

Personal Experience Narratives in the Deaf Community: Identifying Deaf-World Typicality

by

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Abstract

The Deaf community in Britain comprises people who use British Sign Language (BSL) to communicate and who share similar lived experiences. The storied lives of Deaf people, told in the community through personal experience narratives, provide insight into the issues that arise from being Deaf in a primarily hearing world. This thesis explores personal experience narratives told by 24 Deaf people from across the UK in an attempt to reveal the typicality embedded within signed personal experience narratives. As a study of human experiences, a qualitative approach is taken and this is reinforced with some numerical data that reveals the frequency of occurrence of patterns across the data sets. This qualitative research study explores signed narratives derived from two main sources: The British Sign Language Corpus and an additional data set collected through fieldwork.

In the study, a thematic analysis methodology is employed to answer the research questions, and the findings are divided into cultural and interactional themes. Five latent themes are identified from the data analysis process: Communication, Education, Travel, Access and Community. Further categorisation of the data resulted in a series of sub-themes, comprising: getting attention; signing; lack of understanding; mouthings/gestures; use of light; visibility; missed information; reading and writing; technology; and bonding. The study explores personal experiences that reflect the typicality embedded within the narratives, and concludes that the shared personal experiences of Deaf people are related to the consequences of communicating in an auditory-based society, and the effects of the educational provision for deaf children in the UK. The study also concludes that academic understanding of the lived experiences of Deaf people would benefit from further research of personal experience narratives told by Deaf people in order to expand existing knowledge and provide information to the Deaf community.

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Terms of Reference

Big D; little d - The term 'deaf', typed with a lower case 'd', is largely a medical term and is used to refer to people who feel a sense of loss in being deaf and continue to identify with hearing people, communicating through lipreading and speech. The term 'Deaf', with an upper case 'D', denotes a person who does not experience a sense of loss or deprivation, will communicate through sign language and will identify with other 'Deaf' people in the form of the Deaf community (Woodward, 1972).

Boarding Schools - Specialist residential schools for deaf children. This brings deaf children together and creates a natural signing environment for children, and aids the strength of Deaf communities. For most boarding schools, oral (spoken) communication is the compulsory education and communication method, and sign language is not allowed in the classrooms.

British Sign Language (BSL) - BSL is a visual-gestural language and is articulated through the hands and through non-manual features, such as movements of the upper body and eyebrows, and facial expressions. Brennan's (1992) description of BSL provides detailed information related to the importance of the signing space around the body for grammatical purpose, referred to as "spatial patterning" (p. 15). In 2003, BSL was recognised as a bona fide language by the UK government (British Deaf Association, 2015).

Deaf Community - Deaf people come together in the form of a shared minority community: a place where there are no barriers to language and Deaf people feel a sense of belonging. This coming together of Deaf people has come to be known as the 'DEAF-WORLD' (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996).

Deaf Culture - this is a distinctive way of life – "the customs, habits, ideas, beliefs, institutions, etc. which a particular group, through a shared language, hold in common" Brien (1991) and, as Padden (1991) describes, is shared between Deaf people in behaviour, language and in the way they share their own values and belonging in the Deaf community.

Mainstream Education - From the 1980s onwards, many deaf children have had the opportunity to attend local mainstream schools, a policy referred to as inclusion (Powers, 2002). Placing deaf children in mainstream schools, often only one deaf child in the whole school, means being educated by a hearing teacher who will usually have no experience of teaching deaf children. As the teacher and other children in this setting are usually unable to sign, the deaf child is expected to learn through lipreading and is encouraged to listen and speak.

Manualism- The use of sign language for communication for deaf people, as opposed to the use of spoken language (Baynton, 2006).

Oralism – An educational policy that demands that deaf children use oral communication only (through speech and lipreading) and sign language is not allowed (Baynton, 2006).

PHU – a Partial Hearing Unit is a separated classroom for deaf children within a mainstream school, which placed an emphasis on oral communication in the past but have moved towards oral and signed communication in some areas (Waldron, 2003). The benefits include being educated with a group of deaf peers and being integrated with the hearing children for certain subjects.

Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Personal Experience Narratives: Signed and Spoken

1.1.1 Narratives

A perspective raised by Riessman provides a concise description of what a narrative is taken to mean in this study: “the concept of personal narrative is quite restrictive, used to refer to brief, topically specific stories organized around characters, setting, and plot...they recapitulate specific events the narrator witnessed or experienced” (p. 172). Riessman (ibid.: 171-173) considers several perspectives of exactly what a narrative is, including the autobiographical understanding taken by social historians and anthropologists, and the descriptive accounts of lives that are born out in interviews and useful for researching interaction.

The term ‘narrative’ derives from a Latin verb, meaning ‘to tell’. In this sense, narratives have a reporting function and may relay, for example, a sequence of historical or personal events. The content of narratives may be fictional or non-fictional and may appear in various forms, such as anecdote, myth or legend. Kim (2016) informs us that life experiences may be expressed through such various narrative forms, or narrative “genres” (p. 118). In telling the events of the past, a narrative can serve many purposes, such as to impart cultural history, to define expected behaviours, or to reveal culture, identity and values that can be passed from generation to generation:

Narrative meaning concerns diverse aspects of experience that involve human actions or events that affect human beings. Individual stories have their own narrative meanings, and cultures also maintain collections of typical narrative meanings in their myths, folk tales, and histories, accumulated over time.

(Kim, 2016: 190)

Narratives that reveal the way that our experiences reflect our everyday lives are referred to as ‘personal experience narratives’ (PENs). The stories that people tell may contain aspects of their identity and their culture, and therefore hold meanings that are relevant to their lives and are important to them: that is, they are important to them

because of the cultural meanings they contain. It is those cultural meanings that people want to tell and want to pass on (Kim, 2016). Furthermore, PENs can contain illustrations of difficult personal experience, enabling the narrator to express challenging experiences, as well as descriptively positive or factual ones. Analysing narratives provides an opportunity to identify and expose such experiences: “they provide windows into lives that confront the constraints of circumstances” (Riessman, 2013: 185). As a feminist researcher, Riessman reports that narrative inquiry provides a suitable methodology for the study of women’s personal experiences of divorce. Given this avenue for expression of difficulty that PENs facilitate, it is understandable that members of oppressed groups in society use narrative-style stories and jokes to portray their typical experiences, as section 2.2.2 explores. Labov (1972) stresses the relevance of how a point is made in a narrative and the message it sends to the audience:

There are many ways to tell the same story, to make very different points, or to make no point at all. Pointless stories are met (in English) with the withering rejoinder, “So what?” Every good narrator is continually warding off this question; when his narrative is over, it should be unthinkable for a bystander to say, “So what?” Instead, the appropriate remark would be, “He did?” or similar means of registering the reportable character of the events of the narrative.

(Labov, 1972: 366)

1.1.2 Personal Experience and Typicality

This research is interested in how aspects of Deaf people’s experiences are reflected in signed narratives, and considers the typicalities within the stories that are told in the Deaf community. Typicality, developed in academic study by Alfred Schutz (1966), is important for our understanding of people’s experiences. According to Schutz, typicality is the build-up of knowledge based on previous experience: a “preknowledge” of ‘typical’ people, objects, events, etc. It is this preknowledge, and the frames of reference evoked by it, that enable us to relate to individual experiences. Through the principles of “past association and apperception” (p. 33), we have a natural familiarity with certain experiences, and our understanding of daily occurrences is made possible through this typicality:

The structure of what Husserl calls the “life-world” (Lebenswelt) in which, in the natural attitude, we, as human beings among fellow-beings, experience culture and society, take a stand with regards to the objects, are influenced by them and act upon them. In this attitude the existence of the life-world and the typicality of its contents are accepted as unquestionably given until further notice.

(Schutz, 1966: 116)

Schutz notes that the life-world, Husserl’s lebenswelt (1970), is a world that all organisms share together - a theory that is complemented by Uexküll’s ([1934]1992) notion that organisms can have different umwelten (environments) even though they share the same life-world. Uexküll’s description of the cultural differences of the organisms that share the lebenswelt illustrates the premise of this study, that Deaf and hearing people share the same life-world but their lived experiences in it are different:

Perhaps it should be called a stroll into unfamiliar worlds; worlds strange to us but familiar to other creatures...Here we may glimpse the worlds of the lowly dwellers of the meadow. To do so, we must first blow, in fancy, a soap bubble around each creature to represent its own world, filled with the perceptions which it alone knows. When we ourselves then step into one of these bubbles, the familiar meadow is transformed.

(Uexküll, [1934]1992: 319)

Typicality, then, is the product of an individual’s everyday life experiences, which trigger the recollection of previous experience. The cognitive process of experiences becoming typical is referred to in the literature as ‘typification’ (such as McKinney, 1969 and, more recently, Oesterdiekhoff, 2009) and this difference between typicality and typification is seen in the following description:

I would like to focus on how type and typification concern the experience of recognizing similarities. Based on a previous experience of something, it is possible to experience future phenomena, in an associative manner, as similar in type. For example, something as simple as the pre-predicative, intuitive experience of what we come to call a cat can establish a type that then leads us

to recognize other instances of cat-like things as similar. The function of typification also includes a reference to habituality.

(Cocks, 2014: 17)

The term 'typicality' is used in this study, as the focus is on the concept of the distinct qualities of a particular thing (the typicality) rather than on the process of becoming typical and representing a typical thing (typification). That is, this study describes the qualities of Deaf typicality, rather than examining how an experience becomes typical.

Furthermore, Schutz informs us that certain aspects of our experiences are of particular personal interest, and therefore of greater relevance, so typicality, then, takes place according to "structures of relevance" (p. 125). This, Schutz notes, leads "to the assumption that what has proved valid thus far in our experience will remain valid in the future" (p. 116). PENs function, in many cases, to express such relevance and pass on such familiarity within a relevant community. Personal experience narratives play an important role in the Deaf community (Sutton-Spence, 2010). The telling of narratives is traditional in the British Deaf community and includes stories told of a person's own personal experience, and ones that have been passed around and are told by others. The PENs told within the Deaf community may contain experiences that are not related to being Deaf. For example, a Deaf person may tell a narrative about a holiday, and may not make any reference to Deaf-related issues, and the fact that the narrator is Deaf cannot be identified from the narrative. Other narratives told within the Deaf community clearly describe experiences related to being Deaf, such as stories of times in a school for deaf children or the communication problems that occur when a Deaf person is handcuffed by the police and cannot sign (Brennan and Brown, 1997; Parker, 2009).

Narratives containing such events express individual Deaf people's experiences, and express collective Deaf experiences, such as the oralist educational methods that are used in school classrooms. For example, Carter's BSL poem 'Owl'¹ illustrates the oppression felt by schoolchildren who are continually forced to lipread a teacher, and the instinctive interest in sign language. The poetic and visual representation of oralism,

¹ Richard Carter is a Deaf poet and 'Owl' is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDFTIRSKXRg>

in the form of the stern schoolteacher, stands in stark contrast to the representation of manualism, which appears in the form of the empowering owl. The poet adeptly depicts aspects of the typical educational experiences of many Deaf people: those which Stremlau (2007) attributes to the collective lifestyle that results from the shared experiences of Deaf people. As Stremlau notes, narratives may contain experiences that did not happen to the narrator but are told as representations of similar experiences. Regardless of this, such narratives are considered by Stremlau as truths:

It never fails that students ask whether the story is true—their way of asking whether it is autobiographical. That is not an easy question to answer because it depends on how one defines “true.” If “true” means that everything in the story happened, then no, it is not true. However, if it means that the story reflects and draws on my experiences, then it is true.

(Stremlau, 2007: 208)

PENs signed by Deaf people, then, illustrate the commonalities that are shared in the Deaf community and reveal the typical experiences of a Deaf person as they function in the mainstream world that is oriented by sound. This aural world experience is in direct contrast to the visual world of Deaf people, affecting the association and apperception of experiences to a great extent.

1.2 Research Rationale and Thesis Structure

Rationale. This research is housed in the framework of Deafhood (Ladd, 2003), that is, that understanding and knowledge of Deaf people’s experiences is derived from the perspective that a natural and instinctive sense of culture is shared by Deaf people whose primary means of interaction and communication is through visual (signed) language (also McIlroy and Storbeck, 2011). For this reason, an upper case ‘D’ is used to refer to those Deaf people who have a sense of shared experience, and lower case ‘d’ to refer to those deaf people who do not feel the same sense of shared experience (Woodward, 1972), or will follow the original usage for direct quotes.

In the Deaf community, many narratives are signed and it is a common function of the community to share experiences in narrative form. The notion that Deaf people’s experiences are embedded in such stories is important, as it may provide understanding

of the shared experiences of Deaf people on a national level, and even global level (Fusellier-Souza, 2006). There has been little documentation of signed narratives in the UK but recent advances in recording technologies have resulted in several projects that aim to collect and archive samples of sign language use, including the telling of signed narratives (e.g. The BSL Corpus: Fenlon, Cormier, Rentelis and Schembri, 2011; British Deaf Association, 2015). Much of this increasing resource remains in accessible collections but there has been little research investigating its content.

Aims: This research study aims to identify typical Deaf experiences revealed within signed narratives told by British Sign Language users, and to consider the factors that are embedded within the narratives. The personal experience narratives analysed for this study comprise a certain type of account in which Deaf people relay and reflect their true experiences. The study aims to analyse the occurrences embedded within signed narratives that reflect the personal experiences of a sample of Deaf people in the UK. The study focuses on the contents of the personal experience narratives that reveal aspects of Deaf culture, and captures such content in order to evidence the richness and value entrenched in the accounts. The discussion focusses on the extent to which stories that Deaf people choose to share within the community are in fact signed representations of Deaf people's lives, and show insight into Deaf people's shared experiences. In order to achieve these aims, and hence answer the research questions stated above, the main objectives of the study are to explore the content of selected narratives and identify a range of experiences that are based on a Deaf way of life and to reveal the typicality within. The experiences are then explained in relation to any cultural and interactional aspects that they contain. Due to a limited amount of scholarly research in this field in the UK (Ladd, 2003), literature from the US, where research in this area is more advanced, is heavily drawn upon throughout the study. This study comprises the following research questions:

1. What Deaf experiences are embedded in signed personal experience narratives?
2. What do signed personal experience narratives reveal about typicality within the Deaf community?

1.2.1 Thesis Structure

In the following chapter, chapter two, the content of narratives is initially explored, and the first section (section 2.2) presents information related to knowledge of the content of narratives that has been gained through previous research. Alongside the types of narratives that have been analysed, the section next considers the functions of the narratives, and the methodologies with which narratives have previously been studied. Following from this, the chapter next pays attention to personal experience narratives specifically, considering the ways that PENs have been examined and the information that they provide. This section (section 2.3) includes discussion of previous research related to spoken and written narratives, before moving to consider signed narratives in detail.

Chapter three presents the reader with an understanding of the theoretical and methodological approaches taken in this study. After an initial introduction, this chapter begins with a description of the research design, where particular attention is paid (in section 3.2) to the theoretical background of the study. This involves discussion of the goals of the research and the conceptual framework in which it is placed, and is followed by an explanation of the qualitative approach taken. The chapter continues (in section 3.3) with a thorough description of the research methods and processes for undertaking this study. The data collection and selection processes are presented, and the methods for coding and analysing the data, chosen in order to answer the research questions, are illustrated. This section lastly includes information related to the credibility of the study.

The following chapter (chapter four) introduces the reader to the findings of the study, beginning with reference to how narratives are framed (section 4.2) and the central findings (section 4.3). The next section (4.4) conveys data related to the experiential content that was identified during the data analysis process. Next (in section 4.5), the thematic analysis is presented, and the five latent themes and ten sub-themes of the study are explored in detail. Each theme is considered in relation to the cultural content and the interactional content that working with the data also uncovered. The chapter ends with a discussion of references to collective content from the data (in section 4.6) before concluding the chapter.

The final chapter of this thesis, chapter five, brings the study to a summative conclusion, beginning (in section 5.1) with a return to the overriding notion of Deafhood that underpins the research. Section 5.2 presents a review of the methodological considerations taken before the following section (section 5.3) offers a revisit to the concept of typicality that is at the centre of the research aims and rationale. Finally, the limitations of this study, and potential for further research, are considered (in section 5.4) and the thesis concludes with a reminder of the importance of research that explores personal experiences expressed in narrative form.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a review of related literature begins with a discussion of the content and functions of narratives, and discusses the way that this content is expressed. Analysis of narratives in both the spoken language and signed language communities is considered in order to highlight similarities and differences in approaches taken. The review next pays attention to the methodological approaches that previous studies have taken when analysing narratives, and the perspectives that are achieved. In the case of spoken and signed languages, frameworks other than the structural analysis approach are considered, such as content analysis frameworks, and these are discussed in this chapter in relation to sign language research. The chapter next considers signed narratives in more depth, and what they tell us about Deaf people's experiences. This enables this study to identify central themes that are relevant to the research questions and to our understanding of how the experiences of Deaf sign language users are reflected in narratives. Each section looks at previous studies of signed narratives, providing details of the aims of previous research, and provides a brief account of the central findings of previous studies and what they tell us about signed narratives.

2.2 Narratives: Content and Functions

2.2.1 Narratives and Content

Enquiry into the rationale for telling stories, and the content within, is longstanding. As long ago as Aristotelian times, circa 350 BCE, theorists and scholars attempted to understand the aspects of everyday life and personal experience that are embedded in narratives (Breivik, 2005). While the complexities of the functions of narratives and the messages they transfer continue to be unravelled, we do know, as Berger (1997) informs us, that they "furnish us with both a method for learning about the world and a way to tell others what we have learned" (p.10). In relation to signed narratives, Ladd (2003) remarks that "there has been little study of its history and development, especially as a medium for transmitting historical and cultural information" (2003: 49). For this reason,

this review continues with a broad perspective, including discussion of signed, written and spoken narratives, and those of personal and of non-personal content.

The descriptions of the personal experiences that are contained within narratives, i.e. the content, has been far-reaching, covering many emotive and poignant aspects of people's lived experiences. For example, McCarthy's (2007) analysis of personal narratives of Irish and Scottish migration from 1921-1965 found many similar experiences across the two groups during the migration, such as missing the Homeland, and notes that analysing the testimonies enables research to "capture vividly and emotionally the range of multiple motives" for their moves away from the Homeland (p. 223). Analysis conducted by Levorato (2003) of gender related experiences in the multiple re-telling of the fairy tale 'Little Red Riding Hood' suggests that analysis of fictional narratives highlights the reader's (or listener's) active role in interpreting the narrative. She states that, "they learn what values and beliefs the author has; what values and beliefs s/he expects them, the readers, to have; but they also learn *what they can do to resist* values and beliefs that the writer has attributed to them but that they reject" (p. 197, *italics in original*).

This emotional content is also found in narratives told by Deaf people, and in relation to the cultural experience of being Deaf. Stremlau (2007: 208-209), for example, provides an interesting discussion of story-telling that is fictional but is based on personal experiences. The story, called "A Nice Romantic Dinner", relays events that happen at a dinner where Sara (a Deaf character) wants to communicate in sign language with her partner, Brad (who is hearing), and is teaching him signs but Brad does not want to use sign language and closes his eyes:

Instead of repeating what she had signed, Brad said, "That's enough for now. My eyes are tired, and it is dark in here. Let's just talk and eat." He picked up his beer and closed his eyes while he drank several swallows, giving Sara no chance to argue with him...Brad had the nerve to complain that it was too dark in the restaurant to pay attention to her sign, and he wanted her to pay attention to his lips, which are infinitely harder to understand. She was struggling not to cry, not wanting to make a scene in public.

(Stremlau, 2007: 208-209)

The break in eye contact and the refusal to communicate visually is a poignant and common experience for Deaf people. Stremlau refers to this from a culturally Deaf perspective, stating that, “this is not logical behaviour” when communicating with a Deaf person because, although Sara could speak, as a deaf person she needed to have the eye contact that is such an inherent part of Deaf culture. Interestingly, Stremlau notes that she writes fictional narratives based on personal experience because this empowers her to deal with issues of conflict in interrelations between Deaf and hearing people in a direct way that she often feels unable to in real life situations:

“Writing fiction is an opportunity to create a new self and to try on new identities”. (Stremlau, 2007: 209)

Christie and Wilkins (2006) note that signed poetry is another form of signed narrative, providing a description of a poem called ‘Hands’ signed in American Sign Language by Deaf poet Clayton Valli. Valli depicts the value of the hands in Deaf people’s lives in the poem, articulating various handshapes to demonstrate the vital use of the hands, and framing the poem around cultural typicality. In a further work, Christie and Wilkins (2007) describe a signed poem produced by Patrick Graybill, titled ‘Memories: Speech Class’, in which the poet metaphorically relays a Deaf person’s educational experiences. It is customary for the content of signed poetry, and personal experience narratives in general, to represent, metaphorically, Deaf people’s shared experiences and cultural way of life, and Christie and Wilkins conclude that:

The artistic use of language to express emotions related to cultural oppression and cultural pride is common to many postcolonial people.

(Christie and Wilkins, 2007: 43)

2.2.2 Functions of Narratives

Narratives function as an avenue for expression of human experience. Human typicality may be understood as the higher order concept of shared human experience (SHE) – the notion that “people from diverse cultures have many similarities and share some very

basic human experiences”, such a death, childhood memory and suffering (Motyl, Hart, Pyszczyński, Weise, Maxfield and Siedel, 2011: 1183). Poignant and personal experiences told in narrative form are often expressed through humour, and this paradoxical nature enables the storyteller to relay the seriousness of the experience through the overlaying humour. This, as Meyer (1997) notes, serves a primarily social function:

Humor is also social, as one person in a group joking or laughing may well lead others to do so as well. Indeed, humor's power in communication lies in this sociality, as people share in communicating similar perceptions of the normal and abnormal. Thus, shared humor serves as evidence of shared values in the face of an incongruity in a normal or accepted situation.

(Meyer, 1997: 191)

As Meyer continues to explain, such humour in narratives is subjective and is interpreted more effectively when the listener understands the context and is able to relate to the experience being relayed on a personal level. This contextuality is manipulated in narratives expressed through stand-up comedy, which make use of humour to engage the audience and express shared knowledge of the context. For example, The Independent’s tribute to comedienne Joan Rivers, titled ‘Joan Rivers dead: the best jokes to remember her by’, after her death in September 2014, remarks on the importance of humour in her comedy performances, quoting her statement about the use of humour as a tool for dealing with difficult personal experiences: “That’s how I get through life. Life is SO difficult – everybody’s been through something! But you laugh at it, it becomes smaller” (The Independent, 2014). Joan Rivers’ comedy contains a narrative element that expresses shared cultural experience of oppression and discrimination and the humour is applied in order to express a sense of shared experience with audience members from the same ethnic group, in this case Jewish people. An example of this narrative comedy is seen during Rivers’ Live at the Apollo performance, where she narrates through comedy the experience of growing up as the only Jewish child in a Roman Catholic neighbourhood:

I had a very bad childhood and that's because – and I'm sure none of you give a damn – I was the only Jewish kid – this is the absolute truth – growing up in an all-Catholic neighbourhood. You know what that's like? [...] No Christmas tree. No Christmas tree. Do you know what that's like when you're the only kid without a Christmas tree? And nowadays – well, it's like 'Well we do it for all faiths'. It's such bullshit. We walk into an office building and there's a Christmas tree and there's a menorah. Bullshit! The Christmas tree goes up up up up up up up. There's like a little shitty menorah with two orange lights that some angry Puerto Rican's lit backwards. I mean, it's just... 'Juan, you lit those lights backwards' [...] So I'm at the age where I figure, screw it, I'm going to have a Christmas tree.

(Joan Rivers, Live at the Apollo, Part 1, 6:42-7:43)

Mock's (2011) sociocultural analysis of this extract highlights the relationship between the narrative comedy and Jewish culture, proposing that: "Rivers' performance might be coded as Jewish by positioning it in relation to theories and practices of 'Jewish humour'" (p. 101). Narratives of this sort, then, portray a culture and facilitate the passing on of aspects of the culture and its importance in a particular context. Jokes, among other genres, that exploit aspects of religion and culture in a humorous way are centred on a specific culture but are often performed to an audience of various religious and cultural affiliations. In narratives such as the Joan Rivers' sketches, the jokes based on being Jewish are told to a mixed audience yet all of the audience members, Jewish and non-Jewish people alike, will understand the brunt of the joke and this is because there exists a level of awareness in societies of the culture and experiences of Jewish people. This mainstream awareness of some cultures comes primarily from within education and forms an aspect of the general knowledge held within each mainstream community. That is, mainstream community members are largely aware of the typical experiences of this minority group.

This narrative contextualisation is certainly of relevance in the case of signed narratives that contain experiences related to being Deaf. In a similar fashion, Deaf stand-up comedians relay experiences, through signed comedy, of feeling oppressed and discriminated against by the wider 'hearing' society. The UK's most prominent Deaf comedian, John Smith, relays this Deaf experience in his performances. An example of his narrative based on Deaf culture is John Smith's 'Aircraft Marshalling' sketch. John

Smith begins this sketch by establishing an aeroplane being marshalled in (with the use of table-tennis bats in place of marshalling wands as a humorous prop) and while he is in the throes of indicating the directions to the pilot, he is distracted by someone signing to him 'do you want a cup of tea or anything?' In order to respond to questions, a sign language user must free up the hands, and John Smith comically expresses the dilemma of trying to reply in sign language and continue to marshal to the pilot at the same time. While a hearing person may understand the humour in this sketch, a Deaf person will relate to this as a common, shared experience of having to free up the hands on a very personal level and will relate to the narrative element. Whilst visual humour is an element of shared human experience for both Deaf and hearing people, visual humour based on Deaf culture/identity arises directly from Deaf people's experiences, and only has meaning to those who understand the typicality of those shared Deaf experiences. Deaf people identify not only with the experiences being relayed in such narratives but also with the cultural aspect of the story and with the cultural messages contained within.



**Figure 0-1 Aircraft Marshalling sketch
(Deafmedia, 2016)**

In comparison with other narratives that rely on mainstream general knowledge for their humorous effect, jokes based on the culture and experiences of being Deaf are also told to mixed audiences, i.e. an audience of Deaf and hearing people. While the Deaf audience members will appreciate and understand the brunt of the narrative humour, hearing audience members may not appreciate the joke unless they are perhaps studying sign language and deaf studies; in fact, the joke may be lost completely on the hearing members of the audience who do not have any awareness of Deaf culture. For this reason, Deaf comedians and signed narratives are often told only within the Deaf community. Knowledge of being Deaf and the associated cultural implications are not held within mainstream general knowledge in the way that knowledge of other minority cultures exists. The typical experiences of being a Deaf member of a society are not taught within the education system and are not spread in the mainstream through the media in the same way that aspects of other minority cultures are. Due to this, as Kyle and Allsop (1997) report, the typicality associated with being Deaf is not part of mainstream general knowledge in most societies. The exception to this is the sociolinguistic situation found in remote village communities across the world, where a high prevalence of deafness results in a much more aware society (de Vos and Zeshan, 2012). In a study of a Bedouin village in southern Israel, Kisch (2008; 2012) found that the regular practise of cousin marriage has resulted in a very high deaf population, resulting in Deaf ways of life being an everyday part of the make-up of the community:

Not only did kin-endogamy induce high incidences of deafness, it also accounts for a dense social network in which both hearing and deaf people are embedded. Many members of the community have at least one deaf individual among their household, in-laws, peers, or neighbours. Consequently, all deaf and many hearing Al-Sayyid infants are exposed to signing from birth, within the family environment, with additional (deaf or hearing) adult models in the community.

(Kisch, 2012: 365)

This integration is so intense in that this, and other similar villages, are referred to as a 'shared signing communities' (ibid.). This current study, therefore, has an important role to play in spreading more awareness of the culture and experiences of being Deaf in a

hearing world. Every minority group has its story to tell through its narratives, and the Deaf community is no exception.

This ability to understand the context of a text based on preknowledge, i.e. the framing of a narrative, is raised in Sutton-Spence and Napoli's (2009) discussion of sign language humour. The research suggests that "the meaning of a word or phrase and, in this case, a whole story is understood in relation to that frame – that is, in relation to what language users know about the context" (p. 238). The study includes analysis of a signed story about Christmas Eve (performed by Deaf poet, Richard Carter), a fictional narrative, in which Father Christmas (with the traditional sleigh pulled by deer, and bearing presents) is a sign language user. Aspects related to being Deaf are embedded in the adaptation of the story in order to enable the viewer to relate to the content, as Sutton-Spence and Napoli explain:

Much of the humour in this story comes from the audience members' ability to frame the meaning of the signs they see in relation to what they know.

(Sutton-Spence and Napoli, 2009: 238)

The notion of the signing Santa is emphasised again in Carter's poem, 'The Globe'. Here, Carter uses constructed action to role-play Father Christmas putting on his hearing aid and signing to the reindeer, framing aspects of a Deaf identity that the Deaf viewer will identify with (Carter, 2015). Boland & Hoffman (1983) note that humour is a form of "symbolic action that confirms the existence of multiple frames of reference for viewing the same social reality" (p. 196). Deaf people, then, share an equivalent 'social reality'.

2.3 Personal Experience Narratives

2.3.1 Researching Narratives

In the case of both personal experience and fictional narratives, Wilson (1996) informs us that there are two main frameworks – Labov (1972) and Gee's (1986) - by which narratives have been analysed. In a study of Black English vernacular in New York and other inner city areas across the US, Labov (1972) focuses on categorising the functions

of the clauses in the narratives. The aim of the research was to establish whether or not the dialect difference contributed to low reading attainment in the education of the Black community in the cities and found that “the major causes of reading failure are political and cultural conflicts in the classroom, and dialect differences are important because they are symbols of this conflict” (p. xiv).

The second leading framework, Wilson notes, is Gee’s (1986; 2011) method, which also looks at the structure of a narrative but segments the text into pauses and prosodic features. Gee’s (1986) research into the structure of narratives in oral cultures found the same underlying structure in stories told by an African-American schoolgirl and her elderly white schoolteacher, though the schoolgirl was more expressive when moving through the different aspects of the story. Gee’s central finding is that narratives have an ‘event structure’, that is, that stanzas and lines within the stories are organised in line with the events that take place. Similar structural analysis of signed narratives has been carried out, such as Bahan and Supalla’s (1995) study of narratives in American Sign Language. In their study, non-manual features, particularly eye-gaze, pauses, blinks and head nods, are noted as the equivalent to intonation and prosodic features in spoken languages, enabling Labov’s framework to be used, and the focus is also on the linguistic structure of the narratives. As Labov (1972) remarks, other aspects of the content of the narrative are equally as important for the narrative theorist:

Beginnings, middles, and ends of narratives have been analysed in many accounts of folklore or narrative. But there is one important aspect of narrative which has not been discussed – perhaps the most important element in addition to the basic narrative clause. That is what we term the evaluation of the narrative: the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its raison d’être: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at.

(Labov, 1972: 366)

Frameworks such as those so-far mentioned, which fall under the umbrella of structuralist narratology, shed much light on the structural content of narratives. In Junqueira’s (2010) study of the conventions governing Brazilian narratives, Labov’s framework is used to identify differences and similarities across narratives told by Brazilians compared with American narratives. By analysing recordings of 10 participants

according to the Labovian approach, Junqueira found that “the overall framework of Brazilian narratives conforms to the Labovian framework for American narratives albeit with significant and distinctive differences” (p. iii). This study is of interest here, however, because the author also analysed narratives told by Brazilian Portuguese speakers in their second language - English. Junqueira notes that narratives are told in a specific context and in a specific language and culture and may reflect linguistic and cultural differences, yet “the majority of the works on narratives have taken a monocultural and monolingual approach” (p. 2). Linguistic and cultural differences between hearing speakers of English and Deaf signers of BSL are of importance to this study and are central to our understanding of the experiences contained in signed narratives, as the following section reveals.

2.3.2 Signed Narratives

In relation to the Deaf community, Breivik (2005) informs us that many stories of Deaf people’s lives are noted in autobiographies that have been presented in written form over the years, the first being ‘A Deaf Adult Speaks Out’, written by Jacobs ([1974] 1989). Breivik notes that the experiences contained in the relatively few autobiographies recorded in Norway and Sweden are similar to those contained in autobiographies of Deaf people’s lives in other countries, and many are based on what Deaf people can achieve and the experiences of being Deaf in a ‘hearing’ world. A compilation of written PENs published in the UK, in 1991, presents us with similar experiences of being Deaf. Although such written narratives were documented with the purpose of providing a way for Deaf people to express their experiences and to pass those experiences on to other Deaf people, the written format would have restricted Deaf people whose first language is a signed language (hence the written medium being a second language) from fully understanding the narrative message. As the use of sign language has become increasingly accepted in societies, and advances in video-technologies have made the recording of sign language materials more readily available (Lucas, Mirus, Palmer, Roessler and Frost, 2013), PENs have been increasingly recorded in sign language format and archived across the world. Breivik describes a video of Deaf life stories that was compiled in the US in 1994, which aims to “strengthen Deaf awareness and provide

strong rolemodels” (p.4). Though many of these collected signed materials have not been analysed for their informative content or structure yet, their importance is made clear by Breivik:

The stories are highly evocative and give a clear message directed at deaf and hearing viewers alike: “It is not bad to be deaf.” The narrators, through their clear messages, provide role models for deaf children who may be struggling with their identities.

(Breivik, 2005: 4)

The use of the video camera for recording personal stories has more recently moved beyond the orbit of the academic research scholar and has become a popular means of expressing narratives. Webcams enable spoken, written and signed stories to be shared across the internet through various social media formats, providing an avenue for people to relay their personal experiences in narrative form across the internet, as Page (2012) notes:

There are two reasons to write about the stories that people tell about themselves in social media formats:

- 1. Stories remain one of the most pervasive genres people use to make sense of themselves and the surrounding world.*
- 2. The development of social media formats in the first decade of the twenty-first century has enabled people to document the stories of their daily experiences in online, public, or semi-public domains in unprecedented measure.*

(Page, 2012: xv)

The research conducted by Page examines the types of stories found in such media sites and the similarities and differences that occur in the choice of subject matter and storytelling style. Page found that stories embedded in the context of social media satisfy a desire to express shared experiences, and raises the interesting notion that, in social media formats, many narratives relay the personal experiences of people known to the teller, as well as the teller’s own experiences. Referred to as the “second teller”, Page notes that second stories appear to serve to establish common ground between the first and second teller and reassure the first teller that attention has been paid to

the original narrative. Previous narratives of the written or verbal formats were often told in large chunks; online narratives tend, due to the nature of the interactive technologies, to be shorter in length and often told episodically across discussion forum threads (Page, 2012: 193). Previous research, then, shows that narratives told within the Deaf community do include stories of personal experience.

