

Deaf migrants in Swedish adult education

Language ideologies, repertoires, and translingual practices

Nora Duggan



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Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics at Stockholm University to be publicly defended on Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 13.00 in Hörsal 2, Södra huset, hus A, Universitetsvägen 10 and online via Zoom, public link is available at the department website.

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with language learning experiences of deaf migrants in Swedish adult education with a particular focus on how linguistic, social, and cultural factors influence their experiences. Additionally, the thesis critically questions the feasibility of 'full integration' for deaf migrants in Swedish society. The four studies comprising this thesis employ various sociolinguistic theoretical frameworks to investigate these complex issues.

While it is common for migrants to face hurdles upon arrival in a new country, deaf migrants often encounter additional challenges. A notable contrast between deaf and hearing migrants in Sweden is that it is common for hearing migrants to learn Swedish so they will not need to use interpreters while deaf migrants learn Swedish and Swedish Sign Language so that they can use interpreters. This places significant pressure on deaf migrants, as not being able to learn Swedish Sign Language may restrict their access to essential services such as healthcare. Moreover, it is possible that deaf migrants have had limited access to language in their home environment prior to coming to Sweden. These disparities present formidable challenges not only for deaf migrants but also for education and public service providers. Given Sweden's emphasis on the importance of language learning in term of integration, it is crucial to better understand deaf migrants' language learning experiences and, in turn, how it affects their experiences of integration.

This thesis explores deaf migrants' language learning experiences and how these affect their opportunities for integration into Swedish society. Employing linguistic ethnography as an approach, the empirical data include video recordings from participant observations and semi-structured interviews conducted in four folk high schools (equivalent to non-formal adult education) across Sweden. Based on the analysis of these data, this compilation thesis comprises four studies: (i) an exploration of language ideologies constructed in the classrooms and their impact on deaf migrants' language learning experiences, (ii) an examination of different translanguaging strategies used in the classrooms and the efficiency of these strategies, (iii) an investigation of the sociocultural factors that influence language use and language learning, and (iv) an examination of the effects of the Swedish bureaucratic system on deaf migrants' integration experiences.

These studies highlight the challenges associated with deaf migrants' language learning that need to be considered before creating language policies that affect marginalised groups. This thesis offers new insights into how deaf migrants experience learning new languages and how their languaging challenges linguistic norms in Swedish society. Lastly, this thesis underscores the need for a transformative approach to language education that embraces different ways of languaging and places diversity and equity at the forefront.

Keywords: *deaf migrants, sign language, semiotic repertoire, language ideology, translanguaging, translanguaging practice, linguistic ethnography, integration, globalisation, crip theory, crip linguistics.*

Stockholm 2024

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-227555>

ISBN 978-91-8014-775-0

ISBN 978-91-8014-776-7



Stockholm
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ISBN print 978-91-8014-775-0

ISBN PDF 978-91-8014-776-7

The book cover is designed by Ellinor Persson.

Printed in Sweden by Universitetservice US-AB, Stockholm 2024

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List of studies

- I. Duggan, N. & Holmström, I. (2022) “They have no language”: Exploring language ideologies in adult education for deaf migrants. *Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 16(2), 147-165. <https://doi.org/10.47862/apples.111809>
- II. Duggan, N., Holmström, I., & Schönström, K. (2023) Translanguaging practices in adult education for deaf migrants. *DELTA*, 39(1), 1-33. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-460X202359764>
- III. Duggan, N. (2023) “Why the long nose?”: A sociolinguistic analysis of deaf migrants’ language learning experiences in adult education. *Linguistics and Education*, 78, 101243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2023.101243>
- IV. Duggan N. & Holmström, I. (under review) Lost in the system: Tensions between the Swedish idea of integration and deaf migrants’ realities.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I extend my deepest gratitude to the participants and teachers whose invaluable contributions made this thesis possible. Your willingness to share your time and insights has significantly contributed to what can be considered a new research area.

To my principal supervisor, Ingela, it's hard to summarise how much your support has meant to me over the past four years. Starting a PhD during the pandemic wasn't exactly ideal but with your excellent support, it felt like a breeze (well, sorta!). From the beginning, you saw me not as your student but rather as your equal. Your belief in me and your openness had allowed me to not feel silly asking questions which helped me immensely in dealing with imposter syndrome. Thank you for your wonderful guidance and especially for your great patience with my writing process. Now that my PhD journey has come to an end, I no longer have a supervisor. Instead, I have gained a great friend, and for that I'm immensely thankful.

To my assistant supervisor, Carla. Thank you for your great guidance and for bringing in a social justice perspective to my research. You have brought a positive attitude and encouragement to each meeting we had, leaving me feeling motivated to continue my work which I greatly appreciate.

To my mock defence opponent, Linus Salö. Thank you for making what should be a nerve-wrecking event an enjoyable one. Your feedback was of immense help, and thank you especially for the title rework.

To my colleagues at the sign language section in the Department of Linguistics, thank you for welcoming me with open arms and for supporting me in not only my PhD study but also as a newbie teacher. The past four years flew by thanks to you all as I enjoyed working with each and every one of you. To Krister, thank you for sharing your wisdom on how to navigate the tough academic world as a deaf researcher. Thank you also for a great work collaboration; I enjoyed working with you and Ingela on our research project. To Pia, thank you for our great conversations (with tea in hand, a must!) and for opening your home to me. Last but not least, to Moa, how fortunate am I to have another deaf PhD buddy alongside my doctoral journey! I immensely enjoyed our in-depth conversations and our writing retreats together. Thank you also for putting up with my slow Swedish writing; it means a lot to be able to practice my Swedish with a fellow friend.

To all of my PhD fellows at the department, past and present, sharing this journey with you all helped me immensely so thank you. I would also like to thank Bernhard, Masja and Marcin who have led the PhD text seminars over the four years for giving great feedback on my texts.

I would like to acknowledge the deaf scholars who have paved the way, breaking glass ceilings, so that the next generation of deaf PhD students like myself can go further in academia. I would like to thank especially to deaf scholars who I've met through academic conferences, both online and in-person, writing retreats, and even on Twitter who gave me great encouragement throughout my doctoral years. A special shout out goes to my Irish deaf academic friends, John Bosco Conama, Noel O'Connell and Teresa Lynch. You three have been the source of great motivation for me.

To my family – my mom Mary, my dad John, my sister Carmel, and my grandaunt Eileen – thank you for always encouraging me to explore what's out there in this world, and to try and find answers to the thousands of questions I have. I would not be where I am today without your love and support. To my friends outside academia, thank you for reminding me that there is life outside of work and for supporting me along the way.

To Ivan, my husband, thank you for being by my side the past four year; for listening to all of my rants, for celebrating all of the small milestones I made, and for always trying to help me find solutions to the obstacles I faced along the way. You're an absolute star and I'm eternally grateful for you.

Nora Duggan
Örebro, April 2024

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1. Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the language learning experiences of deaf migrants in Swedish adult education with a particular focus on how linguistic, social, and cultural factors influence their experiences. Additionally, the thesis critically questions the feasibility of ‘full integration’ for deaf migrants in Swedish society. The four studies that constitute this thesis employ various sociolinguistic theoretical frameworks to investigate these complex issues.

Today, we live in an era of globalisation, and the increased mobility across spaces significantly impacts how language is used. While globalisation itself is not necessarily a new phenomenon, it is new in terms of its intensity and magnitude (Blommaert, 2010). Globalisation has led to a rapid growth of an already complex web of languages and repertoires. As more people move across spaces at a speed never seen before, so does the diversity in languages and repertoires. Individuals usually adapt their language practices as they move between spaces, aligning to the norms in these spaces. However, migrating to a new country with its own linguistic norms that differ from one’s own can render multilingual individuals ‘language-less’ as their repertoire could be seen as not of much value to the new space (Blommaert, 2007b). Considering that many countries in Europe place great value in migrants having the ‘right language competence’, language learning has become highly politicalised, often viewed as the panacea of all integration issues.

Sweden is considered a multilingual and multicultural country, evidenced by the exponential growth in the number of families with at least one foreign-born parent. Statistics Sweden reports that one in four born in the early 2000s have at least one parent born outside of the country (SCB, 2020). Additionally, Sweden has received a record number of refugees entering the country between 2015 and 2016. While the country has historically been considered as having the most open and liberal migration policies among the OECD countries and integration has been considered a political priority for Swedish political parties (Andersson & Weinar, 2014), the record influx over a short period of time has posed unprecedented challenges for the government. One of these challenges is the provision of adequate language education.

Even though the amount of research on migrants in Sweden has expanded in recent years, little attention has been paid to disabled migrants, especially deaf migrants. While it is a common phenomenon for migrants to face hurdles when they arrive in a new country, deaf migrants often face additional

challenges. A contrast between deaf and hearing migrants in Sweden is that it is common for hearing migrants to learn Swedish in order to *not use* interpreters while deaf migrants learn Swedish and Swedish Sign Language (*svenskt teckenspråk*, henceforth STS) in order to be able to *use* interpreters. This places great pressure on deaf migrants, as not learning STS may mean that they would have little or no access to essential services such as healthcare. Another stark contrast is that it is possible for deaf migrants to have had limited access to language in their home environment prior to coming to Sweden (Holmström & Sivunen, 2022). These differences, among many, present formidable challenges not only for deaf migrants but also for education providers and public service providers. Considering how Sweden has placed great importance on language learning in term of integration, it is vital to have a better understanding deaf migrants' language learning experiences and, in turn, how it affects their experiences of integration.

Note that this thesis and all four studies take on a general definition of 'migrant'. The reason for this choice of term is that different definitions are laden with their own ideologies. For instance, Pisani and Grech (2015) point out the issue with labels such as 'forced migration'. The authors state that the line between fleeing for safety (forced migration) and fleeing for economic betterment (voluntary migration) is blurred particularly when it comes to disabled migrants as many disabled people, particularly in the Global South, are living in extreme poverty with little or no access to healthcare. Also, because this thesis does not focus on the reasons why the deaf migrants involved in the project have migrated to Sweden, the general term of 'migrant' is used.

1.1. Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore deaf migrants' language learning experiences and how these affect their opportunities for integration into Swedish society. Based on this overarching aim, there are four interconnected research questions addressed by each of the four studies in this thesis:

1. What language ideologies are constructed in the language learning classrooms and how do these ideologies impact deaf migrants' language learning experiences?
2. Which strategies do the deaf migrants and teachers use to exchange meanings when they do not have a language in common?
3. How do the deaf migrants' linguistic, educational and cultural backgrounds affect their language learning experiences?
4. Considering the issues related to deaf migrants' language learning experiences, what are the challenges deaf migrants face regarding linguistic integration?

1.2. Brief introduction to the four studies

This thesis consists of four papers that examine language ideologies, translanguaging practices, and factors that affect deaf migrants' language learning and integration into Swedish society. This sub-section briefly introduces each paper while a full summary can be found in section 7.

- **Study I** examines language ideologies constructed in language learning classrooms and how these ideologies impact deaf migrants' language learning experiences. The study highlights how different languages and repertoires have different statuses, how individuals have different interpretations of what constitutes a language, and how there is a great emphasis on the importance of STS as the only acceptable language to use in the classroom.
- **Study II** examines different translanguaging strategies used in the classrooms. Such strategies include the use of dictionaries, the borrowings of words or signs from different languages, and the cooperation between individuals in order to understand each other. The study shows that the efficiency of these strategies was highly dependent on each individual's linguistic and educational background.
- **Study III** explores the sociocultural factors that influence language use and language learning in the classrooms, and how communication can be affected if the factors that lie behind language use and language learning are not recognised. The study shows the need for a better understanding of the influence that deaf migrants' linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds have on their language learning.
- **Study IV** examines how the Swedish bureaucratic system affects deaf migrants' ability to integrate into the new society, and how deaf migrants' experiences of integration conflict with the Swedish government's integration policy. The study also shows how unconscious biases can result in deaf migrants becoming lost in the system.

2. Deaf people's linguistic and educational backgrounds

Exploring the language practices of deaf migrants in Swedish adult education requires an understanding of how language practices among deaf people can vary significantly from individual to individual based on the environment they have grown up in. Humphries et al. (2022) point out that there are two critically important environments for a child's language development: (i) the family dinner table, and (ii) school. The authors argue that if the environment does not provide accessible language for the deaf child, the child may not be afforded opportunities for incidental or contextual learning. The family dinner table, in this context, is not limited to the 'table' per se. Instead, it includes conversations that happen around the deaf child in the home. This part will be developed in depth later in this section.

This section begins with an overview of the diverse challenges deaf people encounter in terms of their language development. Particular emphasis is placed on language practices within the family. The objective is to provide the reader with a better understanding of the hurdles deaf people face when it comes to language development. Language practices within the family also influence how deaf people navigate spaces, which differ from hearing people. This is a crucial aspect to consider when examining the experiences of deaf migrants in this study who have entered new spaces with its own customs and norms. A brief overview of deaf education is also explored, both in Sweden and in other countries, with a particular focus on the different language policies. As this thesis explores deaf migrants' linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds, the aim of this section is to show the complexities of deaf people's linguistic and educational experiences, and how it influences the way they navigate the majority society.

It is important to note that based on my linguistic competence, the literature in this thesis is limited to that written in English and Swedish. This means that potentially relevant literature regarding deaf people's language practices and educational experiences in languages other than English or Swedish is not included, which readers should bear in mind when reading this section.

2.1. Deaf people's language practices within the family

The majority of deaf children around the world are born into hearing non-signing families, many of whom have little or no prior experiences meeting deaf people (Henner & Robinson, 2023b; Humphries et al., 2022; Napier et al., 2007; Pfister, 2019). In this thesis, 33 out of 43 deaf migrants that did the background interviews have hearing parents and almost half do not have a deaf relative. Because of this figure, it is important to understand how hearing (either non-signing or with limited knowledge in a sign language) families shape deaf children's language development in general.

Unlike hearing children and deaf children born to deaf signing parents, deaf children born into hearing non-signing families do not have access to a readily accessible language from birth. For instance, Holmström (2022) conducted a nationwide survey in Sweden to investigate language use in families with at least one deaf child. Among the 101 parents who participated in the survey, 86% reported that they had not learnt STS before the birth of their deaf child. This is a common occurrence seen not only in Sweden but in several other countries. As early language development is essential in terms of deaf children's health and wellbeing, it is critical to ensure that deaf children are given access and constant sufficient exposure to language. Humphries et al. (2014) point out that the consequences of not acquiring language during early childhood include difficulties with memory, numeracy and literacy skills, as well as an elevated risk of depression and behavioural issues.

While there are numerous studies that emphasise the importance of providing immediate support and information to caregivers about sign language learning and connections to peer groups, it is a common issue that parents do not receive enough necessary support (Humphries et al., 2022; Plaza-Pust, 2012; Swanwick et al., 2022). In several countries, it is typical for medical professionals to advise parents of deaf children to raise their children without sign language in order to optimise their ability to acquire spoken languages. Sign language is often regarded as a last resort in these situations (Humphries et al., 2014). Furthermore, multilingual families often face intricate decisions regarding language practices when a deaf child is born into the family (Swanwick et al., 2022). For instance, Lim (2023a) points out that speech and language professionals in the US usually recommend multilingual families to focus solely on English and/or American Sign Language at home, resulting in deaf children not knowing their parents' language(s).

As mentioned earlier, deaf people born into hearing non-signing families often encounter a phenomenon referred to as "dinner table syndrome" (Meek, 2020). The syndrome describes deaf people's experiences of being unable to participate in conversations at the family dinner table. These types of conversations are typically fast-paced and overlapping, making it difficult for the deaf person to keep up (Meek, 2020). An instance of the "dinner table

syndrome” is a study conducted by Weber et al. (2023), who interviewed deaf newcomers in Canada about their experiences at their family’s dinner table. The deaf newcomers described their struggles when participating in these conversations, with some indicating that their family refused to learn sign language. Instead, they either used their home country’s spoken language or the spoken language of the host country, both of which were inaccessible to the deaf newcomers. The authors also point out that it is common for the hearing parents of deaf individuals to believe that they must either choose a sign language or a spoken language, with some being advised by professionals to choose one or the other.

A similar situation is observed in Norway, where parent guidance agencies often urge parents of deaf children to make a choice between spoken or sign language when communicating with their child (Swanwick et al., 2014). This is in contradiction to an initiative where the state offers parents a 40-week sign language training programme over a 16-year period, with accommodation provision, travel expenses and compensation for wage loss. The conflicting guidance by professionals in both the educational and medical fields has made it challenging for parents to make decisions concerning their deaf child’s language development.

In Sweden, similar to Norway, parents of deaf children are offered free tuition in STS, although the length of these courses vary depending on each county (Holmström, 2022). In most countries, however, sign language classes are not always available or accessible for hearing parents of deaf children, and in some countries where classes are provided, it is not always cost-free or easily accessible in terms of location. This makes it inaccessible for the majority of hearing non-signing parents. A perspective to consider is that in the countries where sign language classes are offered, it is often exclusively offered to hearing non-signers while deaf people have frequently experienced being discouraged from signing as well as being denied formal education in sign language (De Meulder, 2019).

While deaf people have different learning paths and different degrees of access to both signed and spoken languages (De Meulder, 2019), it can be said that a significant number of deaf people in deaf signing communities are bilingual. Notably, it is only in recent years that deaf people who are bilingual in a sign language and a written language have come to be recognised as such (Grosjean, 2010; Plaza-Pust, 2012). Prior to this, the concept of sign language as a ‘language’ was not considered, even within the deaf communities themselves (Hiddinga & Crasborn, 2012).

Deaf bilinguals typically access the majority language in its written form, with some having access to the spoken language. This underscores the importance of developing writing skills for deaf people living in majority language societies. A challenge faced by deaf people who have sign language as their primary language is that they must learn to write with limited access to the spoken language. These deaf people must decode a new language distinct

from their own language, while simultaneously learning its grammar and vocabulary alongside writing skills (Holmström & Schönström, 2023).

The varied access and exposure to language during childhood results in significantly different access to social meanings. As a consequence, deaf people have very different ways of socialisation (O'Brien, 2021). O'Brien points out that hearing people frequently pick up on the subtleties, or 'secret code', of spoken language, such as the degree of politeness in the words spoken, while deaf people, instead of relying on hearing, observe bodily politeness markers. The author notes that certain social codes and nuances may not be sufficiently accessible for deaf people, making it challenging for them to navigate hearing majority spaces (O'Brien, 2021).

2.2. Deaf education

Examining the language practices of deaf migrants in Swedish adult education necessitates an understanding of how deaf education influences the language practices of deaf people in general. The aim of this sub-section is to provide a better understanding of the various educational backgrounds of deaf migrants in this study. While it is not feasible to cover all aspects of deaf education, this sub-section aims to provide a general overview of deaf education, with a particular focus on the different language policies in deaf schools in a number of countries. This sub-section begins with an overview of sign bilingual education in Sweden. The purpose of this overview is to provide an insight into the language practices and policies in Swedish deaf education, given the great influence that the sign bilingual tradition in Swedish deaf education system have on the folk high schools (equivalent to non-formal adult education centres, see section 4.1. for more on this) featured in this study. This is then followed by a brief overview of the different language policies in deaf education, with a selection of countries geographically spread out to illustrate the range of language policies and its impact. The purpose of this overview is to paint a picture of the various types of deaf education that are provided and the challenges that come with these types. Lastly, there will be a short overview of inclusive education for deaf children with a particular focus on how the term 'inclusion' is interpreted differently in different countries.

2.2.1. Sign bilingual education in Sweden

As Sweden has a long tradition of sign bilingual education in deaf schools, it is important to first look at what sign bilingualism is and how the deaf schools in Sweden have adopted this language policy. Sign bilingualism can be defined as two or more languages with at least one sign language. Plaza-Pust (2012) explains that there should be two fundamental principles of sign bilingual education: sign language should be considered as the primary language

of deaf children as it is fully accessible in comparison to spoken languages, and based on this principle, sign language should be considered as the first language of deaf children. The author argues that not only does sign language enable deaf children to build knowledge and to express themselves, but knowing a sign language helps deaf children with their writing skills by borrowing sign language structures that temporarily fill in the gaps in their written language grammar until they learn the correct grammar, a skill typically found in bilingual children (Plaza-Pust, 2012).

As already mentioned, Sweden has a long history of sign bilingual education in comparison to many other countries. In 1981, the Swedish Parliament passed a bill that emphasised the importance of bilingualism for the deaf community, highlighting specifically that deaf people need sign language and Swedish to be able to participate within their own community and in broader society (Svartholm, 2010). This bill has meant that a sign language had for the first time been officially recognised by the state as a language in its own right. A major consequence was the introduction of a new curriculum in 1983 by the government to ensure deaf children's development of STS and Swedish (Schönström & Holmström, 2021; Svartholm, 2010). This brought sign bilingualism to the forefront of deaf education in Sweden, as the curriculum includes a model of bilingual teaching through STS and written Swedish. Spoken Swedish is also provided as an option for those who have sufficient hearing capabilities. Svartholm (2010) notes that the curriculum has stated that STS and Swedish have different purposes for deaf pupils; STS is the main language for communication and gaining knowledge, while written Swedish is for the development of literacy skills.

Schönström and Holmström (2021) point out that despite being one of the first countries to introduce sign bilingualism in deaf schools, deaf education in Sweden today has shifted, with fewer numbers of deaf children in sign bilingual schools and more deaf children entering mainstream schools, resulting in fewer children that are proficient in STS. The linguistic hegemony of Swedish in society as well as technological developments such as the cochlear implant, a surgically implanted electronic hearing device, have contributed to an expectation that deaf children should be able to speak Swedish, leaving STS as an afterthought. Schönström and Holmström (2021) also mention that there are a great number of deaf pupils that have moved from mainstream schools to deaf schools in later grades, often without knowing STS, which has created challenges for the deaf schools, particularly considering that the language of instruction is STS. In addition, the exponential growth in the number of migrants in the last decade has meant an increase in the number of deaf migrant pupils entering later grades, some with no prior education or sign language knowledge. The authors note that these new challenges seem to have contributed to lower achievements in sign bilingual schools. Schönström and Holmström state that "the question of language choice remains an issue even after four decades of bilingual education." (2021, p. 29).

The folk high schools in this study, influenced by the long tradition of sign bilingual education in Swedish primary and upper secondary schools, have also adopted sign bilingual education with STS as the main language of instruction. However, not all deaf migrants receive sign bilingual education before they come to Sweden. The next sub-section will demonstrate the various types of deaf education that exist around the world. The aim is to give the reader a better understanding of how various the educational backgrounds of the deaf migrants in this study can be.

