Thesis

Industrial relations and the deaf community:

An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the experience of sign language interpreter industrial action.

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ABSTRACT

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Using a case study of a current boycott of the multi-lingual agency; Language Empire, by a significant number of sign language interpreters in the Newcastle area, the aim of my research was to explore how deaf service-users experience the effects of sign language interpreter industrial action. Drawing on literature from Industrial Relations, Translation and Interpreting theory, Deaf studies and Sign language interpreting theory I situate the unique position of sign language interpreter/deaf service-user industrial relations in the current economic climate. There is a dearth of research into the effects of industrial action on end service-users, therefore sign language interpreters find themselves in a dilemma while navigating the difficult decision-making process when considering taking industrial action. I used first-person accounts collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. I then analysed those accounts using an IPA method chosen to respect the diverse way in which every individual will apply meaning to their lived experience. Six super-ordinate themes were identified across the group, each with a specific focus; on Power, Knowledge, Responsibility, Justice, Relationship with interpreters and Trust. The findings of the research highlighted the extremely different ways in which the boycott was experienced by the participants. This research explores the evolving relationship between interpreters and the deaf community in an economic landscape where instances of industrial action are becoming ever more frequent. The findings of this research, which emerged as a result of the analysis, are presented as tangible examples of both good and bad practice when planning and conducting industrial action. This is in the hope that the individual and personal experiences of those affected will be at the forefront of informing any future boycotts by sign language interpreters.

Keywords: Industrial relations, Industrial action, Sign language interpreters, Deaf community.

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Declaration

I declare that the thesis embodies the results of my own work and has been composed by myself. Where appropriate within the thesis I have made full acknowledgement of the work and ideas of others or have made reference to work carried out in collaboration with other persons. I understand that as an examination candidate I am required to abide by the Regulations of the University and to conform to its discipline and ethical policy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2018, the local deaf community of Newcastle were informed that a significant number of local sign language interpreters would be boycotting a multi-lingual interpreting agency. This agency had a reputation for poor business practices, yet it had recently been awarded, by the UK Government, a contract for providing all interpreting services for a health trust in the area. Although no official statement was made, it can be assumed that the boycott was intended to impact the agency's ability to fulfil the necessary quota as laid out in the contract. To date, the boycott is on-going, leaving deaf service-users with a reduced pool of interpreters available for health-care appointments and negatively impacting their ability to access vital public services.

Which raises the question; how can a profession who claim to align their values alongside those of a vulnerable community, a profession whose ethical code starts with the principle: "Do no harm" (NRCPD, n.d.), take industrial action, the success of which is entirely dependent on reducing access to essential services?

This is not a phenomenon unique to sign language interpreters. In past years we have seen an increase in industrial action across the broader workforce, including other professions guided by ethical principles (teachers, firefighters, nurses, doctors); however, as end-service users are rarely considered in industrial relations research, the current research into the effects of industrial action on those relying on the service impacted is severely lacking.

There is no denying that the sign language interpreting profession is currently experiencing an increase of instances of industrial action through the boycotting of interpreting agencies. However, interpreters considering taking part have no resources to draw upon to guide their ethical decision making. This topic is an important area of study as instances of industrial action are expected to rise. Therefore, if the profession hopes to challenge economic threats to sustainability in an ethical manner, engagement with deaf service-users is required.

This research aims to explore the consequences of an on-going case of industrial action by interviewing deaf service-users directly impacted by the boycott in Newcastle. By recording and analysing accounts of their lived experiences, this thesis aims to offer insights into the experiences of deaf service-users when sign language interpreters withdraw their labour.

This thesis is structured in a manner whereby the current action of the sign language profession is first situated in relation to the wider context This is achieved by reviewing the relevant Industrial Relations, Translation and Interpreting theory, Deaf studies and Sign language interpreting theory literature. By contextualising the position of the profession, the research is able to identify the dilemma experienced by sign language interpreters and a rationale for the methodology employed to resolve this. Subsequently, the theoretical positioning of hermeneutics and phenomenology is introduced, which determines interpretative phenomenological analysis as the best methodology to analyse the accounts of the participants. This is to properly engage with the subjectivity of experience. The findings of the data analysis are presented with a focus on the implications for Theory, Practice, Training, Community relations and Policy identified.

Although this study is focussed predominately on the industrial relations between sign language interpreters and deaf service-users it aims to act as a catalyst for further research in the wider Industrial Relations field, arguing that only by discourse with those affected can we understand the consequences of our actions. It is only with this understanding that workers engaging in industrial action can hope to make informed, ethical decisions. Without it, they fail the very people their profession serves.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter introduction

This chapter will start by exploring traditional Industrial Relations theory and industrial action before exploring how the sign language interpreting profession relates to theoretical aspects described. The unique relationship between deaf service-users and interpreters is then outlined. Subsequently, a summary of the current economic climate in which sign language interpreting takes place is provided, highlighting the impact that national framework agreements, and multilingual agencies are having on the field. Examples of industrial action taken by sign language interpreters are discussed before clarifying the statement of problem and positioning myself as a researcher.

2.2. Industrial Relations

To situate the relationship between sign language interpreters (SLIs) and deaf service-users is a delicate process. However Industrial Relations theory provides a framework for analysing the relationships experienced within the work-system of most workers. Formulating how the profession relates to Industrial Relations (IR) requires some unpacking and has, so far, never been realised within any published body of work within the field of sign language interpreting. However, I shall briefly outline the pertinent aspects in order to create a richer understanding of the complexity experienced within this research.

It is difficult to define IR due to how embedded the phenomena is as a wider social activity (Salamon, 2000). Though it is broadly concerned with determining and regulating employment relationships both inside and outside the workplace (IBID). The theoretical framework of IR also includes aspects of power, interests, conflicts and cooperation found within these exchange relationships (Blyton & Turnbull, 1994).

The Radical Perspective, found within IR theory, will be used to analyse the organisation of employment studied in this research. This is due to its focus on the nature of the capitalist society surrounding the organisation, specifically the ‘top-down approach’, with profit as the key influence on employment policy (Hyman, 1975). Critics of the perspective disagree with its endorsement of trade unionism and industrial action (see Clegg, 1975; Fox, 1973). However, it is within this context that we can start to explore the employment relationships SLIs experience.

2.2.1 Changing forms of employment

SLIs themselves do not fit into the typical definition of what constitutes a 'worker' within the paradigms of IR theory. IR has connotations of male, full-time, manual workers in traditional, industrial manufacturing (Salamon, 2000)[1].

Edwards (2003) claims that employment is an activity whereby an employee works under the authority of an employer, this excludes (according to Edwards) self-employed individuals. He uses the example of a plumber and their customer, stating that the contractual relationship between the two is not considered IR. As such the temporary contracts which procure SLI services complicate the application of the traditional employer-employee relationship.

However, these narrow parameters of IR do not represent the current changing nature of employment prevalent in UK economy. Not least the rise of the 'gig economy; characterised in juxtaposition to the traditional model of employment used in Edwards' description (Johnes, 2019). Here, the contract of reliable, long-term engagement is replaced with an agreement (usually facilitated online) where the value of labour is created between independent agents (IBID).

This non-traditional method of employment better represents the work organisation of SLIs. Unfortunately, this model does not easily fit into existing IR literature.

In the mid-70s and '90s, a dramatic, global transformation to work organisation took place, shifting from manufacturing industries to services across all advanced economies (Bassett & Cave, 1993; Esping-Anderson, 1993)[2]. Stewart and Stanford (2017) hypothesise the development of new definitions to encompass the new categories of worker, ensuring workers' rights for those precariously employed within this emerging economy. Beck (1992) was amongst the first to explore this new employment regime, describing it as being based on less secure, individualised contracts which resulted in an explosive growth of employment insecurity. A trend that has continued as incidences of non-standard work (defined as agency work, zero-hours contracts, contract workers and freelancers) continue to rise (Katz & Krueger, 2019).

Scholars have identified various reasons for this, one being that the shift to a service-centred economy increased decentralisation and subcontracting across Europe (Purcell, Gallie, & Crompton, 2002). This led to the de-nationalisation of public utilities and contracting out of public services (Allen & Henry, 2002). One such implication is that public services are now 'put out to tender', which carries with it an element of formal insecurity (IBID), resulting in the current workforce globally experiencing a glut of job

insecurity alongside the non-standardised employment described above (Greenhalgh, & Rosenblatt, 2010).

2.2.2 Impact on Industrial Relations

The results of this transformation involve a cost-cutting exercise for employers and the erosion of employment rights (Allen & Henry, 2002). This has detrimental ramifications for every level of society by reinforcing existing inequality (IBID). Therefore, the Radical Perspective views this contemporary, neo-liberal work organisation, and the impact it is inflicting on society, as inherent conflict and suggests industrial action as the obvious choice to resolve the issue.

Kelly (2012) describes industrial action as any form of collective bargaining by workers in the face of perceived injustice. It has been frequently stated that there remains a decline in worker-collectivism (IBID), resulting from the change from collective, class consciousness to a self-interested, individualist workforce (Bassett & Cave, 1993; Brown, 1990). Yet in recent years we have seen an upsurge in greenfield organising campaigns, whereby workers, previously un-unionised, are taking collective action to resolve workplace conflict (Simms, 2007). A repercussion to the economic downward pressure currently experienced by many workers is that following a strike drought we are now experiencing a global increase of striking workers (Engler, 2019).

Tilly's (1978) Mobilisation Theory suggests that four aspects are necessary for collective action: First, workers must identify a perceived injustice; then they must attribute that injustice to an outside force; they must have a social identity to which the injustice threatens and finally; there must be a leader who acts as a catalyst for any action taken. Though developed almost thirty years previously, Simms (2007) found the same characteristics within the organising of modern-day campaigns.

The UK has seen a rise in strike action among altruistic professions such as firefighters, teachers and doctors (Goddard, 2016; Szabo, 2016). Such action is often met with outrage that professionals in these roles would forsake the needs of their service-users in pursuit of fairer wages and better working conditions. Such consideration poses professional ethical dilemmas for those striking (Chadwick & Thompson, 2000). Traditionally, these groups have been held back from protest either by professional ethics or state-enforced restrictive measures to safeguard vulnerable service-users against their effects (Szabo, 2016).

2.2.3 Impact on end service-users

End service-users, who are inevitably impacted by the withdrawing of labour, are rarely mentioned within traditional IR literature. Instead, consequences are frequently reduced to any contractual rights industrial action attains (Kelly, 2012). Bellemare (2000) acknowledges widespread demand to expand the narrow parameters of IR work-systems to integrate end service-users. Following this, we are starting to see some mention of service-users within IR theory (for a contemporary example see Hickey, 2012).

From the little research conducted specifically investigating end users and industrial action, the results have been mixed. However, in schools and hospitals where workers have unionised and taken industrial action, marked improvements have been reported in outcomes for pupils and patients (see Day, Sammons, Hopkins, Leithwood, & Kington, 2008; Dube, Kaplan, & Thompson, 2016).

These instances of 'tertiary conflict' (Accornero, 1985) routinely take place within the public sector. Industrial action which impacts essential public services will unavoidably involve individuals who are not the main target of the dispute. The success of the action hinges on the extent of the harm to end service-users, should access to vital services be disrupted (Bordogna & Cella, 2002). This exemplifies the dilemma of the striking worker, whose professional ethics demand that they consider the well-being of the service-user.

There are also public relations to consider. Szabo (2016) suggests utilising 'discursive power' within the dispute. This entails framing the conflict in a manner which convinces the service-users that the industrial action is also in their interest.

2.2.4 Sign language interpreters and Industrial Relations

The majority of SLIs, in the UK at least, are freelance, self-employed workers; as such the relationships they encounter would not be included in Edwards' (2003) definition of IR. However, given that sign language interpreting is rarely paid for by the end service-users (instead funding is secured via institutions with a legal responsibility to make their service accessible, or through government funds). Therefore, the 'employer' is not the direct 'customer' of the labour being bought and sold. This non-traditional contracting of labour constitutes IR when the term is considered in an all-inclusive sense (Salamon, 2000).

As previously outlined, the majority of SLIs do not work for an 'organisation' in the traditional capacity. However, the overarching work-system they exist within is organised in a manner to, in theory, promote social cohesion for all stakeholders involved. Therefore, the industry which enables the sign language interpreting event to take place is considered as the organisation of employment even if the employment is conducted on a contract-by-contract basis like that of the gig economy previously described. And, although there is no formal record of historical industrial action by SLIs, there have been various consequential milestones which indicate significant developments.

One example would be the formation of the National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters (NUBSLI), which was established in 2014 following government cuts to the Access to Work scheme, stating one of the reason as: "[to] ensure Deaf people's rights to high quality interpreting access" (NUBSLI, 2018 p.4). Another example, from 2016, is the first recorded organised national boycott of an interpreting agency by SLI's which resulted in the agency reinstating the disputed features of employment (Lipton, 2017).

Here there are several aspects of IR theory in action. SLIs are a greenfield profession, who do a substantial amount of work within public services, they are viewed as altruistic and bound by professional ethics. Yet they established a trade union and organised a campaign whereby they protested the terms of employment with an (albeit a non-traditional) employer. The boycott is clearly a tertiary conflict and will have had a much greater impact on the end service-users than the opposing party. Also, how the union framed why NUBSLI was formed is an example of utilising discursive power, as they identify end service-user's rights as a reason for the union's formation.

Not only that, the organisation of employment of SLIs commonly involves interpreter referral agencies whose practice uses top-down contractualism (Dong & Turner, 2016) and exist to generate a profit (Best, 2019), thus fitting with focus found within the Radical Perspective of IR theory.

