mode that they have difficulty with is not an integral part of ASL. Those students were the ones who were able to learn successfully under voice-off conditions, and the first two studies came to the same conclusion.

Grammar

I was unable to find any studies dealing directly with the question of whether the grammar of ASL should be taught using only ASL, or whether English should be involved to any degree. Grammar is certainly more complex than a lot of vocabulary. Many concepts translate directly from ASL to English and don't need any particular explanation, whereas it can be difficult to conceptualize the teaching of grammar without the use of the native language. In terms of the proven benefits of the use of English, I have found two studies which inherently involve the use of the L1. If these practices should be a part of the teacher's toolbox, then it would be impossible to say that English should not be involved in the teaching of ASL grammar. Both studies involved similar tasks; one was described as a glossing task, and the other described as a transcription task.

The first study, Buisson (2007), examined the use of glossing in order to compare the grammatical rules of English and ASL, and found that students control of ASL grammar improved after the glossing lessons. The students in the experimental group were 155 students in introductory ASL classes in deaf education programs; they would hopefully go on to use their ASL in the classroom with deaf students. They were drawn from various areas of the United States, as the instruction given was online and so accessible from anywhere with an internet connection. The students in the experimental group were given seven online lessons over five weeks, which taught them by "comparing and contrasting ASL grammar rules with those of English" (Buisson 2007: 335). The online lessons presented to the student a particular set of ASL and English grammar rules and provided explanations and examples. Then, students were able to practice with multiple choice questions that asked them to match glosses of ASL sentences with their English equivalents and vice-versa. The program would then give the students immediate feedback on their choices and explain what was wrong if they had chosen incorrectly. The control group was given readings about such topics as deaf education or communication strategies. Both groups were then tested using a multiple choice test of twenty questions, "based on ASL grammar knowledge" (Buisson 2007: 336). The scores on these two tests were then compared to a pre-test with the same structure that students had taken before the lessons began. Both groups had a pre-test mean score of 38.98 out of 100, and while the control group's score only rose to 45.35, the group that had received the online lessons had a post-test mean score of 71.14.

It would have been impossible to deliver this instruction without the use of English, as a translation requires the use of a written language, which in the case of L1 English speakers would naturally be English. Even the gloss alone requires written words, although it would not

be impossible to imagine a version of this task done using videos of ASL sentences and their English translations. Part of this task also involved the explicit instruction of grammar rules, which would seem to require English itself. Of course, all of this was done using written English, virtually, and not involving any kind of spoken English.

It's also true that the task chosen for the control group makes this result a little weaker than it might be. The study has certainly proven that the task works compared to absolutely no intervention, but it doesn't compare the technique with anything else involving the teaching of grammar. For example, this study doesn't in any way suggest that teaching ASL grammar using a glossing task is any more efficient than teaching ASL in person using example sentences.

Kaul, Reiner and Kaufmann (2014) describes a study in which higher-level learners of German Sign Language were taught to transcribe sentences containing certain signs, which improved their performance on a metalinguistic awareness test. The group being tested consisted of thirty-three participants in their fifth semester of learning German Sign Language (DGS), at the university of Cologne. The task itself consisted of five training session in the transcription technique, in which students watched short videos of a single sentence in DGS. Each sentence contained a particular idiomatic sign, which the instructor explained. Students then discussed the transcription with the instructor and entered their own transcription into an answer sheet before the instructor revealed the correct transcription. These transcriptions consisted of glosses for each sign, as well as instances of mouthing, use of eyebrows, mouth gestures, and mouthing, as the authors of the study wished to focus particularly on non-manual features. In the control group, the specific sign was demonstrated, the video showing the sentence was shown, and questions were answered, but there was no transcription. The article notes that the teaching in

this instance, as in "all DGS courses" was "conducted without voice in DGS." (Kaul et al. 2014: 134).

The authors then tested students' knowledge of DGS grammar using a test of metalinguistic knowledge. This consisted of a test wherein the students were shown a signed sentence, similar to the teaching condition, and were asked to identify whether or not there was an error, and, if there was, to identify what the error was. In the first analysis, students were given one point for correctly determining whether or not an item contained an error. In a second analysis considering only the items with errors, they were given a second point for correctly identifying the error. Ten items were considered of an original twelve (two items were excluded for containing potentially confounding factors), and in the first analysis, the mean score for the control group was 6.78, while the mean for the test group was 9. In the second analysis, out of five items worth a possible two points each, the mean score for the control group was 4.22, compared to 6.07 for the test group. In both of these cases, the differences between the groups was statistically significant (Kaul et al. 2014: 136).

This task also inherently involved the use of a written language based on the students spoken L1- in this case German- as it was used in both the glossing exercise and, presumably, in the test of metalinguistic awareness. However, it's not clear whether the German in and of itself was a key element of the success of the technique, given that the test measured skills regarding awareness of non-manual gestures. These were not linked as directly to the glosses, and therefore a "word-for-word" connection between German and DGS, but rather to the part of the worksheet where students simply had to note their presence or absence.

Both of these studies suggest that the use of a written native language can be helpful in the teaching of signed languages, but neither suggests that spoken language is necessary or

useful. Both of these effective tasks are easily performed using written language. In the second, more recent study, there is an increased use of sign rather than English as a feature of the explanation and testing process. In the second study, any explanations were, as noted, given in DGS. The students transcribe signed sentences rather than working with glosses, and in testing, they work with sign by determining whether or not a signed sentence is grammatical, in contrast to a multiple choice task that seemed to only ask about grammar rules, explained in English. The more recent study may reflect updated beliefs about the use of spoken language. There's no direct way to compare these two studies, and the differences between them are so slight that it would probably be impossible to say that any difference would be a result of the use of English or lack thereof. However, we can say that these are both effective methods, so that it's possible to rely more or less on written English, and certainly possible to teach grammar without using spoken English.

Spoken Language Research

As there has been so little research into the use of the first language in sign languages, it is useful to consider research into spoken languages. The theory underlying language teaching methods may provide insight relevant to ASL, despite the fact that we cannot automatically expect research from a spoken language to be applicable to a second-modality context. However, there is little consensus in the field of applied linguistics about the use of the first language in teaching a second language, although the question is generally framed as one of increased or decreased use of the L1, rather than non-use versus use. Those who argue about the role of L1 in the foreign language classroom tend to also base their argument in different theories about language learning and have different opinions about the goal of language learning, or at least the way that goal should be described.