2.2.2. Language policies and deaf education

It must be noted that research on deaf education has historically been centred in either the US or Europe (Knoors et al., 2019). It is only in recent years that research on deaf education has broadened its scope to include different deaf education systems and their language policies in countries outside the US and Europe. While it is not possible to give a comprehensive overview of such a wide topic, the aim of this sub-section is to present a short history of oralism, which has been a topic of controversy in the field of deaf education for many decades, and its impact on the quality of deaf education. This is then followed by a description of Total Communication, a communication method adopted in some deaf schools in an effort to use both sign language and spoken language simultaneously in the classroom.

Oralism can be defined as a linguistic ideology in which speaking is seen as superior to signing (see Svartholm, 1984 for more on the history of oralism). This ideology has resulted in the implementation of the ‘oralist method’, which can be defined as a method of enforcing speech training while actively discouraging the use of sign language, to some extent by administering corporal punishment if caught using sign language (Anglin-Jaffe, 2013; see also e.g., O’Connell & Deegan, 2014). Deaf schools that adopt this method usually spend a great deal of time and energy on speech training. This often results in several deaf pupils not receiving sufficient quality of education, including literacy skills.

Despite the discouragement or prohibition of sign language in deaf schools that have adopted the oralist method, it is common for deaf children to resist by continuing to use sign language. For instance, Senghas and Coppola’s study (2001) on deaf children’s language use in a deaf school in Nicaragua show that, despite the ban of sign language, the children actively constructed their own language, and passed it onto newer generations of deaf pupils. While corporal punishment related to language use may not be as common in deaf schools nowadays, the oralist approach is still adopted in several deaf schools around the world. There are several negative impacts of the oralist approach. One such impact is that there is less acceptance of sign languages, and a strong belief that spoken languages are superior. This type of attitude toward sign language can be found in both hearing staff and deaf pupils. Study I shows

that there are some deaf migrants who had this linguistic ideology, as they placed great emphasis on the importance of learning Swedish and not so much on learning STS. Another negative impact of the ban of sign language in some deaf schools is that hearing staff members do not know a sign language (see e.g., Adoyo & Maina, 2019; İlkbařaran, 2017), thus resulting in many, if not all, being unable to communicate with their deaf pupils. In these cases, deaf children sometimes become the educators of their deaf peers (Anglin-Jaffe, 2013). For instance, İlkbařaran (2017) explains how, in Türkiye, older deaf children learn sign language from deaf adults when they go to the local deaf club. They then pass this language on to younger deaf pupils in the school. The pupils in İlkbařaran's study also explain that those with 'better hearing' act as a 'bridge', relaying information between their peers and the non-signing teachers.

Total Communication is another communicative approach that has been adopted by some deaf schools. Total Communication, also known as SimCom or sign supported speech, is the use of spoken and signed languages simultaneously following the spoken language's grammar (Tevenal & Villanueva, 2009). Even though the original goal for Total Communication was to make the spoken language visible to deaf students, this communication pathway was also a result of teachers finding it difficult to engage with everyone at the same time; thus, they began blending a spoken language and a signed language together (Tevenal & Villanueva, 2009). Another instance of a communicative pathway that is similar to Total Communication is the use of a sign language while following the structure of a spoken language. This approach has several names in different countries, e.g., Sign Exact English in the US, Sign Supported English in Ireland, and *tecknad svenska* (Signed Swedish) in Sweden. Svartholm (2010) notes that Sweden, like many other countries, adopted this communication method as there was a belief that the two languages should be used simultaneously. The main reasoning was that it would make it easier for deaf children to learn spoken Swedish and provides easier communication between deaf and hearing people. However, Svartholm points out that hearing people who learned Signed Swedish found it difficult to understand deaf people and be understood. Other research has also shown that deaf people who do not have full access to the auditory part of Total Communication do not receive the same amount of information as those who do (Tevenal & Villanueva, 2009). The use of Total Communication or the signed version of the spoken language also failed to contribute to improvements of written skills in deaf children (Svartholm, 2010; Tevenal & Villanueva, 2009). Nevertheless, despite research showing the low impact of Total Communication on deaf children's language development, it is still adopted by some deaf schools around the world.

2.2.3. Different interpretations of ‘inclusive education’

As not all deaf people, including a number of deaf migrants in this study, attend deaf schools, it is also important to look at the education deaf people receive outside of deaf schools.

This sub-section focuses on the term ‘inclusive education’ in terms of deaf education and how there are different interpretations of it. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states that persons with disabilities have the right to receive education, and in addition, Article 24 states that people with disabilities have the right to learn sign language and receive education in sign language. However, Knoors et al. (2019) point out that despite the UNCRPD being ratified in 173 countries, not all these countries have the same interpretation as to what ‘inclusive education’ is for deaf children.

For some countries, inclusive education means placing deaf children in mainstream schools with assistance provision if needed. For instance, in Zimbabwe (Musengi, 2019), Kenya (Adoyo & Maina, 2019), and several countries in the Global North (De Meulder & Haualand, 2021), the provision of sign language interpreters in the classroom is often classified as ‘inclusive education’. This option is often seen as cheaper than placing deaf children in a deaf school and as a more viable option for families who do not live near a deaf school nor want to send their children to boarding schools (Knoors et al., 2019; see also Bagga-Gupta & Holmström, 2015). However, as Knoors et al. (2019) point out, it is common that the best quality interpreters usually work in university, legal and medical settings, and as a result, it is not uncommon to have poor quality interpreters work with young deaf children. This can impact deaf children’s language and educational developments. In some countries, resource persons are hired instead of sign language interpreters. In Sweden, according to Bagga-Gupta and Holmström’s findings (2015), some mainstream schools that have deaf pupils have opted for resource persons instead of sign language interpreters, particular in primary education. The reason for this is that resource persons can offer a range of support to the deaf child beyond just interpretation, despite being neither qualified teachers nor interpreters. Another instance of the different interpretation of inclusive education is where a number of deaf children are placed in classrooms separate from their hearing peers in mainstreams school (see, e.g., Ademokoya, 2019). In this study, there are two deaf migrants who have experienced this type of deaf education.

There has been criticism regarding the view that mainstream school is the least restrictive environment for the deaf child. One such criticism is that in order to be included in the classroom, specific adaptations in communication are required, which are often not met (Knoors et al., 2019).

This sub-section shows the complexities in deaf education, particularly language policies which are shaped by different language ideologies. What is best for the deaf child's language development is often debated among professionals, parents, and members of the deaf community. These debates have resulted in various language policies in deaf schools with varying degrees of success in terms of the quality of education provided for deaf children. As already mentioned, examining deaf migrants' language practices in adult education requires an understanding of the complexities of deaf education globally. While the majority of deaf migrants in this study have attended school, the quality of education they receive can vary greatly, which is important to consider when examining their language practices and language learning experiences.

3. Deaf people in migration and mobility

There is a growing amount of research on how globalisation and increased mobility shapes language practices. Globalisation has a great impact on the evolution of language practices by creating new and complex markets for linguistic and communicative resources (Blommaert, 2010). As a result, there is a shift in the sociolinguistics field from research on languages and speech to a wider focus that includes the whole repertoire. Considering that the deaf migrants in this thesis engage in mobility and they learn two new languages simultaneously, it is important to examine how deaf people language in different spaces, particularly in times of mobility. As Moriarty and Kusters (2021, p. 291) note:

“Deaf people who engage in mobility often use and learn multiple languages, including local or national sign languages and spoken/written languages, and may make use of International Sign.”

This section gives an overview of various research that focuses on the language practices of deaf signers who interact with other deaf signers with whom they do not share a common language. The section also looks at various research relating to deaf migrants’ language practices, including deaf migrants in Sweden. The section ends with a presentation of the research project which this thesis is a part of.

3.1. Deaf people in mobility

Hiddinga and Crasborn (2012) point out that while deaf communities have always existed, it is only in recent years that these communities have begun to come into contact with each other. Increased mobility and globalisation has led to the foundation of international deaf organisations, such as the European Union of the Deaf and the World Federation of the Deaf, as well as increasing numbers of international signing spaces, both temporary ones, such as the Deaflympics, an international sporting event for deaf people (cf. Kusters & Rijckaert, 2023a), and permanent ones, such as Frontrunners, a yearlong international leadership course for deaf people in Denmark (cf. Kusters & Rijckaert, 2023b). In addition, the increased number of people migrating around the world also means an increased number of deaf migrants, each of whom brings their own semiotic repertoires to the new space they arrive in.

Moriarty and Kusters (2021) describe multilingual encounters between deaf people, usually in international deaf spaces, as calibrating. Examples of calibrating are “signing, mouthing, writing and fingerspelling in different languages and scripts; speech; and drawing” (Moriarty & Kusters, 2021, p. 287). Calibrating involves constant adaptation during informal interactions, including acquiring new signs, new mouthing and fingerspelling. Change in the tempo of signing, using pantomimes and different kinds of chaining between languages, are also examples of different types of calibrating. Deaf signing people often have instinctive knowledge of how to orientate themselves in order to receive full sensory access (O’Brien, 2021), for instance, adjusting seating positions so that everyone can see each other signing. The ability to calibrate easily in different spaces with different people is a skill learned over time. It should also be noted that the ability to calibrate easily using various semiotic resources does not apply to all deaf people, as each deaf person have different access to language(s) growing up and their socio-economic capital must also be taken into consideration (Moriarty & Kusters, 2021).

International Sign is an instance of deaf people’s process of calibration. International Sign can be described as “a jointly created communicative toolkit, a shared conceptual space that, in the absence of a conventional shared inventory for communication, includes an array of multilingual and multi-modal resources” (Zeshan, 2015, p. 3). The success in the use of International Sign is heavily based on interlocutors’ efforts to ensure mutual understanding, and it also require calibrating (Kusters, 2021; Moriarty & Kusters, 2021). It can differ depending on the space and who one interacts with. It also comes with its own ideologies, for instance, people who use American Sign Language (ASL) signs in their International Sign can sometimes be perceived as “clever/smart” or as “showing off” (Kusters, 2020, p. 56). The use of International Sign is not, however, always applicable in contexts where deaf signing people with no shared languages meet. In addition, the decision whether to use International Sign can be political. For instance, Moriarty (2020) did a study on deaf tourism in Bali where there were discussions among deaf tourists on the importance of adopting the local sign language. This action, according to them, was a sign of respect for deaf Balinese villagers, and to ensure that the village sign language will not be heavily impacted by outsider influence, particularly considering that there is a small number of people who use this village sign language.

To summarise, deaf people in mobility have the skill of calibrating by using different linguistic and semiotic resources. Calibrating in different spaces can be considered an important skill for deaf migrants, and this skill is usually learnt over time. Furthermore, the ability to calibrate can differ from individual to individual depending on their linguistic, socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

3.2. Research on deaf migrants

While there are no official statistics available on how many deaf migrants there are in Sweden, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 15% of the population are disabled people (WHO, 2011) and taking this into consideration, Pisani and Grech (2015) have roughly estimated that around 3.5 to 5 million displaced people are disabled, some born with disabilities while others have become disabled as a result of environmental and structural factors such as poverty, conflicts and natural disasters among others. Pisani and Grech (2015) emphasise the importance of developing an interdisciplinary research that takes both migration and disability into consideration as these types of research remain scarce.

The study of deaf migration can be considered an emerging field in migration studies. As Emery and Iyer (2021) point out, the experiences of deaf migrants tend to be overlooked in migration and disability studies. While small, there are a number of studies that explore the experiences of deaf migrants. For instance, Emery and Iyer (2021) examine deaf migrants' experiences of living in London using an intersectional lens, focusing particularly on the power relations, and Willoughby (2008) did a study in Victoria in Australia that included 300 deaf migrants. The study shows that the deaf migrants' language competence varied considerably with some already having knowledge of English or Auslan (Australian Sign Language) beforehand while others, particularly those who did not have access to education, did not know any national sign languages and had little proficiency in spoken and written languages. The study also shows that their linguistic and educational backgrounds impacted their ability to learn Auslan and English. The author has also conducted research about deaf migrants' situations in London and Melbourne, with a particular focus on their access to services as well as their language use (Willoughby, 2015). Sivunen (2019) completed an ethnographic study on deaf asylum seekers' experiences living in reception centres in Finland, exploring the complexities of language use and lack of access to services. The author highlights the challenges deaf asylum seekers face in reception centres in Finland. The deaf asylum seekers faced great communication barriers because they had no common language that they can use to communicate with other people in the reception centres and with officials working in the centres. This resulted in great isolation as they could not receive information and advice, and they could not exchange thoughts and experiences with others. Trengereid Olsen conducted research on the situation of deaf refugees in Norway (Trengereid Olsen, 2018) and Norwegian Sign Language interpreters' experiences working with deaf refugees (Trengereid Olsen, 2019). There are also a few studies on deaf migrants' experience in schools, such as Lim (2023a), whose doctoral dissertation centres on the experiences of immigrant deaf students of colour in a deaf high school in the US, and Akmatsu and Cole's study on the psychoeducational needs of deaf immigrant children in Canada (2000).

Another study on deaf migrants' language practices in adult education is Aldersson (2023). While Aldersson's study on translanguaging practices in adult education does not solely focus on deaf migrants, many of his students were foreign born and they know at least one other sign language other than British Sign Language (BSL). His study reveals that language use within the classroom is much more dynamic and fluid than just switching to and from BSL and English.

3.3. Deaf migrants in Sweden

While research on deaf migrants' experiences might be considered relatively new, it is an area of great importance as there is a need for a better understanding of deaf migrants' situations in order to bring about changes on different levels, from support received by the local deaf associations to the government's national policies. Although research on deaf migrants' backgrounds in Sweden is scarce, it is known among the Swedish deaf community that deaf migrants, as a group, are very heterogeneous and this may pose several challenges when it comes to integrating into the new society. Their linguistic and educational upbringing are, for example, highly individualised, and there are deaf migrants who have had limited access to language(s) growing up as spoken languages are not always accessible for deaf people. Additionally, they might not have had access to education or, if they have received education, the quality of that education may have been poor (Haualand & Allen, 2009).

There are a number of challenges deaf migrants face when they arrive in a new country, one of which is access to sign language interpreters. In order for deaf signers to access public services in Sweden, an STS interpreter is usually required. However, deaf migrants most likely do not know STS upon arrival into Sweden. In addition, some do not know a national sign language. For those that do know a national sign language that is not STS, it is not a given that they have used sign language interpreters before. Holmström and Sivunen (2022) note that sign language interpreting services exist in the Nordic countries and these services are usually free of charge. However, a dilemma with using STS interpreters is that the hearing sign language interpreters are trained to interpret between the national spoken language and the national sign language. While there are some hearing interpreters in Sweden that are able to interpret between spoken English and STS, it is uncommon that the interpreters know a national sign language other than STS. In addition, Haualand and Allen (2009) note that it can be said that the majority of deaf people worldwide are emergent readers. Holmström and Sivunen (2022) point out that literacy skills may have not been necessary for deaf people in their home country, but this becomes an issue once they enter a country where literacy skills are highly valued. Lack of access to interpreters and lack of literacy skills make it extremely difficult for deaf migrants to access public services. As a result, some

migrants are entirely dependent on their family members or people with relevant linguistic knowledge assisting with communication out of goodwill (Holmström & Sivunen, 2022).

Another challenge, particularly for deaf asylum seekers, is the application for asylum. The asylum procedure often involves legal jargon that even highly educated multilingual hearing migrants could potentially find difficult to comprehend. Deaf migrants, particularly those who are emergent readers and use mainly homesigns or gestures with their family members, add an extra layer of complexity due to their inability to rely on certified sign language interpreters and read the information given to them by the officials in the migration agency. In Sivunen's study (2019) on deaf refugees in Finland, she points out that the deaf refugees who have received formal Finnish Sign Language instruction have personally experienced a better ability to understand a wide array of new information. The author also points out that even though learning Finnish Sign Language may not guarantee asylum for the deaf asylum seeker, it allows the deaf asylum seeker to state their claim in their own words, and it can potentially lead to a more fair decision. While International Sign may be a starting point for deaf migrants that know at least one national sign language, it can pose challenges for deaf migrants that do not know any sign languages (Holmström & Sivunen, 2022).

To summarise, deaf migrants are considered an extremely heterogeneous group with different backgrounds. A stark difference between deaf and hearing migrants is that it is possible for deaf migrants to have limited access to languages in their home environment during childhood (Holmström & Sivunen, 2022). Holmström and Sivunen (2022) note that the diverse experiences of deaf migrants impact how they navigate the new country with some having more opportunities and others having more obstacles, particularly when it comes to language learning.

3.4. The *Mulder* research project

Considering the importance of a better understanding of deaf migrants' language learning, there is a need for research in this area. *The Multilingual Situation of Deaf Refugees in Sweden* (Mulder) is a research project financed by the Swedish Research Council (DNR 2019-02115) and approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (DNR 2020-02865). The aim of the research project is to generate knowledge about deaf adult refugees' language situation and language acquisition from a multilingual perspective. A study conducted by Holmström (2019) reveals the complexity of deaf newcomers' language situation, with some having little to no access to their family's language and no schooling experiences and others being multilingual with several years of schooling experiences. The author points out that there is limited research regarding these deaf newcomers' language learning. Considering how the

Swedish government places great emphasis on language learning as the most important tool for integration into Swedish society (Fejes, 2019), there is a need for an understanding of deaf migrants' language situation as well as their language development.

The *Mulder* project team consists of three deaf researchers: the principal investigator, co-investigator, and myself as a doctoral student. The research project consists of two sub-projects:

1. Language use in social interaction
2. Language acquisition and development of STS and Swedish

This thesis is part of the first sub-project that examines interaction in classrooms with a specific focus on language use and use of multimodal resources.

While the initial focus of the project was on deaf refugees, the project team found the term 'refugee' to be a narrow focus that excludes other deaf migrants who could potentially make great contributions to the research project. Hence, a decision was made to shift to a broader definition that includes all deaf migrants regardless of their reason for coming into the country. Also, note that in this research, 'deaf' is an umbrella term that describes deaf and hard of hearing people who either use one or more sign languages, and/or use home-sign/gestures as one of their main ways of communication. They can be either be deaf from birth or become deaf in their childhood/early adulthood. Although there may be deaf migrants in Sweden that do not sign, the project collaborates with four folk high schools that use STS as their main language of instruction, so the focus of this study is on deaf migrants who sign.

4. Language education in Sweden

In Sweden, great emphasis is placed on language learning as the most important tool for integration into society (Fejes, 2019). There is a belief that by learning Swedish and about Swedish society, the migrant will have better chances of inclusion (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020). Ahlgren and Rydell note that “[a]dult migrants’ language competence has gained increased symbolic value by indexing loyalty and belonging to the new country of residence” (2020, p. 400). According to politicians and policymakers, language competence is linked to economic success for both the state and individuals as there is a great belief that learning Swedish will enable migrants to easily find employment (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020; Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2017). As a result, there is great pressure on adult migrants to learn Swedish in a short amount of time. There are several different state-subsidised language programmes that are available for adult migrants. In this section, various language programmes available for adult migrants in general is described. This is followed by a brief presentation of issues that have emerged in these language programmes. The focus is then shift to the different types of language programmes offered specifically for adult deaf migrants.

4.1. Language programmes for adult migrants

There are several language programmes available for adult migrants, and while it may not be possible to provide a detailed description of each programme, a general overview of the types of programmes that are supported by the Swedish government is provided. Other language programmes such as those run by private persons or companies not subsidised by the government are not included in the description.

The most common language education programme is ‘Swedish for Immigrants’ (*Svenska för invandrare*, SFI), which is a state-funded free basic language programme for adult migrants and has been running for over fifty years (Lindberg & Sandwall, 2017). SFI is usually provided by either municipalities or tendered by private organisations. The goal for SFI is to provide participants with basic Swedish language skills so that they can communicate in Swedish in social settings and in working life. A requirement for SFI is that it should be flexible to allow the participant to combine their study with either

work or other education. The structure of SFI is that lessons are offered to students for a maximum of 15 hours a week. While the language of instruction is usually Swedish, students with low or no literacy skills are offered basic literacy classes in the language the student is familiar with. SFI is divided into four courses (A, B, C and D) and has three different study paths (1, 2 and 3) depending on the migrants' backgrounds and goals. Study path 1 is for migrants who are either emergent readers or have low literacy skills and consists of all four courses (A, B, C and D). Study path 2 consists of course B, C and D while Study path 3 only consists of course C and D, mainly for migrants with higher education backgrounds.

Another state-subsidised programme is 'Swedish from Day One' (*Svenska från dag ett*), which is aimed at newly arrived migrants/asylum seekers. They have the opportunity to learn Swedish and community orientation while they wait for a decision from the Swedish Migration Agency. There are also language courses run by different study associations such as ABF and Medborgarskola in the form of 'study circles', which can differ depending on each study association.

Folk high schools are another instance of free adult education, and some folk high schools provide language courses for adult migrants. One of the main differences between folk high schools and other forms of adult education is that there are no centrally determined courses or curriculum that folk high schools must follow. This means that each school can independently create the contents and directions of their own courses. However, the schools must provide a 'general course' (*allmän kurs*), a course designed for people who do not have either a primary or secondary school education to complete their education so that they have the opportunity to apply for further education. There are folk high schools that provide 'special courses', for instance, STS courses for those who want to learn the language as well as courses for those who want to become STS interpreters. For more on the history and structure of folk high schools in Sweden, see Maliszewski (2003).

There have been issues with language programmes, particularly SFI, where there has been criticism about the low efficiency, a lack of quality and not enough individualisation (Lindberg & Sandwall, 2017; Rosén & Bagga-Gupta, 2013; Rydell, 2018). In Lindberg and Sandwall (2017), it is pointed out that the migrants did not have many opportunities to interact with people proficient in Swedish other than the teachers. This makes it difficult for these migrants to be able to develop their Swedish skills in a short time. Öbrink Hobzová (2021) points out that it is important to consider that most students in SFI do not come from an education system similar to the Swedish system. Because of this, it takes a longer time for many students to adjust to being the main ones responsible for their own learning results.

When it comes to deaf migrants, the main issue with the design of SFI is that it is based on the assumption that the migrant is proficient in at least one language. They can learn Swedish as a functional second language, using their

first language as a base (cf. Rydell, 2018). This is not the case for many deaf migrants, and because of this, there is a need for deaf migrants to attend schools that provide education suited to their needs.

4.2. Language programmes for deaf adult migrants

The main differences between courses for deaf migrants and courses for the general migrant population are that the language of instruction is STS and that the deaf migrants learn two new languages simultaneously. Because of this, there is a need for courses that are tailored to the needs of deaf migrants. While there are various educational programmes for deaf adult migrants in STS and written Swedish, the Mulder project focuses on folk high schools that cater to deaf people.