This compressed account allows the reader a fundamental insight into the theoretical backdrop surrounding IR and the deaf community. This will provide an adequate basis from which to approach the topic of research. Nonetheless, a greater exploration into how sign language interpreting fits within the overarching framework of IR is needed if research is to expand into this field.

The next section will argue that sign language interpreters occupy a unique position within IR given the implicit expectations which accompany their role.

2.3. Sign language interpreters

As discussed in the previous section, SLIs are not traditionally striking workers. Currently they find themselves in a complex position whereby they are expected to continue to offer a professional service of providing communication access while the economic framework they function within is undergoing intense restructuring (Dong & Turner, 2016). This is having a negative impact on the quality of service that the end users ultimately receive (Best, 2019). To add to this, SLIs have experienced a 'fractious interdependence' with the deaf community (Napier, 2001) and there is an expectation that they will align themselves with the minority group (Dickinson, 2010). Therefore, for SLIs to boycott goes against what is expected of the behaviour of someone within that profession. Situating the unique position of SLIs within the framework of IR also requires us to consider how SLIs fit within the wider field of translation and interpreting.

2.3.1 Translation & Interpreting theory

Historically, translation studies did not consider the wider social impact of the translator. Focusing instead on the lexical elements of the message and as such the primary responsibility of the translator went no further than finding linguistic equivalence so long as fidelity to the original text remained a priority (Jakobson, 2012; Nida, 2012; Koller, 1989; and Newmark, 1981).

It was not until the ‘cultural-turn’ within the translation field that interpreters viewed their productions in terms of the wider world, explicitly acknowledging the implicit power imbalance which accompanies translations (Snell-Hornby, 1990). This inspired translators and interpreters to draw on research from the social sciences (specifically cultural, gender and postcolonial studies) to inform their practice on how to negotiate the power-driven ideologies found when working between two languages embedded within cultural, social and historical positions (Lefevere, 2016).

By accepting that translation can be manipulated and has been used as a tool to promote and maintain dominant ideologies and power-structures while subduing others, we can start to comprehend the delicate position the interpreter finds themselves in when mediating their responsibility not only to the matter being interpreted but to their clients

and society as a whole. The evident conclusion to be drawn is that interpreter's responsibilities have an unavoidable broader social and political role (Tymoczko, 2000). It is within this frame that we can start to unpick the complex relationship between SLIs and the deaf community.

2.3.2 Deaf clients as an oppressed minority

Native signers, predominantly deaf people, have been marginalised throughout history (Lane, 2017). Marked as disabled, deaf people[3] are consistently viewed through the pathological lens of the medical model which focuses exclusively on their impairment (Davis, 2007), resulting in Tom Humphries coining the phrase 'audism' to describe his own experience of internalised oppression (Humphries, 1977). The term resonated with the experiences of many deaf people and has since been adopted to refer to the broader discrimination of deaf people (Lane, 1999).

Bienvenu (2001) argues that the discourse around perceived impairment needs to shift toward self-identification, supporting re-branding deaf people as a minority language group as, she believes, only this will allow for the self-determination vital to overcoming oppression. Lane (2008) supports this view, arguing that deaf activism is at odds with the Disability Rights Movement (See Corker, 2002 for further discussion of the dichotomy of the deaf/disabled debate).

A substantial number have embraced this view, disassociating themselves from the disability community. Instead, deaf communities[4] exist, consisting of people who identify as culturally deaf, part of a linguistic minority and recognise a shared socio-cultural experience of being deaf (Bauman, 2008; Hunt, 2015). It is worth noting that collective reciprocity-driven values are featured as a characteristic of the deaf community (Pollitt, 1997; Ladd, 2003), which will be explored in the next section.

2.3.3 The relationship between SLIs and deaf service users

The 1960s saw the introduction of government legislation which outlined sign language provision as a right for deaf people (Napier & Goswell, 2013). Unfortunately, the wording of these legislative protections forced deaf sign language users to accept the label of 'disabled' in order to access government funds ring-fenced to alleviate disability discrimination (Lane, 2008; De Meulder, 2016).

The legislation also created a sudden demand for SLIs, leading to an increase in academic interpreter education programmes. Prior to this, deaf people would have been directly involved in 'creating' interpreters by hand-picking signing, hearing children

from within the deaf community (Napier, 2017). The introduction of these training programmes had the unintended consequences of deaf people no longer being able to vet budding interpreters, resulting in non-native signers becoming SLIs with minimal exposure to the cultural insights afforded from involvement with deaf community members. This created an influx of unfamiliar, and untrusted, SLIs with no specific connection to the community (Sherwood, 1987; Kurz & Hill, 2018).

As well as this, the legislation 'professionalised' the field of sign language interpreting. Historically, helpers; individuals who saw interpreting as contributing to the general welfare of deaf people, would have taken on the voluntary role of interpreting (Fant, 1990). With money now available for remuneration of interpreting, the relationship changed from "one based on communal obligation to one based on economic opportunity; from one based on personal relations to one based on business relations" (Cokely, 2005, p16).

If we accept that the deaf community holds collective, reciprocity-driven values; it stands to reason that, for interpreters, there would be an expectation of reciprocation from deaf clients (Smith, 1983).

Following demand from deaf people for a more professional service, SLIs looked to spoken-language interpreting for inspiration. Pollitt (1997) describes how, despite working largely in the community domain, SLIs modelled their behaviour on spoken-language conference interpreting. The resulting transformation was a 'pendulum swing' from paternalistic to detached professional; from helper-model to the extreme conduit or machine-model, bringing about a disconnect between SLIs and deaf service-users (Pollitt, 1997; Cokely, 2005). Pollitt and Ladd (in 1997 and 2003 respectively) acknowledge that the adverse values professionalism imposed onto the SLIs conflicted with those of the deaf community and identify this as the antagonising impetus for the current contentious relationship.

Criticisms of the conduit model revolved around the disparate values of hearing and deaf communities. Kent (2007) advises against continued professionalisation to "minimize collusion with systemic oppression" (p.194). They argue that by adopting professional traits, SLIs have aligned themselves with the oppressive hearing society and lost touch with the values of deaf service-users (for greater exploration of this topic see Philip, 1994).

Although it could be argued that this feature is not unique to the relationship between SLIs and the deaf community, in an analysis of cross-cultural constructions of

professionalism, Rudvin (2007) found that narrow, culturally bound parameters result in participants holding different expectations of what constitutes professional behaviour. Though not an exclusive concept, this is meaningful when considering SLI/deaf consumer relations.

Sherwood (1987) identified the ethnocentrism assumed by hearing SLIs in this regard as the cause of the contentions experienced. The belief of SLIs that their own culture is superior, hints at the power struggle that exists between the two groups evidenced by assertations that SLIs regularly exercise authority over deaf people (Lane, 1999).

2.3.4 Sign language interpreters and power

So far, the discussion has concentrated on the professional establishment of hearing SLI's, as, although deaf interpreters are increasing in numbers, the majority of SLIs are predominantly hearing; therefore, part of the oppressive hearing culture by default.

To reconcile the disjuncture between SLIs and the deaf community, caused by the swing to the conduit model, Baker-Shenk introduced the concept of 'allying' in 1991. Mole (2018) builds on this work to investigate how SLIs conceptualise the power-dynamics within interpreted events, drawing on the Oppressor and Ally traits as a framework outlined in Freire's (1970) Pedagogy of the Oppressed. She found evidence of Freirean oppressor traits: "possessive consciousness, pejorative and paternalistic attitudes, hearing fragility and desire for approval" (p.198), which she accredits to the inherent audism prevalent in wider society. However, her analysis also found that SLIs did describe managing power-dynamics, usually in favour of the deaf client, contradictory of many traditional ethical codes of interpreting, which value impartiality and neutrality as a professional virtue.

The duel category membership of deaf service-users as both a minority language community as well as people with disabilities (De Meulder, 2016) designates positions of power within the interpreter-consumer relationship (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2004; Mole, 2018). This has led some scholars to argue that sign language interpreting is a social justice profession (McCartney, 2017) or that the SLIs should at least be actively engaged in confronting injustices experienced by deaf people through how they conduct themselves (Cokely, 2005, 2011; Coyne, 2014; Inghilleri, 2005).

Currently, there is an acknowledgement of the interpreting profession that a commitment to the deaf community is lacking. Gonzalez, Lummer, Plue and Ordaz (2018) criticise *9-5 interpreters* whom they define as "working to primarily earn money

and make a living" rather than being true allies and demonstrating "deaf heart" (p.218), which we are told must come from the interpreters' own sense of justice and morality. However, there is a subtle distinction between recognising the inherent power imbalance, then working to empower the minority language user, and viewing that same client as a disadvantaged victim (Kent, 2007). Mole (2018) categorises this as corresponding with a Friereian oppressor trait and introduces the concept of emancipatory interpreting suggesting that "the trait that the minority might desire the most, is that the interpreter is an ally" (p.70).

Rather than speculate, a solution would be to engage with the deaf community to uncover the type of behaviour deaf consumers desire from their interpreters as well as to produce the circumstances in which effective interpreting can occur (Pollitt, 1997; Turner, 2007). Recently there have been calls for SLIs across the globe to leverage the current disruption experienced within the profession by working in partnership with deaf communities (Napier, 2019).

To conclude, both the field of translation and sign language interpreting agree that the responsibilities of interpreters include how their actions impact on their clients as well as message transfer. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the additional power implicit within these responsibilities due to the dual membership of deaf service-users as both minority language users and an oppressed community. Therefore, the historical development of the role of SLIs must be taken into account when considering the relationship between SLIs and deaf service-users.

2.4. Economics and the current state of sign language interpreting provision

As described when exploring Industrial Relations, the labour of every worker takes place in situ but also within a wider framework of work-systems. To understand the current position of SLIs it is necessary to consider the wider political and economic environment which has influenced its development. The pervasive neo-liberalism present during the professionalisation process embedded itself in the values of the wider workforce (Bassett & Cave, 1993; Brown, 1990). However, it had significance regarding how SLIs shaped their business conduct (Pollitt, 1997).

2.4.1 Economic implications of professionalisation

Although the professionalisation of SLIs has been discussed in relation to the effect on interpreter/deaf service-users relations, there is dispute surrounding the legitimacy of

the title; whether they would be better described as 'hybrid' professions (see Noordegraaf, 2007; Colley & Guéry, 2015), given that they have little autonomous, jurisdictional control over their practice or the market in which they operate (Mikkelson, 1996; Evetts, 2011; Dong & Turner, 2016). Yet, as previously demonstrated, SLI's view themselves as professional and (along with the deaf community and those responsible for interpreting provision) expect professional SLIs to work to set standards. One consequence of becoming a professional is an increase of overheads, as for an occupation to be worthy of professional status there are a series of characteristics it needs to meet which include holding formal interpreting qualifications. As well as this, Harrington and Turner (2001) identify an additional value, which they suggest justifies SLIs' claim to a recognised professional status, that of institutionalised altruism. However, the cost associated with adhering to these expectations makes it difficult for many interpreters to prioritise the institutionalised altruism expected of practitioners while also evidencing that they are complying to expected standards. The 2016 annual survey of working conditions of SLIs in the UK found that interpreters felt the economic climate was too difficult to earn a sustainable living as a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter (Townsend-Handscomb, 2016).
The economic pressure experienced by the profession could explain why SLIs view themselves as a business and manage their professional relationships as such (see Collins, 2016).

2.4.2 Sign Language interpreting procurement

The professionalisation of SLIs did not only impact the conduct of the interpreters; it also changed the organisation of the work-system itself by the dominance of interpreter agencies (Brien, Brown, & Collins, 2002). Previously, deaf people would have used community connections to source interpreters directly; however, the professionalisation process saw this shift to interpreter schedulers when agencies took on this profitable responsibility (Cokely, 2005; Collins, 2016; Best, 2019).
The involvement of agencies has had a hugely influential impact on how services are provided, yet the repercussions of their involvement are painfully under-researched (Ozolins, 20017). This is problematic as agency practice has the potential to lead to significant industrial issues at every point of interpreting service delivery (Ozolins, 2007; Dong & Napier, 2016).

Dong & Turner (2016) identified 'job allocation' as a crucial aspect of the role of agencies. Their ability to fulfil this responsibility will impact the end services that consumers ultimately receive (Best, 2019). This is due to the fundamental importance associated with selecting appropriate interpreters for assignments. A commonly held view by both interpreters and agency administrators is that an in-depth knowledge of the field is required for the allocation of assignments as well as the negotiation of contracts (Brien et al., 2002). Until recently, this role would have been filled by specialist/deaf-led agencies who would have historically held the knowledge necessary for allocating SLIs appropriately.

2.4.3 Market dominance of multilingual interpreter agencies

The political landscape and socio-economic values of the early 1980s led, in many instances, to the neo-liberal policy of contracting-out public services through a tendering process (Moran, 1999). A transition that we know, from IR theory, can have devastating results for employment security for those expected to deliver the front-line service (Allen & Henry, 2002).

In 2014 the British government introduced National Framework Agreements (NFAs) to procure interpreting for public services including healthcare appointments. Despite several attempts to argue that BSL should be removed from the NFA due to the legislative protection afforded deaf people, BSL is still regularly included in tenders for NFA contracts alongside spoken languages (NUBSLI, 2018).