One reason that some have argued for inclusion or increased usage of the first language in the classroom is that they believe the model of second language learning should be geared more towards a realistic bilingual speaker who has access to both languages. The idea is that the way we teach languages often promotes a false separation of the first and second languages, whereas in reality, a speaker has access to both of them at all times. One section of Spada (2007) evaluates the evidence for and against the use of the first language in communicative language teaching (CLT). She describes the idea that "first and second (or subsequent) languages exist in separate compartments in the mind and therefore should be kept separate in the classroom" as a falsehood which has been empirically disproven (2007: 281). This has been proven to be true of ASL and English in the minds of hearing learners as well, despite the fact that they are different modalities. A 2016 study on neighborhood activation (the idea that words/signs reside in mental neighborhoods made of words with similar features) in hearing learners of a sign L2, which primed participants to "activate" the neighborhood containing the sign they were testing using an English word that rhymed with the gloss of the sign. The authors were testing ability to recognize whether a sign was real or not, and they found effects based on neighborhood density (the number of words/signs in a neighborhood). This suggests that their findings "are in line with a number of recent findings that suggest hearing M2L2 [second modality second language] learners co-activate both their spoken and sign languages during sign language processing" (Williams & Newman 2017: 223). M2L2 learners are those, like hearing learners of sign languages, that are a learning a new language in a modality that is different from their first language. Thus, we can see that spoken and signed language are inherently interrelated in the brain and trying to separate them in the classroom could be seen as a futile act.

The idea of scaffolding in education, as influenced by Vygotsky, also features in this argument. The idea is that the first language can be a valuable tool in the learner's task, which is seen as negotiating meaning. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development refers to the idea that there is a zone of tasks students are able to accomplish on their own, and there is a zone of tasks that students are able to accomplish with the help of someone else (Dunn & Lantoff 1998). Thus, scaffolding refers to the teacher's actions that provide a "scaffold" for the child to achieve what they could not do independently. Turnbull and Arnett (2002) describe the arguments around the use of the first language, and mention that proponents of the use of L1 as a tool for scaffolding believe that using the L1 allows students to "negotiate meaning" in the classroom, and that using the L1 students are able to essentially carry on in interactions where they might have been stopped if they were forced to use only the TL. As an example, a student might lack the word or grammatical structure that they need to carry on conversing, and asking for that in the L1 would then allow them to continue the conversation. Swain and Lapkin (2002) provide an example of L1 use in an intentional way, describing a technique used in teaching French to English speakers in Canada. In this study, two students did a writing activity, then had that writing activity corrected by a native speaker. They were able to initially note changes in the writing in French, then discuss those changes in English and communicate more directly about the meaning that they were seeking to convey.

Negotiating meaning is not reserved for the language learning classroom, which means that teaching students to do so teaches them to use the language authentically. The bilingual speaker has both languages at their disposal, and in an authentic context, would be able to draw on both languages and code switch between languages as appropriate. Therefore, some argue, it makes sense to have the classroom be a space where code switching is allowed, as that is the

experience students will likely have using the language (Turnbull & Arnett 2002). This argument can apply to the use of written English in the classroom, but students will likely not be able to code-switch with spoken languages in the context of a conversation with another user of ASL. This is due to the fact that many users of ASL can't communicate in spoken English, but also to the fact, as will be discussed below, that using English would often be culturally inappropriate in a conversation with a deaf person. Students might be able to communicate their ideas to a deaf person using fingerspelling, but this would probably not be considered true code-switching, as fingerspelling is a part of ASL.

However, those who argue against the use of the first language in the classroom often admit that it has various uses, but suggest that it should be limited as far as possible. communicative language teaching (CLT), "the most influential approach to arrive on the scene since...the 1960s" and a term that is often used as an umbrella term for many current approaches (Spada 2007: 283), has theoretical roots in the ideas of Krashen. His input hypothesis seems to suggest no need for the use of the first language at all. It's based on the Chomskyian idea that we each have an internal language acquisition device that works automatically (Krashen 1985). The input hypothesis, put succinctly, suggests that language can be learned by understanding the meaning of messages in the target language, and what is key is for the learner to be exposed to input in the target language that they will be able to parse. He suggests that unknown grammar can be understood through context, non-linguistic cues, and any knowledge the learner has previous acquired. In a situation where The learner, if they are able to understand, will proceed automatically, and learn the "next" grammatical structure automatically. He describes this next level using "$i + 1$," where i is the current linguistic "level of competence, " and one represents the logical next structure to be acquired (Krashen 1985: 2). The $i+1$ mechanism in action might

look something like: The "instructor" says "give me the ball," and gestures to be given the ball. The student, who already knows the word "ball," is able to intuit that the rest of the sentence more-or-less means "give me." However, Krashen does believe that language learning happens more naturally; it is not necessary for the student to consciously connect the dots. If all that were needed for language learning was to understand the target language through context clues and other means, then there would be no need of the native language in the classroom at all. It cannot be denied that his influence promotes an immersion-style learning environment.

Theorists have since built on Krashen's ideas, and indeed Spadas' 2007 article suggests that complete avoidance of the L1 is a *myth* that some believe about CLT. However, Spada suggests that despite the evidence that "L1 use should not be completely banned," "one must be careful about how much L1 use is productive," (2007: 280-281). The phrasing of "completely banned" does not exactly suggest enthusiastic acceptance of the L1. In his article "There is a role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, but..." Turnbull suggests that teachers "maximize" use of the target language, and writes that "[he] fears licensing teachers to speak in the L1 in their SL[second language] or FL[foreign language] classes will lead to overuse of the L1 by many teachers"(Turnbull 2001: 536).