The benefit of folk high schools is that they are flexible and courses can be created to fit the needs of a particular group, which in this case is deaf migrants. Although there are several folk high schools that cater to deaf and hard of hearing people in a number of locations across Sweden, the research project collaborates with four folk high schools that provide language education for deaf migrants. To add, the thesis uses the term “participant” instead of “student” as folk high schools use this term for their students.

Even though there are four folk high schools in this study, School A and School B are run under one organisation and School C and D under another. While these four schools have similar structures, there are some differences. School A has had an agreement with the Swedish Migration Agency since 2009. The agreement states that the school shall provide STS courses as well as community orientation for deaf asylum seekers. In addition, School A provides support with the asylum process as well as support in their contact with various authorities such as the local municipality and the Swedish Public Employment Service. School A is the only school out of four that provides boarding accommodation for participants who need it. School B provides SFI classes for deaf migrants for a maximum of 15 hours a week. The school also provides evening classes for those who are unable to attend the daytime classes. Funding comes from either the municipality that the deaf migrant lives in or the Swedish Public Employment Service. The time allocated for each migrant varies depending on the authority providing the funding. School C and D receive funding from the Swedish National Council of Adult Education to provide education for deaf asylum seekers. These schools also receive funding from the Swedish Public Employment Service to provide the ‘Establishment Programme’ (*Etableringsprogram*) for deaf migrants. The aim of this programme is for migrants to be able to learn Swedish and find a job as quickly as possible. While funding and time allocation may look different depending on the individual, they all participate in special courses tailored for deaf migrants that usually last 1-3 years. This course is called ‘general course for

newly arrived' (*allmän kurs för nyanlända*) in School A, in addition to 'SFI for deaf people' (*SFI för döva*) in School A as well as School B, and 'language and society' (*språk och samhälle*) in School C and D. Deaf migrants attending either School A, School C or School D have opportunities to meet other deaf people attending different courses, while School B focuses only on deaf migrants.

There are challenges in teaching deaf migrants new languages, particularly emergent readers. In Holmström and Schönström (2023), several teachers that teach deaf migrants who are emergent readers mention that it is common for individuals in this group to forget written words as quickly as they learn them. The authors note that the teachers felt that they did not have sufficient strategies to support them in their teaching. It is common that the teachers do not have relevant training for second language teaching, especially for deaf migrants (Allard & Wedin, 2017). In addition, there are very little resources available for these teachers to use, particularly materials for deaf adults who are emergent readers (Holmström & Schönström, 2023).

5. Translingual practice as a theoretical perspective

In times of globalisation and increased mobility, there is a greater need for research on the sociolinguistics of movements and its impact on language practices across imagined geographical boundaries. To quote Blommaert (2010, p. 1):

“The world has not become a village, but rather a tremendously complex web of villages, towns, neighbourhoods, settlements connected by material and symbolic ties in often unpredictable ways. That complexity needs to be examined and understood.”

Blommaert argues that there is a need for a theory that captures the change in language in a changing society as globalisation has meant a rapid growth of an already complex web of languages and repertoires.

A theoretical perspective for this thesis is Canagarajah’s ‘translingual practice’, which is defined as communication that transcends words by using diverse semiotic resources (Canagarajah, 2013). The author points out that language is only one semiotic resource among many; other instances of semiotic resources include the use of gesture, symbols, and images. We use semiotic resources at our disposal to make meaning, and our semiotic resources are shaped by the social and physical environments. Canagarajah describes translingualism as “language relationships in more dynamic terms” (2013, p. 8). In other words, it is the meshing of languages and other semiotic resources in transformative ways, resulting in communicative practices that may be difficult to define in separate entities. Using translingual practice as a theoretical framework means less of a focus on seeing languages as separate entities and more on how individuals use their semiotic repertoires. It also allows for an exploration of how language practices are shaped by linguistic ideologies, and how established linguistic norms are resisted in everyday language practices.

Since this thesis explores deaf migrants’ language learning experiences in multilingual settings, it is important to have an understanding of the complexity of “language competence” and how it affects language learning. The idea of language competency is laden with ideologies and often does not take individuals’ whole repertoire, and how they use it in different contexts, into account. This section presents three theoretical outlines that shape translingual practices: language ideologies, repertoires, and translanguaging.

5.1. Language ideologies

Since this thesis explores deaf migrants' language use and language learning, it is necessary to look at how the idea of language competency is shaped by language ideologies.

The concept of language ideology first emerged in the field of linguistic anthropology through Silverstein who described what he called as 'linguistic ideologies' as a "set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (1979, p. 193). The author argued that it is important to take the speaker, their metalinguistic awareness, and the social world in which they live into account when analysing language development. Silverstein's argument was considered controversial in the field where anthropological linguists usually focused on linguistic forms and their connection to cultural cognition (Kroskrity, 2010). Irvine took this concept further by including considerations of the material world and social inequality, describing language ideology as "the cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests." (1989, p. 255). The author believed that previous analysis of linguistic practices had focused exclusively on the speakers' cognition, neglecting an understanding of the roles of economic resources and political powers concerning speakers' linguistic practices.

Kroskrity (2010) explains that linguistic anthropologists have, over time, become more concerned with giving attention to social and cultural theories, including the agency of social actors and the pervasiveness of social inequality, when analysing linguistic practices. Language ideology can be considered a bridge between linguistic and social theory as it connects communicative action to politics and social inequality (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Each and every one of us, including linguists and ethnographers who mapped boundaries of languages and people, have our own ideologies about languages, varieties, and modalities, as well as who uses them. Even though language use and language choices are personal in nature, it is important to understand the role of power in how individuals language. As Piller notes, "language intersects with race, socioeconomic status, legal status, and gender in complex ways" (2016, p. 3).

Wodak (2011) points out the importance of considering who determines which languages, linguistic behaviours, and identities are accepted as well as how linguistic norms are enforced in society. Not all languages are treated as equal; linguistic differences are hierarchically structured (Piller, 2016). Those with greater positions in society establish linguistic boundaries in order to create 'otherness', a divide between 'us' and 'them' (Wodak, 2011). This is especially relevant when examining language use among migrants and deaf signers: how does language ideologies influence how migrants, deaf signers,

and in the case of this thesis, deaf migrants use language and how their language use are perceived by others?

As Shohamy (2006, p. 14) points out, “the dominant ideology of language in Europe today is ‘standard language’. It simultaneously shapes and hides many of the actual practices of speakers, especially minorities and migrants.” Shohamy argues that ‘language’ was invented in Europe and what the author means by this is that ‘languages’ are perceived by Europeans as something that should be nameable, countable and differ from each other yet translatable. This perception is not always standard in non-European countries. Standardisation of language is political as it produces symbolic domination by creating ‘legitimate language’ that must be accepted by society even if it contradicts actual language practices (Bourdieu, 1991; Gal, 2006). The view of language as bounded is in contrast to language use in everyday life, which is fluid, individual and constantly evolving (Shohamy, 2006).

As this study uses linguistic ethnography as an approach (for an in-depth description about this approach, see section 6), the challenge in doing linguistic ethnography research is describing people’s language use while being aware of the problematic perceptions of languages based on individuals’ and societal ideologies. Pennycook and Otsuji (2016) argue that there is a need for linguistic ethnographers to adopt a metalinguistic perspective while researching language use and language descriptions, approaching reality in greater complexity, for instance, observing participants’ everyday language life with a conscious awareness that the participants’ semiotic repertoires are part of a more complex set of identity repertoires that are constantly being recreated depending on who one interacts with and where one is (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2016).

5.1.1. Sign language ideologies

Because this thesis focuses particularly on deaf migrants who are signers, it is necessary to understand the role of sign language ideologies. Sign languages have had a long history of not being considered a language by many. As a result, there has been considerable focus in sign linguistics research on demonstrating how sign languages are ‘real languages’, which is uncommon in other minority languages research (Kusters et al., 2020). Ideologies about sign language are prevalent. Irvine and Gal (2000) list out the semiotic processes that people use to create linguistic ideological differences, and one of these processes is ‘erasure’. People whose language use deviates from the idea of standard language are ‘othered’ and thereby rendered either invisible or problematic. For instance, ideologies about spoken languages being superior to sign languages, and beliefs that the use of sign languages hinders the development of spoken languages (Krausneker, 2015), have led to oralist language policies in many deaf schools. Bourdieu (1991) points out that the education system upholds the legitimation of the dominant language while it fails to provide

knowledge of and access to this dominant language. This point is especially relevant when looking at language policies in many deaf schools around the world. These language policies attempt or have attempted to erase sign languages and place the majority spoken language at the forefront, which is inaccessible for some deaf children. This has led to sign languages being used as secret languages ‘behind the teacher’s back’ (see, e.g., O’Connell & Deegan, 2014). It also means that the teachers do not use sign language in classrooms with deaf pupils, which results in deaf pupils with ‘better hearing’ translating what the teacher said to their peers (see, e.g., İlkbaşaran, 2017). Ideologies about sign language also affect how hearing non-signing parents of deaf children view sign languages and how they decide regarding their deaf child’s language practices.

Sign language ideologies also influence how sign languages are perceived in society. Shohamy (2006) highlights the issue of having one language as the ‘standard language’ of a country, for instance, the Swedish language is considered the standard language of Sweden. By having a ‘standard language’, users of other languages are stigmatised and labelled ‘second language users’. In the Language Act of 2009, it is stated that along with Swedish as the standard language, Sweden has five national minority languages. While STS is not clearly stated as a ‘minority language’, it is stated as “equal” to the other five national minority languages (Svensk författningssamling, 2009:600). During the investigation process, it was debated whether STS should be seen as a minority language. The result was a perspective that because deaf and hard-of-hearing people cannot access the majority language, STS becomes a communication aid that deaf people are in ‘need of’ (Haualand & Holmström, 2019; Holmström, 2023). Holmström (2023) argues that this can be described as an act of language shaming as STS is seen as a means that deaf people are in need of, rather than a language itself. It can also be argued that every individual is “in need” of language, including Swedish people and the Swedish language.

The dual category status of deaf people as a linguistic minority and a group of people with a disability have made it difficult for the majority society to recognise sign languages as *languages*. A reason for this is that sign languages have historically been and continue to be seen as a communicative means that helps deaf people to communicate with other people (De Meulder & Murray, 2017; Haualand & Holmström, 2019). Additionally, in some countries, minority language rights are only granted to linguistic minority groups that belong to clear geographical regions (Krausneker, 2015). Because sign languages are commonly not perceived as bounded to geographical regions, deaf signing groups are not granted legal rights to sign languages.

There have been several issues with naming sign languages as an act of territorialising a particular geographical location. The act of naming sign languages territorialises them to a place and group of people (Kusters et al., 2020). Kusters et al. point out that while territorialising languages can be

empowering, particularly for sign languages, there are several issues with the territorialisation of languages. The authors use ASL as an example of where territorialising a language to a particular geographic location can be problematic. Having ASL as a named language is empowering for deaf signers in the US as it creates possibilities, such as the inclusion of ASL in deaf schools' language policies, and the introduction of ASL curriculums in schools and universities. However, the issue with territorialising ASL is that it dismisses the fact that ASL is also a language in the deaf community in Canada. Another issue of ASL as a standardised language is that it concretises a white-centric ideology of the identity of ASL users while dismissing Black ASL signers (McCaskill et al., 2011). Palfreyman and Schembri (2021) also gave several examples of the difficulty of naming languages, particularly rural sign languages, e.g., users of Yucatec Maya Sign Language(s) may not have come into contact with each other but are mutually intelligible, to an extent, due to cultural similarities (Safar & Le Guen, 2021). Other instances are indigenous sign languages, such as Plains Indian Sign Language or Hand Talk, and minority sign languages, such as Australian-Irish Sign Language and Finnish-Swedish Sign Language.

There are discussions among not only sign linguists but also members of deaf communities about where the boundary lies between gestures, homesign, rural/village sign languages and national sign languages (Kusters et al., 2020). Kusters and Sahasrabudhe's study (2018) show how deaf people's language ideologies influence their decision to draw imaginary boundaries between what counts as a 'gesture' and what counts as Indian Sign Language. Homesign is another instance of naming linguistic practices based on language ideologies. Lillo-Martin and Henner (2021, p. 407) describe homesign as "a communicative system generated by a deaf person without access to a signing community, for interacting with their family and community". Another description of homesign is that by Goico and Horton (2023, p. 378) who state that homesign is a term used to "describe the signing of deaf individuals who have not had sustained access to the linguistic resources of a named language". Homesign has piqued the interest of language researchers as it is unique and highly individual depending on the deaf person's language socialisation. Deaf children who use homesigns are born into hearing non-signing families and these children communicate with their family members using a system they have created despite having restricted language input (Koulidobrova & Chen Pichler, 2021). However, there are issues with this term particularly in the sign language research field as several researchers do not consider it as a 'natural language'. For instance, Koulidobrova and Chen Pichler point out that even well-developed homesign systems are considered "*language-like*, but not actually *language*" (2021, p. 3). There is an argument that this term does not capture the power inequality in access to language nor how, despite this inequality, deaf children use creativity in their communication, particularly with non-signers. Koulidobrova and Chen Pichler (2021) argue that researchers in

sign language development should not overlook homesign as it is a part of the linguistic experience of the majority of deaf people and it can contribute to the development of subsequent languages. Another theoretical framework that overlaps with language ideologies and is particularly useful when analysing deaf migrants' language practices is Crip Linguistics (Henner & Robinson, 2021, 2023a, 2023b). Crip Linguistics allows for an exploration of how disabled ways of languaging are often deemed as deviant and abnormal. For instance, in Moriarty Harrelson's study (2019), deaf Cambodians were perceived by others as being language-less because they did not use the officially recognised Cambodian Sign Language. Study I also shows how the teachers and the participants label different linguistic resources, with some teachers stating that some participants have no language and some participants in their background interviews stating that they never had a language growing up. The latter, however, contradicts their descriptions of language practices in their family and with their peers in school. Crip Linguistics employs a critical lens on how researchers approach the study of languaging and particularly how they describe language use. The authors argue that "no way of using language should be described as atypical, disordered, or defective" (Henner & Robinson, 2023a, p. 8), and research on languaging often reduces it to spoken languages, written languages and sign languages and does not consider different ways of languaging such as touch, drawing and gesture (Henner & Robinson, 2023a).

Language ideologies permeate every aspect of language practices and language policies within the family, in school and even in society. Language ideologies also influence people's motivation to learn new languages, and how they use these languages. Examining deaf migrants' language learning requires an understanding of the role language ideologies play in language practices in these classrooms, how the teachers teach the new languages, and how they function in social interactions within the school.

5.2. Repertoire

Globalisation and increased mobility come attached with increasingly diverse language practices, and in the sociolinguistic field, there has been a gradual shift away from the use of terminology such as bilingualism and code-switching to a focus on individuals' semiotic resources available at their disposal (Pennycook, 2018). Research on language practices has, in recent years, expanded their focus from languages and speech to looking at the whole repertoire of individuals.

Repertoire is a sociolinguistic concept first associated with Gumperz (1964). He was interested in how multilinguals' 'verbal repertoires' form a behavioural whole. This was a shift from previous research which focused mainly on the grammatical distinctness between languages. Research on

repertoire nowadays focuses not on just speech but also how individuals express meaning using a variety of resources available to them such as the use of body language, pointing, gestures, and facial expressions.

Additionally, in recent years, there has been a shift away from the focus on monolingualism and monomodality, particularly speech, to a perspective of multilingualism and multimodality. Concepts of linguistic repertoire (Busch, 2012, 2015), communicative repertoire (Rymes, 2010), and semiotic repertoire (Canagarajah, 2021; Kusters et al., 2017) have begun to emerge. While linguistic repertoire focuses mainly on the use of languages, communicative and semiotic repertoire focus on various types of modalities in interactions. Rymes (2010, p. 528) uses communicative repertoire to describe “the collection of ways in which individuals use language and other means of communication (gestures, dress, posture, accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate”. Kusters et al. (2017, p. 228) describes semiotic repertoire as a “holistic perspective” that addresses inequality and power relations by looking at the use of semiotic resources while taking ideologies, histories, potential and constraints into consideration. Communicative and semiotic repertoires allow for broader insight into different interaction features, such as the way individuals are dressed, their body language, and other social cues. How individuals deploy their repertoire is usually based on the different social contexts they are situated in (Rymes, 2014). As Stein (2008, p. 76) notes, “[d]ifferent modalities have different affordances” and not everybody shares the same histories connected to these modalities.

Social context must be taken into account when looking at how individuals use their repertoire. Even though language itself is fluid, the power of categorisation can mean that individuals may be deemed as not legitimate users of a specific language (Busch, 2012). Oostendorp (2022) argues for the importance of understanding how the use of repertoire can oppress people, such as make them feel othered, unfairly treated or even invisible. Oostendorp’s study of semiotic repertoires in educational settings in South Africa shows how the black body can become an iconic sign of the social image of a lack of proficiency in the dominant institutional languages. This instance signifies that the body is also in itself a form of expression, even if it is passive. Busch argues that the linguistic repertoire can be seen as “a space both of restrictions and of potentialities” (2012, p. 509). There is thus a need to examine the environment the individual is in, who they interact with and how their surroundings, such as objects, spaces and other resources, influence how they use their repertoires (Pennycook, 2018). Language ideologies also influence how people use their own repertoire and how they perceive others’ repertoires, for instance, which semiotic resources are deemed acceptable and how some are more useful than others. This then in turn influence language policies in schools and government.

Looking at repertoires is also particularly useful when one looks at translanguaging practices among multilinguals. Pennycook (2018) notes that

repertoires should not be seen as ‘within’ languages but rather as more widely distributed and dynamic. This sociolinguistic perspective allows for “a richer understanding of contexts in temporal, spatial and mobile terms” (Pennycook, 2018, p. 9). Looking at repertoires also allow for an exploration of the use of semiotic resources in individuals that may not have had learnt languages as we know it. This is particularly useful when looking at the communicative practices of deaf migrants who have not learnt a prior language(s). The repertoire approach embraces diversity in communicative practices and allows researchers to have a new way of exploring the complexities in everyday communication by connecting communicative practices to individuals’ histories and lived experiences (Rymes, 2014). For instance, when looking at deaf migrants’ language use and linguistic backgrounds, taking the repertoire approach allows for an examination of how various language upbringings, as well as external factors, influence the dynamics of interaction.

5.3. Translanguaging

Canagarajah (2013) points out that the new forms of communication and technology as well as the suppression of time and space in travel has meant that translanguaging practices can easily be found locally. People of different language and cultural backgrounds are living in the same neighbourhoods, leading to interconnected language practices, and one way to explore the interconnection in language practices is by using the translanguaging lens.

Translanguaging was originally used to describe a bilingual pedagogical practice of switching between two languages to ensure the students fully understood the content being taught. Nowadays, translanguaging is seen as a broader term that describes the complex language practices of bilinguals and multilinguals as well as the teachings that use these complex practices (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Translanguaging does not focus on how people switch from one language to another; rather, it focuses on how people make meaning by creatively using different semiotic resources at their disposal. Other terms that have concepts similar to translanguaging include *codemeshing* (Canagarajah, 2011), *polylingual languaging* (Jørgensen, 2008), *flexible* bilingualism (Creese & Blackledge, 2010), and *metrolingualism* (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2016).

Translanguaging is dynamic and fluid. It is a calibration of semiotic resources based on who one interacts with and the environment one is in. It does not see language as fixed and bounded in that one can see which language is used at a particular time (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Examples of translanguaging practices includes combining and switching the semiotic resources at one’s disposal such as “signing, gesturing, speaking, mouthing, writing (in the air, on paper, on hands or arms), typing (on mobile phones, on calculators, on computers), fingerspelling in different (named) languages, pointing at text,

placing a sign on a PowerPoint slide, and so on” (De Meulder et al., 2019, p. 893). Otheguy et al. (2015) stress that translanguaging and using named languages are different in that translanguaging is the full usage of an individual’s own repertoire, and using a named language is the partial overlap between one individual’s repertoire and the other’s repertoire.

Using a translanguaging lens in language research is a form of social justice as the lens requires “making visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states.” (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 21). The lens allows for an analysis of different linguistic features that can be highly individual and have ties to social and cultural constructs (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). Viewing languages as separate systems often means overlooking the complexity of multilingualism. This can be particularly seen in school settings, for instance, language assessments. As Jonsson (2017) points out, monolingual norms are prevalent in many modern societies. The view of speaking one language at a time is often seen as ‘correct’, and uses of translanguaging practices are seen as ‘deviant’ and messy. This view is an example of a monolingual norm. Jonsson (2017) emphasises the importance of shifting away from inflexible labels that convey a static and simplistic view of language, and instead using concepts that capture the multifaceted and complex language practices in people’s everyday life.

The translanguaging lens is particularly useful when looking at deaf people’s language practices as deaf people often move beyond the invisible boundaries of languages and modalities to ensure mutual understanding, using various translanguaging practices depending on who they interact with. Deaf children have varied language backgrounds depending on their exposure and access to language growing up (Swanwick, 2017). For instance, Lim (2023b) has conducted an auto-ethnographic analysis of translanguaging practices in her family, which consists of a mix of hearing, signing deaf and oral deaf members. The author points out that it was common for her family to include at least three languages in a single utterance as they adjust their language use in accordance with “the objectives of each particular situation and which languages the people involved know” (Lim, 2023b, p. 4). Another instance of a translanguaging practice in deaf spaces is International Sign as it usually requires using a wide array of semiotic resources in order to create mutual understanding. However, Kusters (2021, p. 415) points out that while translanguaging is not a lingua franca, International Sign is “named as an entity by many different actors (sign linguists, deaf organizations, and so on)”. This can arguably defy the concept of translanguaging since translanguaging goes beyond named languages or entities in this case. As this thesis looks at language practices in adult deaf education, translanguaging as a framework is especially relevant in the field of deaf education as the notion of *language* is challenged and multimodality is embraced (Allard & Wedin, 2017).

5.3.1. Translanguaging in deaf education

Previous research on deaf education has been dominated by the idea of language as separate systems, particularly sign language and spoken language (Swanwick, 2017) but in recent years, attention has begun to shift from this notion to a wider perspective of language use. The main arguments for the use of a translanguaging lens in educational settings are that it (i) enables a deeper understanding of the topic, (ii) allows for a development of the weaker language, and (iii) helps with the integration of fluent speakers and early learners in the same classroom (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Using a translanguaging lens is particularly useful in research on multilingualism in educational settings as it enables the researcher to capture students' ability to exchange meaning using a variety of semiotic resources.

When looking at deaf people's translanguaging practices, particularly in educational settings, it is especially useful to focus on how they use their semiotic repertoires. As mentioned in the previous section, it is common that deaf children have varied exposure and access to language growing up, resulting in varied language backgrounds (Swanwick, 2017). Their use of semiotic repertoires is constantly in flux because they have different access to languages such as reading and writing, lip-reading and signing, depending on the situation they are in and the people they interact with. Holmström and Schönström (2018) note that sign languages do not have written counterparts that are widely used among deaf people. They mention that, because of this, sign language and written language are often used in parallel as these languages are "a natural part of the language repertoire of deaf people" (Holmström & Schönström, 2018, p. 109).