Unfortunately, a consequence of NFAs is that, as part of the criteria defined in the tendering process, only multilingual interpreting agencies are eligible to bid for contracts; excluding smaller, local, specialist/deaf-led agencies. This has led to a growing number of previously exclusively spoken-language interpreting agencies 'adding on' sign language to the list of languages they provide, without any understanding of how sign language interpreting differs from that of spoken languages, or how to provide interpreters for a deaf client base (Feyne, 2012; Collins, 2016). Lack of knowledge by management regarding how to adequately allocate tasks has been found to result in frequent examples of IR disorder (Kunda, Barley, & Evans, 2002) and interpreters distrusting agency ethics (Dong & Turner, 2016).

Echoing the corporate motive of 'profit over people' commonplace within capitalist societies (Harrison, 2014) the priority of providing a quality service has been replaced with bidding and securing procurement contracts (Feyne, 2012; Dong & Turner, 2016).

Although stated in tendering guidelines that agencies must work to sustainable terms and conditions, research has shown that, due to the competition involved in a deregulated market, it has become common-place for agencies to under-bid and over-promise in order to win contracts (Norström, Fioretos, & Gustafsson, 2012), forcing down the price of interpretation. The reduction in cost is then passed onto the end supplier – the interpreter – in a process labelled 'commoditisation' (Holmes, 2016), resulting in compromised service for the end consumer (Norström et al., 2012).

Owing to agencies often guarding proprietary information or electing to eschew judgement (Ozolins, 2007), there is little direct research into the consequences to end service-users available. However, there are published examples of business practices which evidence profit over service quality with a detrimental effect on the end service-user (Ali, 2012; Dodds, 2014). For example, using unqualified people to fill assignments to maximise profit for the agency (Best, 2019) - a business practice incongruent with the values and ethics found within the sign language interpreting profession.

2.4.4 Impact on the profession

It is widely noted within the profession that poor agency practice is having a negative impact on SLIs (it was quoted as a top reason for practitioners considering leaving the field) (Hale, 2016); however, there is little research into what this specific conduct of agencies, resulting in interpreters being unable to function effectively, is. (Dong & Turner, 2016).

There are published documents outlining industry standards of practice constructed by SLIs for interpreting agencies to follow (Reed & McCarthy, 2017; RID, 2014), though these standards are not enforceable. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Guidelines for Community Interpreting are, however, expected to be adhered to by interpreter referral agencies (ISO, 2014), though there is evidence to suggest that they are commonly flaunted by agencies when convenient.

There is a divergence of standards agreed by SLIs and those set by the market, resulting in market disorder, which has resulted in a lack of professional control by SLIs over the quality of the service they deliver (Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2004). There are a growing number of instances of deaf service-users and interpreters taking to social media to express their frustration with the unethical practices of interpreter agencies.

In a recent example, SLI, Frances Everingham (@onelittlebird) tweeted: “what is the state of interpreting provision for deaf people within the nhs when you arrive and the client says thank god, and is nearly in tears with relief that a terp was actually booked after loads of cancelled appointments” (29 Apr 2019, 7:51 AM. Tweet.) encouraging several Twitter users to share similar experiences. This suggests that the interpreting profession is concerned with the divergence between professional standards and industry practices and the consequences for the deaf community. Examples such as this evidence that SLIs do indeed hold values which strive to minimise collusion with the systematic oppression experienced by deaf people (as advised by Kent, 2007).

2.4.5 Impact on deaf service-users

As previously discussed, agency practices are having a detrimental impact on the level of service which deaf consumers receive. Potentially putting deaf service-users at risk by failing to select appropriate interpreters when allocating assignments (Best, 2019).
There have long been calls for interpreters, agencies and deaf consumers to work together to ensure that interpreting procurement is dealt with in an ethical, mutually beneficial manner (Harrington, 1997; Turner, 2007). However, cooperation and dialogue between agencies, service providers and service users face a fundamental obstacle as many agencies fail to regard deaf consumers as their clients; instead they only acknowledge the hearing contract holders (Feyne, 2012). This allows agencies to negate their responsibility to consider deaf culture and disregard the preferences of the deaf service-users; resulting in implications to choice and control elements of the interpreter/deaf consumer relationship, with agencies failing to offer deaf service-users their choice of interpreter (Brien et al., 2002; NUBSLI, 2018).
This has ramifications for the level of service deaf consumers receive (See Hsieh, Ju, & Kong (2010) for exploration of the benefits of interpreter continuity and Schofield & Mapson (2014) who evidence GP preference for interpreter continuity). The ability to control who does or does not interpret for you as a deaf person goes some way to readdress the inherent power imbalance found within the interpreter/deaf client relationship, which is lost when that choice is removed. Burke (2017) uses personal experience as well as a concise overview of privacy and autonomy concerns to highlight the potentially harmful consequences of removing choice of interpreter from deaf service-users. Ultimately, she argues for a deaf-centred, inclusive approach to interpreting service provision

2.4.6 Recommendations for improving sign language interpreting provision

In response to the issues previously highlighted, there have been demands for agencies to be subject to similar regulation and accountability as the SLIs they commission (Best, 2015, 2019; Feyne, 2012) but how this would be implemented is unclear.

Another suggestion is that SLIs bypass agencies and return to the historical model of being booked directly via community connections (Cokely, 2005; Collins, 2016). However, the business model of NFAs does not make this a sustainable choice for the profession as interpreters will almost always have to be subcontracted by the agency awarded the contract in order to secure funding.

There is the scarcely explored possibility of SLIs joining together to work from a co-operative to challenge the positions of dominant interpreter agencies. Co-operatives offer an alternative to market organisation where profit is not the sole objective and can counter the divisions and inequalities created by a capitalist economy. Co-operatives are said to be able to meet the needs of their communities while simultaneously institutionalising fairness and placing people at the centre of decision making (Ellwood, 2014). This option would allow scope for deaf service-users to work with interpreters and service-providers to shape interpreting provision in a manner mutually beneficial for all stakeholders. However, collective work-systems are not uncomplicated and for a co-operative to succeed, they need to develop new relations with the state (Murray, 2014). Certainly, this is true of any interpreting co-operative hoping to bid for NFAs, as many established agencies have been forced to close. Those still running report difficulty in competing with the corporate giants awarded government contracts. Even huge multilingual agencies have been driven into liquidation, stating NFAs as the reason (NUBSLI, 2017).

Despite the call for SLIs, agencies and deaf consumers to work together to co-design services, there have unfortunately been very few examples of this in practice; however, when local deaf people have been invited to co-produce interpreting services, the results are reported as positive (see Conway & Ryan, 2018 for a good example of co-production between the deaf community, interpreters and health services to deliver a successful high quality service).

2.5. Sign language interpreters and industrial action

By reviewing the current economic pressures currently experienced within the field we are in a better position to contextualise instances of SLI industrial action. In recent years

there have been several cases of SLIs collectively withdrawing their labour (NUBSLI, 2015; Jacobs, 2017; Hill, 2018).

Unionising the sign language interpreting profession has been considered a complex and controversial issue (Goodwin, 2012). As previously noted in section 2.1.6, the UK established NUBSLI, a union of BSL interpreters, was established in 2014 in the UK, which reports several successful interventions in improving workers' rights (Lipton, 2017). However, a general criticism of unions is that they fail to engage with under-represented groups (Simms, 2007). This highlights the need for unions to engage with deaf service-users who may be affected by action taken. Hill (2018) states: "An interpreter union will only succeed if it is able to protect the interpreter's individual rights to due process while simultaneously seeing the fight for Deaf and Deafblind rights as central to its mission" (para 11).

During the 2016 NUBSLI-led boycott of Language Line Solutions (Topple, 2016), the SLIs observing the boycott came under criticism from the local deaf community, arguing that the impact on deaf patients hadn't properly been considered (BBC "See Hear", 2017).

This is something the field must resolve as in-line with IR theory, we are currently experiencing an inevitable increase in industrial action within the profession. Whether that be on an individual or collective basis of SLIs refusing to work for agencies offering unsustainable or unethical practices.

It is clear from reviewing the literature that the sign language interpreting profession currently finds itself at a crossroads; SLIs are currently experiencing economic pressure due to the top-down reorganisation of the work-systems they function within, resulting in detrimental consequences for the service experienced by deaf consumers. The powerful positions of multi-lingual interpreting agencies are systematically reinforced by the Government's role in their introduction, therefore the options available to interpreters who wish to challenge the injustice they experience are limited to traditional industrial action disputes (Szabo, 2016). However, to take part in tertiary conflict will result in negative outcomes for deaf service-users during the period of the action. Simultaneously, the relationship between SLIs and the deaf community continues to rupture. Such is the dilemma the sign language interpreting profession is currently experiencing.

On one hand, there is pressure from the historical context of the evolution of SLIs and an expected institutionalised altruism to continue to work within the ever-decreasing

rates and standards offered in the current economy. However, this inadvertently supports the unsustainable practices which are leading to the commoditisation of the profession. On the other, any action taken by SLIs will indisputably have a detrimental effect on deaf service-users.

How can sign language interpreters resolve this paradox and come to an informed decision? I hypothesise that if the interpreting profession hopes to find an ethical solution to this dilemma, then engagement with deaf service-users is required to establish a full understanding of the impact of any industrial action taken.

2.6 Statement of Problem

If we consider sign language interpreting to be a profession which needs to be economically viable in order to effectively function, then it stands that workers will utilise industrial action to resolve the threats to the sustainability of the profession.

However, if we also accept that the practitioners themselves should be working to expectations of 'deaf heart' to challenge injustice, then the impact such action will have on deaf service-users needs to be involved in the decision-making process. Despite arguments that there should be greater engagement with deaf people regarding interpreter provision, the profession has been criticised for failing to include the views of deaf people to an adequate extent. In addition, SLIs find themselves with no resources to guide their ethical decision-making through this complex culmination of circumstances, leaving them to speculate on what constitutes correct behaviour.

In response to this problem, this study proposes to enter a dialogue with members of the deaf community who have lived experience of the consequences of industrial action taken by SLIs with a specific focus on how it has impacted the relationship they experience with SLIs. By using individual accounts of those affected, this research hopes to commence a body of research that can be used as a resource for SLI's considering industrial action, as well as acting as a catalyst for further research involving deaf service-users.

2.6.1 Researcher reflexivity and positioning the author

My status as a hearing schooled, sign language interpreter, who has supported previous boycotts, as well as holding the position of Branch Secretary within NUBSLI requires the process of researcher reflexivity to adequately position myself as a researcher.

As much as I broadly agree that social justice is an obligation for SLIs (Coyne, 2014) that is not what drives this research. I strive to commit any activism from a position of solidarity (Welch, 1991), relating deeply with Mary Brennan's second dilemma of a sign linguist (see Stokoe, 1986).

My aspiration for this research is to commit to engaging with people's lived experiences rather than speculating on appropriate moral reasoning, as I maintain that this cannot be carried out as a theoretical practice; instead, it requires actual dialogue with members of the different communities involved (Fraser, 2003).

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has drawn on an extensive range of relevant literature to provide a theoretical framework in which to situate the unique position in which SLIs and deaf service-users find themselves in relation to the service provider/consumer relationship. It has provided evidence that market forces are having a substantial, negative effect on service delivery and the sustainability of the profession and that there has been a marked increase in industrial action. The chapter outlines how such action will have negative consequences for deaf service-users, and the ethical dilemma this creates an ethical dilemma for practitioners.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Chapter introduction

This chapter serves to present the methodology selected for this research. First the research question is stated and the rationale for the choice of methodology (interpretative phenomenological analysis) is given. A discussion of the epistemological position provides an informed basis of the relevant theoretical foundations (hermeneutic and phenomenology) before reflecting on how these key influences fuse to establish IPA. The chapter then outlines the methods used to conduct the study, including how participants were selected and a summary of the interview process. Following this will be a description of the significant challenges of generating data using sign language and a step by step depiction of the analysis stage.

3.2. Research Question

The research question which this study will attempt to explore is:

‘How do deaf, BSL interpreting service-users experience the consequences for consumer/professional relationships with local sign language interpreters when SLIs withdraw their labour from an exclusive interpreting service provider?’

Using semi-structured interviews with participants affected by an on-going boycott of a specific agency responsible for providing all interpreting services for a health trust in Newcastle, the research question was developed to focus this study on the meaning, understanding and sense-making of those affected.

3.3. Epistemological position

The primary research question specifies that the study is concerned with individuals’ subjective experience of a particular event; as a result, the theoretical framework used to interpret the data will be drawing on hermeneutic and phenomenological epistemology.

Situating my research within a phenomenological epistemology allows me as the researcher to play an active role in the research process while emphasising the innate dynamic practice of examination (Kafle, 2011). To understand the phenomenon from the individual's perspective, hermeneutic (as opposed to descriptive) phenomenology will also be applied as hermeneutics is based on the assumption that reduction is

impossible. Tuffour (2017) explains that this epistemology rejects objectivity and instead allows the interpretation of experience. Though hermeneutics does not demand a set methodology, it does invite an ongoing dialectic throughout the research process, between the interpretive framework and occasions found within the conversational text where "understanding occurs through a fusion of horizons" (Koch, 1995, p.835), providing moments whereby understanding and interpretation are bound together (IBID).

Finlay (2011) explains that it is this interpretative process which takes the narratives as presented by the participants and connects theoretical discussion; this allows the researcher to achieve a deeper insight through detailed analysis but also through unconcealed personal reflection. They go on to clarify the 'reflexive-relational' aspect between the participant and researcher allows the dialogue of the interpretation, providing an opportunity for meaning to emerge. As such, the participant is seen as a 'co-researcher' in the meaning-making event and, when applying a hermeneutic-phenomenological framework, the research allows and indeed aims for, researcher-participant (inter-)subjectivity, therefore the need for researcher reflexivity is of predominant importance (Tuffour, 2017).