It is also true that many language teachers use the first language in the classroom, regardless of what the theoretical guidelines might say. While we cannot ignore the fact that instructors of foreign language might improve their pedagogy based on theory and evidence, we must also take into account that they have valuable insights and practical knowledge about how the classroom environment functions that writers of theory may not have. De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) observed, interviewed, and did stimulated recall with two teachers of German as a foreign language at a university in Canada, and found through a word-by-word analysis that the

average percent of L1 use was 9.3% and 13.2%. There was no significant difference in averages between the two instructors, one experienced and one novice, but there was a significant difference between classes themselves, with the experienced teacher's minimum use of L1 being 4.6%, and the novice teacher's maximum use of L1 being 25.1%. These instructors used L1 in a variety of ways as categorized by the researchers, with *translation, personal comment, activity instruction*, and *instructor as bilingual* as the top four categories out of fourteen, although *translation* accounted for 32.3% of the use of the first language while the other four accounted for around 10%. Although most of these categories are self-explanatory, *translation* refers to a direct translation of a preceding phrase in German, and *instructor as bilingual* refers to instances of code-switching. This suggests that providing a direct translation continues to be a common use of the first language in the classroom, despite the theoretical idea that this may be inferior to an approach that does not include translation. Personal comment as a top category provides insight into an aspect of teaching that was previously not considered- the building of a bond between instructor and students, which might be more accessible if done in the students' native language.

Littlewood and Yu (2009) provide suggestions for the use of the native language in the classroom. Responding to proponents of "maximizing" target language use in the classroom, they seek to help define what that would actually mean. They suggest the use of two different frameworks to define when the L1 versus TL could or should be used: S.-H. Kim and Elder's framework of "core goals" versus "framework goals," and Pennington's "strategic use" vs "compensatory use" (S.H-Kim & Elder 2005, cited in Littlewood & Yu 2009, and Pennington 1995, cited in Littlewood & Yu 2009). Core goals vs. framework goals can be described as the difference between using the L1 for content purposes or for classroom environment purposes,

and strategic vs. compensatory use can be described as planned use versus use in responding to a problem. They then provide a table, suggesting that the overlap of the two frameworks can provide four areas of L1 usage: Strategic use for core goals is "planned learning activities," strategic use for framework goals is "affective and interpersonal support," compensatory use for core goals is "an ad-hoc 'crutch' to help learning," and compensatory use for framework goals is as "an aid to help classroom management." They then go on to suggest what uses of the L1 fall into each of these categories, and offer some general suggestions for reduction of L1.These definitions give us context for the greater debate, as one could theoretically argue that the L1 should be used for emotional support, but not for classroom management. The authors suggest a reduction in use as an ad-hoc crutch, but do not recommend outright prohibition or encouragement in any category, instead discussing the competing rationales for using L1 and L2 in any given category. Most of the discussion thus far has been about its utility in a planned learning context, and it may be necessary to consider its uses in other contexts.

Thus, we can see that the larger trend of research into immersion or L1 usage in spoken languages essentially has two main "strands," those advocating for the usage of the L1 in classroom, and those advocating for its reduction. Those who advocate for the use of the L1 make some valid points, but none of them apply strictly to the use of spoken language. The argument that the L1 should be used as a teaching tool because bilingual people will have use of both languages in an authentic context does not apply to the spoken L1 because students should not expect to use the spoken L1 in an authentic context (i.e., conversation with a deaf user of ASL). In the case of the argument that the L1 can be used by the teacher for various legitimate purposes, written L1 can fulfill most of the purposes described. The use of the L1 for the purpose of constructing meaning jointly with classmates is the only usage of the L1 that seems truly

inaccessible through written English or fingerspelling. It seems like it would be difficult logistically to have a conversation about forms through written English, and fingerspelling is somewhat cumbersome as well. Communication about emotional subjects, as mentioned by Littlewood and Yu (2009), might also be difficult, as face-to-face communication is generally perceived as more intimate, and again, having a fluent conversation face-to-face using written English would be logistically complicated. The role of the teacher as responsible for considering and supporting students' mental and emotional health and wellbeing seems like it would also be more difficult to achieve through a second language.

In terms of written English, there is no good reason to abandon it entirely. The arguments made by those who oppose increased use of the L1 in the classroom are fairly common-sense arguments; the more that you use the target language in the classroom, the more opportunities students have to learn and practice that language. It would of course be less than ideal to have teachers use L1 whenever it was convenient rather than wherever it was genuinely useful. However, the arguments made by those who endorse increased use of the L1 are compelling, and if spoken L1 cannot be used in an authentic context, written L1 is, if not encouraged, at least not prohibited in the same way. And, if certain functions of teaching need the L1 as a tool, written language can usually suffice.

Deaf History and Culture

To understand the relationship of the deaf community to the English language, it is crucial to understand the history of deaf community in America and the western world more generally. The Sage Deaf Studies Encyclopedia provides a good overview of oralism and related topics. Historically, the two main movements in deaf education are known as "manualism," or teaching deaf children through sign languages, and "oralism," or teaching deaf children to and

through spoken languages (Gertz & Boudreault 2016). Oralists historically advocated not only for teaching deaf children to use spoken language through lip reading, but also against any form of sign language; they did not believe the two could coexist.

Oralism as a movement was popular in the late 1800 through to the 1900s, as the 1880 Second Congress on the Education of The Deaf in Milan established it as the consensus method by which deaf children should be taught (Gertz & Boudreault 2016). It essentially harmed or disadvantaged generations of deaf people in the name of helping them. Oralists believed that deaf people should become as similar hearing people as possible and attempt to blend in with them. Oralism as a philosophy is also linked to a desire to essentially eliminate deaf people through eugenics; Alexander Graham Bell was a notable proponent both of oral instruction and of prohibiting or discouraging deaf people from intermarrying for fear they would produce deaf children (Lane 2005). Oralists also saw sign language as an illegitimate language which could not be used to express ideas the same way as spoken language, and thought that allowing a child to learn a sign language would inhibit their abilities to learn spoken language. Children were forbidden to use sign languages in the classroom and sometimes subjected to physical punishments for using it, such as "having their hands whacked with rulers, taped to their desks, or tied behind their backs" (Gertz & Boudreault 2016). This inhibited their language development, given that learning spoken language is not natural or easy for deaf children, and many who were denied access to sign languages suffered from linguistic deprivation.

Oralism, however, is not exclusively a thing of the past. Many medical professionals still pressure parents to try and give their child the most "normal" experience possible, and press cochlear implant surgery or hearing aids (Gertz & Boudreault 2016). The idea that deaf children will be better off if they can learn to speak and lipread rather than sign for communication is still

very present within the medical industry and in early childhood education, despite the proven

downsides to depriving a child of natural language at an early age (Rathman et al. 2012).