Translanguaging practices among deaf people can be described as visually oriented (Holmström & Schönström, 2018). In Holmström and Schönström's study on translanguaging practices in a higher education classroom with deaf people present, they described various visual-based strategies used by the teacher to facilitate student learning. Such strategies include visualising other languages, e.g., fingerspelling and mouthing of Swedish words, and the use of media, e.g., a projector, a whiteboard and videos. Another instance of a visual-based strategy is chaining, which is the linking of two languages. According to Bagga-Gupta (2004), chaining can be done in various ways such as pointing at a written word while signing, fingerspelling the word on the whiteboard or reading out from a book using STS. It can therefore be described as a translanguaging practice (Holmström & Schönström, 2018).

5.3.2. Issues with translanguaging as a framework

There are aspects that need to be taken into consideration when using the translanguaging framework. Linguistic care work in research on translanguaging practices is particularly important when sign languages are a part of these

practices, considering that sign languages have historically not been as valued as spoken languages and efforts were made, particularly in deaf schools, to eradicate them. As Canagarajah (2022) points out, linguists have often overlooked disability in their research on language use and language competence. Henner and Robinson define linguistic care work as “the time taken in being patient, in supporting and providing semiotic resources, in seeking, expanding, and claiming our own semiotic resources, in calibrating to each other in seeking mutual understanding” (2023a, p. 27). This is especially important when looking at deaf migrants’ language use, considering that some of the participants in the research project come from countries in the Global South that were colonised by countries in the Global North. Adopting a decolonial crip linguistics would allow researchers to “move beyond norms, rationality, and homogeneity as the guiding framework for social, communicative, and epistemological activities” (Canagarajah, 2022, p. 13). The author also argues that this approach would “shift our analysis from *norms to nonnormativity*, and from *diversity to multiplicity*, as our starting point” (2022, p. 13). As Henner and Robinson (2023b, p. 2) point out, “deaf children largely experience language deprivation and absence of linguistic capital.” Most deaf children grow up in non-signing environments and access language in different ways and to varying degrees. Considering this, it is important to examine the power relations in translanguaging practices.

Because translanguaging is highly dependent on competence and flexibility, opportunity to translanguage can be restricted if individuals are not given the opportunity to use their whole repertoire to make meaning (Wolbers et al., 2023). For instance, centralising spoken English in the deaf classroom often means marginalising deaf students as not all deaf students have full access to this modality. Swanwick et al.’s study (2022) shows that sensorial asymmetries combined with spatial challenges can lead to a breakdown in interaction and turn-taking. The authors reveal that the power relations between deaf pupils with migrant backgrounds and hearing teachers contributes to a breakdown in communication as the hearing teachers were reliant on a spoken language which is, as aforementioned, not fully accessible for the deaf pupils. Wolbers et al. (2023) argues that the issue of asymmetries can be addressed by ensuring that sign language is centralised in deaf classrooms.

The translanguaging lens may not be useful in other types of research, for instance, if the researcher wants to capture the specific characteristics of the students’ writing style. Otheguy et al. (2015, p. 298) stress that “translanguaging, then, is not for all discussions of all topics at all times”. Another critical aspect to consider is that the ability to translanguage depends on individuals’ communication competence and flexibility (Iturriaga & Young, 2022). If the individual is not able to use their whole semiotic repertoires to negotiate meaning with others, translanguaging is “restricted” (Wolbers et al., 2023). For instance, communicating with teachers that are not competent or flexible in at least one sign language can be challenging as it leads to restricted

translanguaging practices (Wolbers et al., 2023). While Study II shows how translanguaging may not work successfully, particularly for those who have not had access to language growing up, there is another perspective of how translanguaging practices may be perceived differently depending on that person's background. For instance, Lim (2023b) explains that, in her experience, her use of translanguaging practices in the US has led to people perceiving her language use as 'foreign' or 'wrong'. She describes how in the US there is a raciolinguistic ideology among the deaf community, particularly among white deaf people, that the use of languaging other than ASL and/or English is seen as inferior and not 'up to standard'. As a result, she was sometimes perceived as unintelligent. Language ideologies about 'pure ASL' and efforts to protect the 'standard' language in this case may make it difficult for deaf migrants in the US to use translanguaging practices to exchange meaning.

There are concerns that using the translanguaging lens would validate Total Communication, which is the simultaneous use of both a sign language and spoken language, a common practice found in deaf schools. This type of practice is what De Meulder et al. (2019) describe as sensorial asymmetry, where it is partially accessible for deaf people. The authors stress that "only *some* forms of combining sign and speech are accessible, for *some* deaf people, in *some* situations" (2019, p. 895). In addition, power relations must also be taken into account when looking at translanguaging practices in deaf classrooms, especially in the presence of hearing signers and the use of spoken languages, which are the dominant languages. For instance, Total Communication, where the bimodal bilingual is using a spoken language (majority) and a signed language (minority) simultaneously, which requires the signed language to follow the grammatical structure of the spoken language, diminishes the status of the signed language to that below the status of the spoken language (Allard & Chen Pichler, 2018). Allard and Chen Pichler (2018) argue that translanguaging as a pedagogical approach is not ideal if the teachers in deaf schools are not proficient in sign language, as it may mean that the teachers will lean more on spoken language, which is not always accessible for the deaf students. Considering the position of sign languages in deaf education and how it is commonly not valued, as well as efforts made to eradicate sign languages through history, using the translanguaging framework can be problematic (Swanwick, 2017).

Moriarty and Kusters (2021, p. 287) argue that "[t]he use of resources of the semiotic repertoire in translanguaging practice is infused with morality, in that resources (such as certain sign languages and fingerspelling alphabets) are value laden and have particular associations or meanings in a given context." Considering Oostendorp's (2022) argument on how repertoires can be used to oppress people, it is important to consider in this research how repertoires are attached with their own values and how they influence how people are perceived. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, p. 116) state that "[n]o one acquires a language without thereby acquiring a *relation to language*". In other words,

when looking at how a person learns a language, one should not overlook the social characteristics of the language learner and the environment they have grown up in. This is particularly important to consider when looking at deaf migrants' language learning.

To sum, linguistic care work is vital when using the translanguaging framework to describe deaf people's language practices. Researchers should not overlook sensorial asymmetries and different access to semiotic resources when describing translanguaging practices (De Meulder et al., 2019; Wolbers et al., 2023). Using translanguaging as a framework in research is meant to minimise harm to marginalised groups by embracing linguistic diversity and a wide range of communication practices as valid (Wolbers et al., 2023).

6. A linguistic ethnographic approach

This thesis uses a linguistic ethnographic approach. The empirical data comprises video recordings from participant observations and interviews conducted with deaf migrants and teachers who have participated in the research project. In this section, the rationale behind the selection of the linguistic ethnographic approach for this study is explained. This is followed by a description of the research team's preparation for the fieldwork, and how the fieldwork was conducted. The final part of this section delves into the topic of reflexivity, which is a critical component of the ethnographic approach. This includes reflections on my positionality and role as a deaf researcher, a problematisation of 'informed' consent, and reflections on the challenges with the interview process and transcribing.

6.1. Linguistic ethnography

Ethnography is an umbrella term with several subdivisions of which one is linguistic ethnography, an interdisciplinary approach that combines ethnographic, sociolinguistic and applied linguistic methods to explore the complexities of modern life (Hou & Kusters, 2020). The linguistic ethnography approach enables an analysis of relations between individuals' use of their own linguistic repertoire and the wider social context (Copland & Creese, 2016). It also allows for an understanding of the context of certain situations, such as how language is used as a social practice influenced by various factors, e.g., identity, power and culture (Rampton et al., 2015). Linguistic ethnography can provide insight into how language learning and language socialisation happen. It also allows for an investigation of fluid language practices and how language ideologies shape them (Hou & Kusters, 2020). Hou and Kusters (2020) further assert that linguistic ethnography challenges sign language linguistics research by bringing the complexity of signed practices in various social contexts to the forefront. Similarly, Blommaert states that linguistic ethnography does not try to simplify the complexity of social events but rather describes the "chaotic, contradictory, polymorph character of human behaviour in concrete settings" (2007a, p. 682). In ethnographic studies, data are collected in 'natural settings' rather than specifically set up by the researchers. A characteristic of ethnographic research is that it is not always clear where

observation should begin and which person to follow (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In the beginning it is common to take the time to figure out a strategy and test observations in different places and with different people. As a result, data collection using this approach require a considerable amount of time and effort, both with the fieldwork and with the processing and analysis of data afterwards (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

This study adopts a linguistic ethnography approach as it allows for a flexible approach on an area where there is little research. The scarcity of research on an extremely marginalised group has meant that it is difficult to have expectations of what to explore regarding deaf migrants' language learning. The gap in this area of research also means that there is a great need for a wider perspective and flexibility; I can adjust my research over time based on the findings, which is a typical attribute of ethnographic research. Another reason for choosing linguistic ethnography as an approach is that it allows me to focus simultaneously on the details of the interactions and the external factors in the surroundings that may have influenced the dynamics of the interactions. This makes it possible to link the language practices in the classrooms to wider social contexts such as power relations and language ideologies (Blackledge & Creese, 2022).

This thesis consists of data from participants observations, a key element of ethnographic research. In addition to participant observations, the study also includes data from interviews.

6.2. Fieldwork

The project team had already established contact with four folk high schools before I was part of the team. However, even though the schools agreed to be a part of our project, we still had to do a number of preparations before we started our fieldwork. The first step that the project team took was to introduce ourselves to the teachers at the schools that have agreed to be a part of the project. We gave presentations to the teachers at each school, informing them of what the aims of the project were and what we intended to do once we had their permission to conduct research in their schools. The teachers were allowed opportunities to ask questions and clarify if needed before they signed the consent forms (see Appendix 1 for the consent form for the teachers). After obtaining the teachers' consents, we visited the schools again on a different day to introduce ourselves to the participants. We gave a short presentation about the project in STS alongside a PowerPoint presentation with keywords in written Swedish and pictures. The teachers were also there in the room to assist with clarification if needed. Four versions of the consent forms were provided for the participants to choose from: Swedish (Appendix 2), plain Swedish (Appendix 3), English (Appendix 4) and plain Swedish text with pictures attached (Appendix 5). We gave the participants roughly one week

before we returned to the schools to collect the forms as so to allow them to discuss with the teachers and/or other trusted people on areas they might be concerned about without us present.

A challenge we had was that not all participants were present on the day we introduced ourselves and our project. There were some participants that started the language programme after our introduction day and there were also some that could not make it that day. For participants who missed the day of our presentation or began the course afterwards, we allocated a short time to sit with the new participants and explained the purpose of the research whenever we were in the school for observations. These participants were given time to consider before they decide on whether to give us consent and while waiting for their consent, we made efforts to avoid them when video-recording observations. We also made attempts to not video-record other participants who stated that they did not want to participate in the project as well as made notes to remind ourselves not to include them in the analysis if they happened to be in the video. Once we received the consent forms, we began our fieldwork of participant observations and background interviews. Fieldnotes were also conducted although not to the same extent as the video-recordings for reasons that will be explained in the next section. These methods will be described and discussed in depth in the following sections.

6.2.1. Participant observations

A central component of ethnographic research is participant observation. The benefit of participant observation is the opportunity to observe not just the participants but also the settings they are in, the influences of the environment surrounding them and how other individuals interact with them. The length of time in participant observations can vary greatly as it depends on whether the researcher feels ready to leave the fieldwork. The length can differ from years of observing one particular space to a day shadowing a person. Jeffrey and Troman (2004) identify three modes: ‘compressed’, a short period of intense research where the researcher lives on a site from a few days to a month; ‘recurrent’, a sampling of the same temporal phases such as beginning and end of school terms; and ‘selective intermittent’, where the length of time is longer but with a flexible approach to the frequency of visits. The latter mode applies to this study.

In the fieldwork, two of us from the project team used handheld video cameras to record observations in the classrooms as well as interactions during breaktime outside the classrooms. In some schools, there were instances where the participants were split into two groups and sometimes placed in separate classrooms. In these instances, we had the opportunity to split up and record observations in each classroom. Observations were conducted over several visits to four schools between 2020 and 2022, with an average of 2-3 visits

per school, and each visit lasting approximately 2-5 days. There are approximately 45 hours of video recordings from these observations.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note that in the beginning of fieldwork observation, an ethnographer is considered a novice since they are studying a new and unfamiliar setting with its own social structures and culture(s). The authors mention that “[i]t is only through watching, listening, asking questions, formulating hypotheses, and making blunders that the ethnographer can acquire a good sense of the social structure of the setting and begin to understand the culture(s) of participants” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 79). As I have not previously conducted ethnographic research, it was difficult for me to get accustomed to using the video camera in the beginning as I felt that I was intruding. This has resulted in some interesting data going missing from the video-recordings as I did not know how best to record these interactions. However, the fieldnotes made up for these missing video data. Once I had a grasp on how to use a video camera in the best way, there was less of a need for fieldnotes as the camera captured many interactions. Fieldnotes in the later stage of observations were more about reminding myself which video-recordings I should analyse and what perspectives to take in these analyses.

6.2.2. Interviews

Interviews are an important part of the empirical data in this thesis as it is used in all four studies. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) explain that interviews are used in ethnographic research for various reasons of which one is to amplify the voices of marginalised people as interviews allow for a representation of insider accounts. For instance, deaf migrants are given the chance to express how they feel about their language learning experiences in the interviews. Another reason, as pointed out by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), is to be able to understand how interactions were produced and the ideologies that influence these interactions. Study I is an instance of how interviews are used to understand how language ideologies shape language use in the classrooms observed.

All the interviews conducted for this study are semi-structured in that questions are prepared in advance but with flexibility as so to build rapport with the participant, modify questions if needed depending on whether the participant understands the question, and follow up on answers given by the participants if there was a need (see Appendix 6 for the questions). In addition to formal semi-structured interviews, there were also unstructured interviews during observations. De Fina (2020) explains that unstructured interviews are closer to conversations in that they are not pre-planned, and the purpose of unstructured interviews is for the ethnographer to make sense of what has happened. Unstructured interviews are also useful for building rapport and creating dialogue with participants (De Fina, 2020). Even though there were

unstructured interviews in the study, this sub-section focuses on the semi-structured interviews.

The interviews are divided into three parts: background interviews with deaf migrants, interviews with teachers, and interviews with representatives from public service agencies. The main purpose of these interviews is to better understand deaf migrants' situations that may be missing from participant observations. Below are descriptions of how the interviews were conducted and what kind of questions were asked.

Background interviews

In addition to participant observations, background interviews were conducted with 43 migrants from four schools in order to gain an understanding of their linguistic and educational backgrounds. The semi-structured interviews were recorded using a video camera in an empty classroom that was offered to the project team by the teachers. The co-investigator and I conducted the background interviews individually. Both of us have proficiency in STS, Swedish, English and International Sign. The questions asked were in STS and the participants answered these questions mainly in STS, with some International Sign and English (through mouthing and fingerspelling). There were some instances where we had to clarify our questions or explain the question at length in order for the participant to understand what was being asked. For instance, if the participant did not understand what we meant by this question "What language was used in your school?", we adjusted the question to ensure better understanding such as what language the teacher used during lesson, whether they signed, whether they were signing fluently or had basic signs, whether they used a spoken language with some signs simultaneously, and what language was used during breaktimes. As interviewers, our knowledge about various language policies in deaf education in different countries had benefitted us in that we were able to identify the participants' descriptions of language use in the school they attended before coming to Sweden, even if they may have found it difficult to name the language used in the school they attended.

In the interviews, the participants were asked where they came from, when they came to Sweden, whether they lived in other countries before coming to Sweden, their school backgrounds if any, and how they communicate with their family members. The purpose of the background interviews, particularly for this thesis, is to explore how their backgrounds contribute to their experience of language learning in the school they are currently attending. It also allows for a better understanding of how interactions can be influenced by the migrants' backgrounds.

The background interview data consists of interviews with 43 migrants with ages ranging from 18 to 60 years. The largest number of participants come from West Asia (19), with 11 participants coming from Europe, seven from Africa, five from East & South Asia, and one from America. The

schooling years range from 2 years to 18 years for 30 participants, while the remaining 13 participants had never attended school before coming to Sweden. Communication with family members vary greatly as can be seen in Figure 1. However, there are two answers that have the largest number which are sign language (11 participants) and gesture/homesign (10 participants). The participants who use a mixture of either gesture, spoken language or sign language in communication with their family stated that it depended on who they are interacting with. There are participants that have deaf siblings and hearing parents. In these cases, it is more common to have a mixture of language use. For instance, the participants may use a sign language with their deaf sibling(s), and gesture and/or a spoken language with their hearing parents. There is one participant who had stated that they have ‘no communication’ with their family members at all. It must be taken into consideration that these answers are the participants’ own perceptions of communication with their own family members.

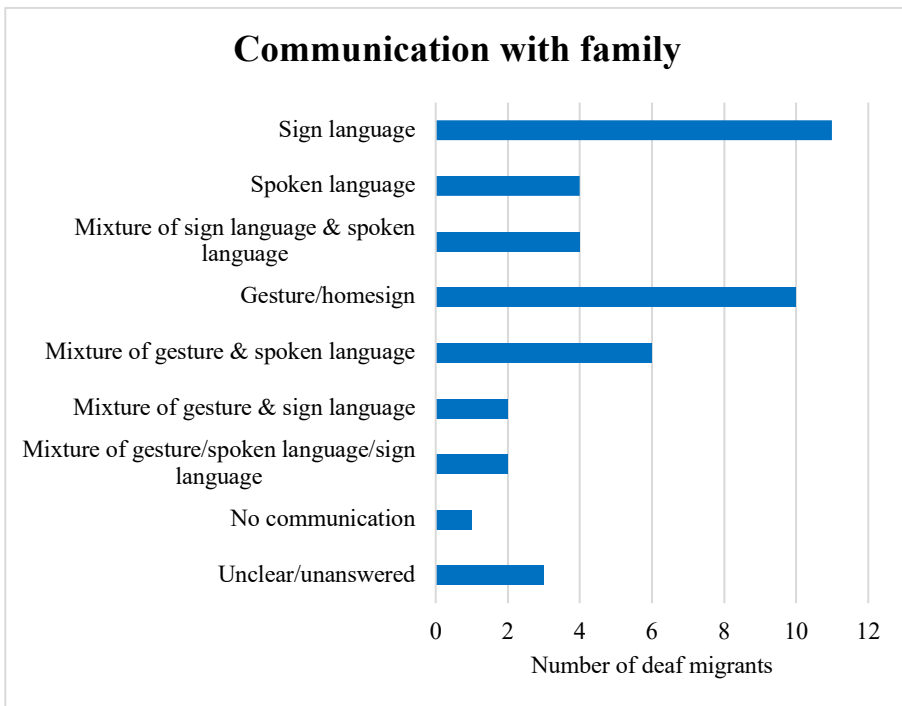


Figure 1. Communication with family.

In the interviews, there were cases where some participants could not answer the questions. This may either be because they did not understand what was asked, or they gave answers that were not wholly relevant to the questions asked. There were also instances, particularly at the beginning of fieldwork, where we forgot to ask some questions that were on the list. The reasons for

this were because we either thought that the question was already answered and moved on to the next one, as it was common to ask one question and receive a long answer that may have answered subsequent questions, or we found it difficult to receive clear answers on the first few questions and then made decisions to prioritise subsequent questions that may be relatively easier for the participants to answer.

Interviews with the teachers

In addition to the background interviews, interviews were also conducted with 14 teachers. The principal investigator (PI) conducted all 14 teachers' interviews and most of these interviews were recorded through Zoom, a digital meeting platform, while two were recorded in an empty classroom in the school. Similar to the background interviews, the teachers' interviews were semi-structured with allowance for further questions on areas of interest, such as the difficulties they encountered when teaching deaf migrants STS and Swedish (see Appendix 7). These interviews focused on their educational backgrounds, language proficiency, work experiences in general, and experiences teaching deaf migrants. Language use in the school and reflections on deaf migrants' language development in STS and Swedish were also asked. All the interviews were conducted in STS. Later on in the project, I conducted additional interviews with two teachers who have had experiences dealing with governmental agencies for the purpose of Study IV, which focused on integration issues. The interviews focused mainly on their experiences with governmental agencies and what kind of difficulties they encountered.

In regard to the teachers' backgrounds, nine are women and five are men. Moreover, 11 of the teachers are deaf while three are hearing, and 13 were born in Sweden while one moved to Sweden as an adult. Their educational backgrounds vary greatly, ranging from leadership training to a high school teacher's degree.

Interview with government agencies

Interviews were also conducted with representatives from the Swedish Migration Agency as well as a representative from the Swedish Public Employment Service. These interviews are mainly for Study IV, which focuses on deaf migrants' access to public service and how these agencies impact deaf migrants' opportunities to integrate into society.

The PI and I had an interview with a consultant that has a specific responsibility for deaf jobseekers in the Public Employment Service. The interview was in STS, and we used the Zoom platform, which was recorded for later use. Questions asked include how the consultant worked with deaf migrants, particularly those that did not have sufficient linguistic resources to understand how the employment service works, how the Establishment Programme worked, and other issues the consultant encountered regarding this particular group.

We were also in contact with representatives from the Swedish Migration Agency who have a specific responsibility to assess deaf asylum seeker's applications. The first contact was made through email. This was then followed by an in-person interview at the Migration Agency office. The interview was done by the PI, and STS interpreters were present as the representatives did not know STS. Instead of a video camera, the PI took notes during the interview. Questions asked include the process of meeting deaf asylum seekers, how they proceed with the interviews, how they use sign language interpreters, and what other issues they have encountered regarding this particular group.

6.3. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a central component in ethnographic research where the connection between the researcher and the researched is "typically even more intimate, long-term and multi-stranded" (Davies, 2008, p. 5). Salö defines epistemic reflexivity as "a never-ending process of critical self-reflection which offers researchers a disposition for grasping those *social worlds* as an inroad to understanding the principles of their knowledge production" (2018, p. 25). To reflect is the turning back on oneself to examine the ways in which the empirical data is affected by the researcher and their process of doing research. Reflexivity is particularly useful in the field of language studies where, as Salö describes, "[p]eople in general – including researchers – have strong sentiments attached to languages and linguistic practices[.]" (2018, p. 25). Language is personal and how people language is subjective in nature, influenced by various internal and external factors. Researching how people language not only requires an analysis of individuals' language use but also how the production of language is shaped by their social and intellectual unconscious (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

This section begins with a description of my positionality in relation to my research, as reflecting on one's positionality is also a form of knowledge production necessary in epistemic reflexivity. Subsequently, I reflect on the ethical dilemmas regarding the process of knowledge production, and particularly on my role as a researcher and how it is influenced by my personal background.