3.3.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was identified as a methodology which permits the research to intrinsically value personal accounts and subjective experience. IPA allows the researcher to examine how each individual understands their experience and explores the unique meanings that each participant applies (Smith & Eatough, 2007). This allows the researcher to examine how the participant makes sense of their personal (and/or social) world. Although developed by Jonathan Smith and his colleagues in the field of psychology over twenty years ago (Smith, 2004), IPA has increased in popularity in the wider psychological field and is considered to be particularly well-suited to exploring topics that are situated within counselling, health psychology and social psychology (Smith & Eatough, 2007). IPA has been accepted within wider fields and was recently adopted by Pirone, Henner & Hall (2018) who presented an IPA exploring the impact of the quality of ASL interpreting on classroom participation (as far as I am aware, to date, this is the only published example of IPA applied to the sign language interpreting field). However, I make the case that it would

be advantageous for researchers to embrace the ethos inherently found within IPA if we are to suitably explore our own conceptions of meaning as interpreters.

It is accepted that IPA is rooted within three theoretical touchstones (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Phenomenology: the study of subjective experience; Hermeneutics: a methodical contemplation of our ever-changing perspectives; 'interpretation', as opposed to experience, and 'reflection' (cf Gadamer; in Willig, 2001); and Idiography: the study of individual meanings and unique life experiences.

IPA is referred to as an ideographic mode of enquiry, as opposed to nomothetic (what is shared with others) approach that tends to predominate contemporary research (Smith & Eatough, 2007). With that in mind, when applying IPA to samples larger than an individual case study, it is necessary to present an account of the shared themes instinctive to the analysis along with a detailed sense of the 'life-world' of each participant. The capability of IPA to capture and present complex perspectives has allowed it in recent years to evolve into what is considered a fully articulated qualitative approach, albeit with a psychological focus on how individuals make sense of significant events in their lives (IBID).

The analysis uses a two-stage interpretation process, meaning that the researcher's own interpretation is needed to make sense of the personal world of the participant, while the research participant is simultaneously attempting to make sense of their own world through expressing their experience to the researcher. This is referred to as a 'double hermeneutic' process, whereby the researcher is required to take on a central role both in the analysis and the interpretation of the described experience. This understanding of double hermeneutics stresses the explicitly dual nature of the role of researcher within IPA.

Fundamentally, IPA seeks to understand the phenomena from the perspective of the research participant. IPA combines empathic and critical hermeneutics, consequently, as well as standing *with* the participant, the researcher must also ask critical questions to stand *apart* in their engagement with the participant's experience, while at all times engaging in the second-order sense-making (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

As IPA was developed within the field of psychology and therapy, it constitutionally expects the researcher to outline to the reader the personal meaning of the research they choose to undertake and articulate this awareness. This self-engagement with the researcher's own biases, pre-assumptions, and understandings brought to the research project, involves a complex and dynamic unpacking to manage the potential impact that

these elements will have on the research. However, rather than mitigate the impact with the aim of maintaining a neutral position, this acknowledgement allows for a richer and more reflexive exploration of the data (McLeod, 2015). As a result, through the use of a 'research diary' completed throughout the process (wherein I was able to explore and reflect using personal reflexivity on my position as a researcher as well as any responses which conducting this research elicited), I took steps as a reflexive researcher to realise my own subjectivity throughout every stage of the research project. An extract of the diary is provided to give a sense of the reflexive process (see Appendix 1).

3.4 Sampling

As explored in the above section, IPA is an idiographic approach, meaning that it seeks to understand specific phenomena within a specific context. The aim of my research question was to gather in-depth data and to capture the range and diversity of my participants' accounts. Therefore, sample size was small and selected purposively (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

To ensure that my research methodology remained in line with IPA protocol, purposive sampling was used to identify and contact a small sample of potential participants via a gatekeeper; someone who matched the criteria for participation but had access and influence to a larger set of participants. A method labelled as 'referral' within IPA studies (IBID).

The criteria used for participant selection was as follows: "Participants will be deaf BSL users who used/uses the services of SLIs, living in the area most impacted by the boycott and for whom the boycott had a personal impact on their everyday life." (See Appendix 2).

A gatekeeper was identified through my own pre-existing contacts, who in turn was able to refer additional potential participants.

The aim was to select a fairly homogeneous sample to represent a *perspective* rather than a population (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 1996). Unfortunately, as I was not able to vet the participants on anything other than the criteria outlined above plus basic identifying features (age, gender etc), I was unaware as to the extent of variation that existed between the participants or if that variation could be contained within the phenomenological analysis. However, the aim of this study is not to make an empirical generalisation, therefore the differences in social factors between participants must be acknowledged, respected and reported from within a particular cultural frame.

Subsequently, the participants were contacted, given a brief outline of the topic and what the interview would entail, and invited to take part, at a time convenient to them, at a venue in Newcastle over a period of two days. An information sheet explaining the research and a link to a BSL translation [https://youtu.be/pDtsxamGlfw] was provided prior to the interviews taking place. The right to withdraw from the research study and/or to refuse to answer any questions was made clear to all participants during the informed consent process. Visual consent to take part in the interview and have responses filmed and analysed was gained on the day of the interviews and, in all but one case (later removed from the sample – see below), written consent was also gained concurrently. Participants were also provided with a hard copy of the information sheet as well as the contact details for my supervisor and myself, should they wish to withdraw their consent at any time (see Appendix 2 for information sheet and consent form).

3.5 Interview

In line with IPA protocol, a semi-structured interview schedule was used (see Appendix 3), with initial questions followed by exploratory questions to encourage the participants to delve deeper into their own understanding of their experience (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007), conducted in a manner whereby the interview was guided rather than led by the schedule (Smith & Eatough, 2007). Participants were encouraged to expand on topics they felt to be significant to their experience of the boycott and were not pressured to answer any topics that they considered to be irrelevant. This enabled an environment whereby the data produced by the interview was a collaborative activity between the participants and myself (Hale & Napier, 2013). Throughout the interviews, questions were spontaneously modified as seen fit based on interviewee responses.

As the aim was to "facilitate an interaction which permits participants to tell their own stories in their own words" (Smith et al., 2009), I attempted to use Seidman's tips for effective interview technique (2006) as well techniques grounded in IPA's psychological and counselling roots: holding the space and active listening (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

In total, four interviews were conducted; however. one was dismissed due to a delay in receiving the participant's written consent leading to the data being considered ineligible to be included.

The remaining three interviews were conducted face to face in BSL, each ranging in time from 47 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes. Two cameras were used to capture the dynamic nature of the conversation.

The full length of each interview was then transcribed and translated into written English using the software program Elan. Pseudonyms were used at the point of transcription to ensure the anonymity of participants.

Each interview transcription was then exported into separate Word documents and, in the spirit of transparency and collaboration, was shared electronically with the participants who had opted to include their email address when the option of checking the accuracy of the translation was offered. This meant that those participants were able to see how their responses had been presented in the study prior to any analysis taking place. As Storey (2007) highlights: an intrinsic openness makes it less likely that the researcher will misinterpret the participant's responses.

3.6 Other considerations

It is worth highlighting the significant challenge posed by working with data delivered in sign language. A language which is not only different from the language used to analyse the discourse, but also one which does not have a written format[5].

The specific language choices of the participants when interpreting their own experience during the interview carry with it their own conceptualisation, values and particular social and cultural meanings. This required consideration throughout the translation process (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). Therefore, when reflecting on the double-hermeneutic process, my position as a non-deaf, non-native signer becomes consequential. Due to the dialogical nature of the exchange, the participants were able to appraise my use of language to inform how to best deliver their own account. Handing the participants this power during the interview process promoted collaboration and maintained an analytical openness (Temple & Moran, 2005; Smith, Chen, & Liu, 2008).

Transcribing the data was not as simple as converting speech to text. Translating the recordings involved an unavoidable transformation process, so I chose to apply a 'foreignizing' strategy (Venuti, 1995) to the task of translating, both to retain each participant's individual 'voice' and to allow the interpretative process to develop further during the analytic process, where, through the ongoing process of personal enquiry;

researcher reflexivity, my own inherent bias could appropriately be explored (Finlay, 2002; McLeod, 2015).

3.7 Analysis

The challenges of working with a transcription that is also a translation can impact massively on the quality of the analysis (Sabouni, 2018). Therefore, I immersed myself in the interview data by watching, interpreting and transcribing, reading, rereading, re-translating, and concurrent re-watching of the interviews (Stuckey, 2014).
A hard copy of the texts were printed then the IPA was conducted as laid out by Smith et al. (2009).

1. The text was read and reread in an attempt to enter each participant's experiential world in turn.
2. Initial noting of descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments with a clear phenomenological focus on things which matter to each participant.
3. Emerging themes were then developed separately for each interview by mapping interrelationships and patterns.
4. Connections were sought across the emergent themes and grouped under super-ordinate themes.
5. Each interview was treated as an individual case study and analysed in its own terms up until this point. Once an inductive analysis had been implemented, and some level of configuration (referred to within IPAs as gestalt) had been reached, then Group level/Master themes were identified and explored.
6. A connecting framework was developed to represent the unique idiosyncratic instances each participant reported but also to explore the higher order qualities shared across cases.

3.8 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was to provide an overview of the methodology adopted within the research. The chapter commenced by presenting the research question then introducing the philosophical underpinnings of the methodology. It then provided a rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews. The design of the study was then outlined: participant criteria were provided followed by the procedure and method used for recruiting. Subsequently, the data collection and data analysis process were

described in detail, incorporating the challenges experienced during interview transcription and analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter is concerned with highlighting the findings of the research using two separate methods. I start by introducing a visual framework to depict how the participants' experience related to each other regarding four separate areas of experience: Overall Experience, Social Aspect, Engagement and Vulnerability. This introduces the participants and focuses attention to how they engage with the boycott comparable to each other, providing a context for the exploration of super-ordinate themes.

Six super-ordinate themes of focus were generated from analysis across the group, each one containing related sub-ordinate themes which divide the super-ordinate themes into separate categories based on the findings of the research. An overview of the themes is presented using a table to present the super-ordinate themes with their corresponding sub-ordinate themes. I then offer a narrative of the findings and discuss potential implicit meanings within the data, this includes my interpretation of how the sub-ordinate themes link to establish into a super-ordinate theme.

Throughout the exploration of the data, quotes taken from the translated transcription are used to illustrate the participant's subjective perspective and experience of the boycott.

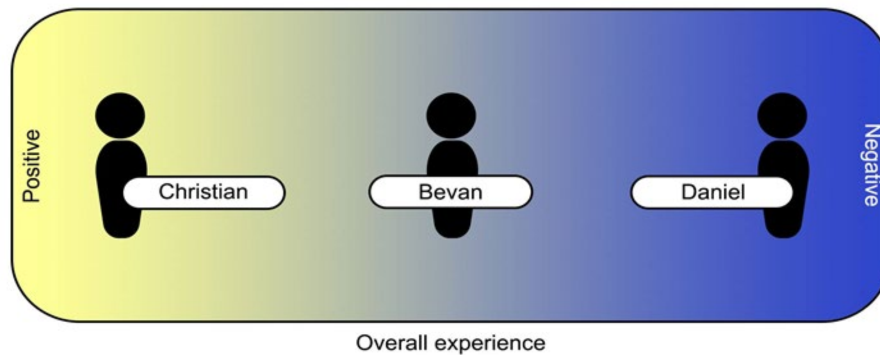
4.2 Participant spectrum framework

In this section, I will give an account of the lived experience of the participants presented during the three interviews with the aim to give the reader a sense of the data. Acknowledging that there is no single, correct way to present an IPA analysis (Smith et al., 2009), I will deviate slightly from the traditional format of exploring each superordinate in-depth straight away. Instead, I will outline a pattern which emerged as the analysis moved from investigating each individual case study to explore how they all interacted with each other within the parameters of this research.

Primarily, the findings of the analysis highlighted the diverse ways the participants experienced the boycott. This is to be expected if we accept that deaf service-users are not a homogeneous group, and will each apply their own individual meanings. However, after further consideration and analysis, it was possible to create a framework whereby each interviewee's experience was able to be plotted in relation to each other.

It is difficult to truly express the richness and interplay of the different experiences of the participants using written text alone, therefore I present this diagram as a visual representation of the continuum of diversity of experience gathered in the data. I posit that this framework can be applied to several aspects of each participant's experience of the boycott.

4.2.1 Overall Experience



Overall experience

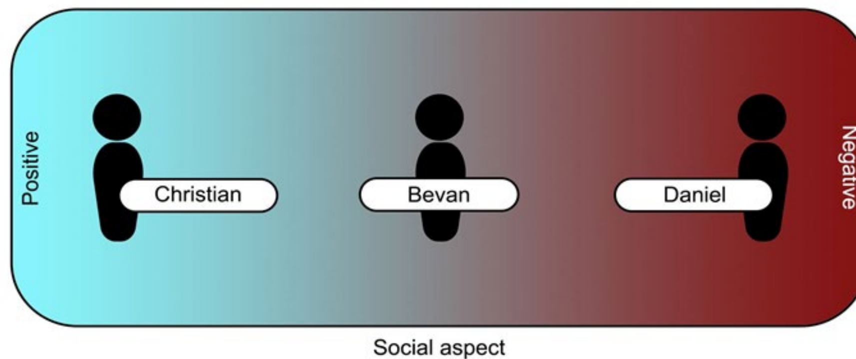
In this example, 'Overall Experience' is used to emphasise the negative or positive impact the boycott had regarding how their experiences were presented during the interviews.