Psychologically, deaf children educated orally often suffer from problems with self-esteem. They

are constantly set up against impossibly difficult tasks that they consistently fail at, not to

mention the fact that they are made to feel ashamed that they are deaf if they are constantly being

asked to hide, deny and compensate for it. All of these experiences are ones that deaf instructors

may carry with them into the classroom, and they are reasons why expecting deaf people to learn

or use English in a given academic situation may be considered unjust.

Oralism is directly in contrast with the prevailing beliefs and opinions of the Deaf

community, who look at deafness as a positive attribute rather than the negative, pathologized

conception of deafness as a disability that many outside the community hold. The concept of

"Deaf Gain," for example is often used in academic study of deafness, and describes the

conception of deafness as merely another form of human diversity rather than any form of loss

(Gertz & Boudreault 2016). Deaf Gain is only one of many theories around and conceptions of

deafness, but it captures the prevailing idea of deafness as natural and beneficial that many in the

deaf community subscribe to, and contrasts it with the idea of deafness as a "loss" of hearing.

Another aspect of mainstream Deaf Culture that is important to understand is the value

placed on sharing information and having access to information. Deaf people, within the

confines of their own community, expect to theoretically be able to understand any conversations

taking place, even if it is not communication that is explicitly intended for them (Gertz &

Boudreault 2016). This in some ways mirrors the experience that hearing people have when they

are in a room full of other hearing people who are using spoken language; if someone says

something in a language you know in your general vicinity, you'll be able to understand and

perhaps unable to avoid understanding the content of their conversation. This "incidental learning" is something that deaf people often miss out on, and it can leave them unprepared in situations that hearing people would be able to navigate (Gertz & Boudreault 2016). This has directly led to the value placed on sharing information in the deaf community, such that even information that would be "rather personal or potentially embarrassing" to members of the hearing community is normal and expected to be shared within the deaf community (Gertz & Boudreault 2016). Thus it is also a key value that they have access to information around them, and all conversation in a deaf space is expected to be conducted in ASL. While it might seem more logical to keep a conversation private from deaf people around you by simply using a spoken language, it is considered much more appropriate to instead physically leave the space if you need privacy. This is because "intentionally excluding a Deaf person from a conversation is considered extremely rude" (Gertz & Boudreault 2016).

Student Motivation and Student Bias

One basic theory in the field of language learning is that students that are more highly motivated will have more success in learning the language. Therefore, it is valuable to know what student opinions are in regard to the use of English in the classroom, and whether the actual prohibition of English in the classroom has any effect on student motivation. While I was not able to find any research on the actual effect of no-voice policies, we can look to the use of immersion policies in the teaching of other languages. Research suggests that students would prefer to use English as well as ASL in the classroom, but one complicating factor in the consideration of student motivation is bias. ASL is associated with the deaf community and often taught by deaf professors, so disapproval of the failure to use English in the classroom may be motivated by student prejudice or bias. This prejudice may not necessarily come in the form of

explicit negative opinions about deaf people, but rather in the form of preconceived notions that disadvantage deaf people and reinforce audistic power structures.

Peterson's 2009 book *The Unlearning Curve: Learning to Learn American Sign Language* provides evidence both of bias and misinformation among students of ASL and their preference for the use of English as well as sign. The book is formatted as a guide for beginner students of ASL rather than an academic report, but contains the results of a survey conducted by Peterson into the preconceptions about ASL. The group surveyed consisted of 1,115 students from 13 different colleges and universities in the US and Canada. School personnel were asked to distribute the survey "first thing at the first class meeting of ASL 1...before the onset of any formal classroom activity" (Peterson 2009: 14). Students responded to questions by selecting an option on a 5 item scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The first of the two relevant questions was "It will be easier to learn ASL if the teacher speaks and signs at the same time" (Peterson 2009: 195) In response, 60.4% agreed, of whom 24.8% strongly agreed. Only 15.6% of students disagreed with the statement. The second relevant question was "I would prefer that the use of voice be prohibited in the classroom" (Peterson 2009: 200). In response, only 16.4% agreed, while 50.8% disagreed, of whom 15.5% disagreed strongly. It also appeared that students were heavily misinformed about ASL and the deaf community; a majority agreed with the statements "American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual-gestural form of English," and more than 40% agreed that "Nowadays Deaf people have the same information that everyone else has" (Peterson 2009: 191-198). Both of these statements are demonstrably false, given that ASL is not a form of English and deaf people still face audism.

It's clear that students surveyed prefer the use of English to be both permissible within the classroom setting and used by the teacher. Therefore, it is very possible that a teacher's

refusal to teach using English and/or their no-voice policy could serve as a demotivating factor for students. However, it is important to keep in mind that the students surveyed in this instance had not yet begun a course in ASL, and so had no actual idea of what the experience of taking a course with a voice permitted or voice prohibited policy would be like, and it's possible that exposure to the instructor's particular teaching methods or their reasoning for their policies might change a student's mind.

However, it is also clear that students carry biased beliefs with them into courses taught by deaf professors, and the ASL/English conflict is an important part of this belief system. McDermid 2009 surveyed both deaf and hearing instructors in nine different university programs in Canada, and found, among other things, that deaf instructors experienced audism from their hearing students. He uses as a definition of audism the "hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community" (Lane, 1999 cited in McDermid). The theorist who initially coined audism defined it as "the bias and prejudice of hearing people against deaf people" (Humphries 1997, cited in Ekert & Rowley 2013). The definition has since been expanded and become more nuanced, including, for example, the institutional aspects of audism. In Lane's definition, the presumed superiority of English over ASL is a critical part of the operation of audism; deaf professors and hearing professors alike were concerned that students "seemed reluctant to approach the deaf staff for advice and preferred to go to the hearing teachers" (McDermid 2009: 239). It is possible that this is due to their limited proficiency in ASL, but also could indicate a preference for hearing people based in a discomfort with the use of ASL and with the deaf community as a whole. McDermid also brings up the issue of voice in the classroom, as some of the professors in the study had concerns about the use of English by hearing students in the classroom, thereby "ensuring the Deaf

professors could not participate" (McDermid 240). Schornstein (2005) also describes students in her classes disregarding the explicit rules of the classroom, and using English to communicate behind her back. If these students were educated about deaf culture, then they would be aware of the fact that this use of spoken English is taboo. What's more, often these students would not be responsive to feedback from deaf instructors about their use of English in the classroom, offering as justification that they preferred the use of English and weren't fluent signers. Although I obviously cannot speak to the nature of the classrooms in the study, blatantly ignoring a professor's request to change one's behavior seems to indicate a lack of respect for the professor and their teaching methods.