6.3.1. Positionality

Salö (2018) argues that epistemic reflexivity differs from researcher positionality as the latter places the researcher at the centre of the research while the former do not place the researcher at the forefront but instead addresses how the researcher influence their research practices. The author claims that the concept of research positionality is narcissistic in that it does not focus on the

individual person as a scientist and the impact of their production of knowledge about other people. I argue that it is necessary to state my positionality in order to better understand how my role as a researcher impact my research. As Massoud notes (2022, p. 66; own emphasis), “[r]eflecting on one’s positionality is also a form of knowledge production. It can help scholars to find their inner wisdom, and it can build community among researchers and between researchers and their research subjects, particularly among *scholars who identify as members of under-represented or minoritized groups*”. Stating my own positionality thus allows for an open discussion of how my research is shaped by my background, and particularly how my experience as a deaf migrant in Sweden shapes my research framework as well as my data collection and analysis. Rampton et al. (2015) emphasise that it is critical in ethnographic research to recognise how the researcher’s personal subjectivity influences the research. Similarly, Massoud points out that “[r]esearch relies on interpretation, which itself is shaped by the social, economic, and cultural status of the interpreter” (2022, p. 69). This is especially relevant in the field of sociolinguistics as one cannot cordon off one’s own life experience and identity when interpreting how language and languaging are shaped by power and hierarchy. With that being said, this do not mean that the validity of the research findings should be put into question. Instead, the effects of my personal background in my research are made visible in my writing (Davies, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

To describe my background, I am a deaf, white woman. I was born in Ireland to deaf parents and a deaf sister, and I grew up bilingual with Irish Sign Language and English, the latter often considered a language of great status. I attended a deaf school in Dublin. In the school, there was a mix of language policies. When I started school at the age of four, I was taught using a mixture of the oralist method and Total Communication while Irish Sign Language was not seen as a suitable language of instruction. In later years, particularly during my final years of school, this attitude had shifted, although I still had teachers who used the Total Communication method. The language policies in school had led me to be greatly interested in how language ideologies and societal attitudes toward deaf people and sign languages shape deaf people’s lives.

I moved to Sweden in 2016, and, similar to the deaf migrants in the research project, I learned STS and written Swedish for a year and a half in one of the folk high schools involved in this project. My background and my language learning experiences has shaped not only my position in the project research but also how I perceive different phenomena during my fieldwork and in my analysis. My experiences with language learning as an adult deaf migrant has led me to be interested in this research topic as I know that there are several factors influencing an individual’s ability and opportunity to learn language. In the school I have attended, there were other deaf migrants in the same situation as me but because of my deaf signing parents, my academic background,

and also my being from an English-speaking country, I experienced language learning in a way different from most of my peers at the time, particularly those who have had no schooling experiences and whose communication with family members were limited to gestures or homesign. Because of this, I realise how important it is to explore the different social factors, such as education and communication with family, that shape language learning experiences and place them at the forefront of my study.

As Jaspers and Meeuwis (2013) point out, the idea that ethnographers should be invisible when they do their work and that their identities should not influence their research is outdated. The authors point out the commonality of the white, middle-class, Global North researcher studying either working-class, non-white, Global South individuals or their ‘representative immigrants’ in Global North countries. As a researcher studying language use among deaf migrants, with over half of the participants in the research project from the Global South, I must understand the potential consequences of describing the language use and how I can ensure the least amount of collateral damage to the participants that have taken part in this study.

6.3.2. The role of the deaf researcher

It is important to highlight my role as a researcher that conducts research on a marginalised group, particularly as a deaf person. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) touch on the issue of people in research viewing the researcher as an expert or a critic and their expectation that the researcher should be able to ‘sort out’ issues within the community. Because the focus of this research is on a marginalised group, there were expectations from some participants and teachers that the project team should be able to identify every single issue that emerged in classroom observations, and that we should be able to present solutions at the end of our research. Jaspers and Meeuwis (2013) make an important point that the researcher has the privilege of selecting how to represent the participant in the fieldwork data in their study. The authors note that:

“We need to be skeptical about assuming that the informants in our case study appreciate that the above representations have made it into an academic article they will not read, may not even understand and probably find quite doubtful as an effective tool in redressing wider-scale inequalities” (Jaspers & Meeuwis, 2013, p. 745).

An instance of this expectation is during observations in one school at the beginning of the fieldwork, where a teacher had made numerous attempts to direct my gaze to what they wanted me to observe in the hope that we could discuss the issue at hand. Although the teacher’s intentions may have been good, and in some cases, it was helpful, the choice of where and what to observe was, in the end, my decision. Even though ethnographers are expected to be open-minded when entering a field in order to learn people’s behaviours,

we still select the scenes we observe and our research focus dictates our gaze in the observation space. In addition, it was not my position as a researcher to discuss what happened in the classroom with the teachers, especially in front of the participants. I was conflicted over how to approach these types of situations so I discussed this issue with the project team at the end of the school day. I was advised to look at the video camera rather than look around the room whenever I see that certain individuals wanted to talk to me. This advice helped me immensely as looking at the camera had helped the teachers and participants to understand that I was there to observe as a researcher.

Jaspers and Meeuwis (2013) stress the importance of working with the research participants, especially in sociolinguistic research, as their insights and experiences can contribute to a better explanation of certain events and potentially identify areas of importance that the researcher may have overlooked. This has made me reflect on how I work with the participants. While the data was mainly based on observations and semi-structured interviews, on some occasions I followed up with the teachers after the lessons I observed. Questions involved how they felt, whether there were any misunderstandings and/or certain situations that they would like for me to particularly note. However, I did not do the same for the deaf migrants, which in hindsight was a missed opportunity to receive their reflections and perspectives on how the lesson went for them.

While it is important for an ethnographer to be constantly reflexive of their role, Davies (2008) warns that by deeply analysing the role of the ethnographer in the research, there is a risk that this can lead to the ethnographer centralising themselves in the research rather than amplifying the people that are being studied. Even though it is important to be reflexive of my role as well as my positionality in this research, it is also important to remember to bring the findings of the research to the forefront. Pennycook (2021) emphasises the importance of conducting research to bring about change, to imagine how things could be better and how this can be achieved. The author argues that being critical is not sufficient enough and that there should be activism that works parallel to research. The project team had decided that the best way to give back to the schools for allowing us to conduct our research was to organise visits to each school and present our findings to the teachers and other staff members interested in the project.

6.3.3. Issue of ‘informed consent’

A centrepiece of research ethics is informed consent, which is obtained from the research participants before the research begins. The purpose of informed consent is to ensure that the research participants receive a full and clear explanation of what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing the research, why it is being undertaken and how the findings will be disseminated (Davies, 2008). Davies lists two elements of informed consent: (i) informing

the participants of the purpose of the research in a way they can comprehend and (ii) obtaining consent that is based on the participant's understanding of the information given by the research. The latter must be done free from undue influence. The participants must also be informed about their right to withdraw from the research at any time. However, the issue of informed consent has proved to be complicated in this research, which is explored in depth below.

Even with our presentations about the research project in each school and provisions of consent forms in different versions, there were still some ethical dilemmas with the idea of 'informed' consent. First, ethnographic research occurs in natural settings and often with an open-ended research design. This makes it difficult to define what 'informed consent' is in this context, particularly when the researcher's control over the research process is limited (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). What happens in ethnographic research is that it can be unpredictable since it is set in natural settings. This means that it is not possible to include the potential consequences in the consent form. It is also not possible to fully lay out what will be included in the analysis and what will not, thus making it difficult to fully explain to the teachers and the participants. Although this research has been approached with the utmost care, the consequences of the research can never be fully predicted and the interpretations of the research findings cannot be controlled (Atkinson, 2015; Copland & Creese, 2016; Davies, 2008). For instance, after receiving the signed consent forms from the participants, there were incidents during classroom observations where I was approached a number of times by some participants who wanted clarification concerning what I would do with the video recordings afterwards. This was despite having already informed them of the purpose of the video recordings and including this information in the consent forms they already signed. I had to constantly reassure the participants that the video recordings were not for public use and the sole purpose was for analysis.

Another ethical dilemma is related to the participants' language competence. Despite best efforts by the project team to ensure that the participants understand what they are giving consent to, the participants' various linguistic and educational backgrounds have meant that it was difficult for us to adjust our information material and consent forms to match each individual's linguistic competence. Davies (2008) notes the importance of repeating information about the purpose of the research as well as constantly asking for the participants' consent throughout the research even signed consent forms have already been obtained. This ensured that consent was constantly being granted by the participants throughout the research and that the participants could build their trust in us.

6.3.4. Challenges in the interview process

As aforementioned, the co-investigator and I conducted the background interviews with the participants that had consented to be a part of the research. The

aim of the background interviews is to gain insights into their linguistic and educational, if any, backgrounds. The interviews came with challenges, which will be examined in depth in this section.

Prior to the fieldwork, it was expected that there would be some challenges regarding the interviews. There may be participants that do not share a language in common with the research team, and this may result in using various available semiotic repertoires, some of which may not get the full meaning across, particularly abstract concepts. There were some questions that proved challenging for a number of participants, with some not being able to state their age and the year they first arrived in Sweden. These participants also stated that they had never attended school before they arrived in Sweden and some stated that communication with their family has been limited to gesture, pointings and enactments. As mentioned in section 2.1., the majority of deaf children are born into hearing families, and it is common that these families do not receive sufficient support in ensuring the best for their child's language development. As Humphries et al. (2014) point out, not acquiring language early in childhood can result in difficulty with memory as well as understanding abstract concepts. Gulati (2019) coined "Language Deprivation Syndrome" to describe incomplete neurodevelopment among deaf adults who have experienced insufficient linguistic input in their childhood. As Language Deprivation Syndrome is a fairly new concept, it can often be confused with learning disability but the difference is that if one receives sufficient language input early, then one would not have learning difficulties later in life. A characteristic of Language Deprivation Syndrome is that a person with this syndrome may appear to be proficient in sign language, but on closer inspection of their language use they show characteristic linguistic deficits (Gulati, 2019). Gulati also points out that another typical characteristic of the syndrome is the struggle to comprehend the concept of time. Based on this characteristic, a plausible explanation is that the concept of age and time are abstract and thus can be difficult for the participants with limited linguistic resources to comprehend.

Another challenge with the interview questions was the section regarding their language background. While Study I covered some aspects of this issue, it is important to examine it further and recognise our role as researchers in this particular issue. We created these questions with the hope of gaining a picture of how they communicate with their family, friends, some who had attended school before, and their teachers. The purpose was to possibly have a better understanding of their language use and their language learning in the classroom observations. However, in hindsight, these questions are based on several assumptions. For instance, the question of what their 'first' language was is based on a language ideology where each individual should have a list of languages in order based on their preferences or the timeline of when they learnt each language. Research on multilingualism has shown this is not the case for multilinguals; rather, multilinguals access different languages based

on different contexts, shaped by different ideologies. The multilingual turn has meant that multilingualism is the new norm of applied linguistic and sociolinguistic research (May, 2014). As Makoni and Pennycook (2012, p. 447) point out:

“languages are so deeply intertwined and fused into each other that the level of fluidity renders it difficult to determine any boundaries that may indicate that there are different languages involved”.

The question of ‘first language’ has meant that the participants were required to be able to separate and create the boundaries of their repertoires and name each linguistic resource they have used. Study I mentions that some participants have stated that they had no language before attending the language-learning courses. However, throughout the interview they mentioned different communicative practices that they had used. This made it challenging for us as interviewers to build a picture of their language practices that are based solely on their descriptions. We knew that in order to be able to describe their language backgrounds, we needed to clarify which linguistic resource they use with their family and in the school they attended. This has sometimes resulted in longer dialogues, and in some interviews, assistance in labelling these linguistic, and sometimes semiotic, resources. Study I includes an example where my colleague suggested the label ‘homesign’ for the language practices the participant described, and the participant stated that this was the right label. Reflecting on this, it may be perceived that we as researchers had imposed our ideologies on these participants by suggesting labels that best fit their language practices, rather than allowing them to plainly describe their language practices. However, because we did our fieldwork with a selective intermittent time mode where there were gaps in-between each visit, it has allowed us to discuss what kind of challenges we have faced, what we have discovered in our analysis, and what we could do better next time. This has then improved our quality of interviewing in subsequent interviews.

6.3.5. Challenges with transcribing

Bucholtz (2000) notes that great attention into transcription practices is needed in order for the reader to be aware of the author’s choices made during their transcription work as transcribing is subjective rather than objective. The author points out that “[r]esearchers cannot escape either our social world or our own subjectivity, and methods that aim to overcome one or the other may do no more than obscure the workings of social and subjective factors” (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1440). In this sub-section, I reflect on the challenges I have faced in my transcription work and how it was influenced by my linguistic and social background. As Bucholtz notes, “a truly reflexive transcription practice will involve a discussion both of the choices we make and of their limitations” (2000, p. 1462).

Transcribing the background interviews was challenging as not all the deaf migrants have a proficiency in STS sufficient to fully express what they mean, especially the mouthing that usually come attached with specific signs. For instance, in one interview, a participant used STS signs that can have many meanings several times, and because they did not mouth the word that would normally be attached to the sign, it was difficult for me to understand which sign they had meant to convey. For example, the sign for court and the sign for lawyer is the same in STS and the different mouthing for these signs helps to identify which is which (see Figure 2 and Figure 3 for comparison). In normal cases, I would depend on the context of what was said in order to figure out which word best fit the sign but in this particular case, using the context was not much help.

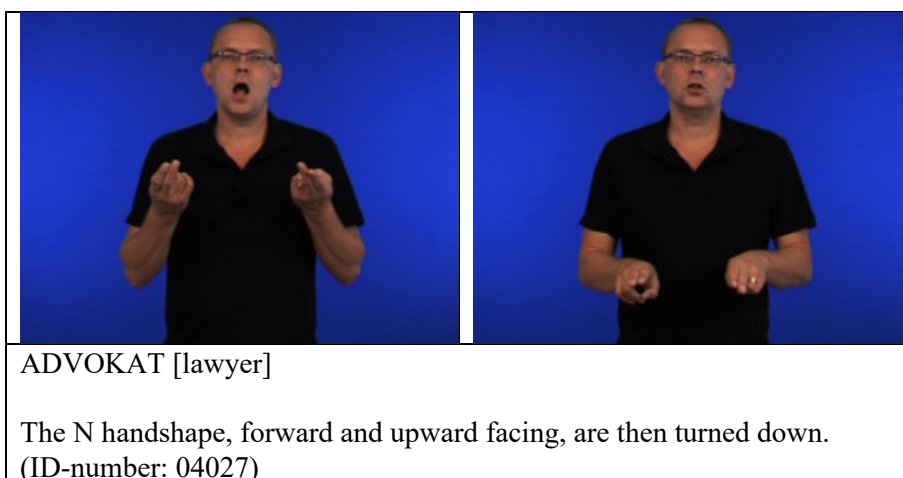


Figure 2. STS sign for 'advokat' [lawyer] (*teckensprakslexikon.su.se*).

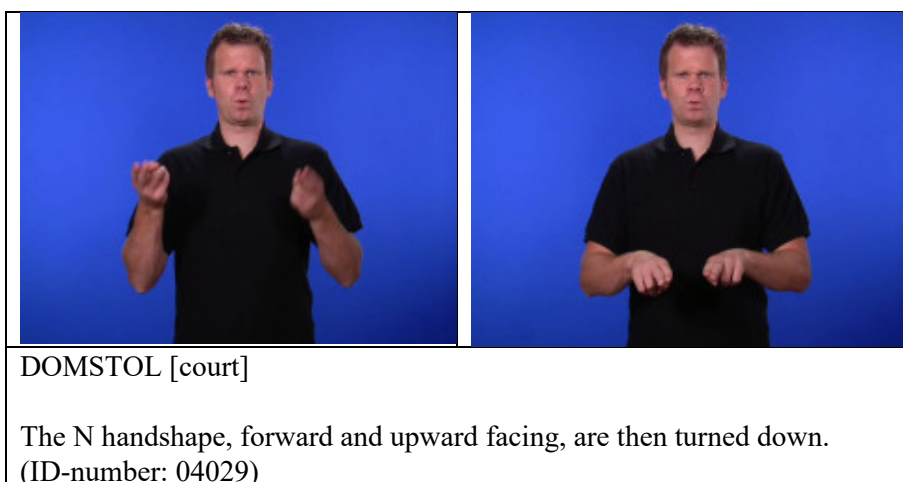


Figure 3. STS sign for 'domstol' [court] (*teckensprakslexikon.su.se*).

Another challenge in transcribing the interviews, particularly for me as a deaf migrant, is the identification of the different Swedish villages/towns the migrants lived in before. In contrast to other team members who were born and grew up in Sweden, I have only had lived in Sweden for a couple of years. Even though I may be proficient enough in STS to conduct interviews, I was not able to identify some of the STS signs for different villages/towns. In addition, there was one case where the migrant incorrectly spelt the name of the town and I could not find the town on Google search. With these issues, I had to seek the help of my colleagues to identify the locations.

Another challenge I had with the video transcriptions was that there were certain signs that may have been common in the region where the migrant came from but were not as common in Europe. While translating one of the background interviews, I identified a sign that I have seen a few times among some migrants but did not know what it really meant. The sign looks like the action of a scissor cutting off a tongue so I put it as *unclear*. I then went through one of the teachers' interviews and in one interview, the teacher explained that the 'cut off tongue' sign is a sign for the word 'deaf' commonly used in West Asia. This fortunately helped me to correctly write what the sign meant. In addition to this instance, there were several instances where the participant used a sign or a mouthing of a spoken word in their home country's language, or even in languages other than their home country, with the most common one being English. These require more time either by looking at the context of the conversation carefully, searching for the sign online if there is a sign language dictionary available, or searching for the translation of the word guessed by context into the participant's home country's language to see if it matches the mouthing. If these three fails, then I put the translation as simply *unclear*.

7. Summary of the four studies

7.1. Study I

“They have no language”: Exploring language ideologies in adult education for deaf migrants.

Apples – Journal of Applied Language Studies, 16(2), 147-165.

Authors: Nora Duggan (main author) and Ingela Holmström.

Language is dynamic, yet societal structures such as integration policies and the education system can impose rigidity in language. The fixity of language is influenced by language ideologies, which encompass thoughts and beliefs about languages and various repertoires. Examples of language ideologies include how people describe and define their language practices, as well as how they perceive the language use of others (Kusters et al., 2020). Languages are often hierarchically structured, and users of languages higher up in the hierarchy are granted more opportunities than users of languages lower in the hierarchy (Piller, 2016). Given the emphasis on the importance of language learning for integration into Swedish society, it is important to understand the role of language ideologies on deaf migrants’ language learning. It is also essential to investigate how deaf migrants perceive their own repertoires and how these repertoires are perceived by others in the classroom.

Study I examines language ideologies in language education for adult deaf migrants and how these ideologies impact the participants’ language learning and language choices. The study also delves into the power dynamics at play in language learning, and how these power relations and ideologies affect how the participants’ repertoires are perceived. The data used in this study are from participant observations as well as interviews with 24 participants and 12 teachers. There are three recurring themes highlighted in this study, all related to language ideologies. Those themes pertain to the meaning of language, the complexity of labels, and hierarchies of language and other repertoires.

The first theme concerns the complexity of the concept of ‘language’. In the background interviews, some participants found it challenging to describe the language practices they used in their home country since they have never had a need to know the name(s) of the language(s) they used daily. Some participants stated that they had little to no language growing up even though their descriptions of language practices in the home, in school and/or with their friends contradicted their statements. The issue of describing language

practices also surfaced in the teachers' interviews. Some teachers described their own language background in ways that depicted language ideologies, such as stating that they knew sign language without specifying which sign language (e.g., STS). These descriptions dismiss the existence of multiple national sign languages.

The second theme explored in Study I is the complexity of labelling language practices. For example, 'homesign' as a named language practice is not commonly known among the participants. This lack of awareness may have led some participants to believe that they had no language before coming to Sweden. In addition, some teachers described the participants' language backgrounds using labels like 'no language' and 'language deprivation'. By using these labels, the teachers dismissed the participants' communicative repertoires that did not fit neatly into the confines of a named language. Furthermore, some teachers occasionally referred to their communicative practices with the participants as not always "real STS", using descriptions such as "reduced language" and "lowering the level" instead. These statements contradicted the rich translanguaging practices found in the classroom observations (see Study II).

The third recurring theme revolves around the status of languages and other repertoires. Among the participants, a common assumption is that STS and Swedish hold a higher status than the language(s) they used in their home country. Some participants expressed feeling that they had to use STS and Swedish outside of the school environment, and that using other languages were perceived as "forbidden". The teachers also actively encouraged the participants to use STS at home, and mixed language use was generally discouraged.

The findings in Study I highlight the presence of language ideologies in language learning classrooms for deaf adult migrants. Both the participants and the teachers have their own perceptions of what constitutes a 'language', and repertoires that lie outside their own definition are often not considered as 'real'. This study also highlights the importance for teachers to recognise their linguistic privileges, which can then lead to greater understanding and empathy towards new language learners. We have also reflected on our own linguistic ideologies as researchers and how these ideologies impact the research. Learning new languages can be empowering for migrants, particularly deaf migrants as it enables them to be independent in a new space and to express their thoughts, beliefs and feelings. This study also highlights how important it is to embrace diversity in languages, particularly repertoires in the classroom as it can create safe spaces where the participants can thrive.

7.2. Study II

Translanguaging practices in adult education for deaf migrants.

DELTA – Documentação e Estudos em Linguística Teórica e Aplicada, 39(1), 1-33.

Authors (in alphabetical order): Nora Duggan, Ingela Holmström and Krister Schönström.

Study II explores how visually-oriented translanguaging practices are developed in language-learning classrooms for adult deaf migrants. Deaf migrants have highly diverse language backgrounds and use their communicative repertoires in various ways. Some migrants have multilingual upbringings, knowing several national languages, while others use primarily gestures and/or homesign. It is argued that to engage in translanguaging, access to more than one language is essential. This study examines whether translanguaging practices depend on deaf migrants' linguistic backgrounds.

When deaf migrants arrive in Sweden, they are expected to learn STS, Swedish and about Swedish society. The Swedish government places significant emphasis on education as a way for migrants to integrate 'fully' into society (Fejes, 2019). Study II provides an overview of the different types of education provided for migrants by different agencies and education providers, including the Swedish Public Employment Service, municipalities and folk high schools. The study also explains two key distinctions between language learning courses for hearing migrants and for deaf migrants: (i) the language of instruction is STS rather than spoken Swedish, and (ii) deaf migrants learn two new languages simultaneously, STS and written Swedish.