A further study that is of interest to this research is Rutherford's (1993) description of folklore in American Sign Language (ASL). Rutherford analysed thirteen texts and a number of video-recordings of fictional signed narratives. This research identifies aspects of Deaf culture: "The intent of this work is to use folkloristics as a tool to illuminate the culture of American Deaf People" (Rutherford 1993: ix). Rutherford used a portable video camera to record sign language data for analysis, a technique that continues to be familiar to sign language researchers. This was supplemented with observations made during a filmed group narrative, in which Rutherford was an observing participant and took notes. Rutherford found difficulties in conducting research of this nature, due to the stories being signed differently in an artificial research studio, an issue that is borne in mind in the case of this research study. Rutherford recalls:

In the case of a group narrative, collection on video in context was impossible. Where attempts were made to duplicate a text in studio, the material, although rich in its own right, did not replicate that of the traditional group narrative. The spontaneity of play seems to be requisite.

(Rutherford 1993: viii)

In order to identify aspects of Deaf culture, Rutherford, in a similar way to Sutton-Spence, used a content analysis approach and found that using ASL is the main identification of membership into the American Deaf community; this notion is reflected in the folklore told. Aspects of Deaf culture and identity are also found in the narratives and Rutherford notes that, "the Deaf identification as reflected in the folklore is with the language and is in terms of what the people are - Deaf - and not in terms of what there are not – impaired" (ibid: 142). This implies that members of the Deaf community see themselves as members of a linguistic minority rather than a disability minority.

Rutherford's following example illustrates the importance of Deaf identity reflected in a narrative about two Deaf soldiers on recognising that they were both Deaf: '...two Deaf soldiers identified each other by signing YOU DEAF? SAME-AS-ME not by saying YOU CAN'T HEAR EITHER?' (ibid: 142). Studies that analyse the content of signed narratives, then, reveal that aspects of Deaf identity, Deaf culture and sign language use are contained in the narratives in order to illustrate the experience of being Deaf.

Coleman and Jankowski (1994) suggest that the cultural content of signed narratives has a further function: to provide an avenue for Deaf people to deal with the oppression that comes with being Deaf in a hearing world. The content of signed narratives, then, moves beyond humour and entertainment (as section 2.1 above noted in relation to stand-up comedy), and functions as a way for the Deaf community to share and manage Deaf experiences:

Deaf people must turn to Deaf culture and draw upon the resources available in storytelling and folklore in order to gain the inner strength we need to continue our struggle.

(Coleman and Jankowski, 1994: 56)

It is also noted in Coleman and Jankowski's study that stories told by Deaf storytellers are different from hearing storytellers' accounts due to being able to include cultural aspects into the stories that are based on the natural visual orientation of Deaf people (described in section 1.1). Sutton-Spence and Napoli (2010), in fact, note that, "signed stories with Deaf characters that view the world entirely from a Deaf perspective are critical in Deaf folklore, where promotion and maintenance of the Deaf identity and worldview are central" (p. 448). Coleman and Jankowski (ibid.) conclude that Deaf storytellers provide the Deaf community with a sense of pride in their identity and culture, qualities that enable Deaf people to resist oppression in their lives; folklore in the Deaf community, then, empowers Deaf people to deal with the struggles of living in a hearing world.

The visual nature of Deaf people and of signed languages is taken into account in Rayman's (1999) analysis of American Sign Language narratives. Rayman looks into the modality of the language when fictional narratives are being signed to see if these linguistic resources shape the way the narratives are told. She examines the use of the

signing space around the body and the way characters are portrayed (via role-play) in the stories, employing the comparative storytelling structure framework also used by Slobin (1996a). Slobin compares the telling of a picture story primarily by young children in several different languages, finding that speakers of different languages experience and relay events differently, hence Rayman's interest in comparing like-stories told in speech and in sign. The task Rayman used was to give out a famous fable in cartoon form in which she elicited features of the stories and compared them being told in two languages: (spoken) English by five hearing native English users and American Sign Language (ASL) by five Deaf native ASL users. One of the five ASL users signing a story had theatre background experience so was potentially able to be more elaborative than the others when relaying the story. Because of this, Rayman also selected a hearing participant with a background in theatre as one of the five native English users to relay the story to balance the participant groups. From this, Rayman found that the hearing participant with the theatrical background was able to role-play and express detailed description but the other (also hearing) English speakers could not do this; however, all of the ASL signers (even those of no theatrical background) were at the same high level of artistic expression.

The notion that Deaf sign language users can articulate language that is descriptively expressive to a larger extent than spoken language users can achieve through verbal resonance is attributed to the visual-gestural modality of signed languages (see section 1.1.1). This descriptive is often expressed through 'constructed action' (Metzger, 1995: 262) and is described by Cormier, Smith and Zwets, (2013) as "...a discourse strategy used widely within sign languages in which the signer uses his/her face, head, body, hands, and/or other non-manual cues to represent the actions, utterances, thoughts, feelings and/or attitudes of a referent" (p. 119). In Sutton-Spence and Kaneko's (2016) description of signed poetry, it is noted that this visual resonance "creates harmony and rhythm among signs with aesthetic visual appeal" (p. 157). However, the use of constructed action moves beyond visual appeal and is reported as achieving much broader visual detail. Quinto-Pozos (2007) examines the unique use of constructed action to enact the object of clauses in signed narratives, in comparison to intonation in spoken language:

...it is not likely that spoken language intonation can provide the range and degree of information that can be provided by a signer's visual depictions in becoming the object. For example, a signer can communicate information about an animate object (including, but not limited to, actions performed, manner of movement, relative size, and posture) and how it interacts with other objects (animate or not) simply by becoming the object... Intonational features in spoken languages can certainly communicate affective, attitudinal, and emotional states of the speaker...but they do not appear to be equipped to portray the actions, movements, or relative size of an object. Thus, becoming the object does not appear to be entirely the same as the paralinguistic elements of spoken languages.

(Quinto-Pozos, 2007: 1287)

Constructed action is used very frequently in sign language discourse, particularly in signed narratives (Cormier, Smith and Zwets, 2013). While hearing people are re-telling stories and experiences that they have experienced through both sound and vision, Deaf people are relaying a story or experience that they have experienced through vision alone. Such visual experiences are reflected in the relation between modality and typicality. That is, Deaf people use visual language to portray visual experiences that are a central aspect of their everyday life, hence an important aspect of their culture. Rayman (1999) also suggests that telling stories in a visually articulate manner is due to the linguistic resources of the language itself, i.e. "representing the manner of motion, spatial relationships, and the portrayal of characters" (p.61). It is noted that Deaf people are adeptly visual in their language and culture due to the way that they experience the world:

With limited access to meaningful sound, they must rely on flashing lights and approaching shadows rather than sirens and footfalls. Their ability to adapt to the world around them depends more heavily on their sight, on their perception of the world through their eyes rather than ears. This visual orientation to the world shapes their culture and the modality of their language that may in turn promote the value of vivid depictions in storytelling.

(Rayman, 1999: 80)

Bahan's (2006) overview of American Sign Language literature takes a different perspective, as the research seeks distinct patterns across Deaf story-tellers and focuses on three areas: The Teller, The Tale and The Audience. Bahan examines the role of each participant in a variety of genres: cinematographic stories, folktales, translated works, original fiction and PENS, and notes that "narratives of personal experience are probably the most common type of storytelling in the Deaf community" (p. 29). Bahan looks at types of stories told in the Deaf community and notes that real life accounts usually focus on a single event that often occurs in Deaf peoples' lives, such as being asked by a hearing person if they can read Braille. In Bahan's study, it is noted that narratives that are signed face-to-face (to live audiences) are often adapted to suit the audience. For example, there may be hearing people in the audience who are beginner level sign language learners and this may require the story-teller to slow down their signing speed; other types of audiences may require that the contents are altered. Bahan informs us that adapting the sign language use during story-telling to suit a less fluent audience results in narratives not being told in the native form of the language. This is an important observation for personal experience narrative research methodology and is discussed further in the next chapter. The content of narratives, then, has been researched from various perspectives. The structural approach and the thematic analysis approach can be adapted for the study of both spoken and signed languages. However, a methodology that focuses on modality difference, that is, the aural/oral nature of spoken languages compared to the visual/gestural modality of signed languages, reveals that certain aspects of narratives are modality-specific, and therefore do not apply to one or other of the modalities.

2.3.2.1 Signed Narratives and the Younger Generation

Based on interviews of four Deaf people and personal observations, Ladd (2003: 49) notes that Deaf people have traditionally signed stories linked to personal experiences, and that these have been told particularly in residential schools for Deaf children, where pupils would pass on stories about past pupils and about their own personal experiences. Sutton-Spence (2010) looks at the types of signed narratives that are told in schools and proposes that the contents of the narratives can help Deaf children to

understand their culture and develop their identities. Sutton-Spence clearly defines the difference between fictional and non-fictional narratives and the implications for Deaf children:

Non-fictional narratives in the form of personal experience narratives (usually defined as those that concern real people and real events) are widespread and viewed as a core of Deaf cultural life. In BSL, these narratives may be presented as the storyteller's experiences, or the experience of other Deaf people in the community, or as the experiences of "someone very like" real community members. Such stories teach Deaf children about their community and their place within it.

(Sutton-Spence 2010: 273)

The notion that Deaf people's experiences are embedded in stories told to younger BSL users is important. Sutton-Spence (ibid) analysed interviews and discussions with seven Deaf adults from across the UK, and looked into the linguistic and cultural content of two selected narratives told in BSL, one fictional and one personal, finding that "storytelling in schools by Deaf teachers plays an essential role in deaf children's development of identity" (p.265). When Deaf people sign stories, they choose to add in certain aspects of Deaf culture and identity that they deem important to pass on to the younger generation. This exposes deaf children to other Deaf people's experiences, enabling them to become enculturated and realise their Deaf identities. These aspects, according to Sutton-Spence's findings, include "pride in deafness, the value of signing, and the importance of the Deaf community" (ibid.: 296). The importance of Deaf schools for providing a means to pass down the narratives is noted in her study, and Sutton-Spence's analysis of one of the interviews found that the stories told in various residential schools for deaf children draw on common shared experiences and therefore contain many similar threads, such as the struggles to fit into the hearing world. Sutton-Spence's method involves a thematic analysis of the signed narratives, highlighting the issues that underlie the stories, rather than describing the Deaf experiences in detail. However, recurring themes related to Deaf people's experiences are identified to some extent in her study; these include events that occur in doctors and dentists' surgeries, the hearing people they meet whilst travelling, life at work, and school experiences. Such

research is relevant to this thesis because they provide insight into the content of signed narratives and the benefits of sharing them with the younger generation.

2.4 Summary

Reviewing previous studies is an important element of the research process. With regards to PENs told by Deaf sign language users, there is little previous research to draw on, hence this review is widened to considering narratives in written and spoken format and has found that signed narratives contain similar content and serve similar functions. It has been noted in this chapter that in both fictional and non-fictional narratives, the central function of story-telling is to express personal experiences and social solidarity, and this applies particularly to experiences that are shared with minority group peers through narratives. The emotive and personal content of narratives is often expressed through humour and the review has shown that this is a common element of narratives. In the case of signed narratives, the shared occurrences relate primarily to the experiences and events that are the result of being Deaf in a hearing world, and of the cultural differences between Deaf and hearing people. Humour, then, is one of the ways through which personal experience narratives reveal human typicality and, on a contextual level, this thesis focuses on Deaf human typicality. Reviewing the literature enabled the research questions for this study to develop, and form a natural part of the methodological discussion that is detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three - Theory and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter considers theoretical and methodological aspects of the research, and provides a basis for how the research questions for this study are answered. The discussion begins with an explanation of the approaches to the research that have been taken, including consideration of the interplay between the inductive and deductive processes involved, and of the qualitative nature of the research. The design of the study is outlined, providing details of the data collection stages and the selection strategies employed. During a detailed description of the narrators, the ethical considerations taken are next discussed. Previous frameworks for analysing narratives are presented and discussed in relation to the research analysis processes for this study, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of research validity and its relevance to this research study.

3.2 Research Design: Theory

3.2.1 Theoretical Background

Social science research involves looking for regular patterns and examining their occurrence to make sense of them. Before beginning to analyse data for patterns, there has to be an underlying theory guiding the direction of the analysis. Berg (2001) describes the relationship between theory and the object of analysis:

In a formal sense, social scientists usually define theory as a system of logical statements or propositions that explain the relationship between two or more objects, concepts, phenomena, or characteristics of humans.

(Berg, 2001: 15)

Berg also informs us of the importance of considering previous studies that have examined the same topic, as this provides us with alternative perspectives and helps us to identify and understand concepts and their definitions. Berg notes that, for

researchers, “concepts provide a means to let others know what they are thinking” (p. 16), and they enable the researcher to measure things in the social world. The underlying theory of a research study derives from an idea and develops into a focus of study, and the perspective with which a researcher approaches a study influences the premise, the design and the methodology of the research. An example helps to illustrate this concept: when someone is a cigarette smoker, different people hold different ideas of what being a cigarette smoker means. This may range from understanding being ‘a smoker’ to mean ‘someone who smokes frequently’ or to mean ‘someone who is a social smoker’. The activity of smoking evokes other ideas for other people, such as why someone would continue to smoke when there are government warnings on the boxes of cigarettes that smoking can kill.

There is an interactive relationship between research theories, aims and methods, and this is illustrated in Maxwell’s (2005) Interactive Model of Research Design, consisting of five main components (see Figure 3-1 below). The model is particularly suitable for this qualitative research study, and is used as a basis for the description of theory and methodology in this chapter. The first two components (goals and concepts) are considered in this sub-section (3.2.1), followed by the third component (the research questions) in sub-section (3.2.2); the fourth component (methods) is discussed in section, 3.3, and the fifth component (‘validity’) is raised later in the chapter, in sub-section 3.3.5, after a description of the strategies for working with the data.

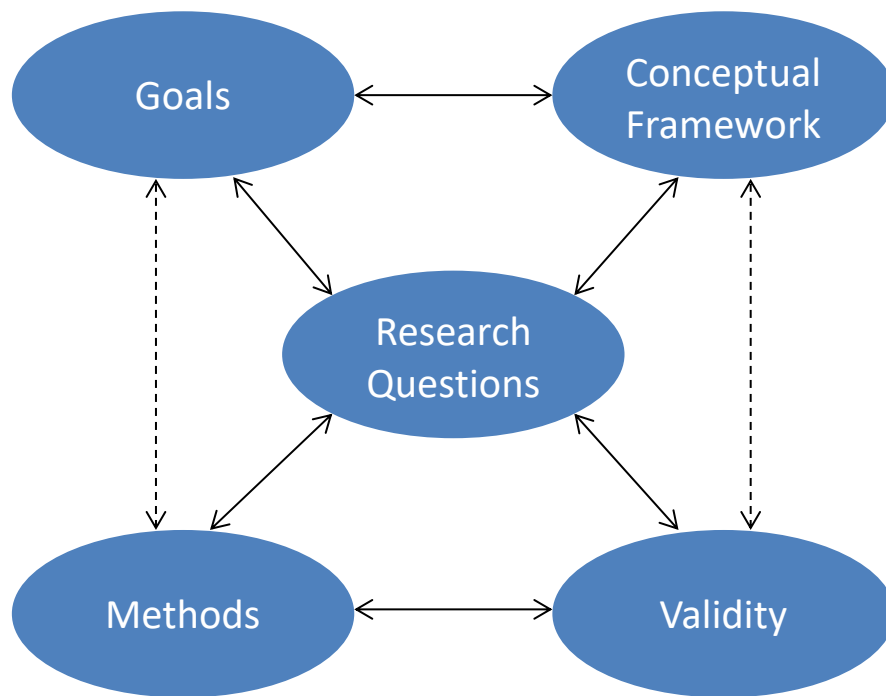


Figure 0-1 Maxwell's interactive Model of Research Design

Component 1.

Goals. *Why is your study worth doing? What issues do you want it to clarify, and what practices and policies do you want it to influence? Why do you want to conduct this study, and why should we care about the results?*

(Maxwell, 2005: 4)

The first of Maxwell's research design components helps a thesis to illustrate the reasons for the research study and the information that may be made available by its completion. The importance of the study for academic knowledge is also clarified through this component. This stage of the process begins with a set of goals that indicate why a study is of value. In the case of this research, the goals are to describe and document the experiences of Deaf people's lives that are embedded in a sample of signed narratives and to identify the extent to which they may reflect everyday life experiences of the Deaf community. As a member of the Deaf community, the researcher's personal experiences include seeing stories signed for many years without realising the importance and relevance that they have for our understanding of a Deaf way of life. This understanding is of academic value, and is also of value to the Deaf community and to the wider society. Documenting the typical experiences of sign

language users illustrates the way of life of Deaf people and identifies the importance of signed narratives for passing this knowledge to younger generations, and it can only be of benefit to make Deaf communities aware of this significance. Previous academic research in the field of sign linguistics, however, has paid more attention to understanding of how sign languages work structurally and morphologically. Ladd (2003) notes that it is equally as important for researchers to unravel the cultural and behavioural aspects of being Deaf. For the wider society, research that identifies and illustrates the culture of a minority group serves to aid intercultural understanding and can influence ways of thinking towards a more positive acceptance of difference. The goals of this study, then, include raising awareness on a wider scale of the relation between language and culture for Deaf people, and this is a timely study, given that British Sign Language was recognised by the British government in 2003 but has not yet received legal status as a protected language (British Deaf Association, 2012).

Component 2.

Conceptual Framework. *What do you think is going on with the issues, settings, or people you plan to study? What theories, beliefs and prior research findings will guide or inform your research, and what literature, preliminary studies and personal experiences will you draw on for understanding the people or issues you are studying?*

(Maxwell, 2005: 4)

Maxwell's second component suggests a process for the researcher to demonstrate understanding of the topic and to show how reading and related background study, in the form of the literature review, sets out a clear picture of the issue at hand and the concepts and theories that underlie it. The review of previous literature, along with the research goals, has a primary influence on the initial development of the conceptual framework. As chapter two revealed, the stories told by Deaf people, expressed through signed narratives, contain descriptions of everyday life experiences that occur due to being Deaf. The information resulting from the review has highlighted the extent to which the experiences contained in signed narratives are shared and are, therefore, typical Deaf experiences – this conceptual understanding is drawn upon throughout this

study and guides the direction of the research methodology. The conceptual framework is an important aspect of a research study, as Maxwell notes:

The conceptual framework of your study—the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research—is a key part of your design.

(Maxwell, 2005: 33)

As the theoretical elements of this research inform the research design, they are presented here, as section 3.2, in the form of what Creswell (2014) refers to as “an up-front explanation” (p. 67). This is consistent with qualitative research and demands that the theoretical underpinnings of the study are presented before the research methodology is relayed.

3.2.2 Research Approach

A starting point to research, then, is a theory: a perspective that steers the focus of the study. Creswell (ibid.) notes that, “consistent with the emerging design of qualitative enquiry, the theory may appear at the beginning and be modified or adjusted based on participant views” (p. 67). Given the limited amount of research into signed narratives in the British Deaf Community, it was necessary for this study to remain flexible and allow the theoretical influences, and the methodological design, to emerge and be modified as required. This falls in line with Creswell’s understanding of an emergent research design process:

The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data. For example, the questions may change, the forms of data collection may shift, and the individuals studied and the sites visited may be modified. The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information.

(Creswell, 2014: 186)

Forming from the research theory, the research questions, the third component of Maxwell's interactive model, develop and provide a clear and concise picture of the research focus:

Component 3.

Research questions. *What, specifically, do you want to understand by doing this study? What do you not know about the phenomena you are studying that you want to learn? What questions will your research attempt to answer and how are these questions related to one another?*

(Maxwell, 2005: 4)

The research questions are closely related to the goals and the conceptual framework described in the previous section and, according to Maxwell, are a crucial aspect of the study, as they provide an opportunity for the researcher to lay out the precise aspects of the topic that are to be explored. Through the research questions, the researcher is able to clarify what the reader, and the researcher, will learn as a result of the study. In this study, research question one - *What Deaf experiences are embedded in signed personal experience narratives?* – has a descriptive function. This question aims to reveal the types of experiences that are embedded in signed narratives and the aspects of Deaf people's lives that they reveal. This will establish an understanding of the events that occur that Deaf people feel it is necessary to relay to other people and to express in narrative form. This then leads to the attentional function of research question two - *What do the personal experience narratives reveal about typicality within the Deaf community?* The intention of this question is to enable the study to focus as narrowly as possible on the identifying component of the narrative – the part that indicates how being Deaf is a key factor in the story being told and how the incident is typical of a Deaf person's life. To a large extent, the two research questions, then, serve different functions, and fall in line with Maxwell's division of "generic and particularistic questions" (ibid.: 70). The first question sheds light on the broader description of the holistic experience; the second enables the study to pinpoint the specific detail of the aspect of being Deaf that are encoded in the signed narratives.

Maxwell (2005: 65) notes that research does not always begin with a set of rigid questions and suggests that the questions may continue to be shaped and amended

during the research process. In the case of this study, the research questions were somewhat vague and unfocussed in the beginning and were amended during the course of the study before being established as the questions discussed above. The development of the research questions is shown in the following table:

Table 0-1 Development of the Research Questions

Original Research Questions	Developed Research Questions
Has the content of the anecdotes changed over time and if so, why?	What Deaf experiences are embedded in signed personal experience narratives?
What aspects of Deaf experience are revealed in anecdotes?	What do the personal experience narratives reveal about typicality within the Deaf community?
What types of anecdotes are being passed down and why?	

The original focus of the study was on the changes that have occurred in anecdotes told by Deaf people over time. During the review of existing literature, it quickly became evident that there is a lack of research in this area and that it was necessary to conduct a study that would also document PENs. Lack of such documentation meant that it was not possible to compare past and current stories told in the British Deaf community. The focus of this study, then, moved to ascertaining the types of narratives that are told and how the content of the narratives reflects the experiences of being Deaf. The questions, then, were shaped into the existing ones after the literature review highlighted the importance of the content of the narratives, and after a deeper understanding of the research design process led to the decision to amend the focus to one generic and one particularistic question. The term ‘anecdotes’ was replaced with the term ‘narratives’ because of the association of narratives with personal experience and also because of the connotations of ‘stories’, or anecdotes, that Polkinghorne describes:

I hesitate to use the word story to refer to this type of narrative. Story carries a connotation of falsehood or misrepresentation, as in the expression, “That is only a story”. Narrative has been used in this sense to refer to the story that evinces a culture’s world-view or ideology.

(Polkinghorne, 1995: 7)

The third question was removed during the research design process due to the limited previous research of this nature to draw on, and due to time and word space restrictions. The reshaping and amending of the research questions, then, is a natural part of the design process and aids the focus of the study.

Two further aspects of research design were also taken into account during the theoretical component of this research study: the qualitative vs quantitative approach and the inductive vs deductive processes. The purpose of data analysis in qualitative research, according to Bold (2012), is to “enquire deeply into the meaning of different situations and different people’s understandings of the world” (p. 120). This appreciation of the issues and experiences that personal experience narratives represent helps the qualitative researcher to understand narrative meaning, rather than to search for facts (Bochner, 2001). While the facts of a personal experience, told in narrative form, are of interest in themselves, the underlying expression of common experience or shared cultural familiarity is of importance here. It is this expression that reveals the typicality within the personal experience narrative and sheds light on the shared experiences of a minority group that are different to those of the mainstream society in which they live. It is this purpose that the data analysis for this study serves; hence, a qualitative approach is taken. Although some numerical information is provided regarding the frequency of occurrence of the themes and sub-themes across the data sets, no additional data of a quantitative nature was collected due to the research questions not containing a quantitative element. The numerical data serves the purpose of adding numerical description to the study and is not analysed from a quantitative perspective.

With regards to inductive/deductive reasoning (Berg 2001), this study began with a deductive approach, that is, the previous personal observations that signed stories often contain typical Deaf experiences and are designed to express a cultural message. This deduction served the purpose of guiding the initial stages of the study but the research shifted towards an inductive process as it continued into its data analysis and discussion stages. It would appear logical to allow any research study to test out an existing theory, which the deductive method enables, as well as allowing it to make broader generalisations that lead to new theory by observing the data through an

inductive approach. In fact, the interplay between inductive observations and deductive testing of theory is described clearly by Creswell (2014) in relation to data analysis:

Qualitative researchers build their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and the data base until the researchers have established a comprehensive set of themes. Then deductively, the researchers look back at their data from the themes to determine if more evidence can support each theme or whether they need to gather additional information. Thus, while the process begins inductively, deductive thinking also plays an important role as the analysis moves forward.

(Creswell, 2014: 186)

3.3 Research Design: Methods

This section presents the research activities and processes used to collect and analyse the data for this study of personal experience narratives and begins with the fourth component of Maxwell's model, concerning the methods employed in a study:

Component 4.

Methods. *What will you actually do in conducting this study? What approaches and techniques will you use to collect and analyze your data? There are four parts of this component of your design: (1) the relationships that you establish with the participants in your study; (2) your selection of settings, participants, times and places of data collection, and other data sources such as documents (what is often called "sampling"); (3) your data collection methods; and (4) your data analysis strategies and techniques.*

(Maxwell, 2005: 4)

In order to clarify the reason for choosing certain methodological approaches in research, Maxwell's fourth component focuses on the collection and analysis strategies used. This allows the researcher to explain how the methods used relate to the topic being studied and the processes involved. The data collection methods and the selection strategies are considered firstly in the following sub-sections in order to present a clear

picture of the data collection process before moving to present information related to the narrators and finally to the data analysis stage and validity aspects of the research.

3.3.1 Data Collection

On the subject of data collection, Darlington and Scott (2002) suggest that whatever the research purpose and question, “certain analytic choices have to be made - what data to collect, from whom, how to focus the analysis and how to structure the research report” (p. 142). It is important, therefore, that a researcher carefully considers the options available regarding how the data is collected, and is able to explain why choices are made so that the reader is fully informed of the process and of the research context in which the process is undertaken. In relation to specific data collection methods, such considerations should be made on the basis that they provide a suitable process for answering the research questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

There are many options available for the type and amount of data to be collected. Creswell (2014: 191) considers the advantages and limitations of four main data collection types: observations; interviews; documents; and audio-visual materials, which are discussed here in relation to this research project. Observations, according to Creswell, are beneficial in that information can be recorded and issues can be identified during the data collection activity; on the other hand, the researcher’s presence may be intrusive and gaining rapport may present problems. This type of data was discounted for this study, as the central aim in the data collection process was to gather data that was as close to spontaneous narrative as possible and was not subject to any intrusion by a researcher. For this study, the researcher only remained in the room in order to record the narratives onto video camera and no formal observations were made during the data collection stages.

Creswell notes that interviews may be advantageous in situations where natural observations cannot take place, and they allow the researcher to steer the dialogue; limitations of this collection type include the fact that the data is not being collected in a natural environment, and that the researcher’s presence may influence the responses. This data collection method was also discounted for this study because the resulting two-way dialogue would not allow for continuous narration of experience from

beginning to end. The third type, documentation, has the advantage of enabling the researcher to refer directly to the written texts being analysed, and they can be analysed at a time that is convenient to the researcher. However, as Creswell notes, documentation may not be authentic or accurate, as not everyone may perceive the information in the same way, and may also be difficult to obtain if the required document is unavailable to the public. This activity was discounted for this study because signed narratives do not appear in written documented form. Audio-visual materials, Creswell considers, have the advantages of being an unobtrusive collection method and allows participants to “directly share their reality” (p. 192); limitations, however, include the difficulty of interpreting the data, the presence of the researcher, and that they may be difficult to collect. Sign language researchers have proceeded with similar techniques, and particularly with the qualitative collection methods of observation and elicitation (Van Herreweghe and Vermeerbergen, 2012). As Van Herreweghe and Vermeerbergen report, “newer to the field of sign language research, there are corpus-based studies where a (relatively) large corpus is mined for examples of structures and co-occurrences of items that then constitute the data for analysis” (p. 1024). Given the advantages and limitations of the various data collection types, this study makes use of visual materials from two sources:

- Corpus data – narratives taken from a sign language corpus (see section 3.3.1.1)
- Field data – additional signed narratives recorded live (see section 3.3.1.2)

These data types are both made up of visual materials, the first being already available publicly and the second being collected as additional data for this research study, as the following sub-sections illustrate.

3.3.1.1 Corpus Data: The British Sign Language Corpus



Figure 0-2 The British Sign Language Corpus
(Moyle, Beeke, Mahon and Mahon, 2010)

A language corpus is a collection of language samples that can be used for research purposes. One of the first corpora containing samples of sign language use was compiled during the late 1990s in America (Lucas, Bayley and Valli, 2001) and advancing video technologies has led to the development of corpora in other countries. In Britain, the BSL corpus was compiled as a result of a project that ran from 2008-2011, the British Sign Language Corpus Project (BSLCP). The project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is copyrighted to Fenlon, Cormier, Rentelis and Schembri (2011). It is housed under an online repository called the Communication Audio-Visual Archive (CAVA) and is held at University College London. Moyle, Beeke, Mahon and Mahon (2010) suggest that a corpus is an important tool for research:

In order to investigate human communication and interaction, researchers need hours of audio-visual data, sometimes recorded over periods of months or years. The process of collecting, cataloguing and transcribing such valuable data is time-consuming and expensive. Once it has been collected, its value to the research community can be maximised by re-use...The CAVA project was designed to support the premise that researchers in human communication might be able to save time and money and improve the depth of their observations and conclusions by reusing existing data.

(Moyle, Beeke, Mahon and Mahon, 2010)

The accompanying information provided with the corpus describes its main purpose:

The purpose of the BSL Corpus is to record examples of BSL used by Deaf people and to store this information in a collection that is made publicly accessible on-line. This data was collected to have a permanent and secure record of BSL, as the language is used today by fluent signers across the UK. We know that the language is changing rapidly due to changes in the Deaf community, so it is important that we have a record for the future.

(British Sign Language Corpus Project, 2015)

A further benefit of corpus research is that it enables the researcher to access language that continues for longer stretches of time and flows more naturally than language in interviews. However, it must be taken into account that the narratives were not told in naturally occurring settings and were produced specifically for inclusion in the corpus. In addition, the participants were aware that they were being filmed and that a researcher was present. Labov (1972), refers to the notion of participants being affected by the researcher's presence as the "observer's paradox". This notion came to light after clinical research trials carried out from 1924-1932 in the Hawthorne Plant, a station of the Western Electric Company in Chicago, revealed increased improvement in workers' performance when they were being observed. This became known as the 'Hawthorne Effect' and De Amici, Klersy, Ramajoli, Brustia and Politi (2000), who inform us of the effects, note that "man has a natural propensity to be influenced by being observed, and therefore the mere awareness of being under observation can alter the way in which a person behaves" (p. 104). According to Labov, a researcher must aim to "observe how people speak when they are not being observed" (p. xvii). In order to achieve this, in the case of sign language research, the most effective process is to record narrative in pairs, so that the signer is facing another signer, and not facing the camera directly. The researcher then leaving the room would be the closest to this model one could achieve where language fluency is concerned. This paired narratives model, where one person signs a narrative to another, is also noted as effective by Rutherford (1983), who found that group narratives did not provide a good amount of analysable narrative data, and also found that the presence of an observer (who was taking notes during the activity) did not encourage natural language fluency. The details of how the participants of the

corpus project were prepared for signing the narratives is reported in an article published at the end of the project:

Each participant was asked prior to his or her arrival to think of a short personal experience narrative to present (lasting no longer than five minutes) during the filming session. For the first task, they were instructed to retell this narrative to their partner. In many cases, however, participants were either not asked by the fieldworker to prepare a narrative, or failed to reflect on this request prior to their arrival, and thus produced a more-or-less spontaneous narrative on the spot.

(Schembri, Fenlon, Rentelis, Reynolds and Cormier, 2013: 144)

3.3.1.2 Field Data: Recording of Narratives

In order to obtain further examples of PENs for analysis in this study, the second research activity involved recording signed narratives from members of the Deaf community across four selected regions of the UK: North West, North East, South West and South East. The most important criteria in relation to the field data set was that the narrators had a story to tell related to being Deaf, and the data collection process was based on this primary criterion. Along with this, it was important that the narrators were Deaf and were fluent BSL users, so the criteria were as follows:

- ❖ The narrator has a story to tell
- ❖ The narrator is Deaf
- ❖ The narrator is a BSL user

Narrators were invited to take part and were recorded signing their narratives in pairs in the same way that the participants in the BSLCP study did (the participant details are presented in the next section (3.2.2) and the selection process in section 3.2.3). It is of interest to note here that narrators were invited to take part in the research that was specifically situated in a local Deaf club. It is noted by Green and Thorogood (2004) that, in the case of personal and sensitive research, participants often prefer to be interviewed in their own homes. For many Deaf people, the Deaf club functions as a 'second home'. Research conducted by Hall (1991), in fact, concludes that Deaf clubs

provide “connection with national Deaf organizations, openness to the larger community, provision for free and relaxed communication, a spirit more cohesive than competitive, and an informal mentoring structure to introduce new members to the culture” (p. 421). They provide an environment where the participant has always felt equal and valued, as opposed to the home environment, where the participant may feel unequal to hearing household members. In a UK study, Atkin, Ahmad and Jones (2002) found that a large number of “young deaf people resented being at the margins of the family, excluded from conversations and other important aspects of family life” (p. 29). Hence, Deaf clubs were considered appropriate places to conduct the field data activities. In each region, the activity was arranged in pairs, with one person functioning as the narrator and the other as the viewer, then roles were reversed. It was felt that this method was most likely to result in data that are as close as possible to natural language use within the community. The activity type is particularly important for sign language research, as the language modality is visual, and communication cannot take place without consistent and maintained eye contact between the interlocutors; this method also facilitated that approach. This activity type, then, was chosen for three main reasons:

- It minimised the effects of the observer’s paradox (discussed in section 3.3.1.1 above), as the researcher was able to leave the room at any time;
- It ensured that they were signing to a fellow member of the Deaf community, rather than just to a camera alone;
- It replicated the arrangement of the corpus narrative activity, enabling the two sets of data to be analysed more effectively.

Field data collection - trip 1:

The first trip to generate new data involved travelling to the South East (London) and the South West (Plymouth) of the UK in February 2016. In each region, narrators were asked to sign a story of their experiences containing issues related to being Deaf. The researcher relayed (in BSL) some examples of the stories from the BSL corpus that contain elements of being Deaf, and asked the narrators to sign stories of any similar

experiences that had happened to them in relation to the type of issues that are of interest to the study, such as school experiences. The narrators signed their narratives but many of the stories told were not specifically relevant to the experience of being Deaf. It became evident, on viewing the data after the activity, that the narrators needed more researcher direction regarding the type of stories that would be relevant to the research. It may have been more productive to actually show the narrators a signed personal experience narrative on a laptop before the activity began or provide more details of the types of experiences of interest. Regardless of this, the trip did result in a sufficient amount of stories that were considered suitable for analysis, a process that is described in detail in later sections.