Thus, it is clear that at least some students prefer the use of English, even after they have been exposed to an environment where it is not welcome, and some are so attached to this belief that they continue to use English even when it is not appropriate. It is not necessarily clear whose needs are more important in a classroom setting where the professors are members of a minority group, and it could be that using English in the classroom does have a benefit in terms of the confidence of the learner. However, the choice of some learners that their needs as a hearing person more comfortable with English are more important than the needs of the deaf person instructing them, is a potential example of how audism might play into the conversation about student motivation. Schornstein (2005) also said that interpreters sometimes made friends with the students, and did not tell her when they were talking. Ekert and Rowley (2013) in "Audism: A Theory and Practice of Audiocentric Privilege" describe audism as analogous to racism or sexism in many ways, which may help explain how the students actions can be considered prejudiced or biased. They write "we assert that dehumanization takes place every time Deaf autonomy is diminished" (Ekert and Rowley 2013: 108). This example, in which students and

interpreters limit the ability of the instructor to effective manage her classroom by refusing to respect her rules, can therefore be considered an instance of dehumanization of the professor. In fact, an example of a similar situation, in which a cashier refuses to allow a deaf person access to information by refusing to communicate through writing, provides the introduction to Ekert and Rowley's discussion of audism.

It is also possible that despite students' stated preferences about use of voice, their actual experience being in the classroom might differ. Research done with hearing language learners suggests that students do not necessarily report more anxiety or less motivation if their instructors use the target language in the classroom. A 1976 study of high school teachers of French and Spanish, identified by their students as outstanding showed that in those classrooms both the teachers and students used English more frequently than in classrooms with teachers not identified as outstanding (Moskowitz 1976). The article uses the mechanism of asking for student opinion on teachers as an indication of which teachers truly were outstanding. I contend that being liked or thought highly of by students is perhaps only one way to measure a teacher's success, with tests of student achievement being another piece of the puzzle. However, we can say with certainty that teachers frequently nominated by their students as "outstanding" almost certainly provided an environment where students' motivation was high and anxiety was low. It is unlikely that a student would rate a teacher highly if they did not enjoy the class, all other variables aside. The study found that in the classroom of those teachers designated as "outstanding," both students and teachers talked significantly more in the target language than did those in classrooms of teachers in the control group. In terms of students talk, in the "outstanding" classrooms 89% of student speech was in the foreign language, and in the "typical" classrooms 67% of speech was in the foreign language (Moskowitz 1976: 137). Exact

data was not provided for the difference in teacher speech in the foreign language. However, this does not necessarily imply that use of the foreign language is a *cause* of student satisfaction. It may be instead an outcome, especially given that the study cited other nonverbal behaviors as different between outstanding and typical teachers.

Another study, done with students and teachers self-reporting levels of target language use and anxiety in the classroom, found that students who reported using more target language reported less anxiety (Levine 2003). A sample of 600 college students in their first or second year of college at universities in the US or Canada were surveyed on a variety of topics related to the use of the target language in their classrooms. These students were learning various languages, primarily French, German, and Spanish. They were asked what percent of the time their instructors used the TL in the classroom, what percent of the time they themselves used that language in the classroom, and what amount of anxiety they felt using the TL. Levine found that increased use of the TL was negatively correlated with anxiety while using the TL. While it was not made explicit whether the TL use variable referred to the students' own use or the instructor's use, presumably it refers to the students' own use, so that students who used the TL more often had less anxiety over its use. Levine suggests that this may be because students essentially become more accustomed to using the TL themselves through using it, and thus become less anxious. What's more, approximately 63% of students agreed with the statement "I view it as a rewarding or worthwhile challenge when I have to use the FL to communicate (rather than fall back on English)" (Levine 2003: 351). While the question is somewhat leading, in that it frames native language use as a negative by describing it as something to "fall back on," rather than something that would provide valuable contributions in its own right, it does provide

a counterpoint to the idea that students being challenged by the target language might inherently a negative.

What we can take from this is that, at the very least, in spoken languages, the increased use of the target language does not necessarily detract from student motivation, and that there are ways in which the teacher can mitigate the effects of anxiety about target language usage. This does not necessarily shed any light on the question of minimal native-language use versus no native-language use. However, since the situation in ASL classroom is often one of minimal or greater native language use, even in no-voice classrooms, because of the use of written English, it lends support to the idea of prohibiting voice.

Replacing Written English

One issue around the teaching of ASL without the use of written English is simply the issue of how to replace the information that instructors and students would give in English with information in ASL. Given that many instructors already have a no-voice policy, it's less of a challenge to envision techniques that don't involve the use of voice, because they are already in place in the world. It's significantly more difficult to imagine a course taught without any use of written English. The survey mentioned at the beginning of the paper, which polled instructors on ASL on whether or not they had a no-voice policy, did not even ask participants whether they had a No-English policy. However, the research into spoken languages suggests that the L1 should be minimized, and written English is still an example of the L1. Our increasingly sophisticated social media and video-based technology offers a possibility for the greater inclusion of ASL and exclusion of English.

MJ Bienvenu (2009), in the article "Revolution at Work: ASL Curriculum Revisited" discusses the ways that ASL curricula at Gallaudet university can change to "incorporate ASL."