The data used in this study primarily derive from participant observations conducted in four folk high schools across Sweden. The dataset comprises 45 hours of video-recorded classroom observations, along with selected information from background interviews with deaf migrants. While there are 48 participants and 23 teachers in the research project, this study's selection of interaction data consists of seven participants and five teachers.

Translanguaging is used as a lens in this study to examine language practices among individuals who have diverse linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds. This lens allows us to identify the various strategies used by deaf migrants and their teachers in our observations. Of particular interest in this study are visually-oriented translanguaging practices. For instance, the use of a sign language to show the structure or the spelling of a spoken language is a common technique that facilitates deaf students' learning. This strategy is labelled as 'intramodal translanguaging' (Holmström & Schönström, 2018) and necessitates the use of at least two modalities. Other examples include the use of various visual resources such as pointing, enactments and pictures in meaning making.

Study II presents three themes that show different translanguaging practices, illustrated with examples. The first theme focuses on the use of dictionaries as translanguaging tools. Dictionaries were commonly used in the classrooms; however, the efficiency of dictionary use varied significantly and depended greatly on the participants' linguistic backgrounds. Using a dictionary required participants to be conscious, creative, and critical. The participant's ability to use a dictionary effectively, their knowledge of multiple languages and their ability to discuss with others who share similar linguistic backgrounds all contribute to rich translanguaging practices. These practices assist participants in understanding the task at hand and the meanings of new words or phrases. Without these combinations of factors, using the dictionary can be challenging.

The second theme delves into translanguaging practices in joint reading activities. These activities were commonplace in the classrooms observed and frequently involve the use of intramodal translanguaging. In these activities, the participants first read a Swedish sentence; then they use intramodal translanguaging to connect the sentence with STS signs by signing exact words word-for-word. Subsequently, they attempt to translate the sentence into STS. This is a complex process and necessitates the ability to discuss the languages' structures on a metalinguistic level, as well as translation skills.

The third theme explores translanguaging in classroom discussions, with an in-depth analysis of two groups: one comprising multilingual participants with similar repertoires and another with multilingual participants possessing different repertoires. The observations reveal that in the group of multilinguals with similar repertoires, the teacher played a less active role in the discussions, serving instead as a supportive presence. The participants were able to engage in discussions among themselves, using a shared language to converse about new words or phrases in Swedish or STS. When they encountered difficulties in understanding new words, the teacher stepped in to provide assistance. In contrast, in the group of multilinguals with different repertoires, the teacher assumed a more active role. This group's discussions involve a mixture of American Sign Language, International Sign, STS, English (through use of mouthing and fingerspelling of English words), written Swedish, and pointing, e.g., at objects.

The findings indicate that translanguaging practices are common in multilingual classrooms, where participants and teachers continuously negotiate meanings using a wide array of linguistic and semiotic resources. However, opportunities to translanguage depend highly on the participants' own repertoires and whether they share one or more language(s) with their peers. It is also revealed that intramodal translanguaging necessitates some knowledge of STS, written Swedish, and translation skills.

7.3. Study III

“Why the long nose?”: A sociolinguistic analysis of deaf migrants’ language learning experiences in adult education.

Linguistics and Education, 78, 101243.

Author: Nora Duggan.

Study III investigates how deaf migrants’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds influence their language learning experiences and explores the issues that may arise due to not having the relevant linguistic resources necessary for language learning. Research on deaf migrants’ language learning experiences is sparse, and given the significance of language learning for integration into the new society, it is important to examine the various social factors influencing deaf migrants’ language learning experiences. This study delves into how deaf migrants with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact with teachers, many of whom grew up in Sweden with Swedish, and for some STS, as their main language(s) in daily life. The primary data used in this study consist of a selection of video clips from participant observations, while background interview data are used to gain a better understanding of the social factors affecting the dynamics of the interactions analysed.

The study provides contextualisation of the language practices and education of deaf people worldwide. To explore the social aspects of deaf migrants’ language learning, it is essential to understand how their language practices are shaped by their early experiences of communicating with family or caregivers, and the language policies in deaf schools they attended. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that the ability to employ linguistic resources appropriate for various contexts is typically developed over time. Deaf migrants’ limited access to the majority language, particularly the language(s) spoken in the family, as well as varying access to education, may result in having a distinct embodied relation to the social world they live in.

Possessing the ‘right’ linguistic capital can significantly impact a migrant’s access to education, job opportunities, and social status in their new environment (Zschomler, 2019). This study employs a sociolinguistics of mobility framework to investigate how deaf migrants language in the new space. Moving to a new space requires acclimatisation to not only new physical spaces, but also linguistic and social norms associated with the new space (Noble, 2013). The value of linguistic resources is continually reassessed as individuals move across different spaces and interact with different people from different backgrounds. In this context, it is essential to examine how deaf migrants’ inconsistent exposure to language during their upbringing affects their language learning experiences.

Study III comprises three different parts, each providing an in-depth analysis of a particular event selected from the video clips of classroom observation. The first analysis focuses on a lesson in which the teacher introduces new words alongside pictures representing those words. The analysis illustrates

how learning new languages often necessitates prior knowledge such as familiarity with classic stories (e.g., Pinocchio). It becomes evident that the participants in that particular lesson were unfamiliar with the story of Pinocchio, rendering them unable to decipher the word associated with the picture of a person with a long nose. Some participants were able to employ their linguistic resources creatively to guess the word shown on the PowerPoint slide, while others struggled to ask questions that would guide them closer to the word the teacher was looking for.

The second and third analysis illustrate that learning Swedish may require an understanding of cultural differences between Sweden and one's home country. The second analysis provides an example of a task that hinge on knowledge of a Swedish custom, which is the task of notifying neighbours of a planned party. The third analysis underscores the importance of recognising that calendars can look different around the world. In both instances, the participants were unaware of the Swedish customs and norms, rendering the assigned tasks extremely difficult without teacher intervention. These examples also illustrate how the teachers' assumptions can lead to misunderstandings, resulting in a need for one-on-one interactions to identify the underlying issues.

The findings in this study reveal the complexity of language learning for deaf migrants by examining the wider context surrounding why some may struggle with learning new languages. These findings highlight how misunderstandings can stem from being unaware of cultural differences. This study also shows how some deaf migrants have attempted to utilise their linguistic resources to get their meaning across, with varying degrees of success. Lastly, this study also emphasises the need for teachers to be aware of their own pre-suppositions regarding deaf migrants' language competences.

7.4. Study IV

Lost in the system: Tensions between the Swedish idea of integration and deaf migrants' realities.

Under review.

Authors: Nora Duggan (main author) and Ingela Holmström.

Study IV explores the complex issues of integration for deaf migrants, with a particular focus on how assumptions regarding language competency and language learning affect their opportunity to integrate in Swedish society. The language learning process is often simplified, without consideration for internal and external factors that influence this process. These assumptions are usually based on able-bodiedness in that it is taken for granted that the migrant is proficient in at least one language and that they have had access to a language and education growing up. As the majority of deaf people around the world have had limited access to language and education growing up, this leads to greater difficulty in learning new languages.

This study employs two complementary theoretical frameworks, Crip Theory and Crip Linguistics, to explore how the norm of able-bodiedness impacts whether deaf migrants are able to 'fully' integrate into the new society. Able-bodiedness is seen as a natural order of things, and because this idea is deeply embedded in society, it can be difficult to question this idea. People who fall outside of the boundary of able-bodiedness are seen as less than others, and they often experience infantilisation by society. As language significantly influences how disabled people are perceived, it is crucial to examine the role of language in integration. Although language competence is often used as a measure for integration, the idea of competence is subjective since competence can vary among individuals. Languageing that deviates from the norm of able-bodiedness, sign language, for instance, is often not considered as 'language'. This affects how deaf people acquire language from an early age and how deaf migrants learn new languages as adults.

Study IV comprises three parts, all of which examine deaf migrants' experiences of integration. The first part focuses on deaf migrants' experiences of infantilisation by others, particularly those who are emergent readers. On first arrival into Sweden, several deaf migrants have found it difficult to communicate with officials from governmental agencies. As deaf migrants do not know STS upon arrival, it is not possible for them to use STS interpreters. For deaf migrants who are emergent readers, it is not possible for them to communicate via writing, a common communicative strategy among deaf people. This results in family members speaking on behalf of them. However, the Migration Agency recognises this issue and allows deaf migrants to learn STS and written Swedish up to a level that they are able to be interviewed for a residence permit. Another experience of infantilisation that deaf migrants face is that, while they have stated that they were able to be more independent after

learning STS and Swedish, their family members continue to infantilise them as they see them as ‘helpless’.

The role of the interpreter is another focus in Study IV. Deaf migrants are in a unique situation in that they are being sent to school to learn a new language, STS in this case, to be able to use interpreters. In addition, the majority of hearing STS interpreters learned STS as a second language. This results in many finding it challenging to calibrate their STS to meet the needs of different deaf signers, which are, in this case, deaf migrants who are not yet proficient in either STS or Swedish. The study also shows how, for deaf migrants, learning STS is often not sufficient when it comes to contact with governmental agencies. They need to understand the Swedish system, the questions asked, e.g., in asylum interviews, and the types of answers the interviewers are looking for. For these migrants, greater flexibility and better understanding of their needs are required to ensure good communication and that correct information is mediated.

The third part highlights bureaucratic issues that may have caused deaf migrants to be lost in the system. Location is a key issue, as there are a few numbers of places that provide education accessible for deaf migrants as well as interpreting services. Being close to a deaf community is also crucial for deaf migrants’ welfare. There were cases where the deaf migrant has been placed by the Migration Agency in a location considered isolating with no access to sign language. Another bureaucratic issue is the dissemination of information, which is often inaccessible for deaf migrants. This has resulted in some not knowing the existence of services tailored for deaf people. Digitalisation is another bureaucratic issue that has come up frequently in this study. Numerous governmental agencies are undergoing a transition from paperwork and drop-in services to digital forms of services, which has created issues for deaf migrants who are emergent readers or have low computer literacy.

The study argues that able-bodiedness norms create bureaucratic issues for those who deviate from these norms, resulting in several barriers when it comes to integration. The unconscious biases confine deaf migrants to an infantilised status, resulting in their being lost in the system.

8. Discussion

The discussion section is structured into five sub-sections. The first sub-section begins with a critical examination of what constitutes ‘successful integration’. Subsequently, there is a critical discussion regarding the use of ‘fluency’ and ‘proficiency’ as metrics for evaluating successful integration. Following this, there is an analysis that explores the potential impact of the historical treatment of STS and the Swedish deaf community on the linguistic integration of deaf migrants. Finally, I reflect on the role of language ideologies in this particular research and present areas not covered in this thesis that could be of potential interest for future research.

8.1. What is ‘successful integration’?

Sweden has a long history of providing language learning programmes for adult migrants, dating back to the mid-1960s (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020). However, a closer examination of these language programmes, notably the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme, reveals a complex set of issues which will be discussed in this section.

Language programmes are often seen by politicians and policymakers as integral for integration, but the emphasis placed on these programmes ignore a whole range of issues migrants face in language learning, including the lack of opportunities to interact with native Swedish speakers. Peled (2023) argues that there are three challenges to consider regarding linguistic integration: (i) arbitrary treatment, (ii) the interpersonal structure of social and linguistic learning, and (iii) the affective dimension of linguistic integration. These three challenges will be explored in-depth, taking the deaf migrants’ experiences into consideration.

8.1.1. Arbitrary treatment

Peled (2023) argues that the argument to “learn the language” is rooted in social norms based on the perceptions and wishes of linguistic majorities, without much consideration of what really constitutes learning a language. The author explains that while it may seem that the demand to learn the language is clear and concise on the surface, this demand itself is generic and

often does not include practical support. Peled also points out that individuals and institutions have different understandings of what linguistic integration is, and what metrics should be used to examine the success of linguistic integration. Hence, newcomers are faced with an arbitrary set of metrics and standards set by different perceptions of what should be seen as ‘successful integration’ (Peled, 2023).

In Sweden, the labour market is commonly used as such a metric. Considering that the focus of this study is on deaf migrants, it is crucial to examine how Swedish deaf people are positioned in the labour market. Rydberg et al. (2010) have conducted a study on the employment rate of over 2,000 deaf people born between 1941 and 1980 who attended special education programmes for the deaf. The study shows that compared to the general Swedish population, deaf people have a lower rate of employment. It is pointed out in the study that deafness is a crucial factor that contributes to difficulties in finding employment. Considering how the government uses the labour market as a metric for successful integration and how the unemployment rate is higher among the deaf population, it must be questioned how using employment as a metric for successful integration may have made it difficult for deaf migrants to be considered ‘fully’ integrated into Swedish society. Although this thesis does not examine how deaf migrants integrate into society after their completion of the language programme, the participants and the teachers were asked about employment after finishing the language learning course. In their interviews, some teachers have pointed out that the participants wanted to “give back to Sweden” by working and paying taxes. One teacher has pointed out that some of their former participants were able to find work by themselves afterwards, while others, with the support of the teachers, found work through social enterprise companies that employ people with disabilities such as Samhall and Dalahänder. With that said, they mentioned that some participants need support in terms of applying for work, understanding the work system, and how to manage money.

8.1.2. Interpersonal structure of social and linguistic learning

Peled (2023) points out that the risk of the simplification of the language learning process can lead to an idea of linguistic integration that may be unachievable for the newcomer. The author notes that individuals and institutions that adopt this idea “focus on how individual new speakers conform to the aggregated linguistic expectations of their host societies, rather than on the kind of political and linguistic culture, and relational foundations more broadly, that may best facilitate the process of linguistic integration” (Peled, 2023, p. 6). Peled also points out that linguistic acculturation requires that the newcomer be not only exposed to majority speakers, but also be familiar with the specific

ways these speakers use expressions and communicate degrees of politeness (see, e.g., Study III). Learning the language requires not only learning grammatically and semantically correct sentences but also how to learn the new language sufficiently enough to be considered as a member of the new community. However, learning the language requires time and energy, which not all migrants have. Öbrink Hobzová (2021) points out that the large influx of migrants between 2015 and 2016 have placed a great strain on SFI and as a result, there were many that had to wait for up to two years before being offered a place in the course. The strain also meant that it had become difficult to maintain standards. Despite the fact that language learning is a long-term project, a great deal of pressure lies on these migrants to learn the language in order to be able to find employment as it is often seen as the common measure for ‘successful integration’ (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020). Lindberg and Sandwall point out that:

[M]ost immigrants show evidence of a strong urge to learn the language of the new country and seem to be willing to make big sacrifices to be able to eliminate or at least diminish the language barriers which stand in the way of their integration in the new country” (2017, p. 125).

Lindberg and Sandwall (2017) note that the policymakers and politicians use SFI as a convenient scapegoat for failures in integration and labour market policies. However, the authors note that “there is no empirical support for an association between language proficiency and employment” (2017, p. 124). The expectations among individuals, policymakers and politicians set on migrants may not be achievable in the first place, which may lead to a common feeling of frustration and failure among migrants that have invested in a great deal of time and energy into language learning. The teachers in this study have pointed out that they have seen some participants being frustrated by their inability to reach the level of Swedish expected to be able to integrate into society. A perspective to consider in regard to deaf migrants in Sweden is that there is no established curriculum tailored for this particular group. Because of this, it is difficult to manage expectations among the participants, the teachers, and general society regarding language learning.

8.1.3. Affective dimension of linguistic integration

Peled (2023) points out that there is a common expectation of a straightforward line in which learning the new language will lead to not only employment but also an increased chance of developing social networks. The author however points out that integrating into the new society requires not only time and energy spent in language learning but also cognitive and affective labour, such as learning how to navigate new social and institutional structures.

While the *Mulder* research project has highlighted various complex issues regarding deaf migrants’ language learning experiences (see, e.g., Study I-III,

and Holmström & Schönström, 2023), there is a need to critically examine how the discourse on language learning as key for ‘successful integration’ into society affects deaf migrants. Integration itself is a complex issue, and integration policies are heavily influenced by various factors such as ideologies, power relations, and hierarchies. While Study IV has demonstrated how societal structures made it difficult for deaf migrants to either receive information about language programmes tailored for them or to be able to continue their language learning, there remains a question of whether it is possible for deaf migrants, or even disabled people, to integrate ‘fully’ into society. Several research in the field of disability studies have shown how societal structures have excluded disabled people from the society they live in. Before examining whether it is possible for deaf migrants to integrate into Swedish society, one should look at whether Swedish deaf citizens are seen as ‘fully’ included in Swedish society.

Schönström and Holmström mention that the proposition to recognise STS in 1981 stated that “Swedish deaf people should be bilingual in the sense that they should master both STS and Swedish in order to become *fully involved citizens* in Swedish society.” (Schönström & Holmström, 2021, p. 16, own emphasis). Despite the 1981 proposition highlighting the significance of bilingualism (STS and Swedish) as a means for deaf people to be fully included in Swedish society, the present-day reality paints a contrasting picture. Schönström and Holmström (2021) point out that there is still a monolingual norm in Swedish society where it is expected that deaf children should be able to learn to speak Swedish, and that STS is seen as the secondary option. This ideology has contributed to a decrease in the number of pupils in sign bilingual schools, with many viewing it as the ‘last option’. The authors also note that the number of signing spaces in Sweden has declined, making it difficult for deaf children to interact with others, resulting in difficulties in being able to develop their STS. The dwindling number of signing spaces in Sweden may mean that it is more difficult for deaf migrants nowadays to meet native STS signers. In order to develop their STS or even keep it on the same level, the migrants need to be in signing spaces often.

The complexity of language programmes for the general adult migrant population, the complexity of deaf migrants’ language learning experiences, the declining number of signing spaces, and the higher unemployment rate among the deaf population, to name a few, have created several barriers for deaf migrants in terms of integration. Societal attitudes and expectations of migrants and language learning has also placed deaf migrants, particularly those who had limited communication growing up and received no education prior to coming to Sweden, at a great disadvantage. There is a great amount of responsibility, or burdens, that lie on the deaf migrants in navigating several obstacles placed by the host society.

8.2. Fluency and measures of proficiency

In an era of globalisation and transnational mobility, there has been a growing interest in how this affects the idea of ‘fluency’ in language and how measures of proficiency can affect a person’s position in society. In addition, research on language use and language competency often overlooks disability (Canagarajah, 2022; Emery & Iyer, 2021; Henner & Robinson, 2023a). Research on ‘language competency’ tends to focus on the capacity to speak, and as a result, disabled people who language in a different way are commonly not taken into consideration (Canagarajah, 2022). While it can be argued that all forms of languaging are valid, it is important to consider how the environment affects how people language. The use of semiotic resources is to be understood in its relationship to the user’s social world. As Rydell (2018) points out, being competent in the host country’s official language is symbolic in that it is often viewed as showing loyalty to the new country. The author notes how competency is influenced by social structures and ideologies. For instance, the education system decides what defines ‘competency’. Because there is a heightened symbolic value attached to language learning, it is ethically important to examine perceptions of competence and how it affects language learners, particularly those who struggle to become competent language users (Rydell, 2018). Based on this argument, it is crucial to examine the perception of ‘fluency’ and how it influences deaf migrants’ positioning in society.

Henner and Robinson (2023b) argue that the concept of fluency is based on racist, classist and ableist ideas. Assessing proficiency often does not take into consideration deaf people’s backgrounds, particularly deaf people with Language Deprivation Syndrome (cf. Glickman & Hall, 2019). As already pointed out in section 2, the majority of deaf people around the world do not have full access to the language(s) used in their family and the majority society they live in. It can be seen that this absence of linguistic capital necessary for learning new languages affects deaf migrants’ ability to use translanguaging strategies in their interactions and language learning (as shown in Study II), and ability to decode linguistic and social meanings (as shown in Study III). Study I also demonstrates examples where the deaf migrants have felt pressure to show loyalty to the new country by placing greater value in STS and Swedish, and lower value in their other repertoires, and by stating the importance of using only these languages even outside of the school environment. Study IV shows how contact with the governmental agencies require competency in either Swedish or STS, and how it took years for some deaf asylum seekers to learn STS at a level where they are deemed ‘competent enough’ by teachers to participate in the required asylum interview along with STS interpreters.

This thesis shows how deaf migrants have varied repertoires, and while some repertoires do not ‘fit in’ within the boundaries of national languages (e.g., Study I), it is still considered valuable in terms of being able to interact with others, although to varying levels depending on the learning context.

Blommaert (2010) suggests using the term “truncated multilingualism” to describe multilingualism as a set of repertoires that are personalised and unevenly developed. The term attempts to counteract the idea of knowing a language ‘fully’ as the author argues that it is not possible to fully ‘know’ a language. Instead, Blommaert believes that everyone learns parts of the language(s) over the course of a lifetime. To know a language ‘fully’ is based on a linguistic ideology that places people who are ‘fluent’ on a higher level of status than people who may not be, and possibly never will be. If one were to use language competency as a measure of ‘successful integration’, then it could be argued that some deaf migrants will never be able to ‘successfully integrate’ into Swedish society.

8.3. STS as a minority language

Márquez Reiter and Martín Rojo (2019) point out how the complexity of linguistic practices in linguistic minority groups can create difficulties for migrants to integrate into the society. For instance, Spain has several national languages, with some constricted to certain locations such as Catalan in Barcelona and Basque in the Basque region of Northern Spain. The statuses of these languages are often contested, which mean that migrants in these locations are met with institutional and ideological structures subjected to contested hegemonies (Márquez Reiter & Martín Rojo, 2019). The authors argue that the ongoing linguistic hierarchisation between Spain and its states creates a complex relationship between everyday language practices, which is mostly multilingual, and language policies at local and national levels. We can also take Northern Ireland as an instance of this complex relationship. In Northern Ireland, the Irish language is seen as a symbolic marker for many nationalists that link them to the south of Ireland, while the same language is viewed as suspicious by many unionist members (McDermott, 2008). McDermott points out that the linguistic hierarchy that places great value in the majority language has made it difficult for promotion of languages other than English among migrant people in Northern Ireland.

Taking these instances into consideration, it may be valuable to examine the role Swedish language policies may potentially play when it comes to deaf migrants’ language learning. The Language Act of 2009 states that in addition to the Swedish language, there are five official national minority languages. While STS also has its own article, it remains unclear where STS stands in comparison to the five national minority languages. In the Act, it states that STS is granted a protection that is equal to the national minority languages. Holmström (2023) argues that this particular article reveals an ideology of language shaming that STS cannot be seen as a ‘real’ minority language, as the article mentions that STS is for deaf and hard of hearing people who are ‘in need’ of it. Like many sign languages in other countries, STS has a history

of linguistic oppression with its use often being discouraged in deaf schools and majority society failing to recognise it as a language. It was only in 1981 that STS was officially acknowledged as a ‘language’ by the state, even though sign language research was already established in Stockholm University almost a decade prior. Unlike other minority languages, there were questions on whether sign languages were ‘real’ languages, and this linguistic ideology has placed sign languages lower on an imagined linguistic hierarchy (Krausneker, 2015; Murray, 2015). This ideology may have contributed to a greater want for protection of STS, both in terms of legislation and standardisation.