The participants are plotted from left (the most positive) to right (negative) with Christian and Daniel at either extreme. For Christian, the boycott was a "*missed opportunity*", something he has spent the past year taking a very active role in attempting to rectify. In his interview he states his frustration with how the interpreters executed their campaign; however, he is mainly positive and believes that there are further opportunities to heal the rift between the interpreting profession and deaf community. He has taken on the proactive role of an agent of positive change and sees this as an opportunity to "*push the deaf community to wake up a bit and get more involved, [he] cannot allow the deaf community to go back to sleep again*".

Plotted at the opposite extreme is Daniel. His experience has been a deeply traumatic ordeal. One which, after repeatedly being denied information and forced into a position with which he is not comfortable, has cost him dignity and pride. Throughout the interview he would start to respond to a point, only to trail off stating "*forget it*" or "*it's not worth it*". His body language and signing style would alternate between animated/aggressive and deflated. He repeatedly mentions how this experience has led him to feel depressed and it is clear he has given up, at the expense of his health.

In the middle lies Bevan, whose overall experience is largely negative. He expresses his annoyance and frustration clearly, articulating how it has made him feel like "*a second-class citizen*". He is able to present his experience without the raw emotion found in Daniel's account, but also without the optimism found in Christian's. Bevan is largely introspective and there is a melancholy to the jovial disposition he presents during the interview: "*And thank God I lived in the better generation (laughs) but unfortunately, that means that I'm now getting old…*".

4.2.2 Social Aspect



The 'Social Aspect' describes how the participants relate to the other agents involved in the boycott.

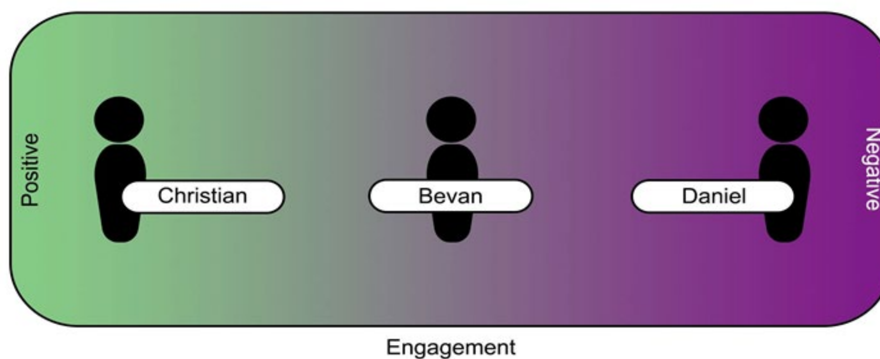
Daniel is only able to describe the events of the boycott on a deeply personal level. He does not engage with it any further than his previous experience and will not, even hypothetically, consider going through a similar experience again. There were multiple instances when Daniel would refer to previously described traumatic events that did not relate to the present conversation. Suggesting that, for Daniel, this experience is something he has not properly processed. Although he states: "*I try not to think about it anymore....*", his behaviour implies that it is something he ruminates on often.

Bevan takes a slightly larger social consideration. He, like Daniel, presented his experience using primarily personal anecdotes, but also showed empathy with the boycotting interpreters: "*To ask them to take a cut in pay - I mean, I would object if it was me! So I feel like they're well within their right [to boycott]*" and concern for the wider deaf community: "*I'm really angry because I know that it affects me but I also know 100% that it definitely affects other deaf people as well!*", highlighting that Bevan's experience goes further than personal affect.

Christian, however, engages with the boycott on the most social extreme of the spectrum. He gives examples of attempting to understand the perspective of every

stakeholder involved; individual deaf service-users, interpreters and those commissioning the contract. He frequently emphasises how this issue is not only a 'deaf' issue by making comparisons to spoken language interpreters and patients who speak a foreign language. He deliberately fingerspells 'B-U-R-N-O-U-T' when describing seasoned deaf activists to juxtapose deaf activism with mainstream activism, the zeitgeist and so wider society.

4.2.3 Engagement



The participants remain in the same order when considering the extent of 'Engagement'. The boycott was announced at a meeting where the local deaf community were informed of changes to the interpreting contract. This meeting represents a significant event for both Christian and Bevan and marks the start of their experiential engagement.

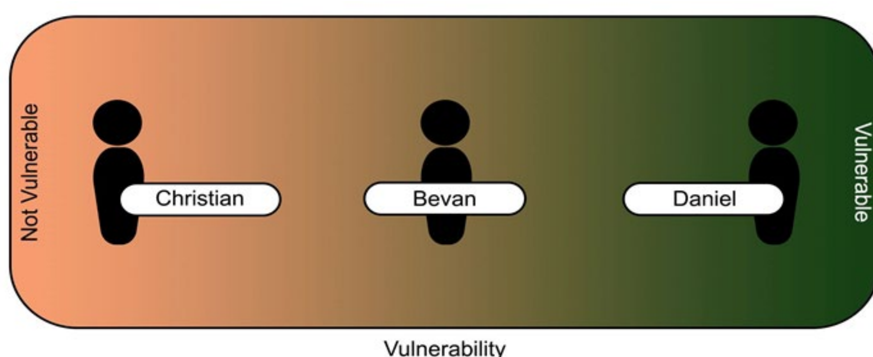
Daniel's engagement started much later, after he was personally exposed to the effects of the boycott. Following which, he withdrew completely, refusing to engage at all to the extent where he will not access his GP for fear of similar experiences: "*I won't work with [Language Empire], no way, no! I told my doctor, "that's it - finished I won't be coming back here!" finished! no more*.". Daniel has not sought further information to understand why the boycott is taking place, nor has he attempted to find coping mechanisms further than refusing to put himself in that position again.

Christian, alternatively, has immersed himself in the wider framework which surrounds the boycott. Taking on a huge amount of responsibility and a proactive role in support of the boycotting interpreters; motivating the deaf community to take action against the agency and working with the independent complaints advocacy to allow deaf patients to feedback in BSL. He is also making sure NHS England complete on their promise to review the contract after 12 months by tenaciously contacting them and refusing to back

down. He attends meetings with local councillors and is arranging a consultation regarding the review to take place.

Between the two extremes, is Bevan. He has actively challenged the contract and agency; he is also vocal in his support for the interpreters involved in the boycott. During the interview, he expressed his understanding of general interpreter provision, but his engagement is limited to the deaf community: "*I listen to their problems. We share experiences. We do talk, yes. I wish that I'd videoed some of the conversations*". Bevan is a prime example of someone like those motivated by Christian to act but who has not campaigned further.

4.2.4 Vulnerability



In terms of 'Vulnerability' regarding the effects of the boycott, the diagram remains consistent with what has already been presented. Christian, a self-proclaimed "*strong person"* with a strong command of written English, is plotted as 'least vulnerable'. Ironically, he is the only of the three participants who has had experience of an interpreter supplied under the new contract, while being the one who would, most likely, have coped best without one. As well as being the youngest and having the least serious ailments, he benefits from a reputation of being strong-willed: "*it's well-known that I am a strong person, that I am not afraid of an argument and I will tell interpreters directly if I am not happy with how they are behaving, this Interpreter knows this so behaves appropriately with me*". Christian's confidence in his lack of vulnerability, leads to expressing his disappointment with the appropriateness of the service he experienced as this meant that he could not submit a complaint: "*if I had been a different person maybe they would have treated me differently and I would have received the lower, poorer standard of interpreting"*.

Bevan (once again plotted in the middle), is the oldest of the three with significant health issues. He can rely on family members although he acknowledges that this is

not ideal, but he would rather attend appointments without an interpreter than use an interpreter supplied by the agency as he states he does not trust their ability. His self-perception of his own vulnerability corresponds with this. He acknowledges his own weakness in comparison to others: "*And I know if I feel this way it will be worse for other people in the deaf community. There are lots of very vulnerable people in the deaf community and Language Empire are able to... take over the lives of those people!*".
At the other extreme is Daniel who has experienced serious health issues in the past and is undergoing treatment for their effects. However, his response to having to communicate with his GP using written notes after twice being informed that the interpreter had 'cancelled' (or more likely after the agency failed to source an interpreter due to the boycott) suggests that Daniel is the least equipped to deal with the effects of the boycott and thus the most vulnerable. During the interview, Daniel was able to discuss his lack of ability to communicate in written English in a clear and detached manner. However, the emotional outpouring that occurred when these experiences were revisited suggests that such events are deeply triggering, possibly in response to the trauma of a lifetime of historical linguistic oppression. Such an experience which will not be idiosyncratic to Daniel but rather will be shared with many other deaf people educated during the age of oralism.

4.3 Overview of themes

Group-Level Super-ordinate Themes	Sub-ordinate Themes
Focus on Power	*Feeling of powerlessness*
	Power between interpreters and deaf community
Focus on Knowledge	*Interpreters withholding information*
	Language Empire/NHS England withholding Information
Focus on Responsibility	*Interpreters responsibility to work with the Deaf community regarding the boycott*
	Refusing to accept responsibility
Focus on Justice	*Choice and Control*
	Dignity
	Taking action to challenge
Focus on Relationships with interpreters	*Deaf and Interpreting worlds as separate*
	Deaf and Interpreting worlds as joined
	Regression back to 'pre-professionalisation'
	Need to join together
Focus on Trust	*Trust in their regular interpreters and the previous system*
	Mistrust of the new agency, in NHS England and the systems that surround current interpreter provision, and the interpreters who will work for the new agency.

4.4 Exploration of the Master Superordinate themes

The analysis of the three interviews detailed several recurrent themes. In line with IPA methodology, I shall outline the super-ordinate themes generated from the data; I also offer my interpretation of the findings to make a case for what the data could mean. The following super-ordinate themes are those which were mostly found within all interviews. Though several themes occur only in two of the three interviews, they relate directly to the research question of this study and as such, have been included due to the value they provide to the overall findings. As outlined in the previous section, the participants described a broad range of experiences regarding the boycott. It is important to state that all participants were generally supportive of the interpreters involved in the boycott and directed the bulk of their frustrations towards Language Empire, the agency being boycotted. It is within this context that the following themes are presented.

4.4.1 Focus on Power

This theme addresses the power dynamics as described by the participants within a series of systems during this period of dysfunction. The descriptions have been divided into 'Feeling of powerlessness' and 'Power between interpreters and deaf community'. Within all the interviews the theme of 'powerlessness' to take control was present. This feeling started on the evening the change of contract (and boycott) was announced, as Christian describes:

> *Christian:* *There was nothing that [the Deaf community] could do because the contract had already been agreed.*

This experience was significant for Christian, who then spent 12 months attempting to regain control of the situation for the deaf community, both figuratively and literally. Describing one instance at a public meeting to discuss the contract between counsellors, Language Empire and NHS England, Christian acted to change the metaphorical position of deaf people who would no longer accept being 'pushed to the back':

> *Christian:* *At the time I was sat right at the back, so I raised my hand and explained that I felt as though the deaf people present had been pushed to the back and I asked would*

it be okay if we moved to be more involved in the meeting as the current seating arrangements made it difficult for people who relied on visual communication to follow. I was told that I could move, so we did.

Although there is scope made for power to be reclaimed, Christian's faith in the ability to change the system is not shared by the other participants. Bevan takes a more jaded view:

> *Bevan:* *It's difficult because they'll always be organised changes... there's always going to be barriers and blocks to challenging those changes [...] It's like that so it's impossible for us to access and challenge anything.*

This brief extract gives a powerful insight to the impotent helplessness experienced when at the mercy of various agents, each with their own complicated bureaucratic process to discern. Here Bevan is contemplating his power in relation to interpreters, Language Empire, NHS England, and the Government. Bevan claims several times that deaf people are "*stuck in the middle*" suggesting that, for him, this has been experienced as powerful institutions making decisions which impact deaf people and then leaving them to deal with the consequences. Daniel gives a real-life example of the paradox he finds himself in when attempting to change his situation:

> *Daniel:* *[Language Empire] won't talk to me; everything has to go via the doctor. And how can I talk to my doctor without an interpreter?*

This excerpt leads the analysis into considering the power the participants feel regarding interpreters. Daniel goes on: "*I can talk to people using sign language but not without an interpreter*". Suggesting that for Daniel, interpreters are a means to readdress the power imbalance he experiences as a deaf individual existing in a society which privileges English over sign language. This highlights the extent of powerlessness felt when that means is denied. Christian also acknowledges this use of interpreters; however, he recognises the powerful position they are allotted when working with deaf patients:

Christian: *after all, it is very important as the interpretation could put [deaf people's] health at risk,*

Seconded by Bevan, who states:

Bevan: *our health is literally in [the interpreter's] hands.*

Bevan also highlights the power of the interpreters to organise the boycott because they were informed of the contract change before the deaf community:

Bevan: *I said, "Deaf people should come first! Its deaf people who should've been informed first why the changes happened! Why a different interpreting agency has been involved? We should've known first - not interpreters!"*

Here Bevan describes his outburst when the boycott was announced; an indignant response to a system which allowed interpreters more power than the deaf people affected.

4.4.2 Focus on Knowledge

Linked closely is the theme of knowledge, unsurprising given the adage: 'knowledge is power'. For a community who regularly experiences barriers to accessing information, this maxim takes on additional significance to all participants. The examples focus on withholding information as a way of withholding knowledge, with both interpreters and institutions guilty of such behaviour.