As a professor at a University for the deaf, her arguments are focused on a context in which most students are or should be already fluent in ASL, rather than just learning it. However, I believe that her arguments are applicable to the teaching of ASL as composing and consuming literature in the target language is generally a major part of language courses, especially at higher levels. Bienvenu's remarks were translated from ASL to written English, and it is in that form that I read them, but she argues for the greater use ASL in academic contexts. She promotes use both in terms of academic writings such as theses or dissertations, as well as in the classroom in the form of homework assignments. She draws on her own experience as a professor, and describes how she asked all students to submit their homework assignments in ASL in courses like "Structure of ASL" and "ASL literature" (Bienvenu 2009: 3). She addresses concerns about videotaped assignments on the part of students and professors with the explanation that students are intimidated because they have no models for how the work is done and should be presented, and they have no experience or training using the tools necessary. And indeed on some level it may be slightly more difficult work, as she found that in his own experience "watching DVDs consumes more time than reading papers" (Bienvenu 2009: 4). She also mentions that in her eyes, the lack of respect for ASL as a legitimate form of academic scholarship is a manifestation of audism; one reason she personally resisted putting a section of her PhD dissertation in English is that "translation loses its meaning and impact" (Bienvenu 2009: 2).

Again, her comments are not directly relevant to the use of ASL versus written English, especially lower-level course, in and of themselves, but they do give us some insight into how these problems might be tackled, and why they should be. If the professor of a course is a fluent user of ASL, as they should be if they are teaching it, there is no reason they could not provide any assignments that they might usually give in written English in the form of ASL videos

instead. This is even easier now, considering that Bienvenu was writing in an era of DVDs, whereas today it's quite simple to make a video on your phone and upload it to youtube. Her most valuable point, however, may be that it is a sense of inherent unfamiliarity with the use of ASL in academic contexts, and subconscious prejudice against ASL compared to English, that makes it so hard to conceive of a class conducted without written English.

Perspectives from an ASL instructor

As mentioned earlier, the experience of instructors is valuable as a counterpoint or support to the work of academics who are studying a specific technique in isolation. I interviewed a professor who teaches ASL at a university with a full ASL program, including upper-level courses like ASL literature. This professor is a CODA, or Child of Deaf Adults, and was raised with ASL as her first language. I was able to interview her about her practice as well as observe one session of her ASL 1 class. As I am not fluent in ASL, my observations cannot be specific about what exactly was being communicated, but I have taken ASL classes before, so I have frame of reference for the activities.

As a CODA, she is positioned uniquely to understand deaf culture perhaps more natively than any other non-CODA hearing person. She mentioned that she considers herself to be a member of the deaf community, and is active in the community in terms of participating in deaf cultural events. In addition to this, in her role as a professor, she is "committed to collaborating with the deaf community on an institutional level." In her classes, there is absolutely no use of voice, with no exceptions. She described to me that students have to sign a pledge, which used to be called a "contract," (although that term doesn't seem quite appropriate to her anymore as it's too authoritative). It seems she wants students to feel like the pledge is less a mandate and more a choice. She described that she doesn't use voice herself in the classroom, despite being a fluent

speaker of English, and she doesn't allow students to use it, to the point of simply ignoring students or saying "no" if students try to speak to her in English. Some of her co-workers in the department, she says, are deaf, and have had to remove a student from the class if they don't desist in speaking. She keeps to this policy very strictly; She does not speak to students in English outside of class except in her role as a coordinator discussing plans to minor in the department, and she does this "not without hesitation." She relays that " Students will be like 'oh hi' and quickly realize who I am... you see their face turn red and they're like 'oh sorry' in sign instead." It also appears that she very slightly relaxed her policies on the uses of English over time, as she mentioned in her spoken English policy that she didn't originally speak English with people even in the context of academic planning, the current except to her rule. This suggests that over the course of teaching, she found that in these limited situations the use of English was more valuable than sticking to a completely no-voice policy.

In her eyes, the question of whether to allow the use of English in the classroom is one of respect for the deaf community and its members, and the prohibition of voice should be a standard in ASL classrooms regardless of the whether the professor is deaf or hearing. She describes an instance in which a deaf coworker essentially had to take a student aside and explain to that student frankly that her persistent use of voice was "an affront" to the professor. The student responded by apologizing profusely, and remarking that she didn't realize that the professor was deaf. Her belief that even hearing instructors should refrain from using their voice in the classroom is founded on the idea that it is impossible for ASL to be divorced from the context of the culture that created it: "ASL is a language used by an oppressed minority group, and to sort of use hearing privilege to...mediate those frustrations is... doing a disservice to the deaf community." Thus, if a hearing instructor is using their voice or allowing students to use

their voices in the classroom, they are taking advantage of their hearing privilege to avoid "frustrations" in a way that deaf instructors would likely not be able to in their classrooms. Deaf people in an interaction with a hearing person in the real world are also likely unable to mediate their frustrations by switching back to their native language.

She took a different position on the use of the written English, but one that stayed consistent with the idea that the ASL classroom is essentially a deaf space, or a reflection of deaf reality. She mentioned that since deaf people are often biliterate in English, it's wrong to suggest that students should not be able to "use English in the way that a deaf person would use English." Her reasoning was partially based on an slight value judgement, in which she said that "the reality is that deaf people all over the world hopefully are bilingual and biliterate." The inclusion of the word 'hopefully' suggests that deaf people should be bilingual and biliterate, in contrast to what other deaf people may advocate. Bienvenu, as mentioned previously, suggests that deaf people should not have to use English to participate in academic culture. This line of reasoning might easily have as its conclusion the idea that deaf people should not have to learn English in order to communicate. There certainly are those who advocate for an ASL-specific writing system. Her comment may, however, reflect the goals of the hearing community for deaf people, or a more pragmatic view of the world which acknowledges that deaf people are better off being able to communicate with hearing people through English. She initially said that the use of video assignments was "fine", but "it really takes a long time to watch everybody's videos every week, " and later reiterated the total absence of written English was just "not a reality of the deaf community." She also mentioned the use of written English at pretty much every level of ASL programming offered at the university, up to and including ASL literature. At the beginning level, she emphasized the importance of an online discussion board in allowing

students to work with the material about deaf history, deaf culture, ect, which they would not be able to do in ASL.

She did say that she discouraged students from communicating in written English if they have a complicated idea, preferring for them to attempt to express the idea in ASL first. She mentions that some students may have some sort of a language processing difficulty, and for those students she may use more written English. As an experienced instructor of ASL, and presumably as many experienced language instructors are, she's "pretty adept at communicating nonverbally." Communication is also made easier at earlier levels by the fact that there's a "finite span of information that they're expected to try and comprehend." She has a better idea of what students might be trying to say to her since "it's not like anything at all could be possible in this discussion-we're talking about what this person is wearing and what she looks like."