Field data collection - trip 2:

The trips to the North West and North East regions were completed in May 2016, three months after the first trip to the South East and South West. It was important, during this trip, to ensure that narrators were clear in what was expected, in order for them to produce the narratives that are an integral part of the experience of being Deaf. Kim's (2016) discussion of narratives includes a consideration of how people *think* narratively before producing a story, and notes that "narrative thinking is an attempt to create a fit between a situation and a story schema about some experience or event that consists of who, what, how and why" (p. 156). While the participant-storytellers are encouraged to think narratively during the data collection process, it is also important for the researcher-storyteller to think narratively and understand the idea of narrative thinking whilst undertaking the process of collecting, coding and analysing PENs. As a narrator, the storyteller's background is important, hence this study has taken steps to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Deaf community and its narrative tellers, who consciously relay stories of their own lived experiences. Exploring narratives told in the Deaf community reveals aspects that belong very much to the Deaf world and have a cultural underpinning. Deaf people relay experiences from within the Deaf community, and the Deaf-world, and do so in contrast and comparison with the hearing people around them (the hearing world). The personal element that narrative thinking allows to be articulated in story form results, according to Kim, as "...a method of creating a story by organising experiences around our perception, thought, memory and

imagination” (ibid.), and Deaf people’s stories contain negative and positive experiences of moving between the two worlds.

In order to enhance the narrators’ understanding of the type of stories that were required, examples that are more specific were provided during the second (field) data collection trip. The researcher asked for stories related to specific Deaf-related incidents, such as when they have experienced communication breakdowns or where they had exploited the fact that they are Deaf. The existing data and the additional field trips resulted in a good amount of collected data:

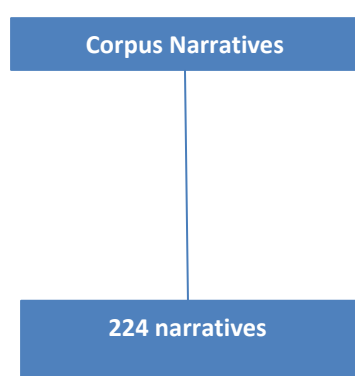


Figure 0-3 Corpus Data Selection

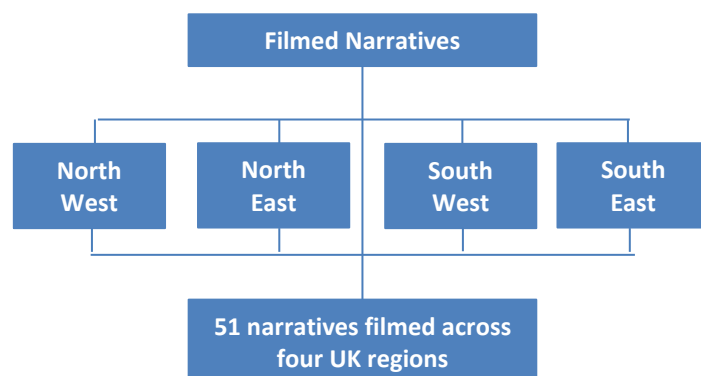


Figure 0-4 Field Data Selection

3.3.2 The Narrators

3.3.2.1 Narrator Demographics

Once the data collection types had been chosen, this study was able to consider the demographics of the narrators and ensure that a suitable and sufficient selection had been made. For both the corpus and the field data, the narrators whose data is analysed are all British Sign Language users and members of the Deaf community. For both data collection types, the narrators completed a background questionnaire requesting basic demographic information in the form of meta-data records. The meta-data record templates for the narrators whose narratives were selected for analysis is contained in Appendix 1 (for the corpus data) and in Appendix 2 (for the field data). As the researcher is a member of the Deaf community, accessing potential narrators for the field data was not problematic but the researcher was mindful of the need to consider familiarity due

to this “backyard research” (Creswell, 2014), that is, research that is carried out on one’s own community. Creswell notes that:

If studying the backyard is essential, then researchers hold the responsibility for showing how the data will not be compromised and how such information will not place the participants (or the researchers) at risk.

(Creswell, 2014: 188)

While being an ‘insider researcher’ (Voloder, 2014) meant that accessing participants was not difficult, it was important to remain aware of the potential for narrators to feel coerced into participating due to the researcher being a co-community member. I was also mindful of the potential for inequalities to cause concerns, such as those experienced by Rohse (2014) during a research study:

Concerning the free participation, I considered my nationality to be an advantage, and saw little potential for coercion of the participants into taking part in the research as I would be an outsider. Although I did not see myself as an authority figure, I understood that there may be socio-economic inequalities between me and the potential participants...which could create power imbalances.

(Rohse, 2014: 62)

In order to minimise the effects of backyard research, and to achieve a systematic approach to participant selection for the field data samples, a gatekeeper for each region was chosen to aid the collection. As mentioned in section 3.3.2.1 above, Deaf clubs are known as places of regular Deaf gatherings, so were considered as appropriate places to make contact in relation to the data collection. Each Deaf club has a respected Chair, who is considered as a community leader on a local level, and would be able to inform local Deaf people about the research activity and invite participation on a non-coercive level. The Chair of a Deaf club from each region was contacted in BSL through FaceTime to ask if they would consider acting as a gatekeeper and given details as to what this would involve (confirmed by Facebook Messenger) and a Deaf person from each region agreed to take on this role. Each gatekeeper invited participation in the research by informing people who attended the following Deaf club sessions (in BSL) of

the study, and set up the date and place for the data collection activity to take place. In a further similar way to Rohse, during her study of storytelling dynamics in contemporary Bradford, I was also aware of the potential for the community to feel “over-researched”. While there has been little research of PENs in Deaf communities, there has been on-going research of a structural linguistic nature, and of Deaf cognition. This, coupled with the increasing number of hearing sign language learners who attend Deaf clubs to practice signing, may be resulting in a Deaf community that feels over-researched, and I was cautious of this during the field data collection activities.

As well as feeling disgruntled with the increasing amount of outsider research, it is also noted that communities may feel anxious about the purpose of the research (Kim, 2016). Kim reports that a participant once asked, “Are you a spy, too?” during the research process, which Kim regards as a “straightforward question from my participant, demanding her “right to know” as a research participant” (p. 98). Being a Deaf researcher, it was anticipated, would help to alleviate such suspicion and result in narrators feeling more comfortable in the research environment and not feeling a sense of the community being over-researched by outsiders. This discontentment may be particularly strong when the hearing researcher is not a sign language user and expects narrators to communicate by writing notes to and from the researcher, or through a third party sign language interpreter, which affects the communicative dynamics. Communicating fluently in the language of the narrators naturally creates a rapport and is a positive aspect of insider research (Young and Hunt, 2011).

3.3.2.2 Ethical Considerations

In relation to the researcher’s relationship with the participants, another element of the methods component of Maxwell’s (2005) model introduced in section 3.2.1, ethical considerations are an important aspect. Ethical procedures must be followed in order to ensure that the research is carried out with appropriate care and attention, particularly with regards to its participants. In order to fully understand the implications of research ethics, the researcher completed two online ethics training modules from the Epigeum series² under the University of Central Lancashire. As Kelman (1982) notes,

² Ethics 1: Good Research Practise and Ethics 2: Working with Human Subjects

research that makes use of participants must seek to proceed with the least harm to those participants. Researchers, according to Kelman, have a “Moral obligation to avoid actions and policies that reduce others’ well-being or that inhibit their freedom to express and develop themselves” (p. 41). In the case of this study, the steps taken to ensure least harm to the narrators involve the following ethical issues:

1. Consent

It is ethical to ensure that all narrators are aware that there is a choice as to whether or not to take part in the research, and that they may withdraw from the study at any time and without reason (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2011). In order to comply with standard research regulations, a consent form must be completed. In the case of the corpus data, a CAVA consent form was completed by each participant and approved by the University College London’s Ethics Committee (see Appendix 3); for the field data, a consent form was designed, which was approved by the University of Central Lancashire’s Ethics Committee (see Appendix 4) and completed by each narrator. A participant information sheet, containing comprehensive details of the project rationale and participation expectation, and a participant briefing sheet, containing details of the research activity, were also designed and given to the field data narrators. Narrators were informed that the data consent form, and both the information sheet and briefing sheet could be made available in BSL format if requested and the filming procedure was explained in BSL before recording began.

2. Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is a particularly important ethical aspect of sign language research, as narrators are filmed and easily identifiable from the video recordings if screen shots are placed in the thesis. It is also difficult to achieve full anonymity because the narrative section of the corpus is accessible online to the public, and the transcribed stories may easily be matched with the corpus participant by a BSL user. As Rohse (2014) suggests, it is important to ensure that participants have thought about the implications of disclosure so all participants were made aware of this issue, and the research proceeded

as sensitively as possible given this situation. This was particularly important due to the fact that the Deaf community in the UK is small and BSL users are likely to be known by many community members and more easily identifiable than hearing participants. The BSLCP project team paid attention to this issue. During the filming of the interviews, for example, they found that some of the participants were naming specific Deaf people so the interviews were moved to a separate section that was placed under restricted access. In order to access the restricted data, a researcher must apply for a User Licence, and the licence comes with a confidentiality agreement (Moyle et al., 2010). For the narrators who took part in the field data collection activity, the researcher explained that screenshots of the narratives may be selected for printing in the thesis and most narrators agreed to this if required. The narrators who opted not to have screenshots selected, agreed that English translations of their narratives could be used for the purposes of the thesis and publications.

3. Reciprocity:

When researching minority groups, the researcher has a moral obligation to give something back to the community. Mertens (2009) advises that reciprocity is a “key element in establishing research and evaluation partnerships that can yield valid information for all concerned because it helps to address power differentials that can diminish a willingness to share life experiences” (p. 74). Prior to the first field data collection trip, I had considered how the narrators could be rewarded for attending, and I had planned to provide tea and coffee, and other light refreshments, as a gesture of thanks. However, on arrival at the first event, I realised that the Deaf club relies on the sale of such refreshments to people attending the club for its profits, and it was felt that providing them would take sales away from the club so I decided against this gesture as a way to provide beneficence to the narrators.

Given this, it was decided that the best option for reciprocating the effort that the participant had made would be the appropriate dissemination of the results. I plan to return to each Deaf club to present a presentation of the results. This will include examples of the stories from the relevant region so that the narrators can clearly see how their own story illustrates the research topic. This will have more personal

relevance for each participant than being sent a copy of the research results in the form of the thesis, and will enable narrators to receive the resulting information in BSL. During the return visit, the narrators will be fully informed of:

- The purpose of disseminating the research and what this involves
- Where the information will go and who sees it
- How it benefits the Deaf community

3.3.3 Working with the Data

3.3.3.1 Preparing the Data

The final aspect of the methods component of Maxwell's research model (presented on Figure 3-1 on page 27) involves providing a clear description of the data processing techniques. According to Denscombe (2007: 288), "most experts in the field would recognize five stages involved in the analysis of qualitative data", all of which are relevant to this study:

- *preparation of the data;*
- *familiarity with the data;*
- *interpreting the data (developing codes, categories and concepts);*
- *verifying the data;*
- *representing the data.*

In order to prepare the data for analysis, the first stage in the process involved a data preparation exercise. All recorded data was uploaded onto a computer and viewed. Before undertaking a data selection and reduction exercise, it is important to establish criteria (Mulrooney, 2009). For Mulrooney, the first criteria in relation to the selection of sign language data for analysis is that the picture quality must be clear and precise, as she explains in relation to a study that began with 50 ASL personal narratives:

Not all of these were conducive to analysis; many were eliminated because of poor video quality. To be included for analysis, the signer's hands and body had to be in the frame, the signer's face had to be clear enough to see facial expressions and eye closures, and, critically, the view of the signer had to be unobstructed.

(Mulrooney, 2009: 41)

In the case of this research study, the clarity of the video recording was taken into account when preparing the data, as it is intended that the data will be retained as a small corpus of Deaf PENs. It was also important that the sign language use was clear, not for structural linguistic purposes, but to ensure that the information was understandable. Clear and legible video quality also results in a higher level of accuracy in the translated transcriptions. From the corpus clips, 8 were discarded due to the picture being too blurred or the signer's face being obscured due to the camera angle. As the field data was collected specifically for research purposes by the researcher, all of the data was of a sufficient video quality. In order to become familiar with the data, the corpus data and the field data selected for analysis were viewed several times. This was an important aspect of working with the data, as it allowed the researcher to consider the sort of themes that could be assigned during the data analysis stage later on. In addition, viewing the data several times enabled the researcher to begin to consider whether all the signed narratives would contain elements of Deaf people's experiences. It quickly became apparent that not all of the collected signed narratives contained evidence of typicality related to being Deaf so a data selection and reduction exercise was necessary, and is described in the following sub-sections.

3.3.3.2 Data Selection

Data selection, often referred to as 'data sampling' (Maxwell, 2005), is an important element of the methods component of Maxwell's interactive model and is discussed here in depth in relation to this study. Having selected the data collection type and sources, it was necessary to consider options for selecting specific data clips (in the case of the corpus samples) and specific participants' recordings (in the case of the field data material) for analysis. Known in the literature as the 'sampling process' (Maxwell, *ibid.*), this process allows a researcher to choose from several methods of data sampling. The

most commonly used selection methods in quantitative research, according to Creswell (2014), involve probability sampling (where data are collected at random) and convenience sampling (where the most easily collected data is utilised), and neither of these methods are suitable for this qualitative study. Probability sampling is deemed unsuitable because it may result in a vast amount of signed narratives that do not contain experiences of 'being Deaf' in them. The fact that all the narratives collected via probability sampling would be produced in sign language does not mean that they inherently contain a relation to deafness, and they would not necessarily express experiences that happened because of being Deaf. That is, many of the experiences expressed in the narratives may also have happened to a hearing person. Hence, probability sampling was discounted in order to obtain narratives that would enable the research to focus on experiences of being Deaf, and events that are typical in a Deaf person's life.

The availability of the corpus of BSL narratives that was already collected provided some level of convenience, but the narratives were still selected intentionally, for the reason previously explained. The intentional selection of samples for analysis is referred to as 'purposeful sampling' (Patton, 2002) and was used in this study to ensure that the collected data contained sufficient Deaf experiences to answer the research questions (see section 1.2). Maxwell notes the importance of this approach for qualitative research:

Selecting those times, settings, and individuals that can provide you with the information that you need in order to answer your research questions is the most important consideration in qualitative selection decisions.

(Maxwell, 2005: 88)

In the case of the BSL corpus data, this purposeful sampling exercise began with a stratified approach. The rationale for stratifying the data was that it would lead to well-defined data sets that would aid the organisation and management of the data. While stratified purposeful sampling forces some element of researcher influence into the selection process (Denscombe, 2007), its organisational benefits help the researcher to establish clear subgroups and achieve an appropriate balance of data.

The BSL corpus is organised according to 4 categories: region, activity, age-range and age of BSL acquisition, and was perused for samples for this study. This process began by selecting the most appropriate section of the corpus for the stratified purposeful sampling. The **activity** section was selected first because this would lead to the set of narratives contained in the corpus. This section is organised into a further four sub-sections related to the four different tasks in which the participants took part: a lexical elicitation task, an interview, paired conversations, and recounting a personal experience narrative (British Sign Language Corpus Project, 2015). The **narratives** section was chosen next, as it was considered the most appropriate sub-section for this study. This section of the corpus contains 224 narratives in total, from the eight regions that the corpus project collected from: Belfast, Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff, London and Bristol. The participants had been instructed to sign a story related to a personal experience or specific incident in their lives and were given free choice of topic (that did not necessarily have to be related to being Deaf). The only criteria were that participants were Deaf BSL users (the meta-data records ensured this) and had a story to tell.

3.3.3.3 Data Reduction

The data reduction exercise began by creating a table of columns in a notebook in order to organise the narratives according to the extent to which they contained Deaf-related experiences (DRE) – that is, experiences that would not have occurred, or would have been very different, if the participant was able to hear:

- ❖ clips containing *no* evidence of Deaf-related experiences;
- ❖ clips containing an *insufficient* amount of evidence of Deaf-related experiences;
- ❖ clips containing a *minimal* but sufficient amount of evidence of Deaf-related experiences;
- ❖ narratives containing a *viable* amount of evidence of Deaf-related experiences.

The last two of the above list were selected for analysis. The result of this data reduction process was that the 224 clips from the corpus data set were reduced to 43 (Table 3-2 below) and the 51 clips from the field data set were reduced to 26 (Table 3-3 below). Each of the following illustrative tables is accompanied by a visual overview chart that show the amount of DRE in the set:

Table 0-2 Data Reduction – Corpus Data

Region	Total	No DRE	Minimal DRE	Insufficient DRE	Viable DRE
Belfast	30	11	9	5	5
Birmingham	20	8	5	4	3
Bristol	25	6	11	5	3
Cardiff	30	19	8	2	1
Glasgow	28	4	10	6	8
London	35	17	11	1	6
Manchester	26	4	10	6	6
Newcastle	30	7	6	6	11
Total	224	76	70	35	43

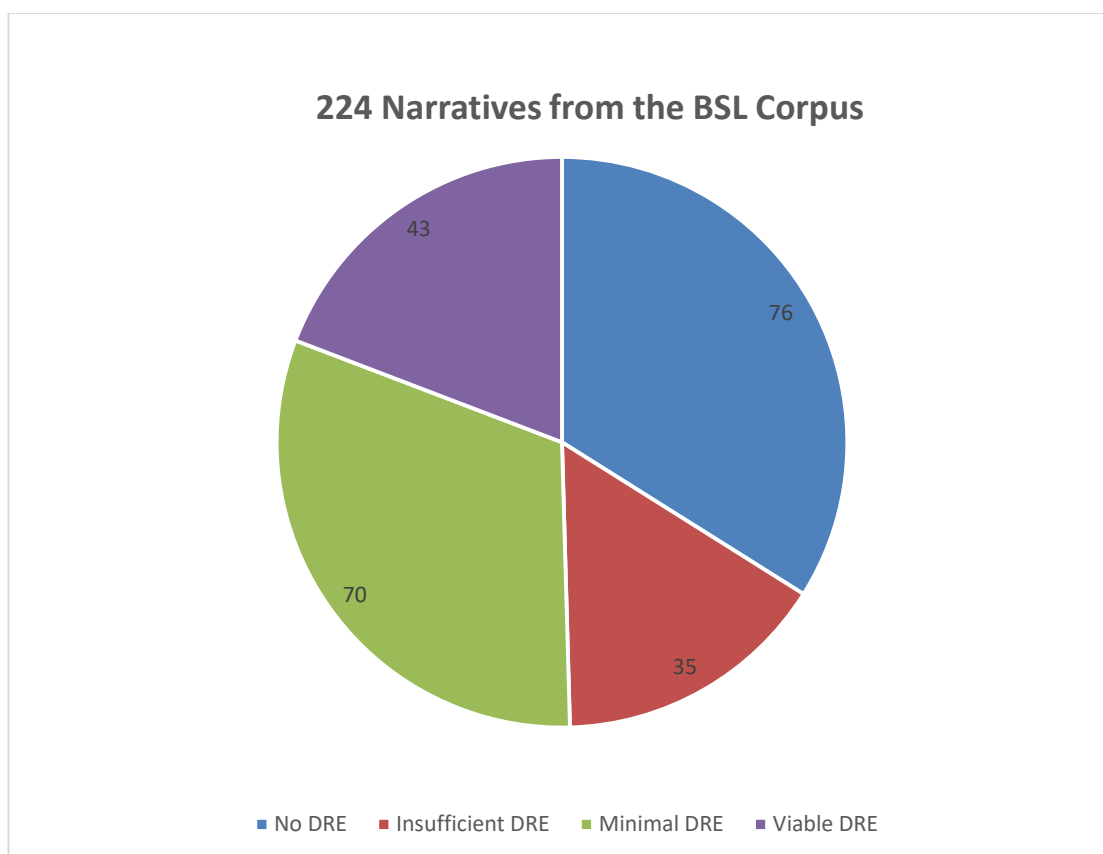


Figure 0-5 Overview of Reduced Corpus Data

Table 0-3 Data Reduction – Field Data

Region	Total	No DRE	Minimal DRE	Insufficient DRE	Viable DRE
Bradford	8	0	0	2	6
London	19	2	1	6	10
Plymouth	12	2	1	5	4
Preston	12	1	2	3	6
Total	51	5	4	16	26

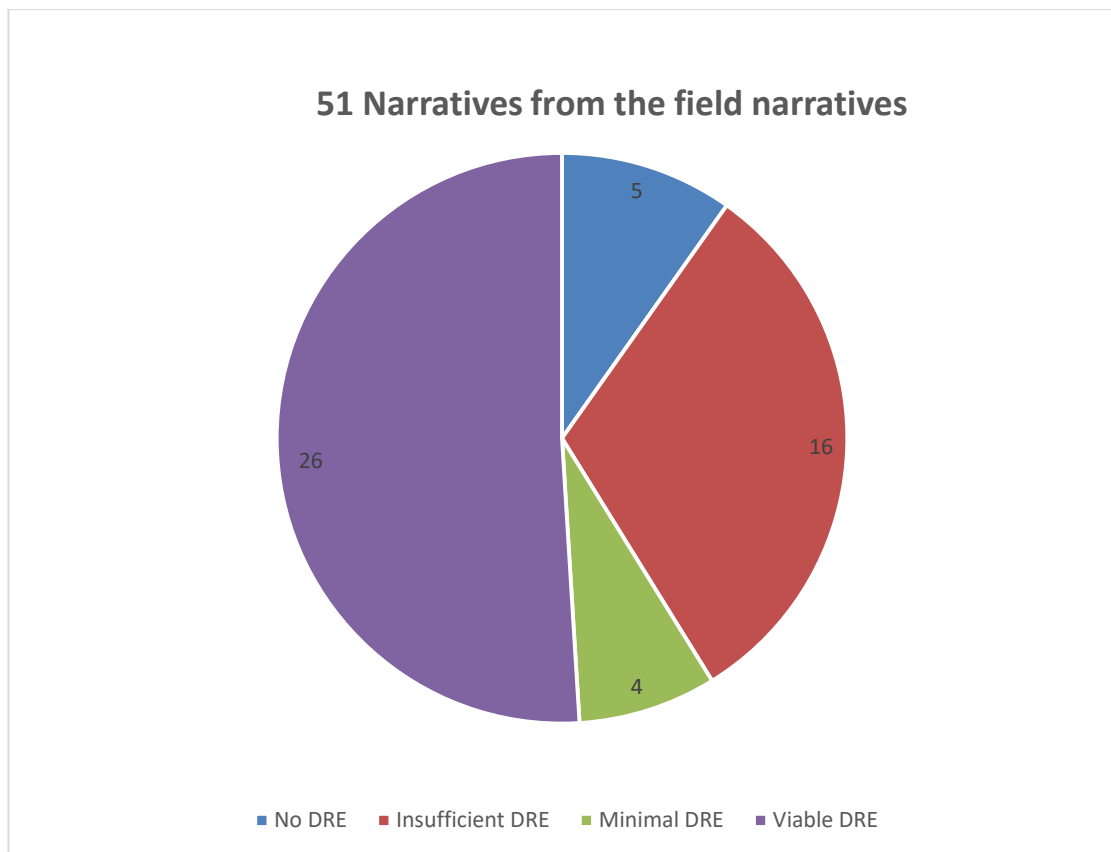


Figure 0-6 Overview of Reduced Field Data

Those narratives were then considered as good quality, analysable material, and were suitable for full analysis. However, in order to reduce the clips further, to an amount that was manageable for analysis, 12 clips were selected from each set. The clips selected for analysis were selected primarily because there was sufficient content to be analysed, and that content appeared to cover a range of potential themes. This would enable the focus of the research questions (the types of experiences and the typicality that they portray) to be explored and ensure that the sample were in fact purposeful. The demographics of the narrators in relation to age and gender were also taken into consideration to ensure that the samples were representative (Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant and Nilufer, 2016) (see Appendix 7 for narrator demographics).

3.3.3.4 Data Transcription

As Darlington and Scott (2002: 143) note, data that is collected verbally, and is tape recorded, must be transcribed. Kim (2016) notes the importance of the amount and the type of data collected in relation to transcription, recalling a research student finding the transcribing of data from voice-recordings to the written form very daunting after a vast amount of data was collected. Kim's succinct reply of a warm "welcome to researcher-hood" (p. 186) captures the spirit of how taxing the data analysis process can be. For this research study, the researcher's proficiency in BSL enabled the analysis to be made directly from the signed data, and the transcriptions were not used for direct analysis purposes. For this reason, only the data that was selected for analysis needed to be transcribed, hence the data collection method resulted in a more efficient process for working with the data. The 24 narratives that had been selected for analysis were translated and transcribed and are added as appendices to this thesis (Appendix 8 and Appendix 9).

However, the transcriptions also served to enable illustrations of the data to be included in the discussion later in the thesis so the type of transcription was also an important consideration for this study. A general transcription would ordinarily include reference to non-verbal cues, such as pauses and laughter, and this is of benefit to specialised studies, such as conversation or discourse analysis research (such as Gee, 2011). A more detailed transcription may be required where the researcher is working from the transcription when analysing the data. This basic same language transcription involves transcribing the spoken source text word for word into written form. For sign language research, however, a verbatim transcription is not possible, as there is no easily-usable written sign language form (Young and Temple, 2014). The data must be translated from the relevant sign language into the required written language, in this case from British Sign Language to English. This process results in a translated transcription that may not be appropriate for direct analysis due to being a translation. Neidle, Kegl, MacLaughlin, Bahan and Lee (2000) inform us of the limitations of analysing data from translated transcriptions:

Traditionally, researchers have relied on written transcription as part of the process of analysing signed language data. Given that there is no direct way to represent in written form manual and non-manual behaviors, certain conventions have developed to enable at least partial representation of signed language utterances...Inevitably, some important information may be omitted – intentionally or unintentionally – by a transcriber. Therefore, any transcription represents, at best, partial information about what was signed, and it is essential, in the course of analysis, to refer directly to the videotape and not rely solely on a written transcription.

(Neidle, Kegl, MacLaughlin, Bahan and Lee, 2000: 21-22)

The interpretation of data, then, may result in various translation difficulties, as McKee (2011) found in a study of signed narratives in New Zealand:

Capturing, in one-dimensional print, the emotional tone of each narrator as it was expressed in sign language was an elusive task for a translator. Qualities of hand and body movement and facial expression of a signer are visual characteristics equivalent to ‘voice’ that don’t transfer easily into writing.

(McKee, 2011: 14)

When translating signed poetry from BSL to English, Sutton-Spence (2005) suggests that “English expressions cannot easily capture a semantic equivalence”, particularly in the case of written English, where she found that, “The constraints of written English make it impossible to capture the visual, spatial and temporal elements of signed poetry” (p. xii-xiii). This is largely due to the different language modalities and the resulting fact that English does not have a spatial element that sign languages exploit:

We may expect the sign language poems to have strong Deaf themes containing powerful visual images.

(Sutton-Spence, 2005: 101)

3.3.4 Data Coding and Analysis

3.3.4.1 Data Analysis Considerations

As the data coding and analysis is such an important aspect of every research project, it is necessary to take into account the purpose of the data coding and what it aims to achieve:

In qualitative research, coding is an integral part of the analysis, involving sifting through the data, making sense of it and categorising it in various ways. The analytic choices made here about what to code and how will influence every stage of the research from here on.

(Darlington and Scott, 2002: 145)

Wilson's (1996) research related to a signed personal experience narrative concludes that structural linguistic frameworks and content analysis frameworks are suitable for the analysis of signed, as well as spoken, narratives. Such frameworks provide an analytical method for examining an individual, or very small amount, of narratives and lie at the level of narrative inquiry that Polkinghorne (1995) efficiently regards as 'narrative analysis'. In contrast, research that examines a larger number of narratives and draws conclusion across those narratives, as opposed to within one narrative, is referred to as 'analysis of narratives'. Polkinghorne distinguishes the two:

In the first type – analysis of narratives – researchers collect stories as data and analyse them with paradigmatic processes. The paradigmatic analysis results in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories or in taxonomies of types of stories, characters, or settings. In the second type, narrative analysis, researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories...Thus, analysis of narratives moves from stories to common elements, and narrative analysis moves from elements to stories.

(Polkinghorne, 1995: 12)

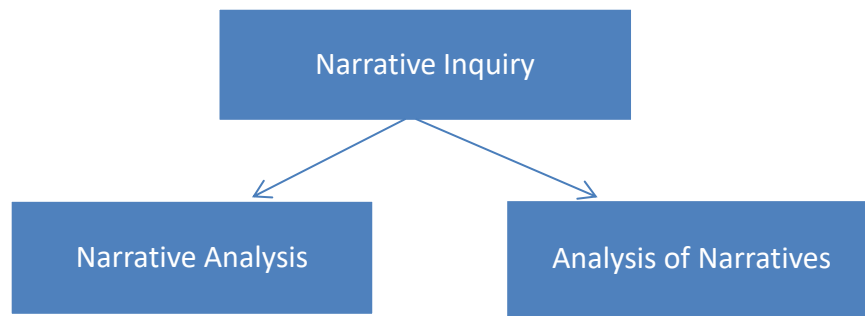


Figure 0-7 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative analysis is not considered an appropriate methodology for this study, as its focus is on the linguistic organisational content of the narrative and it does not provide a suitable method for comparing the experiences contained across multiple narratives. 'Analysis of narratives', which enables the researcher to identify recurrent themes in the data or focus on aspects that underlie the content of the narratives, such as Sutton-Spence (2010) and Rutherford (1993), is considered a more suitable methodology for research. This method enables the study to explore the broader issues that are identified within the samples extracted from the data sets in this study. The research documents the experiences expressed in the narratives in order to answer the first research question: *'What Deaf experiences are embedded in signed personal experience narratives?'*

In line with ethical procedures, and in order to maintain confidentiality, the narrators were allocated a code. As the BSL corpus participants had already been allocated a code, and to maintain consistency across the data sets, the field data narrators were allocated codes on a similar basis. For both data sets, the participant codes comprise a letter representing the region of residence and numbers corresponding to their position (first=1; second=2, etc.) of filming during the data collection process. The corpus participants have an additional 'n' at the end of the code to indicate 'narrative' so this was applied to the field data, also for consistency.

Table 0-4 Participant Codes

Corpus Key: BF-Belfast, BM-Birmingham, CF-Cardiff, G-Glasgow, L-London M-Manchester, N-Newcastle	Fieldwork Key: NE-North East, NW-North West, SE-South East, SW- South West
BF13n	NE2n
BM2n	NE3n
CF6n	NE7n
G11n	NW6n
L2n	NW8n
L5n	NW12n
L11n	SE10n
L30n	SE13n
L34n	SE18n
M18n	SW5n
N1n	SW8n
N7n	SW9n

3.3.4.2 The Thematic Analysis Process

In order to document and discuss the experiences found in the data sets, a thematic analysis was conducted. According to Joffe and Yardley (2004), a thematic analysis is the systematic study and discussion of the meaning of the collected data in context. A thematic analysis provides a system for the researcher to discuss the analysed content in terms of the focus of the study – in this case, the everyday lived experiences of Deaf people. Thematic analysis of raw data involves exploring the content of the data and looking for elements that provide glimpses of answers to the research questions. Through this approach, the researcher is able to look not only for commonalities across the data and the frequencies with which they occur but also to explore the context in which they are expressed:

A thematic analysis...permits the researcher to combine analysis of the frequency of the codes with analysis of their meaning in context, thus adding the advantages of the subtlety and complexity of a truly qualitative analysis.

(Joffe and Yardley, 2004: 57)

The data coding and analysis process involves developing codes and identifying themes according to a process that is often conducted for qualitative research, as Kim describes:

Data analysis in qualitative research in general is comprised of: examining raw data; reducing them to themes through coding and recording processes; and representing the data in figures, tables, and narratives in a final research text.

(Kim, 2016: 188)

This process is illustrated clearly in Kim's (2016) diagram of the basic elements of the coding and analysis process for qualitative data:

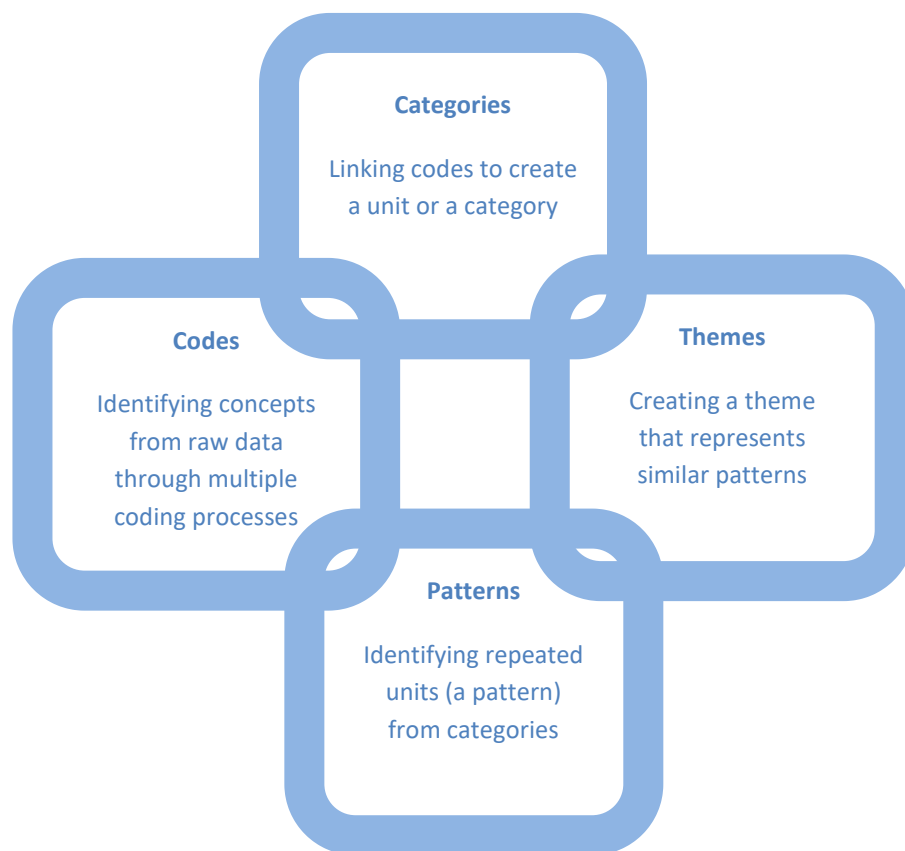


Figure 0-8 Basic Elements of Qualitative Data Analysis
(Kim 2016: 189)

As Sutton-Spence & Kaneko (2016) note, the themes that are established during the analysis of data are “...higher-order abstract ideas, such as life, death, eternity, justice, fear, love and power. Themes are timeless, universal ideas that are relevant to everyone” (2016: 99). A theme may appear in the data or may be deduced from the data in a more implicit way, as Joffe and Yardley (2004) explain:

*A theme refers to a specific pattern found in the data in which one is interested. In thematic and content analysis, a theme of a coding category can refer to the **manifest** content of the data, that is, something directly observable... Alternatively, it may refer to a more **latent** level...Thematic analyses often draw on both types of theme, and even when the manifest theme is the focus, the aim is to understand the latent meaning of the manifest themes observable within the data, which requires interpretation.*

(Joffe and Yardley, 2004: 57)

The thematic approach enables this research study to examine the content of signed narratives and the Deaf typicality that is portrayed in them. This facilitates the focus of the second research question: *What do the narratives reveal about typicality within the Deaf community?* Once the focus of the analysis was clear, it was possible to begin this thematic coding and analysis process. In order to conduct the thematic analysis, a data analysis framework was designed and applied when analysing the data in order to identify the themes:

Table 0-5 Data Analysis Framework

<p>1. <i>The experience:</i> What aspects of Deaf experience are contained in the narrative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify experiences that are related to being Deaf; ➤ How does this experience reflect being Deaf?
<p>2. <i>The typicality:</i> Why types of typicality are revealed in the narrative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore how the aspects illustrate cultural typicality; ➤ Explore how the aspects illustrate interactional typicality.
<p>3. <i>The theme:</i> What theme can be assigned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify a new theme from this experience or ➤ Group this under a theme that has already been assigned.