When interpreters themselves withhold information, it brings into question their very reason. After all, what is the function of an interpreter if not to allow access to knowledge being shared to all parties present? If an interpreter fails to do this are, they technically an interpreter?

Bevan describes the experience of supporting a family member during an extended period of medical checks and treatment, and the dismay they both felt when discovering that a diagnosis had been provided months before but that the information had not been made accessible to them by the (Language Empire-provided) interpreter:

Bevan: *But for all this time she had not known [...] and it was all because of an inexperienced interpreter. A novice interpreter not interpreting the information!*

This experience had a lasting effect on Bevan's trust in the interpreters who undertake work from Language Empire, leading him to reject the current provision on offer for his personal appointments preferring to "*go without interpreters*".

Though, what constitutes an interpreter's responsibility regarding allowing access to knowledge, is not only limited to what takes place 'in-situ'. The responses gathered during the interviews suggest that a broader commitment to knowledge-sharing is expected, if not always delivered:

Christian: *It meant that deaf people found out about the changes to the contract on exactly the same day that they found out that the interpreters would be boycotting. So obviously the deaf community was confused about exactly what was going on and that experience affected them.*

This extract illustrates the disappointment felt when interpreters failed to share vital knowledge with the deaf community about something that would have a direct impact on their lives. Christian feels there is a moral responsibility to allow access to this information, reiterating many times that interpreters cannot expect deaf people to automatically know about the events which led to the boycott. There is an underlying sense of betrayal presented by all participants, not least by Daniel who explains:

Daniel: *absolutely nobody has informed me of why this has happened all I know is that I'm not allowed to use my regular interpreters anymore.*

The experience of Language Empire and NHS England withholding information from deaf people is no less frustrating. One reason for feeling powerlessness within this phenomenon is the lack of communication from the larger institutions.

Christian: *There has been no consultation with the deaf community, so we had been given no opportunity to influence the outcome. None whatsoever.*

Christian has an underlying belief in the system that, if NHS England had garnered the views of deaf patients during the planning stage, then the inevitable negative outcomes could have been avoided. This is evidenced by his role facilitating deaf people to submit complaints against the current interpreting contract, and his persistence a year on, in pinning down a representative from NHS England to discuss the complaints because: "*the community has a right to know what's going on*". This sharing of knowledge, he believes, is important to rectify the situation.

This faith is not shared by Christian's counterparts. There are insinuations that the practice of withholding information was a calculated decision by the agency and procurement body to force deaf people to accept the contract:

> *Bevan:* *Because before the meeting had even been organised the changes had already been planned and deaf people were just stuck. As the bid had already taken place it's like we were stuck in the middle.*

Bevan very deliberately uses the term "*stuck*" to portray the inability to challenge things. If knowledge is power then deliberately withholding basic knowledge is, for Bevan, a strategic manoeuvre which undermines his community and their basic rights. It is not only the withholding of information regarding the overall service which the participants object to but also the smaller, fundamental aspects of using interpreters:

> *Daniel:* *The fact that they won't even tell me the interpreter's name, they won't even tell the receptionist the interpreter's name, that means that I won't trust them.*

This excerpt highlights the huge impact a seemingly innocuous detail can have when concealed. Here the consequences culminate in Daniel losing trust in a system he has long had faith in, resulting in a detrimental effect in terms of industrial relations between the provider (at all stages of provision) and end service user.

4.4.3 Focus on Responsibility

As previously mentioned, there are assumed responsibilities which go beyond the interpreted message. This theme has been divided into the responsibility to boycott collectively with the deaf community, and the theme of negating responsibility.

Responsibility has a significance for all participants but not least for Christian who has adopted the burden of responsibility in regards to motivating deaf people to challenge the events which led to the boycott; however, this is not something he accepts lightly and feels that interpreters should be sharing the load, too:

> *Christian:* *the interpreters themselves should have also taken the initiative to engage with deaf people and highlight the issues because deaf people don't know about interpreting politics.*

This citation outlines the disparities of expectations. Interpreters have a responsibility to work with deaf people, but they also have a responsibility to empathise and understand that they cannot assume the knowledgebase to be the same as theirs. These points are rarely overtly acknowledged but clearly have a significant effect on industrial relations.

There is also the assumption that interpreters, especially those who have already garnered the trust of deaf people, have a responsibility to mitigate the ill effects of the boycott.

> *Daniel:* *after the second time the interpreter didn't attend my appointment I went straight [to a group of interpreters involved in the boycott] because I was so angry.*

This is not to berate the interpreters; instead, the group becomes a safe haven where Daniel can retreat to recover from his traumatic experience. Exemplifying the myriad responsibilities expected from interpreters embroiled in the boycott.

It is not only interpreters who have expected responsibilities, but also service providers. The consequences of not meeting those responsibilities are just as damaging. A fundamental responsibility of any service provider is that they will provide the service in question.

> *Bevan:* *The fact that [the GP practice] say, "oh if you don't like it then you should pay for your own interpreter" ... yeah, they did! They said that to me!*

There is legislation to ensure deaf BSL users are offered reasonable adjustment when accessing public services. Here, the service on offer is not considered ‘reasonable’ by Bevan. He identifies that his GP practice, while acknowledging that their patient has access needs, are neither willing to take responsibility for those access needs, nor take steps to challenge current arrangement, which they recognise as sub-par. The shock and disappointment apparent in his account are consistent with the other participants’ experiences of the theme.

> *Christian:* *[when the boycott was announced] the representative from NHS England was able to just sit back and shrug their shoulders, claiming that there was nothing that they could do.*

The visual representation of someone ‘leaning back and shrugging’ gives a powerful impression of someone happy to negate all responsibility, and not care about the pain they are inflicting by their actions. The characterisation portrayed by Christian in this recounting has come to be the representation Christian carries with him when recalling the complacency, he and other deaf people have been subjected to, which has a detrimental impact on relations between deaf people and interpreting service providers. When responsibilities are shunned, the damage can be irreparable.

> *Daniel:* *[The boss of Language Empire] thinks nothing of deaf people! He thinks nothing of me!*

By failing to meet the responsibility of providing interpreters, the boss of Language Empire has shown that he does not care about those affected. For Daniel, this is a deeply triggering act which symbolises an emotional assault on deaf people’s rights and Daniel’s own self-worth. Interpreter provision has come to be a means to achieving equity for an oppressed group so, when those responsible for that service appear uninterested in the standards provided, it understandably elicits an emotional response.

4.4.4 Focus on Justice

Throughout the interviews, several themes started to emerge and are presented under the super-ordinate theme of Justice. They are closely connected but the significance of each emergent theme as a stand-alone point gives merit to separating them into three areas of exploration: ‘choice and control’, ‘dignity’, and ‘taking action to challenge’.

The safeguard to preserve choice and control within the UK healthcare system is not present regarding interpreter provision. The ability to choose which interpreter is present during personal moments of a patient's health-care journey is critical to exert a level of control when whatever control they once had is diminishing during periods of illness.

> *Bevan:* *they [LE] told me, "oh no they can't interpret for you because they're not on our list", and I was really shocked! I said that! It made me realise [...] I don't have any idea about the interpreters that are on their list, they must be completely clueless! Like, really new, inexperienced interpreters; baby interpreters who don't know any better, novice interpreters!*

Recalling his response to his preferred interpreters boycotting the agency, Bevan feels vulnerable; robbed of personal choice. Bevan has deduced that interpreters who are not boycotting will be uninformed. By taking away the aspect of choice, any control he may have had over the standard of care during his appointment is reduced.

> *Daniel:* *the interpreter hasn't turned up twice in a row, so I asked the receptionist, "you mean the interpreter isn't attending again? Why can't I use one of my regular interpreters?" and all the receptionist would say was that they can't. What do they mean "can't"?!*

This exemplifies what happens when choice is removed and how that impacts control. For Daniel, his regular interpreters represent security and dependability. By denying his choice, the receptionist (due to the constraints imposed by the boycott) is denying him access to healthcare. As people with significant health issues, the restriction to choice has led Daniel and Bevan to take the only control they have: to refuse anyone who is not one of their preferred interpreters. Christian offers evidence that under the new contract there are no safeguards to prioritise this necessary aspect when allocating interpreter provision:

> *Christian:* *there was no mention of any choice of control or even if [Language Empire] had criteria for matching*

interpreters with appropriate appointments. For example, a male interpreter but when a female interpreter had been requested?

Here Christian is invoking a virtue he believes would be shared by all individuals who claim to behave in a principled manner. In his example, patients in vulnerable positions are even more disadvantaged.

Intertwined closely with the control afforded by choice is the right of an individual to maintain their dignity. This theme was expressed by all participants, though they expressed different strategies to uphold this right.

Christian: *I wouldn't feel comfortable if I arrived at the doctors for an appointment, and an interpreter who knew me from work arrived to interpret for me. I would prefer a different interpreter for personal appointments; I like to keep the two groups separate.*

Christian uses a personal example to illustrate his point - the unpleasant feeling of being faced with someone he had a pre-existing working relationship with arriving to interpret a medical appointment. This is a hypothetical situation, for Christian at least. However, Daniel and Bevan's choice and control has been greatly curtailed, putting their dignity at risk. The insult to Daniel's pride by his negative experiences leaves refusal to attend GP appointments as the only solution, regardless of the risk to his health that may present:

Daniel: *But I won't, I just won't go back. No, I'm not going through that again. (Looks away.)*

This behaviour was present throughout the interview. Daniel would break eye contact whenever he started to engage with the pain he had experienced during the boycott, showing the extent that an individual would go to prioritise their dignity. Bevan's priorities are different; his health takes precedence. However, he will not risk the indignity of having a "*clueless*" interpreter involved in his treatment either:

Bevan: *the problem is that I have to go to the doctors… - I'm quite ill - so it means that if I go, I just go without an interpreter.*

Justice can only be dealt if injustice is challenged. As previously discussed, the boycott involves individuals, institutions and systems, and can make the task of bringing those responsible to justice seem daunting. However, the participants have taken varying degrees of action to challenge the current status-quo:

Bevan: *[the ICA] asked if we wanted support and we said "yes" and now we've been recording all of our complaints, and we've handed in a pile of papers to them, so the ICA have that.*

Christian: *over the past year people have been submitting their complaints and recently I have been contacting NHS England.*

Daniel: *So I told [my contact] that I was very angry and depressed and what happened at the doctors and she was shocked, so she said that I should write a complaint and she said yesterday that I should come here and I should talk to you.*

Even Daniel retains his yearning for justice, evidenced by his involvement in this research. Even as someone who at several times indicated that he has 'given up', his actions suggest otherwise. The courage present within all the participants in the pursuit of justice in the face of monumental barriers is palpable.

4.4.5 Focus on Relationships with interpreters

As this research is concerned with Industrial Relations and the deaf community, it is unsurprising that a super-ordinate theme would centre around the relationship deaf service-users experience with their interpreters. Trust was mentioned frequently when discussing relationships; however, the significance of trust was felt to be such that it deserved its own separate exploration. Therefore, this theme will be discussed in terms of deaf and interpreting 'worlds', and as a regression back to 'pre-professionalism'.

The participants were encouraged to consider their beliefs around where SLIs fit within the social construct of deaf and interpreting communities. For Daniel, his relationship with interpreters does not go much further than that of any other professional whose

services he uses. Christian and Bevan, engage on a deeper level. It is Christian who introduces the motif of "*worlds*" to describe how each group constructs their own social network. While rationalising the boycott, he concludes that interpreters "*have grown to become very separate*":

> *Christian:* *Interpreters have their own world, and I understand that.*

There is an implication that Christian is forgiving the actions of the interpreters. The concept of 'world' invokes nationalist imagery of a different society with its own rules and priorities, which focuses on the welfare of its citizens (interpreters) over all others (including deaf people).

Bevan also attempts to comprehend the interpreters' actions:

> *Bevan:* *That that's why the system doesn't work and that's why they informed the interpreters first and then [interpreters] didn't think about deaf people until afterwards.*

This extract shows how Bevan has compartmentalised interpreters as separate to the deaf community who have less individual focus and a shared, collective ethos. If interpreters were part of his community then deaf people would not have been an afterthought as their well-being would have been intrinsically linked.

Christian and Bevan, seemingly contradictory, assert that a vital step to resolving the issues that led to the boycott would be to acknowledge the deaf and interpreting worlds as joined and working together. Interestingly they both use the 'same boat' metaphor:

> *Christian:* *What is important is recognising that we are trying to improve things for everybody who is in the same boat. Because when it comes down to it we are all in the same boat and we need to work together if we want to achieve anything.*

> *Bevan:* *a campaign to do with the boycott... but there's nothing I can do - the deaf community; we can't as [deaf people and interpreters] are all in the same boat.*

By using this metaphor, the participants emphasise that the objectionable circumstances are due to the same cause and create a shared experience comparable to that of one community. This, in turn, creates an obligation expected from all those in the 'boat' to work towards prioritising the prosperity of the group over individual gain.

The theme of joining the two worlds is evident at several points throughout Christian's and Bevan's accounts, Bevan employs the 'boat' metaphor once again:

Bevan: *We're all stuck in the same boat! We shouldn't be arguing! If we're arguing, then we can't get through…*

Here Bevan is imploring both sides to put differences aside to work together to resolve the root cause of both parties' frustrations. An awareness Christian feels that deaf people at least have already accepted;

Christian: *[local deaf people] have realised that things will not be the same and that deaf people need to work with the interpreters to challenge this.*

Christian is offering this reality as an opportunity for interpreters to connect meaningfully with the deaf community to collectively challenge injustice.