One tool that she mentioned that she allows students to use when they are having trouble communicating the word that they want to use is fingerspelling, although "[she] tr[ies] not to use too much." She also referred to this as a tool students might use in a conversation with a deaf person, which was one of the justifications she mentioned for written English in the classroom. In my observation of her class, students used this a few times. In one characteristic instance, the student used a sign as part of a dialogue, and she stepped in to correct him, or to question him about his choice. He produced the sign, and she produced a sign that was similar, but markedly different, presumably correcting him to her best guess of the sign that he was attempting to produce. He indicated that this was not correct, fingerspelled the English word that he wanted to use, and she provided the correct sign. One indication of her limited use of written English in the classroom was that the students had no worksheets or other English resources in front of them

during this lesson. In fact, their desks were entirely bare. However, they did do homework out of a textbook during the time that they were not in class.

Her use of written English was done primarily in two ways: through a PowerPoint presentation, and through use of the chalkboard to clear up any misunderstandings that occured in the class, or concepts that could not be explained in ASL. The general structure of the class involved doing a few practice dialogues in pairs based on general instructions on the PowerPoint, e.g. "Signer A: make a negative statement," and producing ASL translations of sentences on the PowerPoint. There was also one section with minimal PowerPoint backing that consisted of her signing to the class for an extended period without student interaction. The corrections and explanations happened in the interactive portions of the class, where a student would make some sort of error, and she would go up the board and write a word or a phrase, then perhaps translate it or provide an example. Several times she pointed to a word or phrase in order to emphasize it for the class.

In terms of the functions of teaching, in this small sample I observed her use of humour, more complicated grammatical explanations, and logistical conversations with minimal use of English. I observed students come to her with a question expressed solely in ASL, and more than one student seemed to contribute to the sharing of the question with her, suggesting that they were able to communicate about the question in ASL with each other. Grammatical explanations and logistical conversations were done with the use of the chalkboard and signing, where she put up dates for "conversations with professor," and then signed what I was able to parse as the fact that she needed students to sign up for one of two dates. For grammar, she wrote a grammatical term on the board, pointed to it to reference it, and gave examples. These interactions fall into, more generally, the two categories of "planned learning activities" in the case of the powerpoint,

and "an ad-hoc 'crutch' to help learning" as described in Littlewood and Yu (2009). She used

humour at the end of the class, by pointing to the picture of a family enjoying thanksgiving on

the PowerPoint, signing what was presumably "Happy Thanksgiving" and signing something

that involved miming an expanded stomach. She also presumably used humour at other instances

in the class, as I observed students laugh. This use of humor might potentially be described as

Littlewood and Yu's "affective and interpersonal support," although that is a bit of a stretch. The

"aid to help classroom management" is the only quadrant that I did not observe. It could

potentially be present in other instances, but the combination of the fact that any use of written

English would be less-than-instantaneous in reaction to a rules violation and the fact that college

students are generally better behaved than high school students suggest that it is unlikely she

would use written English in this way.

Finally, one aspect of her class structure that was discussed in the interview was the

practice of asking students to engage with the deaf community, and her views on not making

hearing students "a burden" to the deaf community. One factor that must inarguably be a part of

the conversation around the teaching of a minority language is its effect on the community that

the language comes from. Given that, as previously discussed, the expectation in a deaf space is

to completely avoid the use of English, I asked her about student behavior in deaf spaces to see if

there might be any connection between classroom policy and out-of-classroom behavior. She

defined "behaving badly," a term that I provided, as "not trying to use ASL" and mentioned that

she did not think students from her university behaved badly in deaf spaces. She knew roughly

how her students behaved because she frequently attended the same events that her students did.

She believed that the consequences of their misbehavior would be natural ostracization from the

deaf community. I suggested that the no-voice policy within the classroom might help students

transition to the responsibility of not using their voice in deaf spaces. She did not agree that it was relevant, but said that it was true that it gave students more strategies to use in a situation where they were having difficulties making themselves understood.

While discussing the use of writing in deaf spaces, she said that deaf people were unlikely to be patient enough to let someone sit down and write a message to them, but "sometimes they'll fingerspell." "If it gets to the point where it degrades enough that somebody's going to have to start writing a lot of stuff...the interaction will just...dissolve. It's not really participating in the spirit of the event." Interestingly, this seems somewhat contradictory to the idea of the use of English as a deaf reality, and thus as a viable tool for teaching. This is not to say that her statement contradicts the idea that English is a part of life for deaf people, but that it contradicts the idea that English as it is used in the classroom is the same as English as it is used in the deaf community.

Her belief was that education on deaf culture was a more important factor in student behavior in deaf spaces, and she mentioned that students were often the ones who policed the English usage of their fellow students, who she reports come to her saying "They were not using ASL...there was this group from another school that kept trying to talk to me in English and I *wouldn't*." This seems to suggest that students get a certain amount of pride out of forgoing English. She also mentioned that more advanced students who partnered with novice students would be the ones to remind them that it was "voices off" when entering deaf spaces. This seems to indicate that while students might come in with prejudiced beliefs, as previously mentioned in the discussion on Peterson's (2009) survey of students just entering the ASL classroom, it's possible for them to be overcome through education. She believes that students are less likely to push against the rules for usage of voice because the contract that they sign at the beginning of

the semester sets the tone. One of the first readings that they do in her class is *Deaf Again,* which describes "how isolating it is to be a deaf person amongst a hearing family and not have access to information." This lack of access to information in the hearing world is the main reason that deaf people expect access to information in the deaf world, as discussed in the section on deaf culture, and so being able to empathize with their experience may help students understand the no-voice policy in deaf spaces.