3.3.4.2.1 Initial Coding

Using the framework presented in the previous section, it was possible to code and analyse the experiences found in the data. In Denscombe's account of the data analysis process, the coding aspect is highlighted as an important element:

The researcher needs to have a clear idea of the kinds of categories, issues and ideas that he or she is concerned with and how these might appear in the text.

(Denscombe, 2007: 237)

Ryan and Bernard's (2003) discussion of thematic analysis concludes that themes are the classification of discrete concepts, and they note that, "This classification is discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. The link between expressions and themes is important and, for the purposes of this study, a theme, and its corresponding sub-themes, are understood as constructs that enable the study to explore the conceptual linking of expressions across the data. For Strauss and Corbin (1990), the links between expressions and themes are similarly referred to as, "conceptual labels placed on discrete happenings, events, and other instances of phenomena (p. 87)".

The first step in the thematic analysis process involved viewing the signed narrative several times in order to allocate a core theme, or to categorise the narrative according to a theme that had already been assigned to a similar experience. For example, for participant M18n, the experience of *attending a boarding school for deaf children* was allocated to the theme of 'Education'. The two data sets were analysed at this level in order to assign the overall theme of each narrative and to identify which narratives had the same core theme. During their discussion of qualitative data analysis, Ryan and Bernard (ibid.) note several methods for identifying themes in research data. For the broad, core themes, the narratives for this study were perused using two methods of identifying themes: looking for indigenous expressions and looking for theory-related material. Indigenous themes include the expressions that characterise the experiences of the narrators and, conversely, theory-related expressions are those

that, according to Ryan and Bernard, “illuminate questions of importance to social science” (p. 93). This two-fold theme identification process allowed the researcher to derive themes related to the issues that rose from the review of literature, and to take into account expressions that revealed unexpected themes. Ryan and Bernard discuss the benefits of this two-fold technique:

There is a trade-off, of course, between bringing a lot of prior theorizing to the theme-identification effort and going at it fresh...by examining the data from a more theoretical perspective, researchers must be careful not to find only what they are looking for. Assiduous theory avoidance, on the other hand, brings the risk of not making the connection between data and important research questions.
(Ryan and Bernard, 2003: 94)

3.3.4.2.2 Focussed Coding

The second step in the data analysis process involved exploring each narrative in more depth and identifying expressions that were relevant to the research questions. In order to do this, small chunks of information were selected for coding from the signed narratives (for both the BSL corpus and the field data) and the coding involved allocating the extracts under the following categories: cultural content, interactional content, experiential content, and collective content. Firstly, the extract was identified as either a typical cultural behaviour (cultural) or a typical interactive experience (interactional), defined as follows for this research study:

Cultural aspects of typicality include the behaviours that are identified during the analysis that occur as a result of the narrator being Deaf, and are different to the behaviours of a hearing person.

The **Interactional aspects** of typicality include the elements of the signed narrative that signify the interaction between Deaf people and hearing people who are not sign language users.

To continue the previous example, at the boarding school, the participant hides under a bed sheet to play with a box of matches and continually pulls the sheet down and up over his head again to check if he has been spotted by any of the other children in the dormitory or a teacher. In the example employed here, the combination of the individual experience and its cultural context reveal that the participant had to rely on visual means in order to check that nobody was approaching – that is, he was not able to listen out for somebody approaching from beneath the sheet, and had to keep pulling the sheet down to see if anyone was coming. Relying on visual cues is a typical cultural behaviour.



Figure 0-9 Relying on Visual Means
BSL corpus reference: M18n

The next stage of the focussed coding process involved assigning sub-themes to the extracted data. Denscombe (2007) notes, with reference to organising the data into categories, that at this stage, “the researcher begins to assign bits of the ‘raw data’ to particular categories. Careful scrutiny of the data...will allow the researcher to see that certain bits of the data have something in common” (p. 115). The two data sets were analysed at this level in order to identify the nature of the experiences, which would provide answers to the first research question, and the underlying typicality that they illustrate, i.e., to answer the second research question. In a similar manner to the initial coding process described in the previous section, assigning sub-themes was also carried out according to Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) methods of identifying themes. For this more focussed level, the data were perused using three methods of identifying themes:

looking for repetitions, indigenous expressions, similarities and theory-related material. The categorised data are presented and discussed in chapter four. The extracted data may be cross-referenced to the appropriate participant code in Appendices 7 and 8, where the full, translated transcription of the narrative is provided. The following example (Table 4-1) and its subsequent explanation illustrate this process of coding and analysing the extracted data into categories:

Table 0-6 Example of Data Coding and Analysis

Code	Narrative Topic	Theme	Cultural Content	Interactional Content	Experiential Content	Collective Content
NW8n	A bomb scare on the train	Travelling	Tap on shoulder	Didn't know – heard nothing	<i>There had been a bomb scare.....no one else had thought to tap me on the shoulder</i>	<i>Deaf do not know what is happening</i>

1. The first column contains the participant code, in this case NW8n: clip 8 of the 12 clips that were selected for analysis from the North West region of the field data (see section 3.3.4.1 for full details of the participant codes). The example (and subsequent examples) contains a screenshot of a sign with the English below, and the translated sentence alongside from which the extract is taken.

(1)



“There’d been a bomb scare.”

NW8n: BOMB

2. The second column contains a concise phrase that summarises the PEN into a topic, in this case, 'A bomb scare on the train'.

3. The third column contains the theme: that is, the underlying, latent issue that is embedded in the narrative. In this illustrative extract above, the narrative relates to incidents that happen to the Deaf person whilst travelling by train, hence the theme of 'travelling' is allocated to the clip. In order to provide what Braun and Clarke (2006: 8) refer to as "a rich thematic description of the entire data set", the data were coded in a way that highlights predominant themes across the data, a particularly suitable approach for such an under-researched area of study.

Columns 4-7 contain the coding of the extracted data into the initial allocated content categories: Cultural content and Interactional content, and additional content that was also identified: Experiential content and Collective content. These columns pave the way for the discussion of the findings in the following chapter.

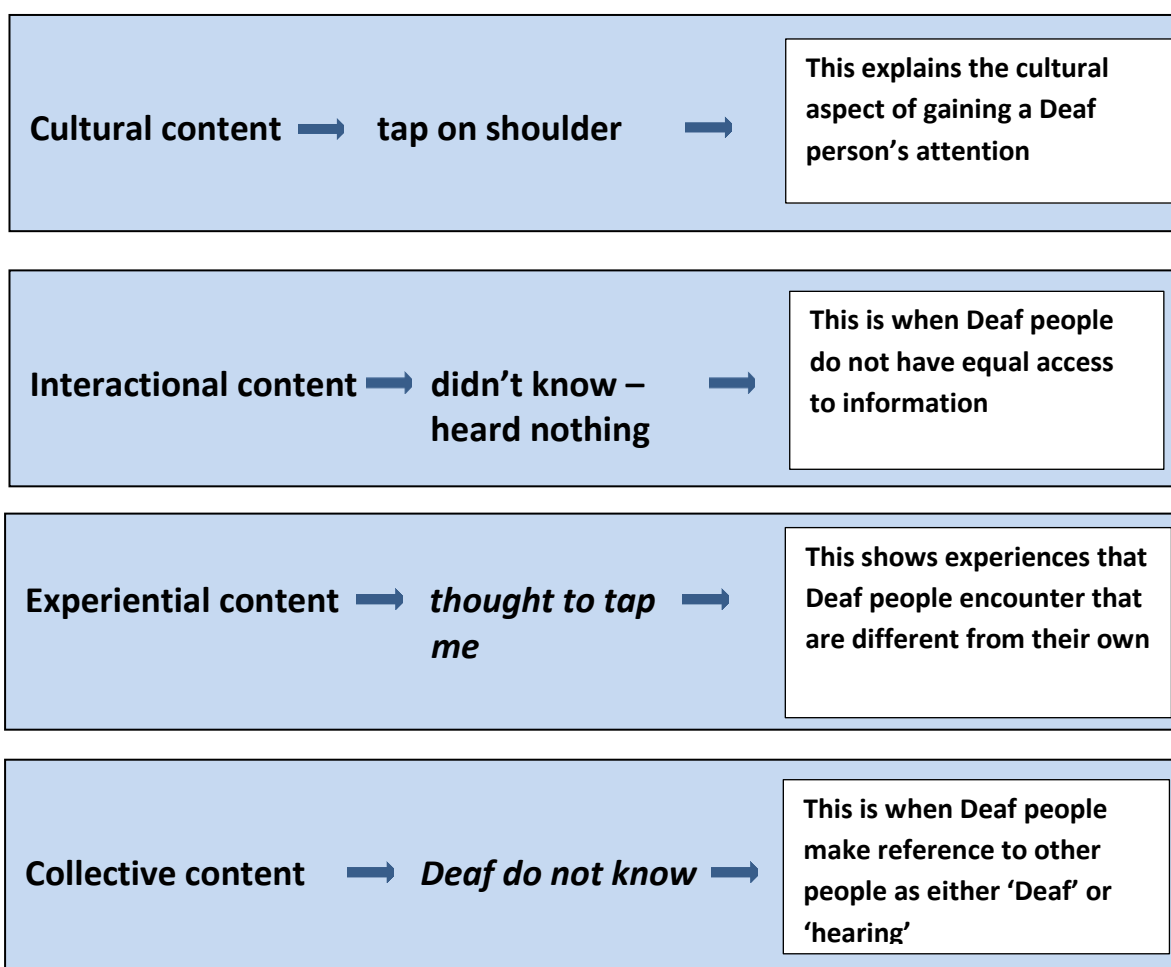


Figure 0-10 Illustration of Thematic Analysis Process

3.3.4.3 Categorisation Difficulties

While many of the signed extracts fitted clearly into the designed columns, there were times when information was difficult to categorise. For example, participant SW5n signs about not understanding the music on televisions in a public café due to not being able to hear it. Difficulty in categorising the extracted corresponding text rose due to the fact that and it was unclear as to whether this should be categorised as interactional or experiential. On one hand, it relates very much to accessing information, hence the interactional category, but it also clearly describes a typical experience for a Deaf person – that of sitting in a public place and not having access to the surrounding sounds – for which the experiential content category would be more suitable. A further difficulty arose when the same participant signs ‘will tap let her know’. Here the participant uses the sign TAP-ON-SHOULDER – a sign that indicates a natural element of Deaf culture: tapping a person on the shoulder to gain their attention before communicating, invoking the interactional content column.

(2)

“I went and asked the manager of the café if they could turn the channel over”



SW5n: TAP-ON-SHOULDER

However, the participant did not actually tap the person, hence the categorisation under cultural content column in the analysed data. Categorisation difficulties are not uncommon in qualitative analysis and it is important to establish a strategy for dealing

with such difficulties (Darlington and Scott, 2002). During the analysis, when categorisation problems occurred, the decision as to which category to choose was based on allocating the extract to the category that it was most highly associated with.

3.3.5 Research Credibility and Dependability

Research credibility is the final aspect of the design process that is considered in this thesis and is described by Maxwell, in terms of research validity, as follows:

Component 5.

Validity. *How might your results and conclusions be wrong? What are the plausible alternative interpretations and validity threats to these, and how will you deal with these? How can the data that you have, or that you could potentially collect, support or challenge your ideas about what is going on? Why should we believe your results?*

(Maxwell, 2005: 4)

Ensuring that the findings of a research study are acceptable to the reader is an important part of the research design process. For a qualitative study, which cannot be completely replicated in the same way that a scientific laboratory study can, it is not particularly feasible to make use of conventional scientific checks, that is: the accuracy and precision of the data (validity), the consistency of the research instrument (reliability), the application of the findings in other contexts (generalisability) and the absence of bias (objectivity). As Denscombe (2010) suggests, a qualitative research study is best able to demonstrate that the findings are trustworthy by ensuring their credibility and dependability.

Credibility, according to Denscombe, offers “reassurances that the qualitative data have been produced and checked in accord with good practice” (p. 299). For this study of signed narratives, such reassurances are found in the good quality of the video recordings of the signed data, and in the use of a qualified BSL/English interpreter to produce the translated transcriptions. In order to analyse a sufficient amount of data, the fieldwork activities produced a second data set that increased the number of

narratives being studied. As Peräkylä (1997) proposes, “In order to be able to achieve a position where he or she can observe the variation of the phenomenon...in any reliable way, the researcher needs a large enough collection of cases” (p. 288). This strategy also enabled the research to check that the same sub-themes occurred data that were collected at different times, ensuring consistency, and provide illustrations of the findings across two separate data sets.

Dependability requires an adequate “demonstration that their research reflects procedures and decisions that other researchers can ‘see’ and evaluate in terms of how far they constitute reputable procedures and reasonable decisions” (ibid.). To this end, transparency of the research process itself, and explanations for decision-making, is crucial. This chapter has provided a clear and comprehensive account of the theory and methods underlying the research design for this study, and the following chapter presents a thorough discussion of the findings resulting from the data analysis, in order to achieve this dependability.

3.4 Summary

This discussion of methodology has shown that research design includes both theoretical and methodological elements. The interactive model that is the basis of the discussion has enabled the primary aims of the study to be taken into consideration, and enabled the research questions to be considered in depth in relation to methodology. With the theoretical aspects of the study expressed in detail, the choices of research methods have been discussed and narrative inquiry, in the form of analysis of a set of narratives, was deemed most suitable for this research project. A thematic analysis has been considered as an appropriate way to identify the experiences that are embedded in signed narratives and to explore the typicality of Deaf people’s lived experiences that they express. This chapter has also shown that a qualitative approach is the most suitable method for examining people’s experiences, with some quantitative data alongside to reveal the frequency with which the themes occur. The discussion of research activities revealed that an existing corpus containing signed narratives, along with additional narratives collected for the study, has been employed in order to ensure that the collected data contained sufficient Deaf experiences to answer the research questions.

Chapter Four – Discussion of Findings

Thematic Analysis: A Narrative Mind

How is narrative inquiry different from documentary film or any good story? - In other words, “That’s a good story, but is it really research?”

(Ceglowski, 1997: 198)

4.1 Introduction

The above quote, from Ceglowski’s study of documentaries, raises the interesting issue of the extent to which various genres are researchable. The following sections in this chapter demonstrate that personal experience narratives signed by Deaf people can be researched and can be considered through an exploration of the typicality that is embedded within them. The discussions highlight the associations between a set of categories that have developed during the thematic analysis and are illustrated on two results tables in Appendix 10. Rather than being broken down into chunks of language that structural linguists, for example, may choose to examine in order to identify the grammatical workings of a language, the narratives analysed in this research study are broken down into categories that effectively answer the research questions, provided here as a timely reminder:

1. What Deaf experiences are embedded in signed personal experience narratives?
2. What do signed personal experience narratives reveal about typicality within the Deaf community?

4.2 Framing Narratives

Before an academic discussion of research findings and the implications of those results begins, it is important to establish and define the specialist terminology used during the analysis and subsequent discussion. Amid the many approaches to analysing and examining qualitative research data from such a perspective as this, studies have made use of several different terms to describe the sections of the narrative that are deemed relevant. The approach, in fact, may dictate the appropriate term; for example, psychologists may refer to the chunk of narrative selected during analysis as a ‘schema’

and, through a different approach, artificial intelligence researchers may refer to the same chunk as a 'script' (Tannen, 1993: 16). In order to identify relevant and analysable themes, this research is centred on the approach used primarily in 'frame analysis' (Goffman, 1986), where the content of a narrative is analysed in relation to the organisation of experience that is embedded within the story and the frames reveal an underlying theme. According to Goffman, humans frame their experiences in order to organise their understanding of them; frame analysis provides a method for filtering the relevant parts of a narrative in order to understand the content and its meaning in a wider context. The framing of the narratives, then, combined with the thematic analysis, enables this study to construct statements regarding the experiences that occur due to being Deaf, and which the narrators embedded into their narratives.

Framing the content of the narratives enables the analysis to illustrate the typicality that is expressed through the personal experience stories and provides an effective method for exploring the experiences of Deaf people as they move between the Deaf-world and the mainstream hearing society. The notion that expectations, and therefore the typical experiences, are expressed through narratives at a structural level is considered in Ross's (1975) discussion of the "structures of expectations" and is described clearly by Tannen:

...that is, that, on the basis of one's experience of the world in a given culture (or combination of cultures), one organises knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences.

(Tannen, 1993: 16)

4.3 Data Analysis: Main Findings

The process of interpreting qualitative data and generating findings is an important aspect of the research task. The purpose of data analysis is, as Silverman (2006: 195) states, "not to criticize or to assess particular texts in terms of apparently 'objective' standards. It is rather to treat them as *representations* and to analyse their effects". The analysis of the data collected for this study reveals that the contents of signed narratives can be analysed, and meaningful frames can be extracted from them, which highlight experiences that result from being Deaf. That is, the experiences are a direct result of

the narrators being unable to hear and they would not occur in a narrative expressed by a hearing person. Sutton-Spence and Kaneko (2016) note that such stories illustrate Deaf people's experiences and offer insight into Deaf people's lives.

Furthermore, similar issues occurred within the two data sets regardless of the fact that the first set of participants (i.e. the corpus data set) were not asked to sign stories of their personal experiences of being Deaf. This study, then, found that the types of issues that occur due to being Deaf are the same across the two data sets, and not only those that deliberately describe experiences that are directly related to being Deaf. The data show that similar frames occur across the different themes as well as across the two types of data that have been analysed. While there is a difference in the extent to which the types of experiences occur in the analysed narratives, the most prominent theme across all of the data is communication, and the issues that Deaf people experience in relation to communicating with hearing people. Analysing the frames reveals that the issues are often recurring and are expressed often enough within the two sets of PENs to be classed as typical.

The full analysis of the narratives is presented in the detailed tables in Appendix 10. The thematic analysis, which is presented in the following section (4.5) was conducted manually so that the researcher could select the frames that reveal Deaf typicalities and avoid computer software making such decisions. While computer software can be efficient for analysis of large data sets or for statistical, quantitative needs, the small amount of data collected for this study was manageable through Microsoft Word charts. This avoided the time consuming element that having to be trained to use specific software would have demanded as well as the danger of incorrect fragmentation that Dey (1993) warns about:

There are more radical criticisms of the role of the computer. For example, it is sometimes argued that the computer encourages 'data fragmentation'.

(Dey, 1993: 62)

This issue became particularly relevant for this study due to two further data coding issues:

1. Many frames that clearly indicated an issue relevant to being Deaf did not relate to cultural or interactional content. During the analysis process, it became evident that the content of these frames highlighted direct experiences, hence the 'experiential content' column was added to the data tables.
2. It soon became also evident that the participants of both data sets frequently made reference to the term 'Deaf' when referring to themselves or other Deaf people, and to the term 'hearing' when referring to hearing people, and the terms appeared to be signed to affirm a collective identity and was often not necessary for the content of the narrative to be understood. Such references were entered into a further column, labelled 'collective content' and are discussed in detail in section 4.6.

4.4 Experiential Content

Interpreting the experiential data reveals that the experiences embedded in the signed narratives analysed for this study, although quite varied, are centred mostly on issues of language and on world-view. The Deaf experiences that are embedded in the narratives reveal the relation between the use of sign language and the world view in which the Deaf narrators in this study function linguistically and culturally – a “Deaf world view” (Reagan, 1995). The use of sign language as a primary method of communication is described clearly in Reagan’s discussion of American Sign Language (ASL):

ASL plays an important role in what could be termed the “Deaf world view” – that is, the ways in which Deaf people make sense of the world around them. It does this in two distinct ways: first, through its role as linguistic mediator, and second, as an identifying facet of cultural identity.

(Reagan, 1995: 247)

The types of experiences that arise cut across the themes that underlie the narratives, as many similar experiences occur across the themes. The experiential content reveals that many of the narrators feel that they perceive and experience the world in a different way to their hearing counterparts. There are many references to moving from one perceived world to another and the negative consequences of being forced to

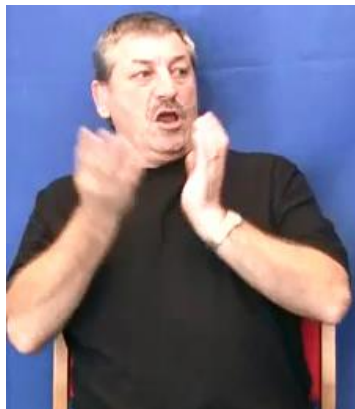
comply with a hearing world-view and to the realisation that they, as a Deaf person, are functioning and communicating in a language (and culture) that is different to the hearing people all around them:

It is the visual-manual language of a visual people, Deaf people. It is the thread that binds the members of the DEAF-WORLD to one another, and to Deaf people across the ages. It is signed language.

(Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 42)

For example, narrators BF13n and N7n both express the experience of feeling like they were moving between two different worlds – the Deaf-world and the hearing world; BF13n expresses this in relation to educational experiences and N7n from the perspective of communication:

(3)



BF13n: WORLD

Experience: left school, in hearing and Deaf world – language confusion

(4)



N7n: WORLD

Experience: being with hearing people was a different world

Experiences related to language generally express lack of information and reflect the narrators' framing of this type of experience as negative. This lack of information that is familiar to many Deaf people comes as a result of the lack of access to language and communication. As well as in mainstream society, this is felt also in the home and in the

school environment, where family members and educational professionals do not use sign language and many Deaf people struggle to lip-read and communicate via the spoken language that is expected of them. Ladd (2008), in fact, refers to sign language as “a powerful positive resource for future generations of Deaf school-leavers” (p. 47). In this study, the narrators express frustration with often being the ‘last to know’ due to not hearing conversations and not being informed of incidences, events, etc. The consequences of this lack of information are highlighted in the data sets and are severe. For example, SW8n describes the experience of being ignored by family members in the home and the feelings of exclusion this caused:

“I’d wave to get their attention but they’d all just ignore me and carry on talking. Oh, I used to explode with anger and grab things and break them!”

(Field data reference: SW8n)

This experience is expressed in relation to everyone in the family listening to each other but not acknowledging her when she wanted to know what was being discussed, and wanted to contribute to the conversation. This exclusion in the family home clearly led to high levels of frustration and SW8n continues to explain that she would then be punished by her father for unacceptable behaviour, when lack of communication and lack of inclusion in the family was the cause. Lack of information is also expressed in other contexts. In the following extract, L30n recalls her mother suddenly disappearing when she had taken her to school for the first time:

“Then I looked back and suddenly realised mother has disappeared. I screamed and screamed, really loudly and my mother heard me screaming from where she was so she ran quickly out of the school and went.”

(Corpus data reference: L30n)

As a Deaf child, L30n would not have heard her mother’s footsteps as she walked away, or noticed that the footsteps had not continued to follow from behind, in the way that a hearing child would. The implications of this are clearly serious and had a lasting impact on L30n, who has chosen to express the memory in her personal experience

narrative. Being left at boarding school without being given any information as to why they had been taken there, why they had been left there without a parent, and how long they would be staying there, is an experience that has been expressed by other Deaf people, such as three of the narratives presented in a published text edited by Taylor and Bishop in 1991. In this text, Goodwill recalls being taken to school and “not realising my mother had gone and never even said, “Bye-bye”” (p. 12) and Monery states: “My parents took me on a bus and then on a train. I had no idea where we were going or what was happening” (p. 81); lack of information and lack of communication are at the core of this experience. Such experiences are tied closely in with the fact that, as Hauser and Marschark (2008) note in a discussion of deafness and cognition, “Because of their hearing losses, and the early environments in which they are reared, most deaf children enter school lacking fluency in either spoken or signed language” (p. 448). This lack of communication also leads to what is mistakenly perceived as having bad behaviour, as the following extract illustrates:

(5)



“The teachers all thought I was very bad for signing.”

L11n: BAD

In this extract, L11n explains that she was sent to four different schools because teachers felt unable to stop her from using signing to communicate. This was seen as unacceptable behaviour, as the schools all had oral policies that means children had to use spoken language and try to lip-read, and were not allowed to sign. In fact, she was

born into a Deaf family, the home language was sign language, and her narrative expresses the suppression of her native first language in school.

Lack of information also extends to negative experiences of relying on sign language interpreters for access to communication. Several of the narrators refer to incidences when an interpreter has not been available or has arrived late, and the frustration that results. In the following extract, SE10n expresses dissatisfaction with a female interpreter being booked for a sensitive hospital appointment after a male interpreter had been requested, and with an interpreter arriving late, resulting in a delayed appointment and resulting anxiety:

“...they emailed me back to say they’d booked a female interpreter as was that ok with me? I said no, and told them that I wanted a male interpreter but they asked why so I had to explain that it was because I’m a man and was going to hospital about a male-related problem so it was not appropriate for a female, as they wouldn’t match my requirements.”

(Field data reference: SE10n)

The experiential content also reveals that the Deaf narrators often frame their narratives around experiences of inequality. There are references to the narrators recalling feeling treated as inferior to hearing people and to feeling patronised by the low expectations of Deaf people that many hearing people presume, an issue explored in detail by Higgins (1980). In CF6n’s narrative, the experience of feeling pushed aside for being Deaf is expressed:

(6)



“The officer came over to talk to me but the man kept ranting and getting in the way, making it difficult for me to communicate with the officer with being deaf. He kept trying to brush me to the side and that was quite upsetting.”

CF6n: BRUSH-ASIDE

In this extract, a traffic control officer paid attention to the hearing person first, as it was easier to communicate (in speech) with him, and the narrator feels that he was not treated as someone who has equal rights to the attention of the officer. There are also recollections of traumatic experiences that have occurred in the narrators' lives, such as NE3n's memory of receiving distressing results in a hospital and being held down to the bed and not able to communicate:

(7)

“The nurse grabbed my arms and held me to the bed but that meant I couldn’t communicate.”



NE3n: GRAB-ARM

In a study of Deaf women's health experiences, Steinberg, Wiggins, Barmada and Sullivan (2002) found that "Insensitive behaviors were also described" (p. 729). Experiences in medical settings can be very traumatic. Narrator SW10n, who is from a Deaf family, also recalls a traumatic experience that was confounded by communication difficulties, when she states that she was "acting as an interpreter" between the hearing people and her Deaf parents when her brother tragically died.

4.5 Thematic Analysis: Discussion

The thematic analysis of both data sets together revealed five themes and 10 sub-themes across the data that serve to categorise the overall content of the narratives:

Table 0-1 Thematic Analysis Results

Theme	No. of PENs	Sub-themes	No. of sub- themes
Communication	12	Getting Attention, Signing, Lack of understanding, Mouthings/Gestures, Use of light, Visuality, Missed information, Reading and writing, Technology, Bonding	10
Education	5	Getting attention, Signing, Lack of understanding, Visuality, Missed information, Mouthings/Gestures, Bonding	7
Travel	5	Getting attention, Visuality, Lack of understanding, Reading and writing, Missed information	5
Access	1	Getting attention, Visuality, Lack of understanding, Technology, Bonding	5
Community	1	Signing	1

Once the coding and analysis was complete, the findings revealed that the PENs contain a high number of references to communication. Communication is the overall Theme in 12 of the 24 analysed narratives, though all of the narrators raise issues related to communication so it is a recurring issue in all of the PENs. The overall Themes of Education and Travelling are allocated to 5 PENs, and Access and Community are each the Themes of 1 PEN. The findings, then, show that a high number of the narrators embedded aspects of communication into their PENs. The implications of this finding are that Deaf narrators who use BSL are constantly functioning with a language that is different to the spoken language (English) of the majority of the hearing people around them, resulting in regular experiences of ineffective communication in the hearing world. The themes did not emerge from the data in a simplistic way but, rather, discrete themes were allocated to the data. As Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997) suggest, the researcher must take into account the information contained in the data and decide on a theme that captures the essence of the narrative:

The language of 'themes emerging' can be misinterpreted to mean that themes 'reside' in the data and if we just look hard enough they will 'emerge' like Venus on the half shell. If themes 'reside' anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them.

(Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul, 1997: 205)

Elements of the extracted data that relate to the types of Deaf-related experiences contained in the PENs are placed in the experiential column and serve to answer the first research question: *What Deaf experiences are embedded in signed narratives?* The experiential information was explicit in detail so no further coding for this column was required and the findings are presented first, in the previous section, (section 4.5) as they relate to the first research question. Elements of the data that reveal cultural and interactional content are entered in the respective columns. Further coding of these two columns, in line with Mertens and Wilson's (2012) 'focussed coding', led to a series of sub-themes that enables the study to illustrate the way that Deaf people organise the recollections of their experiences around certain information structures: the sub-themes reveal the frames around which the experiences are organised. The sub-themes, then, enable the coding to focus on smaller chunks of data. As Mertens and Wilson (2012) note, "In generic discourse, evaluators tend to focus on analysing smaller amounts of data, rather than coding the full body" (p. 451), and this attention to more focussed coding allows the analysis to pinpoint elements of the PENs in which typical Deaf experiences are embedded. These columns explore what the typicality contained within the PENs proposes about typical Deaf experiences and serve to answer the second research question: *What do the narratives reveal about typicality within the Deaf community?* The findings related to each theme is presented in the five sections beginning here, following the discussion of experiential content. As Denscombe (2010) advises, "qualitative researchers need to come to terms very quickly with the fact that it is not feasible for them to present all of their data" (p. 295). Hence, a larger part of the following discussion of the findings is focussed on the experiential content and the two most frequently recurring themes (Communication and Education), and less attention is paid to the remaining three themes (Travel, Community and Access). In addition, each discussion is supplemented with illustrative extracts from the data sets, rather than the full, translated narratives (which are provided in appendices 7 and 8).

4.5.1 Theme 1: Communication

The concept of communication means many things to many people and has long been noted as not easy to define (Littlejohn and Foss, 2011). Dance (1970) succinctly groups the various definitions into three key areas: *observation* (focussing at a very restrictive or very general level of a message), *intentionality* (focussing on the sending and receiving of a message) and *normative judgement* (focussing on the successful exchange of messages). It is this third concept of communication that is of interest to this study; communication is understood as a process of human interaction; hence, its definition relies on the success of the communicative event. Along with its many levels, communication takes many forms, such as Rosengren's list:

Over the millennia, human beings have used various media to communicate in space and time: wood and stone, parchment and paper; smoke, flags and semaphors; electricity and electro-magnetic waves.

(Rosengren, 2006: 1)

After Rosengren's discussion of non-verbal communication, attention is paid to verbal communication but the use of sign language, which is akin to spoken verbal communication, is omitted because it is from most academic research conducted by hearing scholars. Analysing the data for this study reveals a high level of reference to communication, so much so that it represents the prominent theme overall. The following table presents the sub-theme coding for this theme:

Table 0-2 Sub-theme: Communication

Sub-themes (from 12 PENS)	Cultural Content	Frequency	Interactional Content	Frequency
	Signing	11	Missed Information	21
	Getting Attention	11	Lack of Understanding	15
	Visuality	8	Reading and Writing	8
	Use of Light	2	Technology	8
	Mouthings/ Gestures	1	Bonding	4
	Total	33		56

4.5.1.1 Cultural Content

Analysis of the cultural content shows that references to the use of sign language as a primary means of communication, along with issues related to gaining attention before communicating, and the importance of visual aspects of Deaf life, are most prominent in the data. For the narrators, these are crucial elements of Deaf community life, particularly exposure to sign language. In the following extract, the narrator expresses the way that (as a young adult) seeing sign language being used for the first time caught her visual attention:

(8)



“I noticed someone opposite me using their hands to communicate and didn’t understand what they were doing so I went over and asked what they were doing.”

BM2n: SIGNING

Narrator SW8n expresses a similar experience when starting at a school for deaf children, where she saw children signing having never seen it before: “they were signing but I didn’t have a clue what they meant, as I didn’t sign then!” Such experiences indicate that the narrators who were not exposed to sign language at an early age had a natural interest in it. The references to signing by other narrators also relate to seeing sign language being used for the first time, at school or at work, and narrators who had earlier exposure to sign language refer to it in the PENs as an important aspect of their lives. In this study, the narrators do not refer to using spoken language, and the use of sign language as their primary means of communicating is evident, hence signing is a sub-theme that is related to the cultural aspects of being Deaf. The use of sign language inherently requires the use of eye contact, as Bahan (2006: 46) mentions when

describing the Deaf-world as “a way of life for those who are oriented visually”, and this is an aspect of Deaf culture that is expressed in SE10n’s narration of a hospital appointment:

(9)



“....the receptionist not having eye contact, no facial expression and looking all over the place.”

SE10n: LOOK-AWAY

The use of appropriate facial expressions when signing, as well as consistent eye contact, are essential elements of effective communication. Furthermore, the use of sign language over speech has natural cognitive implications, as the visualness of sign language complements the visual cognitive functioning of Deaf people (Marschark and Hauser, 2008). This visuality, which was highlighted during the review of previous literature in section 2.3.2, is a prominent sub-theme and is at the core of Deaf culture. The inability to hear, for Deaf people, is compensated by heightened visual attention, and there are many references to visual means in the narratives. NW12n recalls the visuality of a shining torch light waking him from sleep. This PEN tells of an incident where the narrator was locked out of his house at night and fell asleep in a small Wendy-house in the garden, only to be suddenly woken up by a shining torch that he assumed was his wife’s iPhone torch. The narrator woke to a shocking realisation that, outside the Wendy-house, was a barrage of police officers, police cars, and even a police helicopter flying above. A hearing person would naturally have heard the loud sounds of the car doors shutting, footsteps approaching, and most certainly the helicopter above, so would have been made aware of the approach through sounds. The Deaf

narrator was only alerted to the situation by the light of the torch shining in his face and, as several of the narrators refer to the importance of light for communication, the use of light is also categorised as a sub-theme.

(10)

“...I saw a light shining through the Wendy house window.”



NW12n: LIGHT-SHINE

The way that Deaf and hearing people experience life events is illustrated in this PEN, and the visual association with experiences reflects the cultural way that Deaf people rely on sight rather than sound. Visual association with the world is highlighted in Bienvenu's (2001) discussion of Deaf culture:

Deaf people perceive most things through their eyes. We acquire language visually. It is worth noting that Sign Languages throughout the world adapt to meet the visual needs and comfort of the people who use them. We also acquire world knowledge visually.

(Bienvenu, 2001: 99)

Orienting to the world visually is illustrated in the next extract in relation to the way that Deaf people use visual means to get each other's attention when communicating. Here, narrator G11n attempts to gain the attention of the referee during a football game with by waving his hand (and not by shouting the name in the way that a hearing person would):

(11)



"I tried to alert the boy who was refereeing to stop."