All three participants value the professional service they enjoyed before the boycott and none have a desire to return to the pre-professionalisation of sign language interpreting:

Bevan: *A long time ago lots of deaf people would just use their mother or father to interpret for them at the GP. So, if for example; the daughter was deaf, and the mother and father were hearing or even if it was the other way around... but it's not the same.*

Bevan has the option of using family members as impromptu 'interpreters' but chooses not to. Daniel feels similarly:

Daniel: *[Daniel's partner's] daughter signs a little bit, but they need to improve. So, when they go to the doctor, they take their daughter to interpret for them, but it's not good.*

In both accounts, the participants express discontent at the prospect of regressing back to using family members in place of professionals, reminding us that the pendulum swing came about in direct response to a request for a professional service from the deaf community.

4.4.6 Focus on Trust

The theme of Trust was prevalent throughout all three interviews. It is difficult to create a true representation of how the participant's engaged with the theme as it served as the basis for the lens through which they experienced every aspect of the boycott. It is worth, then, touching on a few prominent examples to explore the influence of this theme regarding trust in the previous system and the mistrust they feel for the new agency.

As evidenced throughout this analysis, trust is a crucial element for Daniel. When trust is broken, he cannot bring himself to engage with that service further, whether that is individual interpreters, an interpreting agency or the health service:

> *Daniel: The only agency that I trust, and I am happy to use is [the agency who supply his preferred interpreters]. They are brilliant. Their interpreters have been with me through everything.*

In this extract Daniel is clarifying the need for deaf service users to be able to develop a relationship with interpreters. It is only then that trust can be built. Christian outlines how the system around interpreter provision is having a detrimental influence:

> *Christian: there is no continuity with interpreters, new unknown interpreters are booked for their health appointments or no interpreter arrives to interpret at all.*

As Christian evidences, there is a huge barrier to deaf service-users building relationships with interpreters due to lack of continuity. This stems from the agency's lack of commitment to nurturing relationships, which impacts on what trust can be garnered.

Bevan, as someone who lived through the professionalisation process, laments the more recent change in interpreter values however:

Bevan: What I've experienced in the past, my generation, it's been very smooth, and it's been fine. The Old School interpreters are fine. But obviously there's been a few instances, a few problems, like teething problems or mistakes but they've been sorted out and things have improved. And I thought with my generation we got through it all, and things will only get better from now on […] but instead it's got a lot worse it's going under, just like the Titanic. It's awful.

This extract demonstrates Bevan's experience of interpreters who developed and situated their positions as professionals during the pendulum swing: Old School interpreters, whom he describes as having "*good hearts*", "*strong links*" and a "*love [for] the deaf community*". Who "*want to work with the deaf community - not in a patronising 'wanting to help them' sort of way, but in a way where they understand that deaf people need high-quality interpreting access*" verses interpreters who have developed their values under the influence of the current state of interpreting provision today whom he feels "*are just in it for the money*".

4.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have introduced and discussed the diverse range of experiential effect caused by a case of industrial action of SLIs withdrawing their labour from the sole provider of interpreters for the participant's GP appointments. I presented the six super-ordinate themes identified within the data: Power, Knowledge, Responsibility, Justice, Relationships with interpreters, and Trust. The participants described how the events leading up to and the consequences of the boycott itself impacted on their feeling of powerlessness and the resulting power imbalance between deaf service-users and interpreters. They talked about the difficulty in accessing information regarding the reasons behind the boycott, and the expected responsibilities of the interpreters to engage with the local deaf community to mitigate the negative effects felt. The experience of having control removed from the participants by the agency was paramount, and they described how the agency practice had impacted on their sense of dignity. Overall, the participants were supportive of the interpreters boycotting and directed their frustrations at the agency being boycotted; however, they did express a

wish for the interpreters to work with the local deaf community and to trust in deaf people to support them to challenge the injustices which led to the boycott.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter will discuss the implications that can be drawn from the data analysis (namely, implications for: theory, practice, training, community relations, and policy), starting with identifying areas within IR theory which require development to accommodate for the findings of this research. Then, as the aim of the research was to act as a resource for SLIs considering industrial action, the next section highlights tangible implications for the profession, leading to how training for SLIs could draw on this research to evolve the current 'in-situ'-focused interpreter education to include how to future-proof against the threats to the profession. The next implication is concerned with how SLIs relate industrial action to the deaf community; the findings of the research highlight the desire from deaf service-users for SLIs to engage on a much more prolific level than they historically have done. Relevant IR theories which could be useful during this process, are re-introduced in this section. Finally, the implications for interpreting procurement legislation are discussed, concluding that current policy regarding NFAs and interpreting agency regulation are not fit for practice.

5.2 Theory: Implications for Industrial Relations theory

The findings of this research highlight the necessity of a wider framework of reference for workers in non-traditional forms of employment. The accounts analysed as part of this research show the complex work-system which SLIs function within. This highlights a need for IR theory to develop provisions to encompass a broader understanding of a contemporary workforce. It is these workers who are currently most at risk of having their employment rights eroded in the current economic climate and therefore most likely to take industrial action.

The data also stands as an example of tertiary conflict and action taken by a greenfield profession, suggesting that the current theories of an individualist workforce, reluctant to take collective action, need to be re-evaluated. Especially in relation to the prolific practice of 'tendering' public services under NFAs. The detrimental consequences to the end service-users of which, though under-represented in traditional IR literature, are overtly prevalent within the accounts found in this research.

This allows us to conclude that there is a legitimacy to the claim that the experiences of end service-users should be integrated into the understanding of IR work-systems.

5.3 Practice: Implications for the profession

There are suggestions found within literature that there is a need for SLIs to reassess their professional behaviour in favour of deaf service-users, including assertions that SLIs should be actively combating the injustice they witness as interpreters. The narratives of those interviewed highlighted multiple examples of injustice experienced by the participants. Surrounding these effects is the manifestation of a demand for justice, therefore, if SLIs aspire to be allies to the deaf community, they cannot ignore their involvement (via their role in the interpreting provision process) with this oppression. There is no neutral position when complicity with the status quo results in injustice.

The findings also show the influence interpreting agencies are having on the perceptions of those practitioners who work within the limited parameters offered. SLIs may feel that they are demonstrating the expected institutionalised altruism by accepting a cut to their working conditions in order to provide interpreting services to deaf consumers; however, how this is perceived by the participants of this study was the exact opposite. Such interpreters were viewed as either being unskilled and inexperienced (and therefore forced to accept lower fees), or they were valuing earning money over the rights of deaf people by accepting unethical agency practices.

The implication of this is that, in some instances, for some deaf service-users, industrial action is agreed as the most ethical option. However, the findings of this research demonstrate that differences in how this action is implemented can affect how deaf service-users experience those effects. Greater engagement with those affected is required to mitigate the powerlessness felt as a result of the boycott, and to empower deaf people themselves to challenge the injustices they experience at the hands of multilingual interpreting agencies. This topic is expanded upon further in section 5.5.

One important consideration which emerged from the analysis of the data is that of the importance of knowledge-sharing. This is a discernible implication for interpreting organisations, groups of local interpreters and the national Union. Sharing information in an accessible format promotes an ethos of openness which will empower SLIs and deaf people to work together. However, all implications present within the findings rest on the foundations of the complex history of SLIs and deaf service-users.

Therefore, all suggestions of potential industrial action by SLIs should be met with critical engagement from the profession. These findings suggest, there is a need for SLIs to join with the deaf community to campaign for positive change if SLIs hope to continue to exist as a profession.

Trust is a theme that dominated all accounts used in this research. Deaf service-users inherently trust in the values of SLIs when they recognise that they are standing up against injustice. SLIs must also have trust in the deaf community to involve them in action which profoundly affects their lives. This is something which SLIs as a profession must resolve if they hope to avoid collusion with the oppression industrial action has on deaf service users, otherwise, they risk alienating the deaf community permanently.

5.4 Training: Implications for training

The findings of this research have the potential to have significant implications for sign language interpreting training, both initial, qualifying training en-route to registration, and that of experienced interpreters who wish to expand their understanding of how IR relates to their relationship with the deaf community. As referenced in section 2.3.1; there is a need for interpreters to value the impact their work has on wider society rather than merely focusing on the effect of immediate message transfer. This research substantiates this view, evidencing the significant impact SLIs can have depending on how they respond at each juncture throughout the interpreting provision system. This implies that there is a need for training providers to widen their remit to include more than just in-situ interpreting training.

This research clearly supports the assertion that the current organisation of funding, procurement and provision is undermining the sustainability of the profession and resulting in adverse effects for deaf service-users. To future-proof and retain a healthy profession, interpreter training must overtly acknowledge these concerns if a resolution is hoped to be reached. Student SLI's must be informed of poor agency practice and how to challenge it. It is only by equipping novice interpreters with the required knowledge that we can expect them to forearm themselves with the skills necessary to avoid falling prey to pressure from unethical agency practices.

Finally, there is a huge implication for training providers to emphasise the need to continuously engage with deaf service-users in order to create a collaborative

interpreting service which meets the needs and expectations of the interpreting and deaf communities.

5.5 Community relations: Implications for SLI/deaf service-user relations

These findings corroborate many of the points covered in the literature review of this thesis. They evidence the significant juncture current circumstances find the profession in, specifically in relation to the deaf community. I postulate that examples such as the boycott contained within this research and the resulting actions of SLI's will shape how deaf people engage with the profession in the coming years.

An obvious implication which SLIs should take from the accounts of the participants is that there was a real desire to use this experience as an opportunity to heal the rift experienced between interpreters and the deaf community. The participants all expressed their support for the interpreters who were engaged in the boycott, trusting in the values which led the SLIs to challenge the injustices implemented by the agency. This was partly due to the existing relationship they experienced with the SLIs and to the (albeit rare) instances of knowledge-sharing to empower the participants, for example; at the public meeting where the boycott was announced. This event was significant for the participants, and those present were better equipped to deal with the resulting consequences, confirming the need for SLIs' engagement with their-remove deaf service-users to mitigate the- remove detrimental effects caused by industrial action.

However, all participants criticised the level of engagement as not going far enough to work with deaf people. This is constructive criticism which should be taken on by SLIs prior to any industrial action taking place. There are suggestions from IR theory, such as Tilly's mobilisation theory and Szabo's suggestion of discursive power, that SLIs can take to engage further with the local deaf community in regards to industrial action; thereby framing the stimulus of the boycott as addressing the needs of the deaf community as well as the working rights of SLIs. This could mobilise the two groups to act collectively in a cohesive, deaf-centred movement to campaign for a resolution, empowering the deaf community to challenge injustice alongside SLIs; potentially going some way to readdress the power imbalance experienced by SLIs and deaf service-users.

5.6 Policy: Implications for legislation regarding interpreting procurement

The impact of the re-organisation of interpreter work-systems on deaf people is evidenced by the lived experiences analysed as part of this research. The huge transformation of services which the participants experienced following the implementation of an NFAs, and the involvement of a dominant multi-lingual interpreting agency to their local interpreting provision, has had devastating results on their lives. This substantiates the assertion that increased agency involvement within interpreting has the potential to lead to increased industrial conflict. The findings of this research documented the influence agencies have on plunging service quality, which corroborates claims made within wider literature that this practice has a negative impact not only on the workforce but also those directly utilising the service. The data evidences this within accounts of the trauma experienced when information is knowingly withheld from deaf service-users by the agency, as well as the harmful consequences of removing control. The accounts given of the impact on deaf service-users' dignity, when they are not viewed as clients of the agency, highlight the damaging effects of the current policies for interpreting provision in action in the UK.

Currently, there is very little recourse for service-users who are repeatedly let down by agencies who are unable to fulfil their function. These findings highlight the need for legislation surrounding such practice. The data shows that the participants felt there was little-to-no penalty sanctioned for the agency by those commissioning the interpreting service. This suggests that it is not enough to trust interpreting agencies to self-regulate and that a more formal policy is needed in order to safeguard those relying on their service.

The findings of this research also suggest that the lived experience of deaf service-users as an oppressed minority supports the call for BSL to be removed from NFA bids. As interpreting provision provided within these contracts does not function as a reasonable adjustment to promote equality for a community protected under UK legislation. Instead, it further re-enforces systematic discrimination and audism, and undermines the individual's right to access public services.

It is not enough for the Government to work exclusively with corporate charities and business and be able to claim 'co-designed' services. The NFA contract which led to the boycott discussed by participants excluded input from SLIs and deaf service-users, allowing only potential contractors the opportunity to contribute. The findings of this research evidence a failure of this interpretation of 'co-design' to meet the needs of the

stakeholders directly involved with the service. Therefore, if interpreting provision policy aims to deliver a service whereby all institutions are meeting their legal obligations to make their service accessible to deaf BSL users, contribution by SLIs and deaf service-users should be considered a principal deciding factor.

5.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted how the findings of this research relate to existing theoretical arguments found within IR and sign language interpreting literature. It outlines the implications for five areas of interest which uses aspects of the data to explore the potential to positively impact specifics within each area. If the findings of this research are embraced by the sign language interpreting profession as well as the wider Industrial Relations field and legislators, there is the possible capacity to reduce the instances or at least the negative effects of industrial action as experienced by deaf service-users.