Overall, much of our discussion of her policies was focused on the use of English in the classroom in terms of the implications for the deaf community, which is an important part of the debate. She did also advocate for the pedagogical superiority of prohibiting English, saying that "Learning a sign language is different for students, and it helps for them to stay in that modality [sign]." Students also felt that way: She mentioned that students, despite expressing that were initially apprehensive about the no-voice policy, say that they now "can't imagine it any other way." When I initially asked her about her policy, she promoted the benefits of immersion. When I asked her whether she felt strongly about her policy, and whether she believed others should also follow it, she responded first by talking about the power dynamics of the two communities, as outlined above. Her teaching practice and experiences demonstrated ease and success with which a professor can teach without spoken English; the use of written English or fingerspelling fulfilled many of the functions that professors might use the native language for. Her position on the use of written English was slightly contradictory, in that the way that English is used in the classroom is not the way that English would be used in a social situation in the deaf community. However, this does not mean that the very idea of using English in the classroom to reflect the reality of the deaf community's use of English is flawed, as the use of English for

emails, or in textbooks, for example, is another way in which deaf people may use English in their day-to-day lives.

Conclusion

To take into account everything from this paper, we can conclude that while there is certainly a need for more evidence relating to language learning, what we do have suggests that the first language should play an limited role in the classroom, if any. The policy of deaf teachers in forbidding the spoken use of the first language by students is reasonable and justified.

In terms of the "nuts and bolts" of language learning, the grammar and vocabulary, the research suggests that prohibiting the use of English in its spoken form brings, at the very least, no ill effects. There may be some benefit to allowing written English. Regarding vocabulary, students seem to learn vocabulary better without the use of English, except in very particular circumstances. If this is the case, the instructor has no reason to use English in the classroom or permit its use in the teaching of vocabulary. There could, of course, always be more research done into this phenomenon, as the research only concerns a specific group of students at a certain level, and does not necessarily apply broadly, although there is no reason why it would not, as the students did not have any special advantages in learning ASL, such as greater experience. In terms of grammar, there were simply not enough studies to come to any kind of conclusion, only to arrive at a vague suggestion of a conclusion, being that English certainly didn't seem to hurt their learning. The first study discussed, however, did not provide any meaningful alternative teaching strategies for the glossing exercise to be measured against, and the second study did not rely on the use of any spoken version of the first language, nor did it employ the use of the first language in written form any more than was strictly necessary for the use of the technique. Research into spoken second languages suggests that there are benefits to instructors being able

to explain the finer points of grammar with the first language. The strategy employed in these studies, a comparison between the first and second languages, may specifically be beneficial given the fact that the languages are already interconnected in the brain. However, it also suggests that many if not most second language researchers believe that use of L1 should be limited.

To take a broader view of the issue, of course, I have also considered the sociocultural context of the teaching of ASL, and found that there is good reason for deaf teachers of ASL to forbid the use of spoken English in their classroom, and indeed to diminish the use of written English if they so desire. Hearing teachers should prohibit English if they wish to make their classrooms more like deaf spaces, or respect the deaf community by not taking advantage of their hearing privilege. Culturally, it is unnatural for students to be able to talk in a language that prohibits the instructors from being able to understand them. It might be different in second space where the students belongs to a minority language group, but it is not right for students to expect a deaf instructor to try and interpret English on their behalf, especially given the fact that deafness in and of itself makes the learning of a spoken language immensely difficult. If students come into the ASL classroom with certain biased beliefs about ASL and deaf people, and because of those beliefs they wish to learn in a more English-heavy environment, it is not the responsibility of the instructor to change their classroom practice. And indeed we do see that, in the eyes of researchers, a desire to use English in the classroom and prejudice against deaf people may be intertwined. However, there is more research to be done in this area as well. It would be worthwhile to study the changing opinions of students toward deaf people over the course of studying ASL, and whether or not the use or prohibition of English in the classroom contributes to any change in these feelings, or any change in behavior around deaf people or in

deaf spaces. It would also be worthwhile, if possible, to see whether declared respect or disrespect for deaf people in any way correlates with use of English in classes where English is prohibited.

It certainly appears that a classroom without spoken English is perfectly functional, as demonstrated by the interview and observation of the professor with a no-voice policy. Many of the functions that teachers often use the L1 for, according to Littlewood and Yu, were accomplished using fingerspelling, written English, and ASL itself. Her beliefs also indicated a desire to have the classroom as a space where different language resources are used in the same way they would be in the real world. This echoes the logic of some second language researchers who advocate for allowing use of the L1 in the classroom because it is a tool that students will have at their disposal when using that language outside of the classroom. Indeed, she suggests that this applies to fingerspelling and written English, although she argues that the logical conclusion of this idea is that spoken English should be prohibited because students should not use it in real conversations with Deaf people.

While Bienvenu argues that written English should perhaps not have so large a place in the classroom as it currently does, she does not necessarily argue that it should be prohibited entirely. Her suggestions are based on the idea that refusing to allow ASL to be an academic language in its own right prevents deaf people from expressing themselves fully in an academic setting, and thus disadvantages them. Research into spoken languages also suggests that use of the L1 should indeed be minimized. However, minimizing L1 does not mean eliminating it entirely, and his suggestions, meant primarily for classes of native ASL speakers, are not appropriate for beginners. So, while the use of written English can and probably should be

reduced, it's not necessary to eliminate it entirely from the classroom, except potentially during upper-level courses where students are expected to be fluent.

It is, however, necessary to be precise in the discussion of what uses of the first language should and should not be permitted, versus what uses should or should not be encouraged, and by whom. I have so far summed up the argument for forbidding the use of the L1 in spoken form completely, both by the teacher and the student, based on the idea that hearing teachers who use it or allow their students to use it are taking advantage of hearing privilege. The evidence also shows that vocabulary is generally taught better in a voice-off environment, and is silent about the teaching of grammar in this manner. Additionally, the written form of the L1 is generally able to accomplish most of the functions that the L1 should fulfill in the classroom. However, the written L1 is generally worse, in terms of teachers' uses, for classroom management and for emotional support of one's students. It also may not function as well among students for discussing and negotiating meaning, as written conversations are more stilted than spoken conversations. Thus, we can see that some uses of a spoken L1 in the classroom are more of an issue than others. A student using English when a deaf professor has expressly prohibited them from doing so is certainly a problem, and can be described as audism. An instructor choosing to use spoken English with a student who is upset, or when there is a problem in the classroom that needs to be addressed immediately, however, may be inadvisable, but is not necessarily on the same level as the previous example.

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