G11n: WAVE-WARN

Gaining the attention of another person by waving, as opposed to calling out, appeals again to the visual nature of Deaf people. In this PEN, the Deaf referee, who would not hear a voice call or other sound-based warning, will be alerted to the person by seeing the hand waving, and this is a common feature of Deaf culture (McKee, 2011) that is reflected in this sub-theme. A similar experience is expressed by NE7n, who recalls suddenly feeling water being splashed onto her back while snorkelling. It is of interest to note that it was a hearing person that splashed the water to get the narrator's attention in this PEN. When waving the hand does not gain a Deaf person's attention, or is not practical, strategies such as this are effective, and appeal to the sense of touch, rather than sight, in order to gain the attention. Presumably, the hearing person had received no response by shouting and splash the water onto the Deaf person's back in an attempt to attract her attention.

4.5.1.2 Interactional Content

Analysing the data for interactional content under the theme of communication resulted in missed information being expressed most prominently, followed by experiences that express lack of understanding, and times when the narrators have had to resort to writing things down on paper in order to communicate. Hence, the most prominent three sub-themes are missed information, lack of understanding and reading and writing. Missing information is expressed in many of the PENs and is an important aspect of issues related to interaction, as the following extract shows:

(12)

***'I wasn't sure what
was going on.'***



L30n: WHAT-HAPPEN

In this extract, L30n recalls often missing information and not being able to understand what was being discussed in the family home. This is a common occurrence across the data sets. For example, in another PEN (SW9n), the narrator recalls the whole family talking to a doctor while she stood by, watching and wondering what was being said.

Whilst growing up, hearing children are exposed to spoken language all around them – at home and outside – and are most often able to communicate with their parents, and other spoken language users, before school age (Clark, 2009). The first day at school, daunting as it often is, is not fraught with language and interaction issues for the average hearing child in the way that it is for a Deaf child who has not acquired sufficient language skills. In addition, the parents, or other caregivers, would have spent time talking to the child about 'going to school' and preparing the child for the event. An aspect of missed information that features in the data is the fact that, as young Deaf children, some of the narrators did not know where they were going when they were taken to school for the first time. They were not prepared for how long they would be there or the fact that they would be staying without the person who took them to the school. Missing information as important as this occurs due to the lack of communication in the home, and often also at the school. Narrator BM2n recalls a very similar experience, in this case being led into a building and not being able to understand where she was going because the lack of communication had led to missed information:

'I couldn't understand them then they took my arm and guided me in'. Clearly, the communication between parents, teachers and the child has not been successful, resulting in a lack of the normative judgement that successful interaction requires. In another narrative (SE13n), the narrator expresses having had difficulties in communicating with her ill mother, stating, "How difficult it is being deaf and caring for her, as communicating with her is so hard". Analysis of the narratives indicates that difficulties in communication often lead to lack of understanding; therefore, a mutual relationship exists between the two top sub-themes under the interactional content.

With regards to the cultural and interactional aspects of communication, the data analysis shows that the personal experience narratives contain significant reference to ways that Deaf people gain or receive attention that are based on visual or tactile means: seeing a wave of a hand or feeling a tap on the shoulder, for example. The use of sign language is highlighted as an important aspect of Deaf culture, and as an important aspect of the Deaf narrators' lives. On an interactional level, the narrators express common experiences of communicating with hearing people mostly by using pen and paper, in order to avoid the misunderstandings that can occur when relying on basic gestures and lip-reading. When communication has not been effective, the narrators have experienced missing important information, and experiencing a frequent lack of understanding: a typical aspect of Deaf peoples' lives (McKee, 2011).

4.5.2 Theme 2: Education

The educational placement of Deaf children has included specialist boarding schools and, with more increasing frequency, mainstream settings, including PHUs (Thoutenhoofd, Leiper and Grimes, 2006). Research has long established a relationship between classroom language use and school-based learning experiences (Akamatsu, 1998) and the importance of effective communication in the classroom cannot be understated. In a discussion of educational placements for Deaf children, Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan (1996) note that “the decision on which language to use in the education of the Deaf is of supreme importance, yet it is seldom addressed in a logical way in the educational systems serving Deaf students” (p. 262) and the implications of this are made clear:

What if you were a child and you had to go to a school where you didn't understand the teacher in your classroom? At the very least, your access to the subject matter would be limited, dependent on what you could learn from texts.

(Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996: 228)

In a more recent academic discussion of educational settings, Marschark and Wauters (2008) also propose that, “regardless of educational histories, placement, and philosophy, effective teaching and learning demand shared communication between instructors and students” (p. 313) and note that Deaf learners prefer to be taught by people who can sign. Given that a large number of Deaf children are educated in mainstream schools, where sign language is not readily used (National Deaf Children's Society, 2010), it is not surprising that educational experiences are frequently raised in the narratives in both data sets analysed in this study. The following table presents the sub-theme coding for this theme:

Table 0-3 Sub-theme: Education

Sub-themes (from 5 PENS)	Cultural Content	Frequency	Interactional Content	Frequency
	Visuality	9	Missed Information	9
	Signing	6	Lack of Understanding	6
	Getting Attention	2	Mouthings/ Gestures	3
	Bonding	2		
	Total	19		18

4.5.2.1 Cultural Content

The next most prominent theme is Education, and the coding for sub-themes results in very similar cultural and interactional content as those coded for Communication. Analysis of the cultural content shows that visuality occurs with most frequency, and an example of this is shown in the following extract, signed by N1n:

“They were talking with the Head and I saw my mum and dad really cross and they started arguing.”



(13)

N1n: REALLY-CROSS

In this PEN, the narrator recalls an experience where he could see that his parents were arguing, after talking to the head of the school, but had no idea what they were arguing about because he could not hear them. He tried to follow the argument by using his eyes, watching to try to understand what they were saying, but this instinctive visuality did not help him to make any sense of what was being said due to the difficulties of lip-reading. This highlights typicality in the Deaf community, as Deaf people often attempt to take in as much information as possible through the eyes in a hearing environment, and this is expressed particularly in relation to communication with teachers.

The following extract is taken from a PEN related to playing with matches. Here the narrator, M18n, tells a story about being in bed in a dormitory at boarding school and playing with matches under the sheet. He recalls pulling the sheet down from over his head to check if anyone had awoken in the room, or if anyone was coming into the room. A hearing person would not need do this, as they would hear footsteps or someone stirring in the room from under the sheet and would not have the need to pull the sheet down to see. The narrator places emphasis on the need to use his eyes in the absence of being able to hear, and the visuality on which Deaf culture is firmly based is framed with subtlety in this narrative.

Alongside several references to gaining attention in the educational setting, the sub-theme of 'bonding' also occurs in the PENs. Bonding as community members is a feature of the Deaf-world that occurs not only in educational settings but also in Deaf community life in general, and is referred to by Higgins (1980) as "a collective experience" (p. 81). Although there are only two references to bonding in the Deaf community in the PENs, they highlight an important aspect of a Deaf way of life. In SE18n's PEN, the narrator signs, "The four of us deaf kids would just be left together" in relation to the way that the four of them bonded together as a small minority group in a school. The second extract categorised with the bonding sub-theme appears in the PEN signed by NW6n. In this narrative, NW6n recalls moving to a school for deaf children after being in a mainstream school, explaining that he "fitted right in" – the narrator refers to the connection he felt in being with other Deaf children like himself.

4.5.2.2 Interactional Content

The majority of the references to interactional aspects of education frame the narrators' experiences of missing information in the classroom. Missing crucial information features highly under this theme, as it does under the theme of communication. In the following extract, BF13n recalls being taken to a boarding school and having to stay there but not knowing what it was or why he was forced to stay there without his parents:

(14)



“It was a boarding school and I would have to stay there.”

BF13n: LEFT (WENT-AWAY)

Analysis of the personal experience narratives for both data sets indicates that interaction with teachers was not easy for some of the narrators. N1n describes this situation explicitly, stating, in relation to the teacher, that, “She couldn’t sign so I just watched her mouth moving around and tried to understand” – a typical scenario for many Deaf children in schools where an oral policy is in place (Bouvet, 1990). That is, the use of sign language is not allowed and children are taught using oral teaching and learning methods. As Bouvet asserts, “Depriving deaf people of Sign Language (the only language that lets them really speak) amounts to seriously debilitating them as whole individuals” (p. 106), and this is clearly expressed as the case in education in the PENS analysed in this study.

Several of the narrators, now as adults, remember their school days well and express cultural and interactional content in the signed PENs. Such educational experiences clearly have strong meanings for Deaf adults, whose memories of school days include negative experiences in relation to the interaction in the classroom, with teachers, and in the interaction between the classroom and the home. Classroom interactions are an aspect of signed narratives that Deaf people deem important to recall, in the same way that is highlighted in the literature review in section 2.3.2.1 above, where Sutton-Spence's (2010) account of storytelling in schools is considered. Recalling and retelling of problematic classroom interactions provides a method for bonding, that is, building the familiarity, and pre-knowledge, that is central to Schutz's theory of typicality, and are expressed in the PENs as typical Deaf experiences. In many clips related to education, the PENs highlight the typicality of the educational experiences that Deaf people have encountered; the experiences remain prevalent and make-up content of signed PENs that the narrators feel should be passed on, hence education is one of the key themes of this study.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Travel

The ability to travel is important in the Deaf community, as Deaf people often reside some distance from their Deaf friends and other Deaf people with whom they wish to associate. As Deaf people do not constitute a geographical community (Atherton, 2012), the need to travel is automatically an issue, and is fraught with many problems that are often raised in PENS. In her study of narratives told by Deaf people in New Zealand, McKee (2011: 18) found that, “Even with the advent of text-based phone and e-mail communications, Deaf people often travel inconvenient distances to hold a conversation face to face”. Ladd (2003) describes the international nature of such travel and its importance for Deaf people:

International activities provide a further dimension to Deaf life. Several organizations arrange regular visits abroad, and considerable numbers of younger Deaf people travel either to sporting events or to carry out ad hoc touring plans. Most of these visits differ from majority society ideas about holidaying abroad in that the prime aim of the journey is to meet up with or to seek out Deaf people from those countries, in order to exchange information about Deaf life as well as to socialise.

Ladd (2003: 48)

The following table presents the sub-theme coding for this theme:

Table 0-4 Sub-theme: Travel

Sub-themes (from 5 PENS)	Cultural Content	Frequency	Interactional Content	Frequency
	Visuality	6	Missed Information	4
	Getting Attention	3	Reading and Writing	2
			Lack of Understanding	2
			Bonding	1
	Total	9		9

4.5.3.1 Cultural Content

Experiences encountered by Deaf people whilst travelling highlight cultural aspects of being Deaf, and the same sub-themes (Visuality and Getting Attention) that arose under the cultural content of the previously discussed themes (Communication and Education) appear here. When travelling, not being able to hear announcements, etc., makes Deaf people, as Bahan (2006: 83) notes, “...highly visual and tactile”; Deaf people revert to using their eyes to get information. In the case of L34n, for example, the narrator only identified that someone was standing right next to him when he visually noticed the person’s feet in his peripheral vision:

(15)



“I suddenly noticed a man’s feet in my vision.”

L34n: FEET (RIGHT-BY-ME-AND-FACING-ME)

This visual alert is similar to the experience narrated by NW12n in extract (10) on page 83 above, where the narrator was only alerted to the presence of a barrage of police officers surrounding the tent by the visual light shining from a torch. In this extract, (15), the narrator also describes how he did not hear the person approach him and the first indication of someone’s presence was by visual means. There is an interesting example of a cultural breakdown in this PEN: when narrator L34n explains that he told the bus driver that it would have been better if he had tapped him on the shoulder to get his attention but the driver kept saying that he was not allowed. In the Deaf-world, such a restriction would not be viable in the way that it is in the hearing world, where sound is the primary cultural method of gaining attention. This illustrates one of the different

cultural norms across the Deaf and hearing worlds (Reagan, 1995). Visuality is an important sub-theme in the case of travelling, and applies to gaining information, as well as to getting attention. In the following extract (16), narrator L2n uses visuality to gain information by looking up at the visual display board and relies on this solely, whilst hearing people rely also on listening to tannoy announcements. This extract highlights an unusual personal experience in relation to getting information. As this study has revealed so far (and as other studies have found, e.g. McKee, 2011), Deaf people often miss vital information when travelling, and hearing people are often unaware of how to interact with Deaf people. In this case, however, the transport staff displayed the narrator's name up on the display board to get his attention, rather than putting out a tannoy announcement, illustrating an unusually good level of Deaf awareness and a positive view of interaction.

(16)



“I looked up at the station’s display board, then a message came up.”

L2n: SEE-BOARD

4.5.3.2 Interactional Content

When Deaf people need to interact with hearing people, often pen and paper is used. In a study of communication methods for Deaf people, Steinberg, Wiggins, Barmada and Sullivan (2002) report that, “Providers who demonstrated minimal signing skills, a willingness to use paper and pen, and sensitivity to improving communication were appreciated” (p. 729). Reading and writing, alongside missed Information, is a prominent sub-theme in relation to travel, and narrator L2n, whose extract (16) is discussed in relation to cultural content above, also states that he used pen and paper

to communicate due to being unable to hear to interact. The use of reading and writing to interact is an attempt to avoid missing information, or misunderstanding information, and this indicates an interrelation between the three sub-themes in this section (missed information, reading and writing, and lack of understanding). Missing information due to being unable to hear whilst travelling can relate to the regular use of (audible) tannoy announcements in the hearing world in which Deaf people interact. Narrator L5n describes an experience of worrying at an airport, where the gate number was to be announced verbally, stating, “...it was not accessible and I wouldn’t hear the information over the tannoy system”:

(17)

“They announced which gate to go to.”



L5n: TANNOY-ANNOUNCEMENT

For travelling, pen and paper may be used to gain information related to times of trains, platform numbers, directions, etc. In railways station, there is often a glass partition that makes lipreading difficult, as the person cannot be clearly seen; writing questions on paper avoids the misunderstandings that lipreading risks, which Jacobs (referring to the same task as ‘speechreading’) succinctly explains:

Speechreading at its best is only educated guesswork. It is a talent which some deaf adults successfully develop into something useful, while others find it a difficult skill to master. It can be compared with breaking an 80 in golf or painting a masterpiece in oils. Speechreading talent has absolutely no correlation with intelligence.

(Jacobs, 1989: 28)

A recent study of road safety issues for deaf people, in fact, includes “writing down the address, the use of paper and pen, (and) a writing pad” all as suggestions for equipment that may make it easier for deaf people to obtain information while travelling (Hersh, Ohene-Djan and Naqvi, 2010: 302). Despite such advice, the data analysis in this study shows that Deaf people are often not content with communicating by pen and paper. In the following extract (18), for example, narrator CF6n expresses frustration when he had to communicate through pen and paper with the police to explain the circumstances of a car accident. The facial expression used to accompany the sign indicates this frustration, as it does in the subsequent extract (19) where narrator L2n describes his dissatisfaction at having to use pen and paper whilst travelling:

(18)



***“I frustratingly had to write things down,
back and forth.”***

CF6n: WRITE

(19)

“I wrote down that I would like a return ticket...”



L2n: WRITE

In addition to the frustration that writing things down can bring on an interactional level, the analysis of this data reveals that resorting to pen and paper was traumatising in a distressing situations. Narrator SW10n relays a very upsetting personal experience of having to communicate through pen and paper with a doctor in a hospital during an emergency, who wrote that her brother had just died. The narrator then had to relay the written information to her Deaf parents in BSL. One can readily understand the trauma of having to receive such distressing information in writing, and to receive it before her parents did due to her better ability to read. Interaction across two different languages, coupled with the use of different modes of communication, clearly exacerbated a difficult personal experience.

4.5.4 Theme 4: Access

Access to information in everyday life is a further issue that is important to Deaf people and is an essential aspect of Deaf people's ability to participate in society as full and equal members (Emery, 2011). This includes gaining access to what is being said in group settings, such as in education, and in personal situations, such as at hospital appointments or job interviews. Research, however, shows that Deaf sign language users do not have the same level of access as hearing people in many areas of public life, and these inequalities leave Deaf people in a very disadvantaged position. Studies have shown, for example, that Deaf people do not have equal access to the criminal justice system, found in a study of access to the criminal justice system by Brennan and Brown (1997). In a further publication, Brennan (1999: 228) states that, "Observations and findings from interviews suggest that there are indeed major problems in ensuring that Deaf people have full access to legal processes" (also Kelly, 2016). In a study of access to healthcare services, Ubido, Huntington and Warburton (2002) found that deaf patients have trouble in several areas, including: communicating with healthcare staff, dealing with issues related to the waiting room, making appointments and understanding prescriptions, and problems caused by a general lack of awareness of deafness by healthcare professionals. In a recent study, Watson (2016) reports difficulties in accessing employment. In fact, a report produced by Harris and Bamford (2001) concludes that Deaf people face inequalities in all major aspects of public life:

The evidence from this study is that significant barriers preclude the full participation of Deaf and hard of hearing people in performing the socially sanctioned adult roles of citizen, employee, parent and patient. In a social model sense, the participants in our studies have been further disabled by the manner in which services are provided and restrictions to eligibility. Health, social and employment services are not organised in ways that facilitate the inclusion of Deaf and hard of hearing people as full members of society.

(Harris and Bamford, 2001: 978)

Analysing the data for this study reveals only one PEN that is centred around the topic of access explicitly. For this qualitative study, this theme is relevant regardless of the frequency of occurrence, as the issue of access often occurs in the PENS that have another central focus, albeit less explicitly. As the following table displays, the focussed

coding for this theme results in similar sub-themes as those that arose under the previously discussed themes:

Table 0-5 Sub-theme: Access

Sub-themes (from 1 PEN)	Cultural Content	Frequency	Interactional Content	Frequency
	Visuality	2	Lack of Understanding	1
	Technology	2	Bonding	1
	Getting Attention	1		
	Total	5		2

4.5.4.1 Cultural Content

When describing experiences related to access in the data sets analysed for this study, the narrators often refer to access to information through sign language interpreters. In the PEN that focusses explicitly on access, however, attention is paid to accessing information through subtitles on television. Narrator SW5n expresses frustration that a pub with lots of televisions hanging on the walls had a music channel on every TV set, which the narrator naturally could not hear. For the narrator, the hearing world is an inaccessible place – a place where everyday functioning is geared towards being reliant on sound, to listening and to speaking, even with visual technology, such as the television. The narrator, then, is experiencing the inequality that is unconsciously placed on Deaf people by an audiocentric society (Eckert and Rowley, 2013). The sub-themes of visuality, technology and getting attention again raise the notion that Deaf people are “visual people” (Lane, Hoffmeister and Bahan, 1996) and constitute what Bahan (2008) refers to as “a visual variety of the human race”. The purpose of switching subtitles on public television screens on is, as Lang (2010) notes, “not to reproduce dialogues exactly but to provide a summary that allows the audience to enjoy the visuals” (p.123) but it is, at least, a small move towards improved equal access to information. This is the reason that the narrator requested that the subtitles be turned on in the pub.

(20)



“I asked...if they could put...news on with the subtitles on so I could watch that.”

SW5n: SUBTITLES

4.5.4.2 Interactional Content

At the level of interaction, the narrator who focuses attention on the issue of access is making a statement that he did not have the same access, and hence did not have the same interactive experience in the pub as the hearing people around him. It is interesting to note that the (hearing) staff members that he approached did not know how to switch on the subtitles and the narrator had to show them. This PEN ends in a positive light, when the next time he went to the pub, half of the television screens were set to the music channel and half had the news on with the subtitles on. Analysis of the PENs shows that access may be required and provided in many ways, such as narrator L34n (example 15) needing to be informed appropriately to get off the bus; narrator N1n (13) wanting the same access in the classroom as the other students; and NE3n (7) needing an interpreter to enable him to access information linked to his health. It is clearly important from the analysis, however, that the narrators feel that it must be provided visually. Being visual is very important to this narrator, as he is a Deaf person and, as McKee (2011: 18) states, “Deaf patterns of interaction are also shaped by the need to receive information through the eyes”.

4.5.5 Theme 5: Community

The notion that Deaf people come together to form a linguistic minority community is a crucial aspect of any research into the language and culture of Deaf people. Given that many Deaf people are from hearing families, and live in neighbourhoods full of hearing people, the main avenue for Deaf community involvement was traditionally at specialist social/leisure clubs (Deaf clubs) that were established for the purposes of bringing Deaf people together. Members of the community may gather in all sorts of places to share their language and culture, such as a specifically established Deaf club, or in a local pub where a group of Deaf people arrange to meet, or in the home. For this reason, Deaf people are often referred to as a language (or linguistic) minority group. Lawson (1994) describes this coming together as a ‘pleasure’:

It is the pleasure gained from mixing with other deaf people that makes one remain a member of the deaf ‘in-group’ – the British deaf community.

(Lawson, 1994: 31)

As Atherton (2012) notes, “...deaf clubs have long been seen as the hub of the deaf community life” (p. 33). The importance of such clubs in the community is described in Ladd’s (2003) study of Deaf culture:

The traditional cornerstones of the community are the Deaf clubs, many of which were founded in the 19th century and thus have their own history and traditions.

Ladd (2003: 46)

Table 0-6 Sub-theme: Community

Sub-theme (from 1 PEN)	Cultural Content	Frequency	Interactional Content	Frequency
	Signing	1	Signing	1

Deaf communities have been faced with the challenges that have come from a serious decline in the number of Deaf clubs. Atherton reported in 2012 that “both anecdotal evidence from deaf club members and data acquired from the pages of *British Deaf News* indicate that deaf clubs have been in a state of decline for several years” (p. 174)

and Ladd (2003) reveals several reasons for this decline, which has an impact on access to the community:

In the last 15 years in the USA, and the last 5 years elsewhere, there has been a significant decline in the numbers attending clubs. Reasons given include mainstreaming in education which cuts young deaf and Deaf children off from the traditional entry root, technological developments such as text phones and captioned television, as well as changing social patterns based on greater mobility.

(Ladd, 2003: 47)

4.5.5.1 Cultural Content

Analysis of the data sets reveals that one of the personal experience narratives has a central focus on the Deaf community and the only sub-theme for both the cultural and interactional aspects is based on the use of sign language (signing). The relation between culture, language and community is clear in this PEN (L11n), where the narrator talks about her home as being like a Deaf club (extract 21, below). The narrator mentions the fact that the official Deaf clubs were mostly for meeting up on Sundays but not during the week in her experience. By opening up the family home to any Deaf people from the vicinity, who would then come together to socialise and share information, the home was providing an additional outlet for Deaf community activities.

(21)



L11n: DEAF



L11n: VISIT

During her personal experience narrative, this narrator explains that, “everyone would pile into my house and it became like the local Deaf gathering place where we could all sign together and have a good time”. This illustrates the cultural need for such gathering on a regular basis, to enable Deaf people to communicate using their language, BSL. Being deaf was not the exclusive factor on which entry to such informal community gatherings lay, however, and it was the use of sign language, and feelings of shared language and culture that brought Deaf people together as a community. Nowell and Marshak (1994) note that “belonging to this community is not based on extent of hearing impairment alone, but upon social and linguistic considerations as well” (p. 69).

4.5.5.2 Interactional Content

From an interactional perspective, the use of signing as the primary method of interaction among Deaf people is expressed in this PEN, which focusses on the use of sign language. Kannapell (1974) proposes that, “certainly the richest resource of the deaf community is its sign language”. According to Kannapell, sign language is the primary means by which Deaf people interact and is the essential element of a Deaf community. There are hearing people within mainstream hearing society who have access to the language and are able to communicate with Deaf people through sign, but this use of sign language is different. It is used in its most heritage form within the Deaf community. The narrator of this PEN explains that the teachers at the schools she attended indicated clearly that they thought she was being badly behaved because she continually used signing as a way of expressing herself. Coming from a Deaf family, where BSL was the natural home language, the narrator was shocked when placed into an educational environment where the use of signing was not allowed, and even penalised. The forced, unfamiliar way of interacting with the adults and peers in the school is discussed in relation to schools for deaf children in the US:

When they arrive at school and find that their home practices are different from those of the new environment, they are startled to encounter a different set of beliefs, and must adjust to them.

(Padden and Humphries, 1988: 24)

In their later work, Padden and Humphries (2005) propose that for Deaf children born to Deaf parents, the most natural form of interaction in the home is through sign language. On entering primary education, children from Deaf families are often reprimanded for signing. The narrator explains that this continually confused her because she moved from the natural signing environment within the home to a 'hearing' environment, where she was forced to attempt to assimilate to a hearing way of behaving (even though it was a school for deaf children). Forcing deaf children to interact in a 'hearing' way is to deny the child a natural, visual way of interacting. As Bienvenu (2001: 99) succinctly explains, "Deaf people perceive most things through their eyes. We acquire language visually". The instinct to interact visually is noted in McKee's (2011) discussion of forcing deaf children to adopt hearing interactive norms:

The phrase 'it's a hearing world after all' is routinely used to justify educational and other choices made on behalf of Deaf people...the obvious rejoinder...is: 'through whose eyes?' There are many ways to construct the world, and 'Deaf' is simply another way of seeing and doing life in New Zealand.

(McKee, 2011: 41)

4.6 References to Collective Content

During the data coding and analysis process, it became evident that the narrators often framed their experiences around recurring references to their collective identity. Lane (2008) discusses the long-standing assumption among hearing societies that all deaf people identify as disabled, and refutes this ideology in a comprehensive discussion of a positive Deaf identity, stating that:

If cultures dominated by hearing people value being hearing, must we not assume that cultures dominated by Deaf people value being Deaf? According to my Deaf informants, Deaf means 'like me' – one of us – in significant cultural ways.

(Lane, 2008: 284)

Despite persistent tendencies to view all deaf people under a pathological model of deafness, Deaf people continue to maintain their separation from this perspective, and gather as a collective group from a linguistic stance (Corker, 2002). When referring to other Deaf people, it is very rare in the data that names, in the form of proper nouns, are used, and the narrators refer regularly to members of the Deaf community as 'Deaf', and other people as 'hearing'. A divide between Deaf and hearing people is clearly revealed in the use of such references, and the data demonstrate the established notion that Deaf people consider their experiences to be bound up in an 'us & them', i.e. a collective, ideology: 'us' referring to members of Deaf communities and 'them' being a reference to hearing people (McKee, 2011). Sutton-Spence and Kaneko (2016: 46) note that, "...many personal experience stories fall broadly into 'Deaf' (shown in the stories as 'Us') and 'hearing' (shown as 'Them')". It is from this outlook that Hauland (2008) describes her position: "Being an outsider in a hearing world, I am like other Deaf people "within hearing culture, but not of it" (p. 111).

The numerous references across the data sets to Deaf people as 'us' and hearing people as 'them' is an important aspect of the findings in this study, revealing that PENS signed by the Deaf narrators are framed around a collective culture. This is referred to as a 'collective experience' (Higgins, 1980) and the use of such terms, according to Higgins, is to show which community people belong to, and indicates 'who is and who is not "one of us"'. Even though, at times, the references appear to be irrelevant to the context of the PEN, or is unnecessary for understanding, their importance is significant, as they reveal the cultural, identity and collective reflections in the content of the narratives. The following extracts illustrate this process:

- ❖ *...my family are **Deaf*** - L11n
- ❖ *I was also born **hearing*** - BF13n
- ❖ *...take me to G?? Hill **Deaf** club* - BM2n
- ❖ *...I explained to them that I was **Deaf*** - L5n
- ❖ *...I went to a **Deaf** school* - M18n
- ❖ *I always thought **hearing** people were good* - N7n
- ❖ *The interpreter, who was **hearing**, was speaking* - SE10n
- ❖ *I was there, a **Deaf** person...* - SE13n

4.7 Summary

During this chapter of research findings, the question, raised by Ceglowski (1997), of whether or not the product of narrative inquiry constitutes formal research is considered. The chapter has shown that signed narratives are researchable and that a thematic analysis across a set of PENs can reveal patterns of information that are able to be categorised. The findings consist, in the main, of 5 latent themes that underlie the narratives, and 10 sub-themes that are embedded within the narratives. The discussion reveals that signed narratives contain both cultural and interactional aspects that are contained within the telling of the personal experience. As the PENs are told by Deaf people, they also reveal explicit experiential content relating to being Deaf, and contain references that illustrate a distinction between Deaf and hearing people in society. Finally, the data analysis presented in this chapter has shown that the personal experiences signed by the narrators are framed around aspects of their lives that result from being Deaf, from sharing similar experiences with other Deaf people, and from a sense of belonging to the Deaf-world – in other words, the narratives analysed for this study provide insight into the typicality of Deaf people's storied lives and a typical Deaf world-view.

Chapter Five - Conclusions and Future Research

5.1 Returning to Deafhood

The central focus of this research has been a process of identification, description and analysis of personal experience narratives told by Deaf BSL users. Achieving the study's aim - to explore the content of selected narratives and identify a range of experiences that are based on a Deaf way of life - has led to a comprehensive understanding of the implications of being Deaf in everyday life. Proceeding with the research from the premise that Deaf sign language users constitute a minority group, with a distinct language and culture, supports the notion of Deafhood coined by Ladd (2003), introduced in section 1.2, and reinforces the idea that Deaf cultures are increasingly being recognised as among the world's seventy per cent collectivist cultures (Ladd 2008). In this light, the study has shown that the experiences that are embedded in signed



narratives are those that arise as a result of the natural, visual instincts of a Deaf person, and the very real circumstance that the mainstream world is based around auditory orientations and does not accommodate auditory deprivation.

Figure 0-1 Deafhood (Ladd 2003)

The discussion of related literature in chapter two, has shown that not only does the mainstream society in the UK not cater for people with an instinctively visual orientation, it even, in fact, has concealed this cultural difference and it is not readily understood in the mainstream, as section 2.2.2 explains. The experiences that occur because of such difference suggests that mainstream society would benefit from awareness of Deaf people as a cultural community. Similarly, in a discussion of military families, Kim (2016: 227-228) refers to a college documentary series called, 'A walk in my shoes', featuring compelling stories of this group of people whose life experiences

also deserve to gain public attention. The term ‘walk in their shoes’ enables us to understand the importance of understanding the experiences and typicalities that are within narratives, and of gaining knowledge of a particular world view, identity and culture. Through this study, I have been able to identify Deaf experiences that do not reach mainstream knowledge; the wealth of information that is contained within PENS can easily be undermined by this lack of awareness. Hence, it is important that knowledge of this difference is passed on to Deaf people and to the mainstream society in which Deaf people live and function on a daily basis.

5.2 Methodology Reviewed

The discussion of methodology in chapter 3 has shed light on translation difficulties, on the theoretical approaches that are available for a study of this nature, and on the ethical considerations of researching a BSL user group. Methodologies such as interviews and questionnaires were discounted, as they would not result in a natural chunk of storied data, able to be analysed for its topical and latent content. Filming the narratives in pairs achieved this methodological goal and reduced researcher influence on the data. The addition of an extra set of collected data, to supplement the corpus data set, provided more focussed narratives and led to a good amount of qualitative material. The visual language modality in itself is an aspect of the study that commands discussion of suitable data collection and analysis methods, and the recorded pairs of Deaf narrators was found to be an appropriate and effective method for capturing analysable narratives of Deaf people’s experiences. The question of whether or not signed narratives are researchable at all, raised at the beginning of section 4.1, is certainly answered positively in the discussion of the aspects of being Deaf that frame the signed narratives. The methodological choices made led to an effective method for identifying and describing the Deaf experiences that are embedded in signed personal experience narratives, and for analysing the typicality in relation to being Deaf that they reveal.

5.3 Revisiting Typicality

At the core of this research study is the notion that being Deaf, and living and functioning in a hearing world, is laced by experiences that other Deaf community members also experience and relate to, which hearing people do not experience, and are therefore ‘typical’ Deaf experiences. Identifying Deaf-world typicalities has enabled the study to describe some of the distinct qualities of being Deaf, and present them in the illustrative discussions in chapter four. The findings resulting from the analysis reveal that the signed narratives are embedded with experiences that can be categorised into cultural and interactional content, answering the first research question of what the experiences contain. The frame analysis led to a description of the latent, underlying content, presented in the form of a thematic analysis. During this process, meaningful frames were extracted from the narratives that highlight experiences that result from being Deaf, and the analysis found similar frames occurring across the different themes, as well as across the two data sets. Experiences that are expressed within the two sets of PENs are classed as typical and are deemed to be able to demonstrate the typicality that is experienced in the Deaf community.

Alongside cultural and interactional content, the study also found additional experiential content, which reveals that many of the narrators feel that they daily move between the Deaf and hearing worlds in which they live. Interpreting the experiential data reveals that, although quite varied, such experiences are centred mostly on issues of language and world-view. It is the sense of a Deaf world-view that captures the essence of familiarity that comes from being Deaf – the familiarity that is a crucial aspect of typicality according to Schutz (1996: 94-95). This familiarity is passed on through generations, serving to preserve the typicality and provide a natural role-model world-view for Deaf people, who live with, and integrate into, the majority hearing culture. Narratives, then, serve to express that familiarity, whilst also providing a coping strategy for dealing with the experiences that come with being Deaf in a hearing world.

Narrative researchers, it is claimed, story the world around us (Mishler, 1995). In the case of this research study, the richness of the stories is sufficient to illustrate Deaf people’s experiences and offer insight into Deaf people’s lives, as they reveal explicit

and latent experiential content relating to being Deaf, and contain references that illustrate a distinction between Deaf and hearing people in society.

5.4 Limitations and Further Research

This study has been reflexive in its methodology in order to achieve a trustworthy and valid account of the experiences that are embedded in personal experience narratives told in the Deaf community. This reflexivity is also important when considering any limitations that came to light during the study. As section 4.6 reveals, an element of the content of the narratives expresses a collective identity, but the space and time limitations of this thesis have restricted the attention that has been paid in this area in order to focus on the elements that answer the research questions directly.

While the methodology chosen for this research has provided a suitable process for a study of this qualitative nature, attending Deaf clubs across the country to collect signed narratives also led to some limitations. Firstly, older Deaf people continue to attend the remaining Deaf clubs, but younger Deaf people tend to socialise more in mainstream places, as Atherton (2012) notes, so the narrators available for inclusion were mostly from the 50+ age group. This was a limitation for the second data collection activity (the field data) but was balanced by the fact that a wide range of age groups (and other demographic factors) was used for the first data set (the corpus data). A further limitation arose from attending a Deaf club while a bingo session was being held, as the willingness of people to take part in the research was affected by the eagerness to join in with the club's activities. Being a member of the Deaf community provided the advantage of knowing the gatekeepers, who could encourage participation, though the limitation that this researcher-participant familiarity can create in any research study, i.e. that the participants' contributions may be influenced by the familiarity, was considered. This limitation was also alleviated by the use of the corpus data set, where the narrators were not aware of this researcher's use of the data.