As pointed out by Márquez Reiter and Martín Rojo (2019), language ideologies and linguistic hierarchisation can greatly influence migrants’ linguistic practices. Study I has pointed out how the teachers stated that they believed that they needed to enforce a monolingual language policy, despite multilingualism being used in the classroom. It could be argued that because of the history of linguistic oppression, the Swedish deaf community may be greatly protective of its language, and thus this may have made the teachers unwilling to be open to the idea of multilingual classrooms in fear of linguistic contamination. Also, the complex history as well as the constant want for better language rights may have resulted in a want for deaf migrants to be fluent in STS. In addition, the linguistic hierarchisation that places Swedish higher up and STS lower down may have resulted in deaf migrants placing great emphasis on the importance of learning Swedish over learning STS.

8.4. Role of language ideology in this research

While language ideology is the main theoretical framework used in Study I, it can be seen that evidence of language ideologies permeates through all four studies. In Study II, there are language ideologies among the teachers who, despite emphasising the importance of using only STS in the classrooms, use translanguaging practices in the classrooms. Study II also points out the linguistic ideology of one teacher who stated that he only encouraged those who are multilingual to use their own linguistic resources to learn Swedish, and not those whose repertoires do not fit within his description of a ‘multilingual’. In Study III, the teachers show that their teachings are based on the assumption that the participants are able to decipher the message without considering linguistic and cultural differences. Study III also shows how the teachers’ linguistic ideologies have created misunderstandings in interactions, and despite this, they have assumed that the problem lies within the participants’ learning capability. Study IV demonstrates how language ideologies shape integration policies, and how it places great pressure on deaf migrants to learn STS and Swedish as there is an ideology of how language learning is a way to show ‘loyalty’ to the host country. Henner and Robinson (2023a) argue that there is

a need for an expansive perspective of what constitutes ‘language’, and an exploration of what kind of attitudes there are towards languaging. The explorations in this thesis follows Henner and Robinson’s argument that “[l]anguage is communication; communication is language” (2023a, p.8). Following this argument allows for a better understanding of how deaf migrants language without the need for labelling these language practices. All four studies show the tension in perceptions of ‘language’ and ‘languaging’ and how these tensions influence deaf migrants’ language practices.

Both Study II and III explore the use of repertoires in the classrooms. While several examples of repertoires shown in both studies include different languages as well as the use of gestures, enactments, translation apps, and pictures, both studies did not explore silence. Busch (2015, p. 14) notes that the repertoire “is not determined solely by the linguistic resources we have, but sometimes by those we do not have, and these can become noticeable in a given situation as a gap”. Oostendorp (2022, p. 78) explains that “[s]ilence is also an important part of the linguistic repertoire and is often a reaction to the shame of not adhering to some kind of linguistic norm”. This is an interesting perspective, and while I did not fully examine how silence is used in interactions, there were interactions particularly in Study III where this could be explored in depth. For instance, it was noted that the interaction between Ana, a participant, and Fanny, a teacher, lasted nine minutes, and there were numerous times in this interaction where silence plays a major role which was left unexplored.

8.5. Areas of future potential research

Although this thesis covers a large aspect of adult deaf migrants’ experiences with language learning, there are numerous potential areas of great interest for the research field that have not been covered in this thesis. Even though it is not possible to cover all areas, I would like to point out some areas for potential research in the future. While the use of technology has been explored briefly in Study II (e.g., the use of the online sign language dictionary), there is a need for an in-depth exploration of how the use of technology requires deaf migrants to be proficient in at least one language and be digitally knowledgeable. There were several instances in observations where technology appeared to be a barrier rather than assistance as it was designed to be (as pointed out in Study IV). For instance, the use of a computer requires the deaf migrant to know how to start the computer and press the right keys on the keyboard to get capital letters and symbols, which are usually required for password log ins. Public services in Sweden are working on the digitalisation of their services, cutting down the need for in-person services. Taking this into consideration, it is necessary to examine how deaf migrants use technology in everyday life and to what degree of success. Another area that has not been explored

in this thesis, although it has been pointed out shortly in Study I, is family language practices. In the background interviews, some deaf migrants explained how they became frustrated with their family members for not being willing to use STS, and other deaf migrants, particularly those who have deaf children, explained how their children preferred to use STS at home while they tried to keep their own sign language. The family language policy dynamic influences deaf migrants' attitude toward language learning as well as how they are perceived in the new space. An area that would need further examination is how deaf migrants use STS-, particularly hearing L2-, interpreters in different contexts such as in contact with doctors, the Migration Agency, or social services. Since these services are considered essential and hearing migrants have the opportunity to use spoken language interpreters, it is crucial to examine how communication works between the interpreter and the deaf migrant and whether it has an impact on the outcome contact with governmental services.

9. Conclusion

The thesis problematises a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to language learning and linguistic integration. The challenges that come with language learning need to be understood before creating language policies that greatly affect marginalised groups. The discourse around the importance of language testing before granting citizenship, particularly the idea of not deserving to be in the country if one does not learn the language, ignores how there are several factors that influence migrants’ ability to learn the host country’s language, including access (e.g., money, time, and location) and previous knowledge (Ahlgren & Rydell, 2020; Peled, 2023). This thesis shows how there are pre-conditions of language learning that are beyond the control of individuals.

There is a need for greater sensitivity and consideration regarding how we frame language learning for migrants, particularly disabled migrants. While this thesis has not included other disabled migrants, the research on deaf migrants’ languaging can also be applicable for other disabled migrants who also may not have received good education prior to coming to Sweden. Several disabled migrants, like many deaf migrants, experience extreme hardship and exclusion in their home country. Because of this, there is a great need for an inclusive approach regarding language learning and the creation of language policy that is flexible and understanding.

Examining deaf migrants’ language learning experiences shows how important folk high schools are for deaf migrants. Because folk high schools encourage flexible course designs to suit the needs of their participants, this greatly suits deaf migrants. With that being said, this thesis shows the great challenge teachers face regarding this particular group. There is a great need for research-based support for teachers of deaf migrants that allows them to better understand their needs. Because there is a lack of materials that suit the needs of deaf migrants, particularly those who are emergent readers, the teachers in these schools adopt a trial-and-error approach to teaching (Holmström, under review). There is a need for a development of teaching materials that fulfil the needs of deaf migrants who are emergent readers.

This thesis shows that there are several factors that are unique to deaf migrants’ experiences. In addition to learning not just one but two new languages simultaneously, another unique factor is that deaf migrants learn new languages in order to be able to use interpreters. This is in contrast to hearing migrants who usually learn Swedish in order to not use interpreters. The thesis

shows that there is an immense pressure on deaf migrants to learn Swedish and STS since not using interpreters may mean that deaf migrants do not have direct access to essential services. This can result in the migrants being highly dependent on family members speaking for them or extremely isolated.

With increased geopolitical instability and greater debates on the linguistic integration of immigrants deeply rooted in linguistic conflicts and tensions (Peled, 2023), it is critical to question the normativity in ‘legitimate language’, particularly how these linguistic norms affect the lived experiences of migrants. This thesis provides new insights into how deaf migrants experience learning new languages, and highlights how deaf migrants’ languaging challenges linguistic norms in Swedish society. Lastly, this thesis shows that there is a need for a transformative approach to language education that embraces different ways of languaging, and which places diversity and equity at the forefront.

Sammanfattning på svenska

Den här avhandlingen behandlar språkinläring för döva migranter i svensk vuxenutbildning med särskilt fokus på hur språkliga, sociala och kulturella faktorer påverkar deras språkinläring och språkanvändning. Avhandlingen ifrågasätter dessutom kritiskt möjligheten till ”full integration” för döva migranter i det svenska samhället. De fyra studier som ligger till grund för avhandlingen använder olika sociolingvistiska teoretiska ramverk för att undersöka dessa komplexa frågor. Vi lever idag i en tid av globalisering och den ökade rörligheten har en avsevärd påverkan på användningen av språket. I takt med att allt fler människor rör sig mellan platser i en aldrig tidigare skadad hastighet, ökar även mångfalden i språk och repertoarer. Individer anpassar sin språkpraxis när de rör sig mellan platser och anpassar sig till normer på dessa platser. Att migrera till ett nytt land med språkliga normer som skiljer sig från ens egna kan dock medföra att flerspråkiga individer betraktas som ”språklösa” eller leda till att deras repertoar betraktas som mindre värd på den nya platsen (Blommaert, 2007b). Med tanke på att många länder i Europa lägger stort värde i att migranter har ”rätt språkkompetens”, har språkinläring blivit starkt politiskt och ses ofta som ”lösningen på allt” när det gäller integrationsfrågor.

Forskningen om migranter i Sverige har vuxit under de senaste åren, men funktionshindrade – och då framför allt döva – migranter har ägnats lite uppmärksamhet. Det är visserligen ett vanligt fenomen att migranter möter hinder när de kommer till ett nytt land, men döva migranter står ofta inför ytterligare utmaningar. En skillnad mellan döva och hörande migranter i Sverige är att det är vanligt att hörande migranter lär sig svenska för att *slippa använda* tolk, medan döva migranter lär sig svenska och svenskt teckenspråk (hädanefter STS) för att *kunna använda* tolk. Detta utövar stor press på döva migranter eftersom det kan innebära att de har liten eller ingen tillgång till viktiga tjänster som sjukvård om de inte lär sig STS. En annan tydlig skillnad är att döva migranter kan ha haft begränsad tillgång till språk i sin hemmiljö under uppväxten (Holmström & Sivunen, 2022). Dessa, och många andra, skillnader medför stora utmaningar inte bara för döva migranter utan också för utbildningsanordnare och offentliga tjänsteleverantörer. Med tanke på att Sverige har lagt stor vikt vid språkinläring som ett medel att uppnå integration är det viktigt att kritiskt analysera hur detta påverkar döva migranternas språkinläring och hur det i sin tur påverkar deras upplevelser av integration.

Den här avhandlingen är en del av forskningsprojektet *Döva nyanländas flerspråkiga situation i Sverige* (Mulder) som finansieras av Vetenskapsrådet. Syftet med avhandlingen är att undersöka döva migranternas erfarenheter av språkinläring och hur de påverkar deras integrationsmöjligheter i det svenska samhället. Till detta övergripande syfte hör fyra sammanlänkade forskningsfrågor som behandlas i var och en av de fyra studierna i avhandlingen:

1. Vilka språkideologier konstrueras i undervisningen och hur påverkar dessa ideologier döva migranternas språkinläring?
2. Vilka strategier använder döva migranter och deras lärare för att utbyta åsikter när de saknar ett gemensamt språk?
3. Hur påverkar döva migranternas språkliga, utbildningsrelaterade och kulturella bakgrund deras språkinläring?
4. Vilka är utmaningarna för döva migranter när det gäller språklig integration med tanke på svårigheterna avseende deras språkinläring?

Med lingvistisk etnografi som utgångspunkt omfattar empirin videoinspelningar från deltagande observationer och semistrukturerade intervjuer vid fyra folkhögskolor. Observationsdata omfattar cirka 45 timmars videoinspelningar med totalt 65 individer (48 migranter, 14 lärare och 3 andra anställda). Intervjuer genomfördes också med 43 döva migranter i åldern 18–60 år och 14 lärare (11 döva och 3 hörande). Utifrån analyser av dessa data består denna sammanläggningsavhandling av fyra artiklar som undersöker döva migranternas erfarenheter av språkinläring och hur dessa erfarenheter påverkar deras möjligheter till integration i det svenska samhället. Nedan finns en kort sammanfattning av respektive studie:

- **Studie I** undersöker språkideologier som konstrueras i undervisningen och hur dessa ideologier påverkar döva migranternas språkinläring. Studien belyser de olika statusvärden som olika språk och repertoarer ges, hur individer har olika tolkningar av vad som utgör ett språk och hur det läggs stor vikt vid STS som det enda acceptabla språket att använda i klassrummen.
- **Studie II** undersöker olika transspråkandestrategier i klassrummen, såsom användning av ordböcker, lån av ord eller tecken från olika språk och samarbeten mellan individer för att bygga upp en gemensam förståelse. Studien visar att hur effektiva dessa strategier är, i hög grad beror på individens bakgrund.
- **Studie III** undersöker de sociokulturella faktorer som påverkar språkanvändning och språkinläring i klassrum och hur kommunikationen kan påverkas om inte hänsyn tas till de faktorer som ligger bakom. Studien visar behov av bättre förståelse för hur döva

migranternas språkliga, sociala och kulturella bakgrund påverkar deras språkinlärning.

- **Studie IV** undersöker hur det svenska byråkratiska systemet påverkar döva migranternas förmåga att integreras i det nya samhället, och hur deras erfarenheter av integration står i konflikt med den svenska regeringens integrationspolitik. Studien visar hur omedvetna fördomar kan leda till att döva migranter "går vilse" i systemet.

De fyra studierna visar på de många utmaningar som uppstår i samband med språkinlärning. Innan man utformar språkpolitik som i hög grad påverkar marginaliserade grupper behöver dessa utmaningar beaktas. Det behövs större lyhördhet och hänsyn när svenska myndigheter utformar språkundervisning för migranter, framför allt funktionshindrade migranter. I denna avhandling inkluderas inte andra funktionshindrade migranter, men forskningen om döva migranternas språkbruk kan även vara tillämpbar för andra funktionshindrade migranter som kanske inte heller har fått bra utbildning innan de kom till Sverige. Många av dem, liksom många döva migranter, upplever extrema svårigheter och utanförskap i sitt hemland. På grund av detta finns det ett stort behov av ett inkluderande förhållningssätt när det gäller språkundervisning och utformningen av språkpolitik.

Undersökningen av döva migranternas erfarenheter visar hur viktiga folkhögskolorna är för dem. Eftersom folkhögskolor utmuntrar till flexibla kursutformningar som är anpassade efter deltagarnas behov är de ett mycket bra alternativ för döva migranter. Med detta sagt visar denna avhandling vilken stor utmaning lärare står inför när det gäller just denna grupp. Det finns ett stort behov av forskningsbaserat stöd till lärare som arbetar med döva migranter för att de ska kunna förstå deras behov bättre. Eftersom det råder brist på material som är anpassat för döva migranter, framför allt de som är nya läsare, provar sig lärarna på dessa skolor fram i undervisningen (Holmström, under granskning). Det finns därför ett stort behov av att utveckla läromedel som inte minst möter behoven hos döva migranter som håller på att lära sig läsa.

Med tanke på den ökade geopolitiska instabiliteten och de växande debatterna om språklig integration som är djupt rotade i lingvistiska konflikter och spänningar (Peled, 2023), är det avgörande att ifrågasätta normativiteten i "legitimt språk", framför allt hur dessa lingvistiska normer påverkar migranternas upplevda erfarenheter.

Sammantaget ger denna avhandling nya insikter i hur döva migranter upplever inlärningen av nya språk och belyser hur döva migranternas språkbruk utmanar lingvistiska normer i det svenska samhället. Avhandlingen visar också att det finns ett behov av ett transformativt förhållningssätt till språkundervisning som omfattar olika språkbruk och som sätter mångfald och jämlikhet i förgrunden.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consent forms for the teachers.

Appendix 2 – Consent form in Swedish for the participants.

Appendix 3 – Consent form in plain Swedish for the participants.

Appendix 4 – Consent form in plain English for the participants.

Appendix 5 – Consent form in plain Swedish with pictures attached.

Appendix 6 – Semi-structured interview questions for the participants.

Appendix 7 – Semi-structured interview questions for the teachers.

Appendix 1 – Consent forms for the teachers.

Information om projektet *Döva nyanländas flerspråkiga situation i Sverige*

Projektet, som vi kallar *Mulder*, är förlagt till Institutionen för lingvistik på Stockholms universitet. Huvudansvarig för projektet är fil dr Ingela Holmström, som är verksam vid institutionen. Medverkande forskare är fil dr Krister Schönström och doktoranden Nora Duggan. Projektet är finansierat av Vetenskapsrådet och godkänt av Etikprövningsmyndigheten (Dnr. 2020–02865). Projektet pågår under åren 2020–2023.

Bakgrund till och syfte med projektet

Mulder-projektet har som övergripande syfte att undersöka den språkliga situationen för vuxna nyanlända, över 18 år, som är döva. Deras språkliga situation är ytterst komplex och mycket olik den som andra (hörande) människor erfar eftersom det är mycket svårare för en person som helt eller delvis saknar hörsel att tillägna sig det språk som talas i omgivningen. Dessutom, om den som är döv inte heller under uppväxten ges möjligheten att tillägna sig ett språk (talat eller tecknat) kan detta få konsekvenser i form av eftersatt språklig och kognitiv förmåga.

Många vuxna döva som de senaste fem åren har kommit till Sverige har växt upp med begränsad, eller nästintill obefintlig tillgång till språk, vilket medför en komplex språklig situation när de ska integreras i det svenska samhället. Inledningsvis ska de vanligen, för att kunna intervjuas av Migrationsverket, lära sig svenskt teckenspråk (fortsättningsvis STS) så att teckenspråkstolkare ska kunna användas, och när de erhåller uppehållstillstånd behöver de utveckla sina kunskaper ytterligare i såväl STS som svenska. Denna inlärning sker många gånger på skolor som har särskilda program för döva, såväl allmänt inriktade som särskilt anpassade för nyanlända elever/deltagare. Det saknas dock forskning som beskriver vilka konsekvenser avsaknad av språk kan få för döva individer och vilka möjligheter de har att i vuxen ålder tillägna sig språk, samt hur denna språkutveckling då ser ut. Det finns heller ingen forskning kring hur undervisning av vuxna döva som lär sig ett nytt språk fungerar eller hur individer med olika språklig bakgrund utvecklar en gemensam kommunikation. Därutöver är vetenskapligt baserade studier kring döva nyanlända i stort sett obefintliga, såväl i Sverige som internationellt.

I Mulder-projektet vill vi undersöka dessa saker närmare för att öka kunskaperna kring språkutveckling och språkanvändning hos döva nyanlända, som sedan bland annat kan användas av lärare och andra professionella som i olika sammanhang möter denna grupp. För att skapa sådan kunskap är projektet indelat i två delar med olika fokus: 1) *Språkanvändning i social interaktion*, där den språkliga interaktionen i undervisningssammanhang där döva nyanlända

deltar undersöks, och 2) *Språktilläggande och utveckling av svenskt teckenspråk och svenska*, där den språkliga produktionen i STS och svenska studeras närmare under olika faser i inläringen.

Genomförande av projektet

Projektet genomförs på så sätt att forskarna i projektet återkommande besöker de skolor som valt att medverka i projektet. För delprojekt 1 innebär detta att en forskare kommer att delta i den vanliga undervisningen som observatör och använda filmkamera för att dokumentera det som sker, tillsammans med skriftliga anteckningar. I möjligaste mån ska detta påverka undervisningen minimalt, bortsett från det faktum att det finns en extra person med filmkamera med i klassrummet. Då det gäller delprojekt 2 kommer en stor del av datainsamlingen att ske i samråd med ansvariga lärare för olika lektioner. Eleverna/deltagarna ska bland annat producera skrivna och teckenspråkiga texter, vilket så långt som möjligt ska ske inom ramen för den vanliga undervisningen. Till detta kommer att forskarna själva genomför kognitiva och språkliga tester på eleverna/deltagarna vid några tillfällen, vilket planeras in tillsammans med skolpersonalen. Vi kommer också att genomföra en del intervjuer med såväl skolpersonal som deltagare, vid tidpunkter som fungerar för den verksamhet som pågår i skolorna. Intervjuerna kommer främst att handla om undervisningen och erfarenheter kring denna, men syftar också till att samla in bakgrundsfakta om deltagarna.

Förvaring av materialet och anonymisering

I studien kommer personuppgifter i form av bakgrundsdata att samlas in, såsom deltagarnas ålder, hemland, hörselnedsättning och språk. Detta görs för att resultaten ska kunna jämföras med tidigare forskning och för att kunna se om det finns gemensamma faktorer hos deltagarna som genererar samma resultat. Den rättsliga grunden för personuppgiftsbehandlingen är samtycke. Allt inspelat och digitalt material kommer att förvaras på en säkerhetsskyddad server på Institutionen för lingvistik i 20 år, och bara projektets medlemmar kommer att kunna komma åt det. Alla data som inte är digitala från början (t.ex. handskrivna texter) kommer att överföras till digitalt format och förvaras på samma plats. Alla deltagare i studien kommer att få en kod, så att inga namn kommer att identifieras tillsammans med materialet. En så kallad kodnyckel, som kopplar ihop kod med rätt person kommer att förvaras separat från materialet på en server på institutionen.

Hantering av personuppgifter

Alla personuppgifter hanteras enligt Dataskyddsförordningen (EU 2016:679) samt Lagen med kompletterande bestämmelser (SFS 2018:218) och övrig nationell lagstiftning. Ansvarig för personuppgifterna är Stockholms universitet. Enligt EU:s dataskyddsförordning har du rätt att kostnadsfritt få ta del av de uppgifter om dig som hanteras i studien, och vid behov få eventuella fel

rättade. Du kan också begära att uppgifter om dig raderas samt att behandlingen av dina personuppgifter begränsas. Om du vill ta del av uppgifterna ska du kontakta projektansvarig forskare Ingela Holmström (ingela.holmstrom@ling.su.se), Institutionen för lingvistik, Stockholms universitet. Om du har frågor om personuppgiftshantering kan du vända dig till Dr. Jeffy Mwakalinga (jeffy@ling.su.se; 08-16 23 38) som är personuppgiftsansvarig vid Institutionen för lingvistik, eller dataskyddsombudet på Stockholm universitet (dso@su.se; 08-16 41 91). Om du är missnöjd med hur dina personuppgifter behandlas har du rätt att ge in klagomål till Datainspektionen, som är tillsynsmyndighet.

Resultat från projektet

Resultaten kommer att redovisas i vetenskapliga tidskrifter, rapporter riktade till forskare, skolpersonal och andra professionella samt genom presentationer till samma målgrupper. Vid presentation av resultat från studien kommer inga bilder eller filmer att visas som gör att någon person kan identifieras. Istället presenteras resultaten genom att de överförs till skrift, eller illustreras med fiktiva bilder, teckningar eller figurer.