6. CONCLUSION

This study started by identifying an instance of industrial conflict, namely a group of SLIs who are collectively boycotting an interpreting agency over poor agency practice. This is a significant area of interest as the profession is currently experiencing economic downward pressure resulting in an increase of instances of industrial action. Currently, SLIs are experiencing a top-down re-organisation of their work-systems; the discord felt between interpreters and interpreting service-providers over opposing views of priority and values further exacerbate their predicament. Simultaneously, SLIs are navigating a contentious relationship with deaf service-users whereby the implementation of professional behaviour has diverged from community expectations. Where SLI's fit within the framework of IR remains, so far, unestablished. However, situating their position, even on a temporary basis, is necessary to attempt to determine a suitable resolution. I posit that the employment of freelance SLIs is most like the non-standard, less secure service-centred work-system, which is an increasing reality for contemporary workers across the economy. The frequency of SLIs working in public services which are regularly put out to tender increases the likelihood that they will experience tertiary conflict, the result of which is reliant on the impact on end service-users.

SLIs find themselves faced with the dilemma of how to ethically safeguard the sustainability of their profession while also evidencing a commitment to empowering the deaf community. The aim of this research, therefore, was to investigate how the consequences of the industrial action were experienced by deaf service-users who rely on SLIs to access health-care services in the local area. By engaging comprehensively with lived experiences of the effects of interpreter industrial action, this study hoped to explore how the action affected service-users' perceptions of the relationships they encountered with SLIs.

The direct effects caused by SLIs boycotting agencies were, somewhat surprisingly, secondary to the resulting discord surrounding the impact on interpreting provision for deaf service-users. The participants experienced the effects of the boycott largely as an extension of broader failings from further up the work-organisation system.

From this, conclusions can be drawn, which would have tangible implications for SLIs considering taking part in tertiary conflict. Firstly, the effects of poor agency practice can be more detrimental than those of interpreter industrial action. Secondly, that it is

necessary for the profession to work *with* affected deaf people, to collectively challenge the injustice of poor agency practice together.
To conclude, I look to Mona Baker who once said: "It is time for translators to change the world." (Baker, 2006). On completion of this research, I would like to echo her sentiments. It is the time for sign language interpreters to change the world; hand in hand with the deaf community. It is only by working with deaf people that SLIs can hope to challenge the pervasive threats to our profession and the systematic oppression they bring to our service-users.

6.1 Suggestions for further research

Situating SLI industrial relations along with deaf service-users' experiences of industrial action is largely uncharted territory. It was necessary to stitch together the pertinent aspects from several theoretical frameworks to present an understanding from which the case can be analysed. While the more pertinent themes are outlined below, almost every element included in this thesis would benefit from further research.
As previously mentioned, there is a need for greater exploration of how SLI's relates to the wider schema of IR as this has, so far, never been realised within any published body of work within our field. To do thoroughly so would greatly benefit the profession particularly amid this period of industrial unrest.
This thesis acknowledges the hearing-centric focus of the research. This is, in part, due to the fact that the boycott in question was implemented by exclusively hearing interpreters. A worthy area of future research would be to explore industrial action taken by deaf interpreters, given that their employment systems are even less secure than that of their hearing colleagues.
Finally, the dearth of research into involving end-service users is an area of research which is in desperate need of countering. As our work-organisation has moved to a serviced-based employment, those most impacted when workers withdraw their labour are people relying on essential services. The human cost of industrial action is not something which can be bargained with on a theoretical level; it is only by fully understanding the harm an action will inflict that workers can come to an informed decision on the most ethical course of action.

6.2 Limitations

As is the nature of IPA research, it is impossible to identify wider trends within the accounts of the three participants to apply to other deaf service users who were impacted by the boycott, therefore it is unknown as to whether any of the experiential aspects can be generalised.

Although aware of 'active listening', I am not professionally trained in how to confidently use this recommended skill necessary to encourage a deeper level of engagement with the participant's own interpretation of their account when conducting an IPA interview (Smith, et al., 2009). Due to this, it may be that a fuller more detailed picture of the participant's experiences could have been possible with an interviewer who had greater knowledge of IPAs.

Finally, there is a huge limitation of the interpretation process of conducting an IPA when the interview is conducted in a language with no written form. During the transcription of the interview, the researcher was already 'interpreting' and imposing their own 'voice' onto the participant's account. This is an area under-researched within in IPA literature and ultimately adds an extra layer of complexity when attempting to uncover and present the participant's experience for analysis.

ENDNOTES

1. The alternative term of *employee* relations has been applied by some IR theorists to depict a changing and diverse workforce; however, IR remains the established term and is still the most commonly used to denote the relationships associated with employment (Edwards, 2003). IR also implies concern with strikes and collective bargaining (Salamon, 2000) making it a pertinent term for this research.
2. Sometimes described as shifting from 'Fordism' to 'post-Fordism' after the decline of the car manufacturing methods pioneered by Henry Ford (Amin, 2011).
3. I have chosen not to utilise the d/Deaf convention as it has fallen out of favour in recent years, criticised for the resulting divisive nature of its usage (See Kusters, De Meulder, & O'Brien (2017) who state "[t]he d/Deaf distinction creates or perpetuates a dichotomy between deaf and Deaf people (even when trying to be inclusive by writing 'd/Deaf'), and it has caused practices and experiences of exclusion. This dichotomy is, in fact, an oversimplification of what is an increasingly complex set of identities and language practices, and the multiple positionalities/multimodal language use shown is impossible to represent with a simplified binary. (pp.13, 14)")
4. Turner (1994), contests the anthropologic label of "community" to describe deaf peoples. Indeed, it is now considered that there is not one 'deaf community', rather that there are multiple deaf communities relating to various intersecting social identities that the membership share. However, "the deaf community" is still used as an umbrella term (Hunt, 2015) to describe those who identify as culturally deaf in contrast to disabled.
5. Although written conventions for signed languages have been created, they are not suitable for use of this type (See Emmorey, 2001).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Researcher Reflective Diary

Although I gave a brief summary of my position as a researcher in section 2.5.1, I also completed a researcher diary (as recommended by Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) throughout each stage of the research process. This process allowed me the space to explore the influence my own subconscious biases were inflicting on my actions while also allowing me the opportunity to utilise myself as a tool within the research by self-consciously bringing myself into the process.

The following excerpts are presented to provide a summary of some of the insights afforded by completing a researcher diary during the process of completing this research.

Excerpt 1)

January 25th 2019

What makes me interested in this topic?

…. I guess since becoming freelance and taking a high-profile position within NUBSLI I can't hide from the narratives surrounding interpreters profiting from the deaf community. It was easy when I worked for a deaf charity for much less pay than my self-employed colleagues to have the self-belief that I was practising the institutionalised altruism expected of SL terps. […] But now, I'm constantly double guessing myself – it's easy to get caught up in the bureaucracy of running a trade-union. Especially as we've been 'fire-fighting' threats to our profession since inception. I guess I'm thankful for the opportunity EUMASLI has offered me, the time and space to really reflect on industrial action and what that means for narratives around SLI and D com relations. […] at the same time, I have a niggling voice in my head which tells me that my position within the wider framework dictates that I'm the wrong person to be doing this research – I can't possibly be 'objective'... though can anyone when researching such an emotive topic. […] Hopefully, by completing this diary I'll have more

confidence that I'm exploring that 'non-neutrality' to an extent whereby I can believe that I've been transparent (with myself at least).

Excerpt 2)

February 5th 2019

Positioning myself

I'm struggling to unpick my position. Obviously, I want to honour the experiences of those I will (eventually) interview – but I'm also fearful that there's an 'exploitative' aspect to this whole process. I'm a hearing SLI, branch sec of a union which endorses industrial action (albeit as a last resort) ... so, if I reflect on what I'm hoping this research will do, surely there's a performative aspect? it's that I want to use the fact that I've done my due diligence, I've listened to the experiences of those affected, therefore I can justify the actions of future boycotts? What if the results of this research fundamentally show that the damage caused to deaf service-users are not worth the potential benefits to the profession? Then I'd report them, I know I would. And deal with the fall out afterwards.

[…] (February 7th)

I've been ruminating and researching on this topic (hey – researching stuff is how I process) and I think I've discovered a personal insight. My whole MO for this research started with the dilemma of SLI's being simultaneously expected to portray 'deaf-heart' while also experience immense economic unrest – and how to resolve this. If I come at this research from a position of solidarity with those affected then it keeps them, their experiences, how they have been affected at the forefront of the whole process while also allowing me to consider the 'root' of the conflict outside of the SLI profession.

Excerpt 3)

March 29th 2019

Interview analysis

It's moments like this that I'm glad I've been keeping this diary. I'm wary of picking out segments to support my claims because I don't trust my subconscious bias not to skew the results. I 'm very mindful of 'exploiting' my participant's position to further my own, I want to do justice to [Participant 1]'s lived experience – that was very important to

me which is why I chose an IPA – as this gave me the opportunity to bring all of me, my history, my current position out into the open [...] It's also reassuring that after the 'translating/transcribing' process I could email the interview over to him, as I trust that if I had misrepresented any of his responses he would have the confidence to inform me. I guess that I didn't hear back is a good thing... I must have translated our interview in a manner that he broadly agreed with.

Excerpt 4)

April 9th 2019
Interview Analysis (cont.)
I'm exhausted. I'm angry. I'm scared. I can't distinguish where my emotions end and [Particant 3]'s begin. I watch the video back and I feel so awkward […]Here's a grown man, full of pride almost in tears as I ask him to relive experiences he obviously has not dealt with, the rawness of his reaction is palpable, and there I am, muddling through my interview schedule. It's times like this when I question my ability to do an IPA. I'm not a therapist – a counsellor would have been able to use these moments where [Participant 3] was deeply emotional to benefit him! Me... I felt like by getting him to re-live it was re-traumatising. […] But at the end of the interview, there was a lightness to his body language, like maybe he needed someone to witness his pain? Surely that's the least I can do. I have to find solace in that and "bracket" these emotions [participant 3] is stirring up in me if I hope to do justice to these interviews.

Appendix 2

Information Sheet

1. Project Title:

Industrial relations between interpreters and deaf clients.

2. Participant Selection / Characteristics needed to participate in the interviews:

Participants will be deaf BSL users who used/uses the services of SLIs, living in the area most impacted by the boycott and for whom the boycott had a personal impact on their everyday life.

3. Description of the project:

This research aims to explore how deaf BSL service users experience the effects of interpreter boycotts by using first person accounts collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews then analysed using an IPA method (an IPA methodology means that the researcher is attempting to understand the unique meanings the participant applies to their lived experience of the effects of the boycott.)

4. Description of the researcher:

Samantha Riddle, I am a registered sign language interpreter and branch secretary of the National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters. I am in the final semester of the European Masters in Sign Language Interpreting; my final assignment is to conduct research which will contribute to the interpreting field. I have previously conducted a pilot study focused on the 2016 Language Line Services boycott in Sheffield which has informed my current research.

5. Participant involvement:

Participants will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview which will last between 45 minutes to 1 hour, taking place at Mea House on the 20th of March. During

the interviews participants will be encouraged to speak freely about their experiences of the boycott as well as their experiences of interpreters in general. The interviews will be filmed and a translation into written English will be provided within a week, participants will have the opportunity to check the transcription for inaccuracies before the analysis takes place.

6. Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with taking part in this research.

7. Benefits:

Although there are no direct benefits to participants, it is assumed that the findings of this research will be used to inform the planning of any future boycotts to ensure that the experiences of those affected by the actions of those boycotting will be at the forefront of the decision making process. The results could also be used to campaign for fairer sign language interpreting provision, in hope to avoid future industrial action.

8. Dissemination of results:
The results of the research will used to write a thesis, which will be made public including presentations at various conferences and publications.

9. Confidentiality:

The researcher will:

* keep all personal details confidential (names will be changed during the transcription stage)

* data will only be seen by the researcher (and if necessary supervisor)

* not allow other people to see/ your recordings

* some quotes or transcribed examples of comments will be published in the research (no sensitive/identifying information will be used)

10. Withdrawing Consent:

If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw from participation in the research

at any time, prior to publication, without having to give a reason and without consequence.

11. Further information:

You can ask anything about the research project before you sign the consent form or afterwards. You will be provided with a copy of the information form will the my (the researcher's) contact details and my supervisor's contact details should you wish to contact us after participation.

Consent Form

Please complete the following questions:

I agree to participate in the research project	Yes / No
I give permission to record and analyse my interview	Yes / No
I give permission for my contribution to be used in your research	Yes / No

I, ________________________ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: ____

(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: ________________________________ Date: ___________

Researcher's Name: Samantha Riddle

Researcher's Signature: ________________________________ Date: ___________

Appendix 3

Interview Schedule

Topic: Boycott

1. Can you tell me how the boycott of Language Empire by sign language interpreters has affected your life?
1.a. Can you describe when you first became aware of the boycott?
1.b. Can you describe a recent example of when the boycott has had an impact on your ability to access public services?

2. Can you describe what adjustments you have made?
2.a. Have you changed the way you conduct your 'day to day' business over the time of the boycott?
2.b. How does that make you feel?

Topic: Experience with interpreters

3. How would you describe the way you think or feel about interpreters?
3.a. Have your feelings about them changed over a longer time of working with them (for example, from childhood to present)?

4. Has the boycott changed the way you think or feel about interpreters?
4.a. Do you feel differently now compared with before the boycott?
4.b. If so, in what ways?

5. Do you feel that the impact the boycott would have on deaf people in Newcastle was taken into consideration by boycotting interpreters?
5.a. What would you have liked them to consider?

6. Can you describe how you see the future regarding deaf people and interpreters moving forward?
6.a. How would that compare with the current situation?