Further research is certainly warranted, as the lack of previous scholarly work in the UK of this nature also created a limitation in this study. Future research must also take steps to ensure it is conducted with its participant community's interests at heart. As Silverman warns, research for research sake is not wise:

Although you may claim that your study is meant to improve public understanding of your chosen group's situation and perspective, your motives can also be criticized. For instance, Dingwall (1980) has noted how studying underdogs (disadvantaged people) 'undoubtedly furnishes an element of romance, radical chic even, to liven the humdrum routine of academic inquiry'.

(Silverman 2006: 359)

With such ethical motives, future research should aim to expand scholarly knowledge of the shared experiences of Deaf people, and also aim to increase awareness of the visual orientation of Deaf people in everyday life in both the hearing mainstream society, and in the Deaf-world.

Personal future research aspirations include expanding this initial study through further analysis of the content of the narratives that expresses a collective identity. This under-researched area provides an avenue to further enhance scholarly knowledge of the content of signed narratives and the extent to which Deaf people's experiences are framed around this collective identity. Continued research would also include returning to the sites of the second data collection activity in order to show the narrators clips of their signed narratives and delve further into the reasons for collective references, and, secondly, to aid the dissemination of the research results in BSL. Additional aims include expanding the findings of this study into a more comprehensive account of the lived experiences of Deaf people, and also of collecting further signed narratives in order to build a corpus of PENs. This, it is anticipated, would include experiences from further age groups and participant backgrounds in order to increase the diversity of people whose personal experiences are documented.

It is hoped that this present study has given the reader at least a glimpse into the storied lives of Deaf people; this glimpse may provide some level of understanding of the Deaf typicality that should be preserved, valued and, above all, should gain the respect it deserves.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Meta-data Record (corpus data)

(blank template)



Title:

Identifier:

Creator:

Subject:

Subject:

Date:

Identifier:

Language:

Rights:

Rights:

Rights Holder:

Project ID:

Project
Contact:

Project Contact
Organisation:

Longitudinal
Project:

Content Genre:

Content
Subgenre:

Content
Communication
Context:

Primary Actor
ID:

Primary Actor
Age:

Primary Actor
Sex:

Primary Actor
Occupation:

Transcript:

Primary Actor
Condition:

Primary Actor
Condition
Subtype:

Primary Actor
Cause of
Condition:

Primary Actor
Family History:

Primary Actor
Handedness:

Primary Actor
Sign Language
Experience:

Primary Actor
School Leaving
Age:

Primary Actor
Education
Model:

Appendix 2: Meta-data Record (field data)

(blank template)

What is your full name?	
Where were you born?	
Where do you live now?	
What is your age?	
Are you male or female?	
What primary school did you go to?	
Was this a deaf school, mainstream school or PHU?	
What high school did you go to?	
Was this a deaf school, mainstream school or PHU?	
Was anyone else in your family deaf when you were growing up?	
Is anyone else in your family deaf now?	
What age were you when you became deaf?	
When did you start using sign language?	
What is your occupation?	

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form (corpus data)

Consent for participant (adult) to be recorded + recordings archived and used for future research and teaching

NB If the adult has a communication disorder, the content of this form must be presented to her/him in an accessible format.

CONSENT TO BE VIDEO/AUDIO-RECORDED, AND FOR STORAGE AND FUTURE USE OF DATA

Please initial box

I agree to be video/ audiotaped for this project.

☐

I know that my video/audiotapes will be stored in the UCL human Communication Audio-Visual Archive (CAVA) held at the UCL Library:

*Initial **one box only** to show how long you want recordings to be kept for*

EITHER

2a) For as long as the Library exists, for future research. I know that future researchers will sign a CAVA Repository End User Licence Agreement to respect my confidentiality, rights and dignity, and use my data in a responsible way. ☐

OR

2b) until the project team have finished their work in [date]. Then they will be destroyed.

☐

3. I know that when the project team labels my recordings, writes articles and talks about the project they will use a false name, not my real name.

☐

4. I agree that my data can be used for presenting research findings (e.g. at conferences); for further analysis in future research projects [and/or for teaching purposes].

5. I know that the information collected about me may be audited by the research sponsor, [name], to check that the research is being conducted properly.

☐

Name of participant _____

Signature _____

Date _____

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ls/cava/docs/consent-form-adult.doc>

Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form (field data)

Lesley Davidson - Lancashire Law School

Consent Form

1. I agree to take part in this research and to having my sign language data stored and analysed at the University of Central Lancashire:

YES ☐ NO ☐

2. I agree to screenshots of my signing being used in publications (print, CD-Rom etc.):

YES ☐ NO ☐

3. I agree to video clips of my signing being used in publications (print, CD-ROM, etc.):

YES ☐ NO ☐

4. I agree to screenshots of my signing being used for conferences and presentations:

YES ☐ NO ☐

5. I agree to video clips of my signing being used for conferences and presentations:

YES ☐ NO ☐

6. I agree to screenshots of my signing being used on the internet:

YES ☐ NO ☐

7. I agree to video clips of my signing being used on the internet:

YES ☐ NO ☐

8. I agree to my story and personal information being kept in an online public access corpus:

YES ☐ NO ☐

9. I only want translations of my story in English to be used and not my signing:

YES

☐

NO

☐

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 5: Participant Briefing Sheet

Lesley Davidson - Lancashire Law School

Participant Briefing Sheet **(Also available in British Sign Language)**

The purpose of this data collection activity is to record personal experience narratives in British Sign Language. Please follow the data activity plan below and remember – you do not have to take part in this activity and you can withdraw from it at any time without reason.

1. Take a seat with your pairs partner
2. Agree with your partner who will sign their story first
3. When it is your turn, sign your story to your partner for around 3 – 4 minutes and if you have more stories to sign, you can film another clip
4. Don't worry about how you sign the story – the research is interested in the content of the story and not the signing that you use
5. Try to tell a story/stories about your experiences as a Deaf person during any stage of your life
6. When you are watching your partner's stories, please try not to interrupt them so that the stories flow more naturally

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.

Appendix 6: Participant Information Sheet

Lesley Davidson - Lancashire Law School

Participant Information Sheet

(Also available in British Sign Language)

1) The project title



Personal Experience Narratives in the Deaf Community – identifying Deaf world typicality

2) The research aims

In the Deaf community, many narratives are signed and it is a common function of the community to share experiences in the form of story-telling. The notion that Deaf people's experiences are embedded in such stories is important, as it may provide understanding of the shared experiences of Deaf people on a national level. Previous research concludes that story-telling continues to play an important role in the Deaf community. The telling of narratives is traditional in the British Deaf community and includes stories of personal experience and ones that have been passed around from different sources. This research will broaden knowledge of how aspects of Deaf people's experiences are reflected in the stories, and will consider the relevance and typification of the stories that occur in the Deaf community.

3) Why am I asking you to take part in this research?

The reason you have been chosen to take part in this research is because you are a Deaf BSL user and you may have stories to sign that tell us what life is like for a Deaf person. There is very little research in this area and you are valuable to this research because you are part of the Deaf community. Your signed narratives may help me to:

-  Show that the stories Deaf people tell contain elements of culture
-  Raise awareness about why Deaf people tell these signed stories

4) Do you have to take part in this research?

No decision is forced on you at all; you can take part if you want to but you do not have to. If you do decide to take part in this research, you can withdraw at any time and you do not have to give a reason for withdrawing. You will receive a consent form in English, which will also be signed to you in BSL. So remember - you can pull out at any time and this will not affect your protection within this research.

5) What will happen if you do take part in this research?

If you agree to take part, you will be a participant in the following data collection activity: you will sign a story about your experiences as a Deaf person. You will do this in a pair with another Deaf person and they will then sign a story to you.

6) How will the data collection materials be kept confidential?

All data collection materials will be kept strictly confidential until the data for which permission has been given via the consent form is made public. Because it is important to show examples in my research findings, the recorded data clips, screenshots of your story, and/or a translation of your story in English, may be used in published materials and in further research.

I may also keep your story and personal information to put in a corpus of signed narratives that I am aiming to create. This means that your story and personal information will be part of an on-line collection of signed stories and will be available for anybody to see, just like an on-line dictionary.

7) What are the effects or the risks in taking part in this research?

Some of the issues that you sign about may be of a sensitive nature or very personal and expressing information of this nature may lead to some participants feeling emotional or exposed. In this case, you will be able to continue or withdraw from the research according to your own wishes and you will not be pressured into continuing to participate.

8) Who will be approving this research project?

The Lancashire Law School, at the University of Central Lancashire, has given approval for this research project to go ahead.

9) Who would you contact if you wish to make a complaint?

In the event that you would like to raise any concerns regarding the research or make a complaint, you would contact the Student Investigator:

Post: FAO Lesley Davidson, MA by Research student, 19 City Court, Percy Street, Preston PR1 1DY.

Email: LDavidson2@uclan.ac.uk

Text: 07881368571 Facetime: lelbsl@hotmail.com

Skype: lesley.davidson58

If the complaint relates to the Student Investigator or you would prefer to raise the issue with an alternative person, you would contact the Director of Studies:

Post: FAO Dr Martin O'Brien, Lancashire Law School, Livesey House 315, University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE.

Email: MAO-brien@uclan.ac.uk

Telephone: 01772 893095

If you have any further enquiries regarding this research, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Many thanks for your time,

Lesley Davidson

Appendix 7: Selected Narrator Demographics

Narrator Demographics: Corpus Narratives

Code	Male	Female	Age	Region
BF13n	X		53	Belfast
BM2n		X	62	Birmingham
CF6n	X		39	Cardiff
G11n	X		85	Glasgow
L2n	X		54	London
L5n	X		58	London
L11n		X	57	London
L30n		X	74	London
L34n	X		54	London
M18n	X		55	Manchester
N1n	X		47	Newcastle
N7n	X		60	Newcastle

Narrator Demographics: Field Narratives

Code	Male	Female	Age	Region
NE2	X		68	Leeds
NE3		X	70	Bradford
NE7		X	61	Leeds
NW6	X		27	Preston
NW8	X		46	Preston
NW12	X		51	Bangor
SE10	X		55	London
SE13		X	58	London
SE18	X		66	London
SW5	X		47	Plymouth
SW8		X	62	Plymouth
SW9		X	53	Plymouth

Appendix 8: Translated Transcriptions (corpus data)

BF13n (Which school?)

I was also born hearing and I was surprised when my mum told me. What happened was that I had meningitis and was constantly in and out of hospital from birth until I was about 2 or 3, when they finally found out I was deaf. My mum was very distressed and wondered where I could go to school and did not know where to send me. Then a priest told her about Jordanstown School where they had a good nursery for children and juniors. So she sent me there but then a while later they decided to move me because my mum and dad did not want me to use sign language; they thought it was a waste and wanted me to be oral and learn to speak. My mum went to see the priest again and he told her he thought there was a school in Dublin that was oral. He said they did not use sign language there because that was lazy so my mum agreed to send me there. I had only been in the first school about two years when one-day mum and dad took me in the car and we went quite far and quite slowly. We finally arrived and they said I could go and play with all the kids there but they were all just speaking, as they were very strong oral. Mum and Dad went off to talk to someone and then they just left. I was crying and crying and getting stressed asking where my mum and dad were, and then I realised – it was a boarding school and I would have to stay there. It was stressful and I cried a lot but eventually I got used to being there with the oral deaf kids and I stayed there for 6 – no 5 years. That was a primary school, where you could stay until you were about 11 then had to move on to another school. So my mum had to look again and then said it would be best if I went back to Jordanstown school but she was worried about it because she did not want me using signing, as she was such an oralist. But the school in Dublin, yes it was an oral school but they used gestures too, like they would hold the hand at head height when saying ‘mum’ or ‘dad’ then hold it lower down when mouthing ‘my brother’ and lower down again for ‘my sister’, and the mouthings were really clear too.

Anyway, so I finished there and went back to Jordanstown School and, when I started there, I was a new boy and I went in thinking it was the dummies’ school. But, when I looked around, all the deaf kids there were using signing. That was very strange for me and I cried and became stressed because I did not want to be there and just wanted to go back to my old school, really. I stuck it out and luckily I met up with a couple of my old friends from the Dublin school who had also moved there and I knew well. Those two really helped me because I thought signing was for dummies but I did not want to get teased there for being oral so I eventually started picking up more and more signing. My signing soon improved and got better and better, and I started to feel more relaxed than when I was the new boy and really embarrassed. Anyway, I stayed there until I was 16 and then started looking for a job. I was very involved with Deaf people by then and was a strong sign language user, and when I had to step out of the Deaf world and into the hearing world, I started switching between signing and speech. I had to use speech with the hearing people at work but then I would meet my Deaf friends and start signing, and this confused me. I had stopped speaking since I left the school in Dublin really, and I missed. But my English learning had been crap anyway and I couldn’t speak English well. So I needed to find a way so I looked and that’s when I met Bob (E?) who taught Deaf people English. So I started

learning how to speak again and then I could use both. So I use both signing and speech now, both of them, and it's much better than when I was young because it all really confused me at that time.

BM2n (Lost after the park)

When I was five months old, I had meningitis. I've read about it now as an adult in newspapers but didn't understand anything about it when I was young, as my parents never used to tell me anything. They felt sorry for me so just left me alone a lot of the time to play and carried on chatting themselves. They were very worried about having a deaf baby. My father was flown home urgently when I became ill because I nearly died. He worked on the ships and they sent a telegram and he was brought home immediately. They saved my life but the meningitis left me deaf, and as I was growing up I would regularly watch my mum, dad and siblings constantly talking to each other but I would never know what they were saying. I would look up at them and try to figure it out but I just couldn't hear and that went on for years. I used to go to the park every week, or even 2 or 3 times a week, because I was so bored with school and everything. I would come home at half three and have nothing to do so I would go off to the park to play. As soon as my parents and sister weren't looking, off I would go, and I would play on the swings on my own even though I couldn't hear anything that was going on around me and I was the only deaf child there. Once, I got lost on the way home from the park. I suddenly couldn't remember the way so I walk and walked all around but couldn't find my way so I started crying and crying and just stood in a street huddled up. A man and woman came up to me and started talking to me but I couldn't understand them then they took my arm and guided me around the corner to a police station. The police gave me something to eat so I started tucking in because I was starving. The police man started talking to me from behind but I just took no notice of him because I couldn't hear what he was saying then he came round to the front of me and waved at my face and spoke. I tried to explain that I couldn't understand what he meant because I was deaf then I carried on eating and was quite content. I started reading some comics that were quite funny then my mother, sister and brother suddenly came in. I threw my arms out to my mum, happy to see her. The police officer told mum that I wouldn't talk to him and couldn't hear him and asked her what was wrong with me so mum told him I was deaf and dumb so he understood then. He said he was really sorry and gave me a box of chocolates! I went to start eating them straight away but my mum slapped the back of my hand and told me I was naughty and took me home. At home, my sister really told me off but I couldn't understand what she was saying; she was just shouting and shouting but I didn't know what she meant so thought my mum must have been really worried about me.

From then on, I was always frightened to go back to that park because that experience really spoilt it for me so I used to go and visit my best friend and play with her and her brothers and sisters instead. We were really close and she was like a sister to me when we were growing up so my mum and dad just left me alone and neglected me really. I used to wipe my nose on my sleeves and had big green stains all up them, right up the upper arm part as well, because I was so poor. One school teacher, Mrs Beech, who had a daughter called Janet Beech, gave me some of Janet's clothes that fitted me and were nice but my mother was really cross until the teacher spoke to her about it. I was often ill, too, but my mum would send me to school. Even

though I would tell her how poorly I felt, she still forced me to go. I would stay in bed as long as I could then go to school but just wanted to be back in bed. Once, Miss Short, another teacher, and Mrs Beech, both went marching up to my mum and told her I was really unwell and that she needed to take me to see a doctor so my mum reluctantly agreed. My parents just wanted to get rid of me really. As I was growing up, though, I started using voice and managed to pronounce quite a few words so they were confused about whether or not I was actually deaf. They put hearing aids in both of my ears but I still couldn't hear anything at all, so that was that, and it was like that until I eventually left school.

I started working as a sweet sorter and one day I was sorting away and noticed someone opposite me using their hands to communicate and didn't understand what they were doing so I went over and asked what they were doing. They said they would take me to G?? Hill Deaf Club, so we went. I remember it had a big sign over the door saying 'Deaf and Dumb'. We went in and everyone turned and looked at me. I didn't understand why there were so many people there and all using their hands to chat, so I asked them why they were moving their hands like that in my usual half-voice and exaggerated mouth patterns then one of them said, 'oh, you're hearing – get out'! I explained that I was deaf and used lip-reading because I couldn't understand signing and asked them to teach me and so they started teaching me how to sign and I got better and better at it, so I became a good sign language user once I had left school.

CF6n (Car accident)

My story is about ages ago – three or four years ago now – when I went to work in York in the north of England to do some training for CACDP. I was all packed and ready to go – well, it was awful really, as I had just thrown everything into my case and thought it would be fine, then I left on the Friday at about 3 o'clock. I left handy because you know how busy the traffic can be, especially having to go on the M1 to head up north; it gets really busy. Anyway, I set off and the weather was lovely so I could look around and it was great. I went up the M5 then onto the M42 and finally go on the M1 at about 5 o'clock, which was great. The motorway was getting busier and busier but I carried on driving, no problem, then I came up to a lorry so I sped up to 70 mph and started overtaking. Just as I pulled alongside it, the lorry moved into the middle lane, and this meant I had to quickly move over into the third lane, which I did. I carried on ahead then I noticed in my mirror, a car tailgating me badly. I just ignored it anyway and carried on ahead until I had passed the lorry then started to move back over into the middle lane. As I did, a car suddenly moved towards me from the first lane and I had to quickly swerve away from the middle lane. As I quickly swerved, I began to lose control and the car that had been tailgating me crashed straight into the back of me. I felt the bang and tried to get control of the wheel but the impact sent me swerving even more and I started losing control. I tried to regain control, still swerving with the impact, and quickly put my hazard lights on to warn the lorry and other cars to stop, which they all did. I finally regained control and pulled on to the hard shoulder and just stayed still. My heart was beating really fast and I was shaking like a leaf; it was awful. I just kept thinking, *I'm OK...I'm not hurt...I'm OK*. Then the car pulled in behind me on the hard shoulder. I couldn't communicate at all though, and just sat there, still shaking. The man got out of his car and came storming to my driver window and started banging on it but I was just frozen.

I just couldn't move and I couldn't even open my seat-belt. I just sat there, looking at him, and he started pointing at me and screaming, "YOU...YOU". I still couldn't move because I was in so much shock but he carried on ranting then he grabbed his mobile phone, mouthing, "phone" and he called the police. That was fine with me and I finally calmed down and was able to get out of the car. The police came...well, it was the traffic control warden who keeps a check on the motorways. The officer came over to talk to me but the man kept ranting and getting in the way, making it difficult for me to communicate with the officer with being deaf. He kept trying to brush me to the side and that was quite upsetting but eventually the officer looked at me and asked if I was okay, and I said I was fine. We tried to communicate but couldn't and frustratingly had to write things down, back and forth. Then the man kicked off again, screaming and shouting, so the officer told me it was best if we went and pulled over at the next services that wasn't far away. He checked that I was fine again and I got back in my car and headed off again. I was so shaky and nervous still that I had to drive really slowly in the first lane. Their cars sped past me and I kept wondering if it was my fault, or his fault, and I couldn't think straight at all then I finally got to the services. The officer asked me lots of questions about what had happened and I told him, still thinking about whose fault it was. The officer said that the insurance would sort it out and then we were finished. I got back on the road and finally got to my hotel. I tossed and turned all night, and didn't sleep well at all. When I woke up the next morning, my head was throbbing but I had to just get on and do the training. I couldn't stop thinking about it but managed to do the teaching and was fine and just had to stay focussed. Going home, I drove really slowly, in the first lane all the way and it's about a four-hour drive but I just had to take my time and was really nervous.

That happened on the Friday and when I got home I tried to sort it all out through my insurance but it was awful because I found out that we both had the same insurance company, which was really bad. We argued and argued but it went on for ages but the insurance couldn't sort it out so we both had to get a solicitor each and carried on arguing over it for two years! Really, it was his fault because he came into the back of me and as you know, all over the country the agreement is that if someone crashes into the back of you, it is their fault. He reckoned I was swerving all over the place deliberately but I wasn't. I was avoiding the car that cut me up but he hadn't seen the car and I had no witness. Anyway, we carried on arguing but eventually I won. I am fine driving now but still get a bit anxious when I see a lorry, and am really careful and I won't overtake one since then.

G11n (Donnelly school)

My story is about Donnelly School. The teaching was awful there because the teachers used absolutely no sign language at all when teaching us. No BSL at all, just speech, so I couldn't understand a word that they were speaking. For those with some hearing they may have gotten something but for me, and your husband too, it was awful. It was like that for years at school. We played football, and played snooker, which was enjoyable but the teaching part of it was terrible.

At lunchtime we'd all run outside to play football. But our pitch was placed on the side of a steep hill. So when going forward you were also going sideways down the hill with the ball.

We would all be running like that and that was how we played football every day! A football pitch on a hill! Didn't bother us really; we just ran up and down after the ball. I was good at tackling. One day I was in goal and I saw this big bush next to me. Then all of a sudden I felt a warmth on my left arm and I saw there were bees. There was a big bees' nest that had formed on the bush. I tried to alert the boy who was refereeing to stop and let's get away but one of the boys wasn't looking and he kicked the ball towards the goal but it hit the nest and all the bees flew out and attacked me. I was being stung all over my body and ran into the school to the nurse's office. She put some lotion on me then phoned the next village, which was not too far away and had a bee keeper there. He came to the school and started taking the bees off me and from inside my clothes. I had stings all over me so they put more cream on. I saw a bee going up the man's sleeve so I tried to tell him but he didn't seem that bothered about it and he just left, still with the bee up his sleeve!

Every 6 months the dentist would do a visit to our school. Well every day I had been eating lots of toffees. When he looked at my teeth he said that I had a bad tooth at the back and that he would have to pull it out. But there was no anaesthetic there. They just held my head tightly and then he yanked and pulled with a pair of pliers until my tooth came out! He gave me a little bit of cloth to wipe the blood and said what a brave boy I was. Then he gave me sweets and told me to go. The pain was unbelievable! I had another 2 teeth pulled out after that.

We had no hot water on our school, only cold water. When we washed we would be given a basin of cold water. We would brush our teeth, spit in the basin, then wash our hands and face in it! Then we would walk with the basin and throw the water away. That's what we had to use. The dormitory had no heating so it was very cold. We wore these long night dresses that looked like girlie dresses! We all wore these dresses and you had to hold them up as you walked and we'd be shivering cold. In the morning they'd come along and wake us all up, opening all the windows even though it was freezing! It wasn't so bad in summer but in winter it was freezing!! It was hard living there. I was at Donnelly school for 6, nearly 7 years.

My other school before that was Clydesdale School. I was there a year and a half but then war broke out so they took us all up to Donnelly Castle on buses. We saw this huge place that looked like a castle. We didn't have any idea what we were doing there. I thought it was a lovely castle and they'd brought us up there on a little holiday. There was 200 of us. In the first school we had 200 girls and 100 boys but when we moved about 100 of the children went elsewhere. They showed us all around the castle, the classrooms, and the dormitories and so on. We still didn't have a clue what we were doing there. Even after the first couple of years, children kept asking when we were going back to Glasgow but they'd just answer with, "You're staying here". Some of the teachers were really awful. We had one teacher, well he wasn't really a teacher, he was a tailor. He was such a cruel man. He would pick up little tiny boys and bash them against the desks and beat them terribly. One little boy didn't want to eat his dinner and told him he felt sick but he forced him to eat his food even though he felt sick. That's the God's honest truth. I wanted to kill him; he was such a cruel, cruel man. Everyone was frightened of him. He was such a cruel man and I'll never forget him. When the war was over, I was moved to Maryhill School so I could be a day pupil then I left school a year later. Some of the kids boarded there but I went home and was a good boy there so never had to be caned again like at the other school.

L2n (Lost visa on at the train station)

Something happened to me a while ago. You know my Brother lives in Nottingham and I used to drive up and down there regularly in my car. Well one weekend I'd had enough of driving and I thought I might as well take the train for a change. So I got on the tube to Kings Cross St Pancras station and looked around for the ticket office. It was quite a distance away in the corner of the station so I walked across and when I got there a man was sitting in the booth behind a glass screen. He was speaking to me from behind the glass but I couldn't hear him of course so he handed me a piece of paper and I wrote down that I would like a return ticket to Nottingham and with a reserved seat and handed back the piece of paper. The man keyed all of this information in to his computer. It cost £26 and an additional £2 for the return journey which was £28 in total. I thought that was really cheap and I should have taken the train before rather than spending all my money on petrol for the car; I wished I'd gone by train before! Anyway I paid the money and got my tickets. There was plenty of time before the train left. I had about 40 minutes to wait and I hadn't had any breakfast so I was hungry because I'd left home early that morning. I looked around and there was nowhere to buy any food apart from Mc Donald's! I thought that I couldn't eat there but I looked around again and there was nowhere else. I gritted my teeth and went in and bought a bacon roll and went back outside to the tables out there. On the walls were the old fashioned timetables displaying the train arrival and departure times. Nowadays you have the new TV's but back then there were the old timetables. I sat down and looked for the information about my train; it was leaving at 11.20am so there was still plenty of time and I decided not to get on yet because I'd reserved my seat so I wasn't too bothered. I'd get on at the last minute. I put my bag down and unwrapped my bacon roll. My mouth was watering and I was just about to take a bite when all of the information on the timetables started to scramble and then the screen went blank! I thought there must have been something wrong with the station's computer then a message came up saying, "Attention, David Morris please report to the ticket office." I couldn't believe it; I was so embarrassed! I was sitting, bacon roll still poised untouched! People were looking around at each other, wondering who David Morris was, so I pretended to look around too, trying to be inconspicuous! I was wondering how on earth they knew my name. Then one of the staff walked past with a walkie-talkie and I decided I was going to have to confess! The man said, "Are you Deaf?" pointing to his ear, so I said yes. This drew lots of attention and everyone was looking at me, which made me even more embarrassed! I wrapped up my bacon roll and put it into my bag. The man told me to follow him and indicated the direction we were going in...I followed, with everyone watching as we went. All the time I was wondering what was wrong. Maybe my brother had contacted the station to tell me that there was a problem and he wanted me to cancel the trip? But I'd paid for my tickets so what a waste of £28 that would be! The man took me into a room and told me to sit down and wait. I sat there for a time and then a man came in who I recognised. I asked him where I'd seen him before and he said he'd been working in the booth where I bought my ticket earlier on. Of course, that's how I recognised him. Then he said, "You left your visa card. You forgot to take it with you after you paid for your ticket!" I was amazed he had so much deaf awareness: he knew he couldn't put out a message over the tannoy system because I wouldn't hear it. By now it was getting late so I was in a bit of a flap about getting my train on time. The man said,

“That’s no problem...hold on”, and he made a call to tell the train to wait and I ran across the station and jumped on to the train with relief. It was brilliant!

L5n (Flying to Edinburgh)

On the subject of flying, I used to be an assessor for CACDP level two and it was usually all pretty similar but then one time I received a request to go up to Scotland. Growing up, I’d travelled all over the world but I’d never been to Scotland! I’d been asked to go to Edinburgh so I was quite excited about it. I booked a flight with Easy Jet, because they were cheap. I was flying from Luton airport and when I arrived I explained to them that I was deaf. You know on the boarding pass, you have a gate number and they announce which gate to go to...this would be either 8 or 7. They announce the information over the tannoy system, so I told them that it was not accessible and I wouldn’t hear that information when it was announced. They told me to sit down and wait, and I felt a little patronised but I sat and waited anyway. Then everyone started moving over to one of the gates and I was about to get up and follow them but the airline staff told me to stay where I was. I was getting quite frustrated after a while, as everyone got in the lift and had gone and I was the last person left sitting there! I tried to attract the manager’s attention and was told, “Just wait; it’s all right!” It was really frustrating, then a man in a suit came along and told me to follow him. I followed and he took me to a car waiting on the tarmac. I got in and was driven to the plane! All these people had to go up in the lift and form a queue and wait to get on and I was taken separately and driven right up to the steps of the plane! When I got on, there was no seat number on my boarding pass so I could sit in any seat I wanted to. I sat at the front where there was plenty of leg room but then the captain came out and told me I wasn’t allowed to sit there, as those seats were reserved for disabled people. I tried to argue that I was classed as disabled as I was a deaf person but he said no, as those seats were reserved for people in wheelchairs. I moved and sat in the seats over the wing next to the window, which was also next to the escape route just in case the plane crashed and I had to get out; you never know! I hadn’t been on a plane for a while and I was a bit nervous! Anyway, I sat down and started to read and then the captain came along again and said, “You’re not allowed to sit there because it’s next to the exit and if there is an emergency the information would be announced over the tannoy so the person in that seat would need to hear the instructions given to help the other passengers out of the plane.” I thought, “he thinks because I’m Deaf I’ve got no common sense”. So I said, “You told me I could sit anywhere but this is the second time I’d been asked to move seats!” So I moved again and went to the back of the plane where there were three seats in a row and I chose to sit there so that I could stretch across them and lie down on the journey! Then we got underway and I arrived in Scotland without any more problems.

L11n (Deaf club at home)

So your sister is deaf and that is the same for me; my family are Deaf. My sister, brother and I are all deaf, and my mum and dad too. There are no deaf people in previous generations, even though a lot of people think all my ancestors were deaf too, and that the deafness goes back a long way, but it doesn’t. It’s just my immediate family and all the children from the next

generation down are all hearing too. Altogether I went to four different schools because I was very naughty at school. I was also always in trouble for using sign language at school though, as the teachers all thought I was very bad for signing. We all had to be oral and speak but I used to sign all the time and couldn't stop so they sent me to the four different schools. That made it difficult for me because I ended up with many, many friends from all the schools and sometimes I would meet one of them but couldn't remember which school they were from, which was really funny!! There was also all of my sister's friends and my brother's friends and they would all gather at our house because we were deaf. So the house was constantly full of deaf people and every week loads of deaf people would come and visit and we would all be signing for hours and all be constantly laughing together. That was many years ago, and before deaf clubs were opened all across the country. Well, there were a few clubs but mostly for meeting up on Sundays and not for gathering through the week. So everyone would pile into my house and it became like the local deaf gathering place where we could all sign together and have a good time. And my mother would make loads of tea and give it to everyone, and give them all cakes and all sorts of goodies!

That doesn't happen anymore so there is just nothing like that now and looking back, I know that deaf people have been going to deaf clubs less and less too, due to them all closing down. So deaf people have started going mostly to pubs to gather together but things were very different during my time. Now I sympathise with my mother because it must have been such hard work for her and if I was in her place, there's no way I could do what she used to do!

L30n (Is that my mother?)

I remember something that happened to me years ago, when I was growing up. I was actually born hearing but sadly, at the age of three, I was ill with meningitis and became deaf. I remember going to hospital loads and loads of times but when I got home, I didn't really think anything of being deaf because I couldn't remember being hearing, really. The bad thing was that there wasn't really a school I could go to because I lived in a small, quiet town, and my mother thought about it and decided to send me to Exeter School. I'll never forget my mother taking me to Exeter School. I wasn't sure what was going on the supervisor...the person who looked after the children...said she would show me where my bed was. My mother was following behind as I walked with the supervisor, holding her hand and we got to where it was. Then I looked back and suddenly realised my mother had disappeared. I screamed and screamed, really loudly and my mother heard me screaming from where she was so she ran quickly out of the school and went. She must have been heart-broken, my poor mother! Anyway, I stayed at the school and was happy there as I was growing up. It was a good school but it was war time at that time. From the age of 5 to 7, I was a boarder so I only went home at Easter, summer and Christmas. A woman used to come and pick me up (it was my mother and she always picked me up), me and seven other children who lived between Reading and London, and she took us all on the train but I didn't know who she was. When I was about seven, I asked if that lady was my mum because I had started writing letters home and was told it was. I just had to ask again, "Is that really my mummy" and it was only then that I realised that it was! On the train, I said to her, "Are you the mummy that I send my letters to?" and she said, "Yes, I am your mummy!" It must have been that I didn't remember who she was because I didn't live with her and it wasn't until

two years later that I realised who she was. Yes, that really happened to me and I really cried over it! And my father was a shock too but I didn't see him much and was mostly with my mother when I went home. I always knew who my sister was because we were really close but I didn't realise who they were, and that happened when I was about 7!

Well, I think it was because I was just left at the boarding school and my mother just disappeared. After that, she was just the woman that came to pick me up each time. I literally only went home for a few weeks at Easter and Christmas and 7 or 8 weeks for the summer, so spending more time at school than at home must have made me forget who she was. But then I became a very stubborn girl: it was my own life and I lived it my own way and nobody was going to tell me what to do! My sister used to try and tell me off but I wouldn't let her tell me what to do! So I became a strong girl and felt that I could do anything I wanted in life and go anywhere I wanted, even to London! My mum used to worry about me because I was deaf and it might be difficult but I always felt absolutely fine. She put me in the school! So boarding school helped me to become quite strong.

L34n (A bus journey)

I know I haven't told you this yet so I'll tell you about what happened last year. I went out because I was off work that day, and decided to go out for the day because the weather was lovely and sunny. So I put my summer clothes on and got my sunglasses and my erm...iPod for music, which I really love because I can watch videos on it. So I can play games on my mobile or on my iPod, and I play Tetris on it, which is quite old fashioned now but I love it. So I was upstairs on a double decker bus and we went up Kilburn High Road and I was playing away on my game for what felt like about 10 or 15 minutes, so I knew I would be getting off soon, in about another 10 minutes or so. The bus stopped a few minutes later but I carried on playing, totally focussed on my game. Then I realised the bus hadn't started up again, and wasn't moving from the stop. I carried on playing but it still hadn't moved even after another good 5 minutes. Anyway, I carried on playing, looking down at my game then it was really strange because I suddenly noticed a man's feet in my vision, stood right at my seat. I suddenly felt like I had become so immersed into my game that I had completely forgotten that the world and everything in it existed!! I looked down at the feet, thinking, *who on earth do those feet belong to?* Then I looked up and got such a shock to find someone stood there and they said they had been shouting at me over and over again. I got such a shock and started saying sorry but then he asked me for my ticket and I explained that I am deaf by gesturing with my hand over my ear. He was surprised by this, and didn't seem convinced so I repeated that I was deaf. He continued to ask for my ticket so I took out my free bus pass and showed him it. He said, "What a waste of my time; I've been stood here for about 10 minutes". I couldn't believe it, and all the people on the bus had been looking while he continued to shout at me! I told him he should have tapped me on the shoulder but he said they are not allowed to do that. So I asked him how we could get round it then because a deaf person won't hear if they are playing on a game on their phone so it is best if he taps on the shoulder. He just kept saying, "I am not allowed" and all the people on the bus were looking over and I could tell they were thinking, *oh my goodness, it's a deaf person, how pathetic*. So I felt really unconfident then and went downstairs and told the driver what had happened and

how he should have tapped me on the shoulder. The bus driver just said that he was just doing his job and following the rules so I told him that he should let people know because deaf people are not aware of that. It was really embarrassing. So that was last year, in the summer, and I'll never forget it!