Förfrågan om deltagande

Den här informationen vänder sig till dig som är personal på en av de skolor som uttryckt intresse för att delta i studien. Du tillfrågas därför härmed om du vill delta. Ditt deltagande är frivilligt och du har rätt att när som helst avbryta din medverkan. Det finns inga risker med att delta. Om du samtycker till att delta ska du underteckna den bifogade samtyckesblanketten, som lämnas in till någon av forskarna.

Om du under projekttiden behöver råd eller hänvisningar till var du kan få professionell hjälp, så kan du vända dig till Åsa Gustafsson (asa.gustafsson@ling.su.se) som är fristående från projektet.

Med vänliga hälsningar

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Appendix 2 – Consent form in Swedish for the participants

Information om projektet *Döva nyanländas flerspråkiga situation i Sverige*

Projektet, som vi kallar *Mulder*, är förlagt till Institutionen för lingvistik på Stockholms universitet. Huvudansvarig för projektet är fil dr Ingela Holmström, som är verksam vid institutionen. Medverkande forskare är fil dr Krister Schönström och doktoranden Nora Duggan. Projektet är finansierat av Vetenskapsrådet och pågår under åren 2020–2023.

Bakgrund till och syfte med projektet

Mulder-projektet har som övergripande syfte att undersöka den språkliga situationen för vuxna nyanlända som är döva och över 18 år. Den språkliga situationen för denna grupp är komplex och ser annorlunda ut än för hörande personer eftersom det är mycket svårare för den som är döv eller har annan grad av hörselnedsättning att tillägna sig det språk som talas i omgivningen. Dessutom finns det många döva som inte under uppväxten har fått möjlighet att tillägna sig ett språk (talat eller tecknat) och detta kan medföra att det är svårare att lära sig ett språk i vuxen ålder.

De senaste fem åren har det kommit många döva från andra länder till Sverige och bland dem finns det döva som inte har fått tillgång till språk under uppväxten. Och när de kommer till Sverige måste de börja lära sig svenskt teckenspråk (som vi skriver STS i fortsättningen), till exempel för att kunna använda svenska teckenspråkstolkar i intervjuer med Migrationsverket. Om de får uppehållstillstånd behöver de också utveckla sina kunskaper ytterligare i såväl STS som svenska, för att kunna delta i det svenska samhället och till exempel få arbete. Detta betyder att många deltar i utbildningar på skolor som har särskilda program för döva, såväl allmänt inriktade som särskilt anpassade för nyanlända elever/deltagare. Men, det saknas forskning som beskriver vilka möjligheter döva har att i vuxen ålder tillägna sig nya språk och hur denna språkutveckling då ser ut. Det finns heller ingen forskning kring hur undervisning av vuxna döva som lär sig ett nytt språk fungerar eller hur individer med olika språklig bakgrund utvecklar en gemensam kommunikation. Därutöver är vetenskapligt baserade studier kring döva nyanlända i stort sett obefintliga, såväl i Sverige som internationellt.

I Mulder-projektet vill vi undersöka dessa saker närmare för att öka kunskaperna kring språkutveckling och språkanvändning hos döva nyanlända, som sedan bland annat kan användas av lärare och andra professionella som i olika

sammanhang möter denna grupp. Det innebär att de kan ha en bättre förståelse och kunskap kring hur de ska undervisa eller bemöta döva nyanlända. För att skapa sådan kunskap är projektet indelat i två delar med olika fokus: 1) *Språkanvändning i social interaktion*, där den språkliga interaktionen i undervisningssammanhang där döva nyanlända deltar undersöks, och 2) *Språktilläggande och utveckling av svenskt teckenspråk och svenska*, där den språkliga produktionen i STS och svenska studeras närmare under olika faser i inläringen.

Genomförande av projektet

Projektet genomförs på så sätt att forskarna i projektet återkommande besöker de skolor som valt att medverka i projektet. För delprojekt 1 innebär detta att en forskare kommer att delta i den vanliga undervisningen som observatör och använda filmkamera för att dokumentera det som sker, tillsammans med skriftliga anteckningar. I möjligaste mån ska detta påverka undervisningen minimalt, bortsett från det faktum att det finns en extra person med filmkamera med i klassrummet. Då det gäller delprojekt 2 kommer en stor del av datainsamlingen att ske i samråd med ansvariga lärare för olika lektioner. Eleverna/deltagarna ska bland annat producera skrivna och teckenspråkiga texter, vilket så långt som möjligt ska ske inom ramen för den vanliga undervisningen. Till detta kommer att forskarna själva genomför kognitiva och språkliga tester på eleverna/deltagarna vid några tillfällen, vilket planeras in tillsammans med skolpersonalen. Vi kommer också att genomföra en del intervjuer med deltagarna, vid tidpunkter som fungerar för den verksamhet som pågår i skolorna. Intervjuerna syftar till att samla in information om deltagarnas bakgrund, och deras erfarenheter från undervisning och kommunikation i Sverige.

Förvaring av materialet

Allt inspelat och digitalt material kommer att förvaras på en säkerhetsskyddad server på Institutionen för lingvistik, och bara projektets medlemmar kommer att kunna komma åt det. Alla data som inte är digitala från början (t.ex. handskrivna texter) kommer att överföras till digitalt format och förvaras på samma plats. Alla deltagare i studien kommer att anonymiseras genom att de får en kod, så att inga namn kommer att identifieras tillsammans med materialet. En så kallad kodnyckel, som kopplar ihop kod med rätt person kommer att förvaras separat från materialet på en server på institutionen.

Resultat från projektet

Resultaten kommer att redovisas i vetenskapliga tidskrifter, rapporter riktade till forskare, skolpersonal och andra professionella samt genom presentationer till samma målgrupper. Vid presentation av resultat från studien kommer inga bilder eller filmer att visas som gör att någon person kan identifieras. Istället

presenteras resultaten genom att de överförs till skrift, eller illustreras med fiktiva bilder, teckningar eller figurer.

Förfrågan om deltagande

Den här informationen vänder sig till dig som har kommit till Sverige från ett annat land de senaste åren och går på en av de skolor som uttryckt intresse för att delta i studien. Du tillfrågas därför härmed om du vill delta. Ditt deltagande är frivilligt och du har rätt att när som helst avbryta din medverkan. Om du samtycker till att delta ska du underteckna den bifogade samtyckesblanketten, som lämnas in till någon av forskarna.

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Appendix 3 – Consent form in plain Swedish for the participants.

Information om projektet *Döva nyanländas flerspråkiga situation i Sverige*
Projektet kallas *Mulder*. Det genomförs av forskare vid Institutionen för lingvistik på Stockholms universitet.

Vi som arbetar med projektet är fil dr Ingela Holmström (huvudansvarig), fil dr Krister Schönström och doktoranden Nora Duggan.

Vi har fått pengar från Vetenskapsrådet för att genomföra projektet under åren 2020-2023.

Projektet är godkänt av Etikprövningsmyndigheten (Dnr. 2020-02865).

Vad är det för projekt?

Vi ska undersöka hur den språkliga situationen ser ut för vuxna nyanlända som är döva och över 18 år.

Det kan vara svårare för döva än hörande att lära sig talat språk eftersom de inte hör.

Många döva har inte fått lära sig ett teckenspråk.

Det kan då vara svårt att lära sig ett nytt språk som vuxen.

De senaste fem åren har det kommit många döva från andra länder till Sverige. Bland dem finns det döva som inte har fått lära sig språk när de växte upp.

När de kommer till Sverige måste de börja lära sig svenskt teckenspråk (STS). Det är viktigt för att kunna använda svenska teckenspråkstolkare i intervjuer med Migrationsverket.

Om de får uppehållstillstånd behöver de fortsätta lära sig STS och även svenska, för att kunna delta i det svenska samhället och få arbete. Många går på skolor som har kurser för döva nyanlända.

Ett problem är att det saknas forskning om hur vuxna döva lär sig nya språk. Vi vet inte mycket om hur deras språkutveckling ser ut.

Det finns inte forskning på hur undervisningen fungerar. Vi vet inte hur döva nyanlända från olika länder med olika språk utvecklar en kommunikation tillsammans i en grupp eller klass.

Vi vill undersöka de här sakerna djupare. Då kan lärare och andra som jobbar i olika myndigheter eller organisationer lära sig mer om hur de ska undervisa eller förklara saker.

Vårt projekt har två delar: 1) *Språkanvändning i social interaktion*. Där undersöker vi hur klassen kommunicerar och fungerar tillsammans. I del 2) *Språktillägnande och utveckling av svenskt teckenspråk och svenska*, undersöker vi döva nyanländas STS och svenska.

Hur ska vi göra?

Vi ska komma till skolorna flera gånger.

I del 1 kommer en av oss att vara med i den vanliga undervisningen och använda filmkamera och skrivna anteckningar för att dokumentera vad som händer.

I del 2 får deltagarna skriva och teckna olika texter på de vanliga lektionerna. Deltagarna kommer också att göra några tester för att se hur mycket STS de har lärt sig. De får också göra ett test där de får para ihop olika bilder.

Vi ska också göra några intervjuer med deltagarna. Det är för att samla in information om deras bakgrund och erfarenheter från undervisning och kommunikation i Sverige.

Vad gör vi med materialet?

Vi frågar dig om personuppgifter, till exempel hur gammal du är, varifrån du kommer, om du är döv och vilka språk du kan.

Det är för att vi ska kunna se om det finns likheter med andra som har forskat. Det är också för att se om det finns likheter och skillnader mellan er som deltar.

Allt som filmas eller skrivs kommer att sparas på en server på Institutionen för lingvistik som bara vi kan se.

Alla som är med i studien kommer att bli hemliga. Istället kommer vi att ge varje person en kod, så att man inte vet namnet.

Det kommer att finnas ett papper där det står vem som har fått vilken kod, men det papperet ska sparas på en annan plats på en server på institutionen.

Dina personuppgifter

Alla personuppgifter hanteras enligt Dataskyddsförordningen (EU 2016:679) samt Lagen med kompletterande bestämmelser (SFS 2018:218) och övrig nationell lagstiftning.

Stockholms universitet är ansvarig för personuppgifterna.

Du har rätt att få se de uppgifter om dig som finns i studien. Det kostar ingenting.

Du kan be om att uppgifter om dig ska kastas om du vill och att dina personuppgifter inte ska användas.

Om du vill veta vad vi har sparat om dig ska du kontakta ansvarig forskare Ingela Holmström (ingela.holmstrom@ling.su.se), Institutionen för lingvistik, Stockholms universitet.

Om du har frågor om personuppgiftshantering kan du kontakta Jeffy Mwakalinga (jeffy@ling.su.se; 08-16 23 38) som är personuppgiftsansvarig vid Institutionen för lingvistik.

Du kan också kontakta dataskyddsombudet på Stockholm universitet (dso@su.se; 08-16 41 91).

Om du inte är nöjd med hur universitetet har skött dina personuppgifter så har du rätt att klaga till Datainspektionen, som har ansvar för att kontrollera hur andra myndigheter sköter sina data.

Vad händer sen?

Vi ska berätta vad vi hittat genom att skriva artiklar till tidningar som handlar om forskning. Vi ska också skriva rapporter och föreläsa för andra forskare, skolpersonal och andra som arbetar med döva nyanlända.

Vi ska inte visa några riktiga bilder eller filmer som gör att någon kan se vilka som är med.

Vill du vara med i projektet?

Du har fått den här informationen för att du har kommit till Sverige från ett annat land de senaste åren och går på en skola som är med i projektet.

Vi undrar om du vill vara med i projektet. Det är frivilligt och du får bestämma själv om du inte vill vara med längre. Det finns inga risker med att delta.

Om du säger ja så ska du underteckna samtyckesblanketten. Den ska sedan lämnas in till någon av oss.

Om du under projekttiden behöver råd eller få veta var du kan få professionell hjälp, så kan du kontakta Åsa Gustafsson (asa.gustafsson@ling.su.se) som inte är med i projektet.

Med vänliga hälsningar

Ingela Holmström

Fil. dr, Universitetslektor

ingela.holmstrom@ling.su.se

Krister Schönström

Fil. dr, Universitetslektor

schonstrom@ling.su.se

Nora Duggan

Doktorand

nora.duggan@ling.su.se

Appendix 4 – Consent form in plain English for the participants.

Information about *The multilingual situation of deaf refugees in Sweden* project

The name of the project is *Mulder*. The researchers of the project are from the Department of Linguistics at Stockholm's university.

The people involved in the project are Dr. Ingela Holmström (Head Researcher), Dr. Krister Schönström and Nora Duggan, PhD student.

We have received money from the Swedish Research Council for the project from 2020-2023.

The project is approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr. 2020-02865).

What is the project about?

We will investigate what the language situation looks like for migrants who are deaf and over the age of 18.

It can be more difficult for deaf people than hearing people to learn a spoken language because they cannot hear.

Many deaf people have not learnt a sign language.

It can be difficult to learn a new language as an adult.

Over the last five years, many deaf people from other countries have moved to Sweden. Among them, there are deaf people who have never learnt a language when they grew up.

When they come to Sweden, they must learn Swedish Sign Language (STS). It is important to be able to use Swedish sign language interpreters for interviews with the Migration Agency (Migrationsverket).

If they receive a residence permit, they need to continue learning Swedish sign language and even Swedish if they want to be able to be a part of the Swedish society and to work.

Many migrants attend schools that have courses for deaf migrants. There is a lack of research on how deaf adults learn new languages. We do not know much about what their language development looks like.

There is no research on how teaching works. We do not know how deaf migrants, from different countries with different languages, develop a communication in a group or class.

We want to investigate these things further so that the teachers and other people who work in government or organisations, can learn more about how to teach or explain things.

Our project has two parts: 1) *Language use in social interaction: we examine how the class communicates and works together*, 2) *Language acquisition and development of Swedish Sign Language and Swedish: we examine deaf migrants' Swedish Sign Language and Swedish*.

What will we do?

We will come to the schools several times.

In part 1, one of us will be in the classroom during normal teaching time. We will use a camera to film and write notes to document what is happening.

In part 2, the participants will write and sign different texts during classes. The participants will also do tests to see how much Swedish Sign Language they have learnt and tests where they will pair together different images.

We will also do interviews with the participants. The purpose is to collect information about their background and experience of learning and communication in Sweden.

What will we do with the material?

We will ask you about your personal details such as how old you are, where are you from, if you are deaf and what languages do you use.

The purpose is to see the similarities and differences between the participants of the research.

All the filming and written materials will be stored in a server at the Department of Linguistics. It will only be seen by us.

Everyone who is involved in the research will be anonymous. Instead, we will give each person a code so that people do not know names.

There will be a paper stating who has received which code but that paper will be saved in another place on a server at the department.

Your personal data

All personal data is managed following the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, EU 2016:679), the Data Protection Act (SFS 2018:218) and other national laws.

Stockholm University is responsible for personal data collected in the research.

You have the right to see information about you that is collected in the research. It costs nothing.

You can ask for your data to be removed if you want and for us not to use your personal data.

If you would like to know what we have collected about you, you can contact our Head Researcher, Ingela Holmström (ingela.holmstrom@ling.su.se), Department of Linguistics, Stockholm University.

If you have questions about the management of your personal data, you can contact Jeffy Mwakalinga (jeffy@ling.su.se; 08- 16 23 38) who is responsible for data protection at the Department of Linguistics.

You can also contact our Data Protection Officer at Stockholm University (dso@su.se; 08-16 41 91).

If you are not happy with how the university have managed your personal data, you have the right to make a complaint to the Datainspektion, who is responsible for looking at how public sectors manage their data.

What happens next?

We will present what we have found by writing articles for journals about research. We will also write reports and present our findings to researchers, school staff and others who work with deaf migrants.

We will not show any pictures or videos that may reveal who is involved.

Do you want to be involved?

You have received this information because you have moved to Sweden from another country within the last five years and attend a school that is involved in the project.

We are wondering if you would like to be involved in the project. It is voluntary and you can decide whenever if you do not want to take part anymore. There are no risks in being involved.

If you agree to be involved, you will need to sign the consent form. The form should then be given to one of us.

If you, during the project, need advice or information on where you can receive professional help, you can contact Åsa Gustafsson (asa.gustafsson@ling.su.se) who is not involved in the project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ingela Holmström
Associate professor

ingela.holmstrom@ling.su.se

Dr. Krister Schönström
Associate professor

schonstrom@ling.su.se

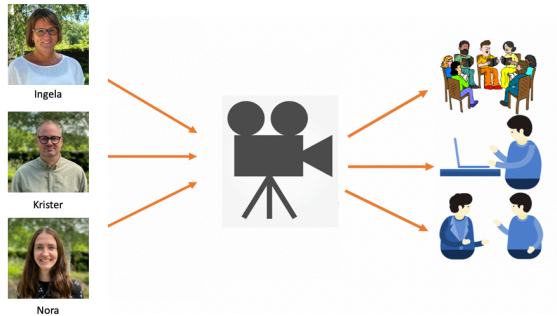
Nora Duggan
PhD student

nora.duggan@ling.su.se

Appendix 5 – Consent form in plain Swedish with pictures attached.

Information om Mulder projekt

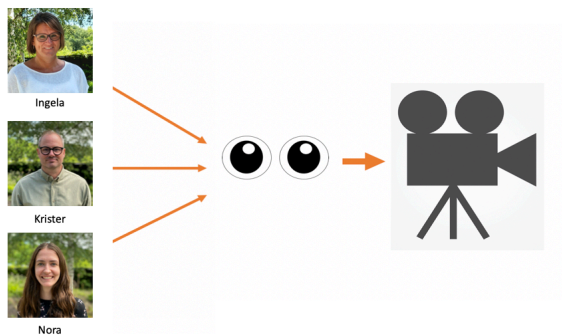
1. Jag förstår att intervjuarna, klassrumsobservation och tester kommer att filmas



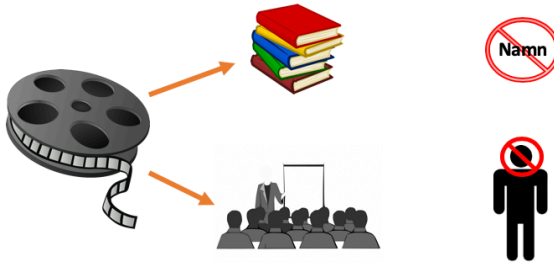
2. Jag kan säga till forskaren att stoppa när som helst om jag inte vill bli filmad



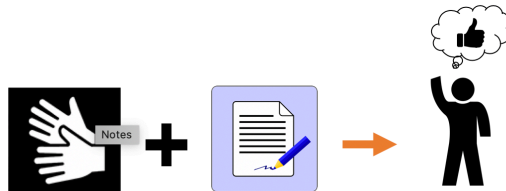
3. Videomaterial kommer bara att ses av Ingela, Krister och Nora



4. Videomaterial kan användas för forskning men min identitet kommer inte att visas för allmänheten



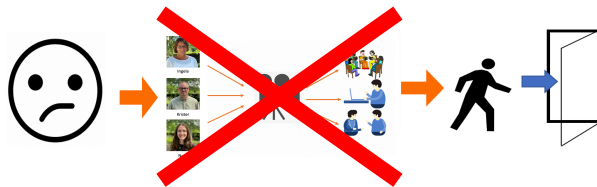
5. Jag har fått information skriftligt och på teckenspråk om forskningen



6. Jag accepterar att vara med i forskningen och att filmas



7. Jag får bestämma om jag inte vill vara med längre i forskningsprojektet



Appendix 6 – Semi-structured interview questions for the participants

Bakgrundsfrågor till informanter i projekt Mulder

Personlig bakgrund

1. Varifrån kommer du?
2. Hur gammal är du?
3. När kom du till Sverige?
4. Har du bott i nåt annat land på väg till Sverige? Vilket i såfall?
5. Var/hur bor du just nu?
6. Hur ser din familj ut (föräldrar, partner, barn, syskon)?

Hörselbakgrund

7. Hur gammal var du när din hörselnedsättning upptäcktes?
8. Använder du hörselhjälpmedel? Vilket?
9. Om du har hörhjälpmedel - hur gammal var du när du fick det?
 - a. Är du opererad med CI? I Sverige? I hemlandet?
10. Har du någon annan funktionsnedsättning mer än hörselnedsättningen?
11. Finns det andra i din släkt som är döva eller hörselskadade?
 - a. Döva/hörande föräldrar
 - b. Syskon
 - c. Övrig släkt (vilka)

Språkbakgrund

12. Vilket är det språk du fick lära dig först? Hur gammal var du då?
13. Vilket/vilka språk använder ni i din familj?
14. Har du fått lära dig något teckenspråk?
15. Vem använder du detta teckenspråk med?
16. Vilket språk uppfattar du att du behärskar bäst?
17. Hur är din språkbehärskning i de språk du kan?

Utbildningsbakgrund

18. Har du gått i skolan?
 - a. Hur många år?
 - b. Vilka slags skolor?
 - c. Vilka språk användes i skolan?
 - d. Fick du använda teckenspråk i skolan?
19. Vad har du för utbildning?
 - a. Yrkesutbildning? (vidareutbildning?)
 - b. Högskola/universitet?

Arbetslivserfarenhet

20. Vad hade du för sysselsättning i ditt hemland?
21. Vad är din nuvarande sysselsättning?

Appendix 7 – Semi-structured interview questions for the teachers

Intervju med skolpersonal

1. Berätta lite om dig själv och din bakgrund
2. Vad arbetar du som/med på skolan?
3. Vilka språkkunskaper har du? Hur väl behärskar du de olika språken?
4. Hur arbetar ni med nyanlända elever/deltagare på din skola?
5. Berätta lite om de nyanlända eleverna/deltagarna. Har något förändrats de senaste åren?
6. Hur fungerar kommunikationen (språkligt) i skolan för eleverna/deltagarna (med kamrater, lärare, annan personal etc.)?
7. Vilket/vilka språk använder du i undervisningen av nyanlända elever/deltagare?
8. Hur fungerar nyanlända elevers/deltagares inläring av svenskt teckenspråk? Hur mycket använder de språket?
9. Hur fungerar nyanlända elevers/deltagares inläring av svenska? Hur mycket använder de språket?
10. Hur upplever du de nyanlända elevernas/deltagarnas kunskapsnivå? Finns det skillnader, och vad tror du de kan bero på?
11. Hur ser dina kontakter ut med andra aktörer utanför skolan avseende gruppen döva nyanlända? Har din skola organiserade samarbeten med andra aktörer?
12. De nyanlända elevernas/deltagarnas framtid – vad tänker du om den (t.ex. möjligheterna till arbete, familjeliv och fritid)? Påverkas detta av hur väl de lär sig svenskt teckenspråk och svenska?
13. Kan du sammanfatta lite av dina tankar och säga något övergripande om undervisningen och språkanvändningen för döva nyanlända?
14. Något annat du skulle vilja ta upp/berätta?