M18n (Playing with matches)

When I was very young I went to a deaf school because I was born deaf. When I went to the school everyone there was deaf and used sign language, including all my friends. I learnt a lot from everyone around me. Bath times at the school would alternate between one day being the girls bath night and the next being the boys. I was in a dormitory with 4 other boys, so there were 5 of us who were signing away to each other every night. It was really enjoyable. But at the end of one night all the other boys went to sleep except for me. I just couldn't sleep and was wide awake. I wanted to play with something so I pulled the sheet up over my head rubbed my hands with excitement, ready to play. I had a box of matches so I took one out and lit it and was fascinated by the flame. I then blew it out but was enjoying myself so much I lit another on. After that I looked out over the sheet to make sure all the boys were still fast asleep, which they were, and so completely unaware. So I carried on, going through all the matches in the box, and again pulled the sheet down to check no-one was looking then pulled it over me again. I carried on playing with the matches until, unbeknown to me, one of the house-mothers' came in to the dormitory and immediately smelt the fumes from my match burning. She came over to my bed and pulled back the sheet to find me sat there with the matches in my hand. I was caught red-handed and she marched me off to the headmaster's room. There she told me to stand directly outside his bedroom door and not to move one inch. The housemother left and whilst everyone in the school slept soundly, I stood perfectly still waiting for the headmaster outside his bedroom.

After what seemed like a really long time, I was becoming increasingly tired, unable to stand straight and barely able to keep my eyes open. So I took myself off to the housemother's bedroom, knocked on her door and explained that I'd been waiting all that time and felt exhausted. She told me to go straight off to bed. So I walked through the school and when I got back to my dormitory, the boys in my room were still fast asleep. I got into bed and fell fast asleep. When I woke up in the morning, I got out of bed, made the bed and got dressed. None of the boys knew anything about what had happened the night before. I didn't say a word to anyone about what had happened. We all went downstairs for breakfast and were having a nice time when one of the teachers came over and pulled me out and told me I had to go to the headmaster's office. I was shocked and asked why but she just said I had to go there immediately. So I walked to the office and knocked on the door. The headmaster answered and told me to come in. I sat down and the Headmaster brought out a box of matches and placed them down in front of me. He said to me, "Who gave you these matches?" I told him that my father had given me the matches and he was shocked and couldn't believe my father had given me the matches. I insisted that he had then the headmaster said that he would have to write to my father over this.

When it came to the Friday afternoon, my father came to pick me up to take me home. I was very excited when I saw him. He had received the letter earlier on that week and had a conversation with the headmaster before returning to me so we both got in the car and drove home. I felt very happy and as we drove; I had the window down and the wind was blowing into the car as we travelled home. When I arrived home I was very excited and pleased to see my mum, who gave me a big hug after not seeing me for five days while I was at school. My father went into the kitchen and then returned to the dining room where he placed a box of matches in the middle of the table. He told me to sit at the table and he sat directly opposite me at the other end of the table. Then he asked who had given me the matches. I didn't know what to say, but then I told him that nobody had given me the matches and that I had gone to the cupboard in the kitchen and taken the matches myself. He asked me if I knew how to use matches so I said I did and he told me to show him. Well I thought this was really easy and I was not worried so I took a match out and lit it. After a while I blew it out. "That's very good", my father said, "Take another match and light it again". So I did. I thought my father was being awfully nice to me letting me play with the matches. As the flame burned down the matchstick it was very exciting and before it reached the end I blew it out.

Then my father said, "Ok. Now light one more match." So I did and I thought we were going to burn our way through all the matches. Then just as I lit the match he said to me, "This time I do not want you to blow the match out and if you dare do, I'll smack you". So I sat there looking at the flame slowly burning down towards my fingers. It did reach my fingers and burnt them. I screamed and cried all over the house and my father said, "Let that be a lesson for you." I told him I would never play with matches again. I never did play with matches again and many years later, when I was married, my wife told me that my daughter had been playing with matches. I immediately recalled the lesson my father taught me so I taught my daughter the same lesson, and later my son too.

N1n (Deaf or hearing?)

My story is about school. When I was young, I went to a school for hearing children that was really near my house, the Methodist School. One day, the coach came to pick up my brother – my brother is deaf too – and I waved goodbye to him as the coach went, not really knowing why. Then I walked over to school. The classes were really big and there were rows of kids and the teacher was stood there speaking away and writing lots of things on the board but most of the kids were just messing around and throwing stuff around the classroom, which I thought was awful. I hung up my coat and hat and sat in one of the rows, watching the teacher. She couldn't sign so I just watched her mouth moving around and tried to understand any gestures she was using but I couldn't understand, I turned to the kid next to me to copy his but just said, "Stop it, nosey parker" and started messing around with some kind of instrument so I just tried to write anything I could down in my book. The teacher was pointing to things on the board and trying to say something to me but I really couldn't understand and next thing she came walking up our row. There were about 15/16 of us, boys and girls, all in rows, a massive class, and she seemed to be talking about three of something. I remember she came toward me so I just put my head down on my desk, leaning it on my arm that was hiding my book, and pretended to write. The

boy in front was pulling funny facial expressions and covering his book up with his arm so I did the same. The teacher came right up to me so I kept my arm over my book and looked up at her, and she spoke to me but I couldn't understand her. I tried to speak using really exaggerated mouth movements and was waving her arms around but I just couldn't get it then she took my arm and led me out of the classroom and to the Head's office. They were talking and I was waiting and waiting, and next thing my mum and dad came walking in. My dad still had his work overalls and cap on, and dirt all round his face from work, and I saw him saying, "What is the problem with my son?" I immediately said, "Daddy...and...Mummy" – I could only speak one word at a time! They were talking with the Head and I saw my Mum and Dad really cross and started arguing and it went on for ages, and I was so shocked. Then my mum just grabbed my arm, saying, "Come on" and took me home then took me to see the doctor. The doctor kept looking in my ears and looking at me. In the old times the doctors were different and they didn't have all the equipment they have now. He kept telling me to cough as he listened through his stethoscope, and said there was nothing. He shone his little torch down my ears and then started talking to my mum. I didn't know what they were saying so I just started looking around the room. I turned my head to look behind then the doctor suddenly banged his hand down on his desk and I turned around in surprise and looked at him. He told me to do it again and I did, turning back to look at him as soon as he banged his hand down on his desk. The doctor couldn't understand how I could know when to turn then he suddenly realised that the bang was causing a vibration, and I was feeling it. Then my father said that he now realised that whenever he shouted "Oi" or my name, I would only turn round if he stamped his foot at the same time. So he had been stamping his foot to get my attention without even realising! Then they said I would definitely have to go to the deaf school so I would go to school with my brother. After a few minutes, they all agreed and I was transferred to the deaf school.

It was weird on my first trip there because all of the kids were signing away on the coach and I was just looking at them all amazed. Then my brother did a thumbs-up gesture to me and mouthed that they were all friendly deaf and really good. I just sat quietly until we got there and went into the school. They put me straight into the small school, the juniors, because I was only 5 but he was in the seniors so I was alone. Then one of the kids asked me if I was okay and said, "Are you deaf?" so I nodded that I was and then one of them started doing really horrid mouth movement with their tongue sticking out, mouthing, "You're like the hearing so you **lip-read**" and it was really awful. Then another said, "No, he's deaf so he can sign with us" and then I started picking up signs, like BOY and GIRL and everyone signed. Even the teacher used fingerspelling and would mouth really clearly before pointing to the board. As I grew up, the junior school teachers were really, really strict, and the Head was really strict with us. He said we must take to school a handkerchief, a nail file and some other things and must come to school really smart and neat with a well done up tie. Oh, it was really strict in the juniors and I hated that so I couldn't wait to move to the seniors. There you could do whatever you wanted: you could have long hair, wear boots and even wear flared trousers. The older deaf kids used to tell us all about how it would be once we were 11 but I was still in the juniors, where they would do a check each day that you had your handkerchief and everything, and would tick it all off on a list and it was ridiculous.

Anyway, I finally moved to the seniors and it was great. I grew my hair really, really long and wore a scruffy shirt and used to double up my tie into a fat-tie knot and was really proud of

myself! I loved school and travelled there and back every day. Some of the kids boarded, even some of my deaf friends, but I never did. I refused to board so I just travelled there and back every day while I was at that school, and that was that!

N7n (Different worlds)

I am Tony and I'm from Sunderland. I grew up there stayed there all my life and didn't move around at all. I went to three different schools: the first one I went to was in Sunderland but my father wasn't happy with the school so he sent me to Boston Spa School, in Yorkshire. I used to get the train there and back every day. Boston Spa School is very different now. In my day, you had to get the bus into Durham, with your big suitcase, then walk up a big steep slope to the train station platform but there's an escalator now. It was great on the way home because it was downhill!! Anyway I went to the school and it was great, I really enjoyed it there and only went home at Easter, Christmas and summer; that was all. I stayed so that I could sign with all the other boys! Nowadays everyone just goes to their local school. The next school I went to was in Newcastle but I was only there for two years so it wasn't really worth me moving.

When I left school, I became a joiner, an apprentice joiner. Well, I was really a cabinet maker, and worked for a company called Adrenshare. It was okay there but the bad thing was that I was so used to being able to sign away in sign language with all the boys at school but when I started on my first day on my new job, it really shocked me terribly to see them all talking to each other in speech! I just watched them all talking away and felt really lonely. I just kept looking at my watch, getting angrier and angrier, and thinking, *hurry up 5 o'clock!* Then I could get out of there and get back to my signing. It really was a completely different world and it was awful. I used to write things down with the hearing people and most of them would try to gesture to me. It was alright, my job as an apprentice joiner but most of the time I just sat there bored and watching what to do. I'll never forget one thing. I always thought hearing people were really good at writing and reading English and we always managed okay. The foreman was a nice bloke and we used to write things down with each other. But one morning, I was reading a newspaper and was really surprised when I noticed it said about the percentage of hearing people who can't read and write. It was a low percentage but I was really shocked because I had thought all hearing people can read and write. I nudged the foreman and showed him and said I didn't know that and I was really shocked. The foreman laughed and said that in the firm, which was roughly a thousand people, half of the people were thick and useless! I was really surprised and couldn't believe it but it made me feel good! When I went home, I asked my parents about it and they said that yes, it was true so then I felt a bit better. So we would write things down and sometimes one person had a higher level than the other. But the job was alright so I stayed there for a while as an apprentice and then I moved to a builders' firm. It was the same there – I used to write things down to communicate.

So I worked as a builder for a while until I got fed-up of joinery. Then I saw an advert for the BSLTA; Durham University were looking to train more teachers and I thought that would really make a change. So I joined the course and I learnt a lot there. In fact, it really changed my life to a great extent and it was a big shock for me. I really liked teaching, and it made me realise that I had spent so many years in school being talked at by the teachers and just not taking it in and now I was the teacher, and I felt like smacking some of the students sometimes! So the

tables were really turned. So I really enjoy teaching and have been doing that for about 20 years now. It's really good and I feel that hearing people's attitudes towards deaf people have really improved. One of my experiences was funny: I told a story and all the hearing people laughed. It was about a bus, or a coach trip we went on – when we arrived, it was a small place and I pressed the reception bell to ask a question, it was a small place and there was nobody around at all, it was empty. A man eventually came and I could lip-read him. He said, "Can I help you" and I wrote down what I wanted, because that's what I always do. Then I got a real shock when I realised that the man was blind! He was just stood there with his eyes closed, saying, "How can I help you", and I thought, *Oh, how can I communicate with him?* It was really terrible. He was waiting for me to reply. He was hearing so he could hear my breathing and I didn't know what to do. I thought about just walking away but then I would have felt really bad. I know that you can spell words onto a blind person's hand but thought that if I grabbed his hand it might startle him and he might think that something was wrong. I was just stood there thinking, *what can I do?* Then luckily, a woman came walking up. She was a stupid woman – I went to tap her on the shoulder and said, "I am deaf", she just nodded; then when I pointed to the man and said, "He is blind", she just nodded again and I thought, *why is she just nodding?!* So I asked her how I could communicate with him and she just kept nodding in a really patronising way. I just rolled my eyes and thought, *fucking stupid!!* She told the blind man that I was deaf and he said, "Oh, I am sorry". I tried to tell him it was fine and that I never expected this situation to happen. Then the blind man walked away and another woman came over and started writing things down for me but I thought, *hold on...what about equal opportunities? It's the blind man's job.* It was really funny but it was an experience I'll never forget! It was bad.

I taught but I also assessed levels 1, 2 and 3; I travelled all over the place by myself, by train and taxi all over Great Britain assessing signing. Some assessments were good and some were really poor; some hotels were lovely and some were awful! Sometimes I was away from home for a whole week if I was stuck there. I was really busy and mostly it was through June and July because that's when CACDP exams were at the end of the year. Every day I would travel and I would go as far up as Scotland and then go back down to the Midlands and then up to Newcastle then back down and back up the country! I had some very bad experiences with the trains but it was alright. Nowadays, the assessments are all done by marking videos so I eventually quit. Now I am a freelance teacher. It's okay; it's not overly busy. It fluctuates really, so sometimes I am and sometimes I'm not busy. You know, they just go on and on about the budget and it's the same old story. I recently became like a full-time grandfather to a five-year old...no, no, a three-year old...and push him up and down all day!

Appendix 9: Translated Transcriptions (field data)

SW5n (TVs in the cafe)

I want to tell you about problems I have had in the past with hearing people being so different to deaf people. There's one example: the cafe nearby. I have been in there occasionally and found it really frustrating because they have loads of TVs hung on the walls in there but they always have the music channels on, with people singing, and I don't understand a word of it, being deaf. I find that so frustrating! So, one day I went and asked the manager of the cafe if they could turn the channel over and put – oh, I don't know – perhaps BBC news on with the subtitles on so I could watch that. The manager asked how you do that and the woman there said, “Oh, I don't know how to do that” so I said, “Oh, give it here!” So they gave me the remote and I changed the channel. I got rid of the music, as I wanted something that I could watch - to make me happy. So I finally got it on but it changed ALL the TVs in the room on to the BBC news! The hearing people were startled by the change in the channel but I just thought, *I'm deaf. I don't care; I want something visual to watch.* I even had to teach them how to put the subtitles on - they didn't know how to do that! It was great; it made me really happy. I said, “Thanks very much” to the manager and they were fine about it. So I'd sit there watching the news eating my meal - keeping up to date with what's happening. When I'd finished my meal I once again thanked the manager for allowing me to put the subtitles on and left. As I was leaving, I turned round and saw that they had switched it straight back over to the music channel again - straight away! It was like, well, the deaf person's gone - back over it goes for the hearing people! Oh well! But now things are much better, things have improved, I actually went into that cafe today and ordered some food. As I looked up to the screens - I don't know how many there are; maybe 10 screens? - Well 5 of the screens had music channels on and the other 5 had the BBC news with subtitles on! They now alternate between a music channel and the news channel, and that's so much better. That makes me happy because all deaf people can go in and watch the news and have access through subtitles - that's much, much better. It's all about campaigning to improve things.

SW8n (A difficult experience with my family)

I was born in Totnes and when I was born, I was rushed into hospital because I was 3 months early; I was premature and tiny - I only weighed 2 lbs so I was rushed in. I was a twin but unfortunately the other one died. They kept me in an incubator and I stayed in there for nearly 6 months until I grew big enough to be able to go home. As I grew up, I was very poorly, really ill, and my parents were both very busy, as they were working on the farm. I was just a small baby at this point so knew nothing that was going on - I learnt about it from my mother. So as I was growing up, I was very, very ill and I do remember finally moving to Exeter deaf school. I didn't go to school until I was almost 5; I was late starting because I was that ill! So it was agreed that I would move to the boarding school and I stayed in the nursery at that time. There were lots of other deaf people there and I was astounded because it was the first time I had met people like myself. They were signing but I didn't have a clue what they meant, as I didn't sign

then! My parents thought I was hearing when I was born but they realised eventually that I was profoundly deaf. Because I was so responsive, they thought I was hearing but really I was just carefully watching things. The hospital failed to diagnose me as deaf until I was about 4 years old when they did diagnose me as deaf, and that was in London. I had to go to London to a hospital called Grays Inn hospital. I stayed there for a week with my mum - for a whole week - while they carried out different sound tests and things, and did lots of different tests until they finally diagnosed me as deaf, and that was when I changed and went to Exeter deaf boarding school. It was agreed I'd go to Exeter school, which was good because they had no time for me, as they worked really hard on the farm for hours every day so it was decided I'd board at the school.

I remember when I first arrived at the school in Exeter. I'd travel to school on the Sunday and go home on a Friday, for the weekend, and on a Sunday I'd always feel ill because I was nervous about going. I didn't like school because I was shy and quiet. Anyway, as I was growing up, when I was about 7, my parents decided to give up the farm, and everything, and move to Exeter - well just outside Exeter - to Exminster, a small village. They had to move and although they stopped working on our farm, my Father carried on working as a paid worker, working for another farmer on his farm. Before that, he had his own farm but when he finished there, he worked *for* another farmer who paid him a wage. So we lived in a cottage. It was a very nice cottage. There were 8 children in total and I was the oldest, and I remember, when I was about 14, looking after the youngest - my brother - and I always still call him my baby brother.

Anyway, I was at Exeter school and that's when I started to sign. I learnt from there, where they taught me to sign. My parents didn't sign and they all never signed, none of them. There was only one - my brother - who I taught to fingerspell, and I remember in bed at night, we'd play things like...doctors and nurses, and we'd play in the dark but we couldn't see so we used a torch to fingerspell to each other. He was the only one who could communicate with me, that was all. I couldn't talk to my other brothers or sisters - I just couldn't. I'd always just give up and lose my temper because, for example, on a Sunday, at tea time, we'd all sit together on a long rectangular table and if I wanted to say something, I'd wave to get their attention but they'd all just ignore me and carry on talking. Oh, I used to explode with anger and grab things and break them! One tea time, we had a really beautiful Sunday tea laid out and I grabbed a fruit bowl full of lovely fruit and threw it across the room in temper. My father caned my hand for it - he was a very strict father. He used to cane my hand and tell me off for being naughty but it was really all because of communication difficulties. I couldn't speak because I was deaf and that was really difficult. It carried on like that and when I was 16, I started a new job and that was a big shock. It was so different because at school, everybody could sign but here they couldn't. My mum went with me on my first day, and stayed with me but after about an hour, I looked up and she had disappeared. She had just gone and left me there with all the hearing people. It was a bit daunting at first but I knew I would have to get used to communicating with them, and I have been fine ever since. Things have improved and it's much better now. That was a difficult experience for me but I am fine now.

SW10n (Holiday with the family)

I'm going to talk about what happened some time ago, my brother passed away. It was probably about 15 years - no actually it'll be 16 years this August - gosh, it gone by so quickly, that's unbelievable! Oh what happened was so emotional. My brother was called Jason, and he wanted to go scuba diving, he was desperate to go, he been before in here in England, I can remember that, but he'd only had a brief lesson. He asked for my permission to take my son scuba diving with him because he was only 15 at that time but he really wanted to try, so I agreed he could go. They both booked to spend the full day out at sea on a boat together go diving and be dropped off at the hotel in the evening by the scuba diving company, we all decided to stay and pottered around, but I paid for them both to go. Oh it was hot in Turkey that day! Anyway the two of them went off and I didn't think any more about it we just meandered around. That evening staff from the diving company dropped them both off, my son told me all about the exciting time he'd had, he said it was amazing, the sights, the diving - but he'd been accompanied by a man because he was underage being only 15, so the man escorted him and they went off diving together and he said it was fantastic. At that point my brother was fine - he was ok, he said he felt tired, which was fair enough so off he went to bed. The following morning - well, my brother was sharing a room with another Deaf man, they had a twin room and he came to me and said, "Oh, your brother's not so good he's been really sleepy and throwing up." I replied, "Oh dear" and checked my son to see how he was feeling. He said he was fine and hadn't been sick or anything. I thought that was really strange but just left it. But by that evening my brother really wasn't well at all and he had deteriorated and it was decided to ask the holiday rep to please ring for a doctor. They agreed and a Turkish doctor arrived, gesticulating and impossible to lip-read - I didn't have a clue - communication was impossible! We were struggling to explain so the holiday rep stepped in and wrote things down for us. Anyway we went into my brother's room and he was examined. The doctor checked his stomach and he didn't seem too concerned saying everything seemed OK and gave him some tablets - which was fine. My brother hated sympathy and didn't want a fuss and was adamant that he was fine and no one should worry about him, which was fair enough, so we left him be. He just got worse and worse though over the next couple of days until it was finally time to go home. The coach came to the hotel to pick us up and by this time my parents were so worried about my brother because he was so pale, sallow and the doctor had been to see him 3 times by this point. Was it three times? Yes, I remember now, it was three times. He kept checking him over, but communication was impossible I really didn't understand a word, we had to write everything downs between us. By now he couldn't walk, he was so weak, we thought he had a bug or something - we just didn't understand the doctor and my brother kept everything to himself, he was determined not to bother to us or spoil the holiday for everyone. But he was so weak, walking was impossible so when we got to the airport I put my foot down and said, 'That is it - you're having a wheelchair!' I forced him - end of! He couldn't walk so I was getting him a wheelchair, he didn't want to but finally agreed, and got into in the chair. We wheeled him to the check- in where our passports were checked and our flight details confirmed. At this point, I was so worried as I didn't know what to do and was in a real quandary. I talked it over with my husband and we thought I might be for the best if we discussed it with the airline. So we went over to the reception desk and I explained my concerns about my brother, the fact he wasn't well and my worries about the flight, stating we needed help. My parents were - how can I explain it? - panicked, no, that's not the right word, they didn't know what they should do. The staff came over to him and asked if he'd been sick or was ill and what was wrong? And my brother said, "No, nothing like that, just felt really weak." They made a note of it and seated him right at the front so the hostess could keep an eye on him, you know? Right at the front near the area where they make the teas and the serving trolley come from? We had a chat and it was agreed, so I asked my brother if he was ok with that and replied he was fine about it. To be honest, he was adamant he just wanted to

go home he even said, "I just want to go home - I'm not well." I didn't know what it was, how he got ill, or where it was from - all I knew was that it was since he'd been diving and from then on. I didn't know if it was the water that was dirty. I don't know! Anyway we were inside the plane, everything was on time, was spot on. We took off leaving turkey to fly to Bristol, we were to land in Bristol. I remember that it was dark as it was a night flight. Shortly before we were due to land in Bristol, just before - I'd say maybe 15 or 20 minutes before we were due to land, my Mother, who was sat at the front with my brother from what I remember, she was sat on his left side and then I can't remember who was sitting on his other side, I forgot who was sat there. Anyway, I was sat in the next row behind them and saw my brother tapping my mother on her shoulder saying, "I love you so much." I just watched them and didn't say anything - I thought he was feeling bad or guilty for spoiling the holiday or something - I don't know. Anyway he tapped her on her shoulder and said, "I love you so much" and mum reassured him saying, "There, there, don't be silly! You'll be fine a I'll look after you - don't worry." He wasn't irate- he just sat there and looked kind of resigned, very quiet and subdued, just so very quiet. We landed at Bristol, and we were taxiing back to the gate, you know, to the guys with the semaphore paddles? We were waiting for them to put the air brakes on - you know that feeling of jerking forward when the brakes come on? Finally, we stopped, and due to it being dark they turned the lights on - it must have been in the morning - I think about half past 5, 5 o'clock or half past 5 in the morning I think. People stood up to get their cases and there was a queue of people so the hostess told my brother to wait in his seat as he was so weak and to let the others get off. My brother nodded his agreement but he wanted the toilet so as he stood up, collapsed and fell straight to the floor. He fell in the gangway at the front, just by the 2 exit doors at the front, you know? Just behind where the pilot sits. He fell straight across the corridor - it was chaos! The hostess took my mother out, but luckily people had started to exit from the rear - so my parents could move to some empty seats further down the plane - I think they moved maybe 4 or 5 rows back and they were settled there. I thought 'oh shit!' I was worried about my children - I didn't want them to see anything so I turned to my husband and asked him to get them off, he said, "Ok, I'll meet you in the airport - we'll wait there for you - it'll be better." I shrugged an apology but he said it was fine, so he left with a Deaf friend. My parents stayed in their seats, while the other 4 left and I told them I'd meet them there. I looked at him on the floor and I knew he'd gone. The hostess was there and the captain heard him fall and came out and started doing CPR on him because they realised his breathing had stopped, he wasn't making any noise - he wasn't breathing at all. I was trapped standing at the front and I couldn't do anything. They were talking to me and I indicated I was Deaf, and she said, "Oh, you're Deaf? Right ok." Then she started talking to the hostess who was with my parents and told her to get them off the plane and wait with them in the terminal near the baggage carousel. We then started communicating via pen. I explained that he was also Deaf, she wrote down lots of questions asking for his name, etc. Then she got on the radio and rang, I assume, 999. I was not sure what she was doing, I assumed she radioed for an ambulance or something - I don't know. She asked in writing when he started to become ill and I explained he hadn't been well before we left, and that we didn't know what was wrong with him. During this time, they continued performing CPR on him. Then the fire brigade arrived, you know, they are specialist and based at the airport, in case any planes were on fire. They arrived so quickly, and they carried on with the CPR. We were still communicating via pen and paper written and they asked for his passport. I had to rummage round in the bags to find it. I handed it over and they asked for his name and date of birth his age - all sorts of things. And all this time, they were still performing CPR on him - they gave him oxygen - they tried everything but I could tell by his eyes - he'd gone as there was nothing there. Something came over me and I just knew and was prepared for the worst - I really was beginning to prepare. I knew but just didn't want to admit it. Next the ambulance arrived ready to take him to Bristol hospital - BRI I think? Bristol Royal Infirmary, I think that's what it stands for but anyway they arrived and took over putting him in the ambulance. The air hostess came with me, it was

overwhelming, she came outside with me and I was shivering - I was hot but my body felt cold and my knees were shaking. We rushed over to my parents and she wanted to send them in a taxi, but I wrote that I wanted to go with them because they really were panic stricken. The ambulance left and I was agreed that the hostess, and my parents and I would travel by taxi from the airport to the hospital. When we arrived, the hostess was amazing - she was so supportive and provided reassuring hugs. We arrived at hospital to A and E. There were lots more questions and people talking amongst themselves and the air hostess was fantastic communicating with me writing all the information down. I remember her uniform- it's was red - Air 2000, the company's gone now but I remember a badge on her uniform - Air 2000. It was a red uniform with a red and white cravat - I still remember that. So anyway we were writing things down and she said very clearly, "I'm very, very, sorry" and handed me a piece of paper - it had the company's name on it their contact details, her name and contact details because she knew everything that had happened as she had seen it all. So I thanked her. She apologised and said she had to go home, I thanked her again and she left. I went into the family room and a nurse, well girl, asked if I'd like a cup of tea or some toast. By this time, I was starving as I hadn't eaten for ages, so I said agreed that tea and toast would be good. She went off and we waited and waited and waited. My parents were devastated and they were panicking. Actually, my father wasn't too bad, but my mother - she was terrible she had lost it. I've never seen her like that before - it was unbelievable. I tried to keep her calm by saying that we didn't know what was going on yet - but she was demanding answers. I just tried to reassure her and kept her calm until finally a doctor came and asked if there were any family that we would like him to contact? He wrote it down and then I signed the question to my parents. We went communicated going back and forth this way with him and me writing things down and then me signing it to my mother and father. My mum would tap me on the shoulder whilst we were writing asking what was going on! I was stuck in the middle, my parents couldn't read English very well, whereas I could read English quite well. The doctor was relying on me as there wasn't an interpreter there at that time and it was in the early hours in the morning. By this time, it must have been 6, or 6.30 in the morning - I think it was morning. So I asked them who they wanted to be contacted and my Mother said she wanted to her sister who is my Aunty. Luckily the contact details were on the back of the passport - the emergency contacts bit, which was great. They made a note of it and my father wanted his brother - my Uncle to be informed so they took his details down too and said they would ring them and left. I suppose they were going to tell them what had happened and that help was needed! We waited for ages and ages - I was so tired! Finally, the doctor came back again, and wrote on a piece of paper 'I am so sorry' and passed it to me. I looked at it - he expected me to tell my parents which meant I was the first to know, I knew before my parents and resigned myself to the fact I would be the first person to tell them that their son had died. I explained that they were unable to resuscitate him and he had not survived. My Mother was hysterical in floods of tears. My father grabbed her and shouted at her telling her to shut up, to stop. She was crying and asked to be held so I hugged her and she couldn't stop crying. All three of us were sobbing and it was awful - it was devastating. I tried to calm her down and she became adamant she wanted to see him, I turned to the doctor as he'd backed off during this as it was all in sign language and he was hearing. I was acting as the interpreter for them! Then, we had to write things down again and he told us that Aunty Shirley and Uncle Tony were on their way and would get here in about 2 hours. He asked if we wanted to see him to which my parents did. He informed us that he would let the nurse know so she could get him ready for them and that he was really sorry but there was nothing further he could do. We thanked him and he left. My mother was devastated, we opened the windows as it was so warm in the room - well it was August so it would be. We sat and waited until the nurse came to get us and I supported my mother as she walked to see him. I looked at him and it was..... lovely - it looked just like he was asleep and he didn't look horrible in any way, he was still dressed in his holiday clothes, he had a sheet over him up to his chest and he just looked like he was asleep,

he didn't look like he had died a long time ago because he still had colour on his cheeks from the sun. His eyes were closed, different to when I'd seen him earlier, lying in the passageway, on the plane with his eyes open and it was awful but now he just looked like he was sleeping, it was very different and it was lovely. My mother grabbed him and wouldn't let go. My father just didn't know what to do for the best. My mother was shaking my brother's hand and she was in floods of tears. She was pulling him trying to wake him up. I felt she was going too far - it was all too much, and I told to my father, "enough" to which he nodded in agreement. I told him that this is just too much for her. I tried to encourage her away by asking if she wanted a cup of tea and that we would come back to see him. She just didn't want to let him go and she was shaking so much - it was such a relief when she did finally let him go. We went back to the same family room and sat there. We just waited and waited until finally Auntie Shirley and Uncle Tony arrived. The doctor came back and it was so much easier as they could speak directly to him - they were all talking away to each other and it was a relief just to leave them to it. They explained that we needed to wait for the death certificate to be signed and as he was the last person to see him, he needed to sign and confirm the death was in the hospital. That meant the certificate would be picked up and passed onto the coroner and his body could be taken away as they already knew the cause of death. We were all so emotional and we couldn't take it all in. My husband, my two children and our friend had already gone home. I contacted home all broken down and in tears. My brother died in the August and then, I think, it must have been 6 or 7 months later that we had the inquest which is where you go to court and they investigate the cause of death. We went to court and they decided it was an accidental death caused by the scuba diving when he had the bends - it's when you go diving and your lungs collapse and when there's not enough air in the blood. When my brother went diving, the descent was fine but he came up too quickly but my son was fine because he stayed with the man who made sure they came back up at the right speed. They thought my brother came up too fast which meant that there wasn't enough air in his body and being on the plane made it worse and made him collapse. It was too late - he didn't survive. It was awful! My mother still thinks about it and it is always in her mind. We talk about it and she still goes to his grave every month with takes flowers. My mother had a go at me because I never go so I explained that he's in me and that he's not in the grave - he's with me. She understands this now and has accepted it now.

SE10n (Interpreting at the hospital)

Recently I had to go to hospital so I let them know I'm Deaf and would need an interpreter. After a while, they emailed back to say they'd booked a female interpreter and was that ok with me. I said no and told them that I wanted a male interpreter but they asked why so I had to explain that it was because I'm a man and was going to hospital about a male-related problem so it was not appropriate for a female, as they wouldn't match my requirements. Anyway, when I arrived, there was a male interpreter there but he turned up late. He was a new interpreter and I was very unhappy that he was late. The appointment was at 11am but because he arrived late, it had to be moved back then would have been moved back again to 12pm to let other people go in but fortunately it wasn't too busy and there were only a few people in there so the doctor said, "Come on in". So I went in but...oh, no, sorry...before that... Sorry, let me go back - before that, they said, "Oh, sorry but the interpreter is going to be late; he should get here about 20 to 12". I wasn't impressed and they said, "You go and sit down and wait". Well, I wasn't going to sit there staring into space with no one to talk to - that's horrid! So I went and made myself a coffee and was waiting when another man came, a black man, who said, "I've got an interpreter for

you” so I asked where they were and he said they were upstairs. I thought, *that’s strange; he’s supposed to meet me here*. Anyway, I went all the way upstairs but there wasn’t an interpreter there. I thought, *what’s he talking about? He just told me...* at which point the black man said, “Oh, sorry...I’m sorry but he’s downstairs in the basement”. I wasn’t happy - I’d wasted all my time climbing up all these flights of stairs and he just said, “Shall we go back down?” I refused. I wasn’t walking all that way again so I got the lift all the way down, where I met the interpreter.

After I’d seen the doctor and he’d finished his examination, I determinedly said I wanted to make a complaint to the manager so he took me into his office and made notes. He was very expressive, making lots of shocked faces. He acted it out really well, repeating what I’d told him about being sent up and downstairs. Then I explained about the interpreter, and the receptionist not having eye contact, no facial expression and looking all over the place. The interpreter, who was hearing, was speaking and the receptionist should be listening. I asked about booking the interpreter and he said, “Oh, I’ve got to fax it off”. I explained about the previous times when I attended and the interpreter failed to turn up and I wasn’t informed about anything and just left sitting there staring into space and looking around the room. The manager said, “Do they really behave like that? That’s not professional; I’ll raise both the issues” and I said, “Yes! Thank you very much” and then I left. All those people - to be treated like that because I’m deaf is just awful. Deaf people just suffer so much!

SE13n (My ill mother)

I’ll tell you about something that happened to my mother when she was ill. It was probably last month - yes last month. My sister was away and my mother was ill, and just kept getting worse and worse. One morning I arrived and my mother had collapsed and was lying there all upset. I was panic stricken, thinking and thinking what I could do. She was lying there in a terrible state and I grabbed my mobile phone but I realised I couldn’t use text to call the doctor so I started pacing around the room trying to decide what to do. Then I remembered my niece. She’s an interpreter so I called her and she popped up on the screen so I could sign to her. She was actually driving to Cambridge but I had to say, “Your nanna is really ill, and I want you to call a doctor - NOW! Please, please”. She said, “Don’t worry” then she said she’d contact my nephew. He had just arrived home when she rang him so he dropped everything to come over. It was such a relief at last but she said it would take him an extra half an hour before he arrived and I wanted to make contact immediately but I couldn’t. It looked terrible because I was there, a deaf person, and it was my mother lying there, and I had to use my niece and nephew who are both hearing. It was really difficult as a deaf person in that situation. Anyway, it was sorted out eventually.

I then spoke to the Macmillan cancer place and a lady came out to assess my mum and said she needed a carer. I explained how difficult it is being deaf and caring for her, as communicating with her is so hard. Mum keeps rambling, and I know that’s not like her, but all the medication she is taking is making her really drowsy. So this woman said, “Oh, it’s fine, it’s fine; you’ll be fine” and I was really taken aback by this. I thought, *No, I don’t understand my own mother* but she just kept saying I’ll be fine and it’ll be alright. I really felt she just wasn’t deaf aware, and I was so emotional. Anyway, eventually my sister finally came back but it happened again. My mother took a turn for the worse - my sister and I both saw her. We had gone in to change the bedding and put some clean sheets on, and we saw her and it was terrible. Until this

point, mum had been refusing to go to hospital but she actually finally agreed to go to hospital - finally! So my sister and I are both deaf and we didn't really know what to do next? So I said to her, "See - now you know how I felt. This is what I went through last time - it's not that easy, is it?" So she went off into another room and tried to ring - struggling to hear on the phone - while she rang 999. It was so difficult, and she was saying repeatedly into the phone, "I don't understand you" so then she left it and we waited and waited until finally an ambulance man arrived. Eventually, an ambulance man came...the one that comes first...yes, a paramedic, and checked her over. He was quite taken aback by the fact that we are both deaf. Anyway, then he pricked her finger again and again to get some blood out, and we had to say to him, "Hey, that's enough! You're putting holes in her finger...that's plenty!" Poor mum. Anyway, then we tried communicating with him then at last an ambulance arrived and they decided to take her to hospital, as she started being sick. They sorted everything out and my sister went in the ambulance with my mum whilst I stayed at home to tidy up and clean the house.

Both of us have had horrid experiences due to being deaf and that was my bad experience. You know, people say, "What's wrong with you? It's OK, it's all right, and you could just go and ask the neighbours for help. Knock on the door next door and ask them to help you". But I don't even know the neighbours, I don't know who they are yet people say, "Oh, it's OK, they'll help you make a phone call". But what if they're not in when I need immediate help? Do they really expect me to leave my mum to go next door - who's going to look after her while I do that? It's so difficult!! It's not easy at all.

SE18n (At mainstream school)

When I was growing up, I went to a school with a PHU, which is a small unit of deaf children in a large, mainstream school for hearing children. It was a good school and I had a good time there. We all signed and the unit teachers signed when they were teaching us. Outside, at break times and lunch times, we were with all of the hearing kids and that was very oppressive. They would gather in their groups to play football and I would be left just wandering alone. The four of us deaf kids would just be left together. We would go up and ask if we could play too but they would just tell us to go away so we would just hang around, watching. They used to make fun of us a lot, too. But luckily, I was a good football player so sometimes they would pick me to play and I could join in. When you're deaf and you try to integrate with hearing people, though, life is hard and it's really not easy. When you're immersed into an all-deaf group, it's perfect. When you leave school, you're automatically immersed into the deaf world and it's no problem at work or mixing with deaf people and you've got the deaf club. Looking back, having to integrate with hearing people did slightly help to make me a strong character because I had to deal with the bullying.

NE2n (A doctor's appointment)

I recently had a really bad cough so went to the doctor - the doctor gave me some medicine - well tablets – antibiotics so I took them and it got better but then the cough came back again. I just couldn't stop coughing so I went back to the doctor and explained that it was no better but unfortunately I didn't have an Interpreter with me so we had to communicate by writing things down. So anyway, he sent me for an x-ray and I didn't need an interpreter for that - it's easy enough. So then I went back to the doctors for the results but they hadn't received them yet. I was disappointed, as it was just dragging everything out. The doctor said to me, "Better ask your family to ring up because I need you to phone for the results". So then I explained that I couldn't phone so he told me to get my family to ring. The doctor had no awareness of deaf people. Anyway, he told me to ask my family so I asked my son to ring the doctor for the results about my chest. He texted me and said, "I've rung up but they've still not received them". That was a shame! Anyway, then I came back off holiday and there was a letter there waiting for me, saying the doctor wanted to see me, straight away! So I went down to make an appointment; this was in the morning and luckily they gave me an appointment for the same afternoon.

So, the doctor was explaining about various problems but I didn't have a clue what he meant! I didn't understand a word he was saying! It was so hard to communicate. He wrote it down but it went straight over my head! I asked for a piece of paper and wrote on it that I wanted to come back again when they'd booked an interpreter. So they booked an interpreter at the next appointment and then explained to me about my problems with my chest and heart - I felt so much better! Since then, they always book an interpreter for me at all appointments and that feels so much better for me. It's so important to have an interpreter to make sure you've got access to information - without one, well, you just don't understand, if you know what I mean.

NE3n (Results at the hospital)

I'll tell you about an awful thing that happened 24 years ago when I went into hospital for some tests. I went into the hospital and the doctor was there, and there was a bed and a long gown so I put it on and got on the bed and the doctor came over and spoke to me. I couldn't communicate with him - I didn't understand a word! I was trying to lip-read but it was too difficult. Then the next thing, 2 nurses came and stood either side of me and I looked at them both - it looked like they were preparing for something but I didn't have a clue what was going on - it was so hard! So eventually after some faffing the doctor said, with exaggerated lip patterns, "Erm...5 minutes' and held up 5 fingers. So I thought, *OK, he wants me to wait for 5 minutes, fair enough - I'll wait*. Then another nurse came and I thought to myself, *what are you doing here?* And she said, "The doctor" – I could lip-read that – "asked me to come because I can sign a little bit". "Oh", I said, "so you can sign a little bit? Oh, alright then". She said something to the doctor, who said something back and then she said, "The doctor's asked me to ask you some questions". "Oh, OK then", I replied. The nurse then said, "The doctor's asked me to ask you, what you think?" So I said, "Erm...I don't know - what?" She then asked, "Do you know what's wrong with you?" So I nodded and said, "Yes, I think so" and she told that to the doctor. Then the doctor asked her to ask me what I thought was wrong with me so I replied,

"Well, I think I've got the 'big C'". "Oh, 'C'", she said, and she nodded and told the doctor. The doctor said something to her and she signed to me, "Yes". Well, I was immediately dumbfounded; it was such a shock - and then it hit me and I jumped forwards. I felt like I'd been shot! The 2 nurses, who were stood either side of me, grabbed my arms and held me to the bed but that meant I couldn't communicate! It was awful of them to tell me like that, through a nurse with limited signs but there were no interpreters at that time. Honestly, the impact it had on me was so bad. I'll never ever forget that. It was 24 years ago, when we had no interpreters - nothing! But at least the doctor used enough initiative to be prepared and get a nurse who could sign - even if it was only a little bit; it was better than nothing. Imagine what he would have done without her - would he have written the word 'cancer' on a piece of paper? Would he have done that? I really don't know - it makes me feel sick at the thought of it. But I got through it. I had the operation all those years ago and I'm still here so I'm happy. You have to be positive in life!

NE7n (Snorkeling in Australia)

I'll tell you about Australia. We went to Australia and visited the Great Barrier Reef on Christmas Day. It was lovely! My husband and I went on a boat and there were probably over a thousand of us. We all borrowed flippers and masks and snorkels and went swimming. Oh, it was beautiful to see all the fish swimming around with the turtles. My husband was holding my hand as we were swimming but we got separated, looking at all the beautiful things. There was a net all around us to keep everyone enclosed in the area, so people couldn't swim off. I thought that was interesting. Anyway, the next thing I know is that I got the feeling of water being splashed onto my back so I looked up through my mask and was shocked to see a man in a rowing boat in front of me, shouting at me and pointing back to the boat. I looked around me and realised that everyone had disappeared from the water; it was time to go back to the boat and an alarm had gone off but I hadn't heard it. Luckily, they saw my snorkel bobbing up and down in the water and came to get me! He rowed back to the boat and I had to swim to keep up with him until I got back to the boat. My husband had been looking for me everywhere but it was so difficult with over a thousand people milling around on the boat and he hadn't been able to find me. Everyone else was already dressed, and there was me with a snorkel, mask and flippers, stomping around - I was the last one changed! My husband asked where I'd been. I was just lucky the man thought to splash water on me to get my attention and if there hadn't been that net there, I could have swum off and been left behind by the boat - me - bobbing up and down and my husband wondering where I had gone!

NW6n (Finding the right school)

I started to learn sign language when I was 13 - a late starter! But before that, I went to a mainstream school. My mum used to take me to the local school; she didn't know anything about deafness then so she used to take me and my brother to school every day and pick us up. I'd wave my hands around to try to communicate but I didn't know what I was doing...it wasn't BSL, it was more like gibberish - it was strange really. But they all just ignored me and let me get on with it. But I picked up so much through my eyes, visually - I watched everything and I thought

in pictures and then would try to gesture to people. But I struggled to translate those pictures into words and explain what I meant to my mum. If I had used BSL or English with her, she'd have understood but at that time we didn't use it. Anyway, that was when I was in mainstream school and then I moved to Kingsbury Green School, which was a little further out so I needed to get the bus. There were other deaf children there – we were put in a PHU, a small unit for the deaf children. When we'd finished in our unit, we'd go over to join classes in the mainstream school with an interpreter, and the teacher could use some basis signs, and sometimes there'd be a teaching assistant for additional support. So from there I started to build up my understanding but I wasn't satisfied there; it felt like there was a part of me - my identity - that was missing. At that point, I didn't understand about being deaf; I didn't think there was a problem. Later on, other kids started leaving and I realised I would have to leave Kingsbury Green and move on to high school but I didn't know where to go. No particular school was recommended for me so I just followed my friends into a hearing mainstream secondary school! I just followed everyone across and later realised - I think with hindsight - that I chose the wrong place but mum said off you go, so I did.

Once I was there, everything went downhill quickly. I mean, I did get interpreters so that was good but they were often missing from lessons because the school had run out of money to pay for them but they didn't tell me anything about it and I got so stressed by it all. Sometimes I could see the teacher talking and looking all around the room and I'd sit there not able to do my work so I'd just copy off the person next to me. I didn't have a clue what I was writing; I just copied it down. I found it so frustrating that in the end I just walked out - I was so angry! My mum wanted to know what was wrong. She was in a real panic and my dad didn't know what to do, as he couldn't communicate with me either. I was just so angry that I quit and I wouldn't go to school. At that time, I was year 7, not 8, and I refused to go to school so I'd just sit there at home. How was I supposed to communicate with them? I tried to explain but I just didn't have the words to explain my signs. Then my friend told me about 'Oak Lodge', a deaf school. I knew the sign but didn't know the word for it until he told me. I said to my mum, "Oak Lodge" but she still didn't understand me. She was desperate to know what I was saying but just couldn't work it out. She finally decided to take me - it was a really good idea actually - to a deaf event, where there were loads of deaf people. Mum took me round the stalls and we suddenly saw the word 'Oak Lodge'. It was written on a stall so we checked it was the same Oak Lodge that my friends had mentioned. Mum had a long discussion with the people there but I wasn't sure if I'd even feel comfortable there or not. But then eventually, after the local authority had agreed the funding, I was able to visit. I was so excited because my friend was there and I fitted right in. I was buzzing, meeting so many new people. I'd received my exam results from the mainstream school and I'd failed all of them - every single one. Oh no, actually I passed one - it was PE, and that was only because it was so visual so it was easy! Once I got into Oak Lodge, the deaf school, I started passing all my exams, and with good marks too, to be honest, but I wasn't surprised really. Looking back now, I remember that I was considering staying on at the deaf school but I decided against it, and chose to go to a mainstream college instead because I'd compared the pass rates *and* I would have reliable communication support, which I didn't have when I was at school. I just couldn't rely on it there - they'd just stop providing it when the budget ran out and then they'd blame the coordinator, saying there were problems with them not managing the support properly, whereas in college it was reliable.

NW8n (A Bomb scare on the train)

I had a similar issue as a deaf person, with not knowing what was happening. When I was about 20, I had been partying with my friends in the Midlands: Wolverhampton, Birmingham - round there anyway. I got a train from there to my parents, who live up near Liverpool. So, I was sat on the train, dozing off, as I hadn't had much sleep the night before because of the party. I soon fell fast asleep! Shortly after, someone tapped me on the shoulder - it was a conductor who told me to get off immediately. There'd been a bomb scare and everyone had evacuated the train but I hadn't realised and I was sat there fast asleep! I didn't hear a thing! No one else had thought to tap me on the shoulder as they were leaving the train and I would have just stayed there asleep!!! I was fortunate that the bomb didn't go off - I was really lucky.

N12n (Locked Out)

This story happened at home about two years ago on a Friday night when there was an under 20 rugby match, Wales versus France. I was meeting with about 7 Deaf people in the evening to watch the match but first meet them in the pub at 6pm.

My wife cooked dinner for the family and we were busy with the meal. I asked my wife if she could drop me off at the pub to which she agreed. We were ready and about to go when my youngest daughter cried out that she wanted to come with us. At that time, it was freezing and she didn't have her socks, shoes or coat on yet so my wife sorted that whilst I waited in the car. I made sure that I had coat, thick hat and gloves on as it was so cold and also checked that I had money, my mobile and keys in my pockets.

I waited in the car whilst my wife was getting our daughter ready and realised that we were already 15 minutes late and the Deaf people were constantly texting me to hurry up. I told them that I was sorting out the family first and to hang on. I thought it would be better if I sat in the driver's seat and switch the car engine on so that when my wife and daughter came out, we can get going and my wife can drive later. They got in the car and I drove to the pub and when we arrived, I kissed my daughter and my wife went to the driver's side and I wave them goodbye.

I went in the pub and the Deaf waved their hands to applaud my entrance. I told them that it was difficult to manage time when sorting the family out. We had a few drinks then walked to the rugby stadium specifically for the under 20s which is a beautiful new building with new seats. We singed away whilst walking to the stadium and when we arrived, we bought more drinks. We were taking pictures of the match with our mobiles to show that we had been at the stadium and we showed our phones to each other, texting and drinking in between watching the match. You know what Deaf people are like. The team won, it was a good match and enjoyable.

There were three or four of us that lived in Rhyl and wanted to go to a pub that was near the railway station and have a drink before going home. There was plenty of time as we had an hour so we all walked to the pub. We drank, chatted, texted on our mobiles when I saw that my mobile battery was low. Some of us left the pub until there four remaining.

When it got to 11.30 pm, I decided I had enough and was ready to go home. I walked for about a mile and arrived home. When I got to the door, I searched my pockets for the key when I realised that I had left the key with the car key when I drove earlier. I should have taken it out when I arrived at the pub but had left them and my wife drove home with the keys. I had no keys and my mobile batter was flat. At first I was at a lost to what I was going to do when I realised that it would be all right as my three daughters are hearing. The middle daughter was staying at a friend's house, the oldest who was 15 and the youngest who was 5 were in bed and would hear me knocking on the door. First I tried the door to check that it was locked, then I rang the doorbell twice with no response. I walked round to the back of the house and looked into the kitchen window and saw no-one. I went round the front and tried the doorbell again with no joy. I knew I would have to really bang on the door and still got no answer. I looked around the neighbourhood worrying that I was making too much noise. I banged and kicked the door to the point where the door was vibrating. I walked round the back again. My oldest daughter's bedroom window was upstairs on the left and my youngest was on the right. I found little stones and threw them against my oldest daughter's bedroom window which bounced off and with no response so I picked up a handful of stones and threw the lot against the window. The stones bounced and hit me in the face which was painful. I tried ringing, kicking and banging the door again to no avail. I knew my daughter was home not away. I continued to throw handfuls of stones but still no response. I was getting frustrated because it was freezing outside and didn't want to sleep outside. I looked around and saw the Wendy house in the garden. I opened it and saw the stairs in it and a mattress folded on the floor. It looks like I would have to sleep in there knowing that in the morning my body will be stiff but that is my problem. I went in, closed the door and put a cover over myself and laid down. I imagined that this is what it is like for tramps braving it out at night. I tossed and turned for about half an hour when I saw a light shining through the Wendy house window. I thought, with relief, that it was my wife shining her iPhone torch and thought 'where have you been?' I opened the door and climbed out and signed, 'Where have you been, I've been knocking....' when suddenly I felt my arms being grabbed and restrained. I thought to myself, that can't be my wife as she couldn't restrain me like this. Then I thought it might be a male stranger and started to wave 'no' then I saw the person holding me had police numbers on his shoulder. I quickly gestured that I was Deaf. I was let go and I tried to sign to the police that I was Deaf and that my wife was Deaf and that I had knocked but no one answered. When the police shone his torch round, I was shocked to see several police around my garden fence shining their torches. I quickly gestured that my children were in bed sleeping and didn't hear me throwing stones at the window. The police shone the torch at the window and I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw that the window was smashed. How terrible! The police asked if my children were hearing and I told them yes. The police were puzzled that they hadn't heard anything. Then I saw a helicopter hovering above us with lights shining all over the garden. It made the garden look beautiful and felt like daylight. I was gobsmacked. The police then talked into his walkie-talkie explaining to the other police what had happened. I felt anxious to all that was happening.

The police asked for a telephone number and I gave him my daughter's number. I dialled it on his phone and he said it was ringing and I thought to myself that she would hear that. There was no answer so the police tried knocking on the door and the kitchen window to no avail. I started to feel embarrassed about the whole thing. I noticed that none of my neighbours had their lights

on which surprised me. When I walked to the front, I was shocked to see six police cars lined up in the road without their lights flashing. I felt queasy to think that the neighbours never saw anything. We tried knocking and ringing the bell again.

The police typed up a message on his phone and showed it to me which asked if I had any family living nearby. I told him that my parents live in Llandudno which was about four miles away. The police told me that he would have to take me to my parents to which I agreed to. I was embarrassed because it felt like I was being arrested as I got into the police car. The seat was horrible and hard. I used my hands to give them directions to my parents' house. We arrived at their house and I felt like I had been a naughty boy. The police rang the doorbell and I pointed up and gestured that my parents slept there. The lights went on quickly and I could see my mother through the door window coming down the stairs. She opened the door and I could see she was looking shocked and wondering what was wrong. My mother confirmed to the police that I was her son. The police then explained what had happened. She was shocked. As the police left, I thanked him.

I went into the house and explained more to my mother and she laughed and laughed. She wondered why my daughter didn't answer the door. I said that I wasn't sure if she was out or in bed but knew my middle daughter was away. My mother then used her mobile, which was an old type where you had to press each key several times to get the letter you wanted, to quickly send a message to my wife as her battery was running low. We had a cup of tea and talked for a while when there was a message on the phone. My wife had replied! My wife was shocked asking why the police was involved and why I was at my parents. My wife was sitting in the lounge watching TV waiting for me to come home. She had texted me earlier to let me know that I had left my keys in the car and that she would wait up for me and to text her to open the door but I couldn't do that because unfortunately my mobile battery was flat. When my mother texted her that our daughter's bedroom window was smashed, she quickly ran up to look. My daughter was in bed with the covers over her head. My wife woke her to which she responded with an angry 'What?' My wife shouted at her that Daddy has been trying to get in and has been knocking on the door to which my daughter responded that she was tired and fast asleep. My wife went to look at the window but saw no broken glass in the room. She rolled up the blinds and to her horror saw the smashed outer glass of the double glazing all smashed but the inside window was fine. My daughter retorted that Daddy was stupid. My wife told her that I had tried ringing the doorbell. My daughter was gobsmacked and hadn't heard a thing as she was heavily asleep.

It was decided that it would be best that I stayed at my parents' house. It felt weird because the last time I had slept in my old bedroom was twenty- two years ago and it felt like being single again.

The next morning my wife and daughter came over to pick me up. My wife asked me why I went to the police station and I told her that someone must have rung the police thinking I was a burglar. I explained to her everything that has happened. Even though my wife was shocked at first, she laughed about it. She couldn't believe it.

Appendix 10: Data Analysis -

Sub-Theme Key:

S	Signing
G	Getting Attention
V	Visuality
O	Oral/Gestures
L	Lack of Understanding

M	Missed Information
B	Bonding
U	Use of Light
R	Reading and Writing
T	Technology

Corpus data

Coding and Analysis of BSL Corpus Narratives

Code Number	Topic	Theme	Typicality		Interactional Content		Experiential Content	Collective Content
			Cultural Content					
BF13n	Which school?	Education	Sees signing – do not know what it is	V	<p>Oral, didn't know what it was</p> <p>Mother and father talk</p> <p>Left at boarding school, didn't know it was boarding</p> <p>Oral with gestures</p> <p>Rubbish at speaking English</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p>	<p><i>My mum was very distressed and wondered where I could go to school</i></p> <p><i>My mum and dad didn't want me to use sign language</i></p> <p><i>Wanted me to be oral and learn to speak</i></p>	<p><i>I was born hearing</i></p> <p><i>Found out I was deaf</i></p> <p><i>With oral deaf</i></p> <p><i>Deaf kids used sign</i></p> <p><i>Deaf people</i></p> <p><i>Deaf friends</i></p>

							<p><i>Mum and dad went off and were talking to someone and then they left</i></p> <p><i>Started crying and crying, asking where my mum and dad were</i></p> <p><i>Didn't want to be teased there for being oral</i></p> <p><i>Step out of the deaf world and into the hearing world</i></p>	
BM2n	Lost after the park	Communication	<p>Police waved to get attention</p> <p>Mouths teacher's name</p> <p>Seeing signing but not knowing what it was</p> <p>Learning to sign</p> <p>See someone Deaf</p>	<p>G</p> <p>O</p> <p>V</p> <p>S</p> <p>V</p>	<p>was never told - had meningitis</p> <p>Family talking</p> <p>Not hearing anything</p> <p>Man and woman spoke</p> <p>Led by arm but didn't know where to</p> <p>Police talking from behind</p> <p>Took no notice</p>	<p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>L</p>	<p><i>I read about it now as an adult in newspapers but didn't understand anything about it when I was young, as my parents never used to tell me anything</i></p> <p><i>I was the only deaf child there</i></p> <p><i>Police officer told mum that I wouldn't talk to him and couldn't hear him and asked her what was wrong with me</i></p>	<p><i>Mum told him I was deaf and dumb</i></p> <p><i>Take me to G? Hill Deaf club</i></p>

					<p>Didn't understand what he was saying</p> <p>Sister shout but didn't know why</p> <p>Didn't understand signing</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p>	<p><i>Oh, you're hearing - get out!</i></p>	
CF6n	A Car Accident	Travelling	Sees banging on window	V	<p>Police couldn't sign</p> <p>Communicate via pen and paper</p>	<p>L</p> <p>R</p>	<p><i>Eventually the officer looked at me and asked if I was okay</i></p> <p><i>Frustratingly had to write things down</i></p>	
G11n	Donnelly School	Communication	<p>Waved to the others</p> <p>Waved to get the man's attention</p>	<p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>Teachers not using sign language</p> <p>Did not understand teachers</p> <p>Didn't know why arrived at castle</p> <p>Misunderstood about 'holiday'</p>	<p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p>		
L2n	Losing Visa Card	Travelling	Saw message on board	<p>V</p> <p>V</p>	<p>Man speaking through the glass</p>	<p>L</p> <p>R</p>		<p><i>Are you deaf?</i></p>

			Saw the man approach Alerted visually via the timetable board	✓	Communication via paper and pen Amazed by the deaf awareness	B		
L5n	Flying to Edinburgh	Travelling			Wouldn't be able to hear tannoy Sat in wing seat – told to move as wouldn't hear instructions in emergencies	M M	<i>Told me to sit down and wait, and I felt a little patronised I was the last person sitting there He thinks because I am deaf I've got no common sense</i>	<i>Explained to them that I was deaf Deaf person</i>
L11n	Deaf Club at Home	Community	Signing away Signing for hours	S	Teachers thought signing was bad	S	<i>Used to sign all the time and couldn't stop so they sent me to four different schools House constantly full of deaf</i>	<i>All deaf Deaf people Deaf clubs Deaf gathering</i>
L30n	Is that my mother?	Communication			Arrived at school not knowing what was going on Was left at school by mother but not knowing why	M M M	<i>Think anything of being deaf because I couldn't remember being hearing There wasn't really a school I could go to</i>	<i>Born hearing</i>

					During the holidays, was picked up by a woman – didn't know it was mother Realised at 7 from letters written to her	R	<i>I looked back and suddenly realised my mother had disappeared</i> <i>When I was about seven, I asked if that lady was my mum</i> <i>my mum used to worry about me because I was deaf</i>	
L34n	A bus journey	Travelling	Sees feet Looked up – shocked Tap on shoulder Tap not allowed	✓ ✓ G G	Tries to shout	M	<i>He asked me for my ticket and I explained I that am deaf</i> <i>Had been shouting at me over and over again</i> <i>They were thinking, oh my goodness, it's a deaf person, how pathetic</i>	<i>I was deaf</i>
M18n	Playing with Matches	Education	Signing with each other Sheet down to check Looked all around	S ✓ ✓	Knock on door- waited until door opened Father and headmaster talked	M M		<i>Born deaf</i> <i>School for the deaf</i> <i>Friends deaf</i> <i>Deaf asleep</i> <i>Deaf don't know</i>
N1n	Deaf or hearing?	Education	See teacher gestures but not understand	✓	Teacher talk, don't understand	L	<i>I went to a school for hearing children</i>	<i>School for hearing</i>

			<p>See parents argue with teacher but do not know what was said</p> <p>Doctor bang table, feel vibration</p> <p>Father realised banging his foot caused vibrations</p> <p>See signing, felt nervous</p> <p>Try to speak, deaf said best to sign</p>	<p>V</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>V</p> <p>S</p>	<p>Shout, do not talk clear</p> <p>Teacher and head teacher discuss, saw mouth movement but did not understand</p> <p>Could only say single words</p> <p>Teachers didn't sign</p>	<p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>O</p> <p>M</p>	<p><i>Pretended to write</i></p>	<p><i>Brother deaf</i></p> <p><i>Deaf school with brother</i></p> <p><i>Brother said deaf fine</i></p> <p><i>Are you deaf?</i></p> <p><i>You're like hearing</i></p> <p><i>Deaf tell me</i></p> <p><i>Deaf friends</i></p>
N7n	Different worlds!	Communication	<p>School sign</p> <p>Couldn't wait until 5pm to sign</p> <p>Tapped woman on shoulder</p> <p>Hear breathing</p>	<p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>First job, all spoke, big impact</p> <p>Communicate with hearing via pen and paper or minimal gestures</p> <p>Could lipread the receptionist</p> <p>Started to write on paper, person was blind so how to communicate?</p>	<p>M</p> <p>R</p> <p>O</p> <p>R</p>	<p><i>It really was a completely different world</i></p> <p><i>I always thought hearing people were really good at writing and reading English</i></p>	<p><i>Hearing people</i></p> <p><i>Deaf people</i></p> <p><i>He was hearing</i></p>

Field data

Coding and Analysis of Fieldwork Corpus Narratives

Code Number	Topic	Theme			Typicality			Collective Content
			Cultural Content		Interactional Content		Experiential Content	
SW5n	TVs in the pub	Access	Will tap to let her know	G	Music and singing on TV – do not understand	L	<i>Hearing people being so different to deaf people</i>	<i>Hearing people</i>
			TV with subtitles	T	Today, saw pub had half of TVs with music and half with subtitles	B	<i>They gave me the remote and I changed the channel</i>	<i>Deaf people</i>
			See subtitles	V			<i>The hearing people were startled by the change in the channel but I though, I'm deaf</i>	<i>Me deaf</i>
			Access for deaf	T				<i>All deaf can</i>
			Eat – watch subtitles	V			<i>I even had to teach them how to put the subtitles on</i>	
SW8n	A difficult experience with my family	Communication	See sign at school	V	Parents did not sign	M	<i>They were signing but I didn't have a clue what they meant, as I didn't sign then</i>	<i>Deaf school</i>
			Learnt signing at school	S	Brother signed the alphabet	B		<i>Deaf people</i>
					Couldn't talk to family	M	<i>Because I was so responsive, they thought I was hearing but really I was just carefully watching things</i>	<i>Profoundly deaf Deaf boarding school</i>

			<p>In the dark, would use torch to communicate</p> <p>Waved to get their attention</p>	<p>U</p> <p>G</p>	Over time, could communicate with hearing	<p>B</p>	<p><i>Hospital failed to diagnose me as deaf until I was about 4</i></p> <p><i>All just ignore me and carry on talking</i></p> <p><i>I used to explode with anger and throw things and break them</i></p> <p><i>Tell me off for being naughty but it was really because of communication difficulties</i></p> <p><i>I started a new job and that was a big shock. It was different because at school, everybody could sign but here they couldn't</i></p> <p><i>I looked up and she had disappeared</i></p>	<p><i>Nursery – all deaf</i></p> <p><i>I was deaf</i></p> <p><i>Hearing people</i></p>
SW10n	Holiday with the family	Communication	<p>Brother tap mother</p> <p>Saw brother talk to mother</p> <p>Plane landed – lights came on</p> <p>See eyes – nothing there</p>	<p>G</p> <p>V</p> <p>U</p> <p>V</p>	<p>Doctor Turkish – talk with gestures but not understand</p> <p>Use pen and paper to communicate</p> <p>Communication breakdown with doctor</p>	<p>L</p> <p>R</p> <p>L</p>	<p><i>The doctor was relying on me because there wasn't an interpreter there</i></p> <p><i>He expected me to tell my parents.....first person to tell them that their son has died</i></p> <p><i>I was acting as an interpreter for them</i></p>	<p><i>Deaf man</i></p> <p><i>Deaf friend</i></p>

			<p>Written information signed to parents</p> <p>Parents sign – information written</p> <p>all signing – doctor held back as only hearing person in room</p> <p>Father tapped mother repeatedly</p>	<p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>G</p>	<p>Couldn't understand the stewardess</p> <p>Stewardess rang someone – didn't know who – assume ambulance</p> <p>Doctor and stewardess talk</p> <p>Doctor wrote – 'I am sorry'</p> <p>Aunt and uncle arrive- doctor talk to them</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>R</p> <p>M</p>		
SE10n	Interpreting at the hospital	Communication	Man tap	G	<p>Receptionist no eye contact, no facial expression</p>	M	<p><i>They'd booked a female interpretertold them that I wanted a male interpreter</i></p> <p><i>He was a new interpreter and I was very unhappy that he was late</i></p> <p><i>Interpreter failed to turn up and I wasn't informed about anything and just left staring into space and looking around the room</i></p>	<p><i>Let them know I'm deaf</i></p> <p><i>He's hearing</i></p> <p><i>Deaf suffer</i></p>

SE13n	My ill mother	Communication			<p>Can't phone doctor</p> <p>Difficult communicate with mother when she is ill</p> <p>Sister – difficulty with phone to call 999</p> <p>Communication with ambulance man was difficult</p>	<p>T</p> <p>L</p> <p>T</p> <p>L</p>	<p><i>Remembered my niece.....so I called her and she popped up on the screen</i></p> <p><i>It would take him an extra half an hour before he arrived and I wanted to make contact immediately but I couldn't</i></p> <p><i>Looked terrible because I was there..... and had to use my niece and nephew</i></p> <p><i>Nurse not deaf aware</i></p> <p><i>People say '.....you could just ask the neighbours for help.....but I don't even know the neighbours</i></p>	<p><i>Me deaf</i></p> <p><i>Difficult for deaf</i></p> <p><i>Sister and me – both deaf</i></p> <p><i>Nephew and niece both hearing</i></p>
SE18n	At mainstream school	Education	<p>Used sign language</p> <p>Learnt using sign language</p> <p>4 deaf hang around together</p>	<p>S</p> <p>S</p> <p>B</p>			<p><i>Playground all hearing and just a small deaf group</i></p> <p><i>Ask if we could play too but they would just tell us to go away</i></p> <p><i>They would make fun of us a lot</i></p> <p><i>When you're deaf and your try to integrate with hearing people, though, life is hard</i></p>	<p><i>Deaf children</i></p> <p><i>Mainstream school for hearing children</i></p> <p><i>Hearing kids</i></p> <p><i>Deaf kids</i></p> <p><i>Hearing people</i></p>

							<i>Make me a strong character because I had to deal with the bullying</i>	<i>All-deaf group, it's perfect</i> <i>Deaf world</i>
NE2n	A doctor's appointment	Communication	Got results via an interpreter who signed	S	<p>Use pen and paper to communicate</p> <p>Doctor said to phone for results</p> <p>Doctor phone for results</p> <p>Son use text</p> <p>Got letter from doctor</p> <p>Saw doctor but did not did not understand information</p> <p>Hard to communicate</p> <p>Doctor wrote something but did not understand</p>	<p>R</p> <p>T</p> <p>T</p> <p>T</p> <p>R</p> <p>L</p> <p>L</p> <p>R</p>	<p><i>I didn't have an interpreter with me</i></p> <p><i>Better ask your family to ring – doctor had no awareness</i></p> <p><i>I wanted to come back again when they'd booked an interpreter</i></p> <p><i>Since then, they always book an interpreter</i></p>	<i>Deaf people</i>
NE3n	Results at the hospital	Communication			<p>Communication with doctor difficult – hard to lipread</p> <p>Doctor said to wait 5 minutes – didn't know why</p>	<p>L</p> <p>M</p>	<p><i>Two nurses came and stood wither side of me.....I didn't have a clue what was going on</i></p> <p><i>Nurses grabbed my arms and held me to the bed but that meant I couldn't communicate</i></p>	

					Another nurse came – didn't know why	M	There were no interpreters at that time	
					Nurse easy to lipread and could sign a little bit	B		
NE7n	Snorkelling in Australia	Communication	Felt splash on my back	G	Man spoke – didn't understand	L		
			Shocked to see boat	V	Didn't hear alarm to get out of the water	M		
			He pointed – everyone had gone	S				
NW6n	Finding the right school	Education	Started signing at 13 – late	S	Did not have a language – made up signs but was not understood	L	I went to a mainstream school	Deaf children
			Able to pick up on visual cues	V	Tried to explain the visuals to mother who did not understand	L	School knew nothing about deaf	Hearing mainstream
			Saw the sign for school	V	No language with family	M	We were put in a PHU, a small unit for deaf children	Didn't know what deaf meant
			PE was visual	V	Teacher and assistant had basic sign	L	Felt like there was a part of me – my identity- was missing	Deaf event
			Went to deaf school and felt connection	B	Teacher turn their backs when talking	M	Did get interpreters.....but they were often missing from lessons because the school has run out of money	Meet other deaf
			Used sign language	S	Knew about a deaf school but couldn't tell my	L	Copied from others but did not understand the English	

					parents the name of the school			
NW8n	A bomb scare on the train	Travelling	Tap on shoulder	G	Didn't know – heard nothing	M	<i>It was a conductor that told me to get off immediately</i> <i>There had been a bomb scare.....no one else had thought to tap me on the shoulder</i>	Deaf person
NW12n	Locked out!	Communication	Signing See torch shine Saw numbers on shoulder, realised police Signed 'Deaf, Deaf, Deaf' Used gestures to guide police to parents house	S V V S G	Police communicated via texting on phone Mother text wife Wife texted Police officer could sign	T T T B	<i>I got out of Wendy house and my arms were seized</i> <i>There was a helicopter hovering above shining light on garden</i> <i>I went to front of house and was shocked to see 6 police cars</i> <i>My wife was in lounge waiting for me to come home</i> <i>My neighbour had heard banging</i>	Meet with deaf Meet deaf in pub Deaf text me Deaf 'hurrah you arrive' Deaf left Daughter hearing Wife deaf

