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2022
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Influence of Race and Formality on Black SASL (South African Sign Language)

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South African Sign Language: MA Dissertation

2022

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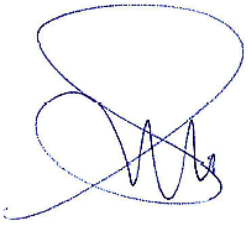
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Declaration and Disclaimer

I hereby declare that the work that is presented in dissertation is my own work.. I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.

I do confirm, however, that l received assistance in *writing* this MA Dissertation in terms of English. I am a Deaf person, and my first language is South African Sign Language, which is a visual and spatial language and is very different from English.

I wrote my draft in English, but it required a substantial amount of editing. So, I signed parts of my dissertation and had it translated into academic English. Therefore, while the ideas in this dissertation belong to me, I disclaim that the English used in this work is mine.



Simphiwe Mkhize

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I would like to thank God, for getting me through every day, for giving me the strength to continue my work when there was a time that I thought I could not do it, for believing in my passion and pursuing my dreams. I could never have done this without the faith I have in you, the Almighty.

To my supervisor, Dr Michiko Kaneko, and my mentor, Naomi Janse van Vuuren, thank you for allowing me to 'steal' space in your offices so I could continue finishing my work. Thank you for Wits University, for offering me the opportunity to access higher education. But most importantly, my deep thanks to Michiko Kaneko as my supervisor. You have tested me beyond my boundaries. Your selfless acts of character, motivation and valuable suggestions have brought my ideas to life. Your constant support and constructive criticism added a different flavour to this dissertation, for which I am truly appreciative and forever grateful. Naomi always thinks that I am more than the girl I tend to believe I am - thank you for trusting me that I can do better and more.

I would like to thank my family and friends who have contributed to the success of this work. I have not seen you much recently, but your unwavering support, encouragement and understanding has not gone unnoticed.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who supported me, and a special acknowledgement to the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) for providing funds in order for me to complete my studies. It allows me to carry the torch and to be the light for my community.

At last, I would like to express my deep thanks once again to my supervisor Michiko Kaneko and Naomi Janse Van Vuuren for your great patience, reassurance and always accommodating me in your free time, again and again. They are extremely hard people to please, for obvious reasons, yet they are very helpful people.

With Sincere Thanks,
Simphiwe

Abstract

This dissertation explores sociolinguistic variations in South Africa Sign Language (SASL) with a special focus on how a Black Deaf person in South Africa would change his signing depending on whom he is talking to, as well as the level of formality. Previous studies suggest that the racial background of the addressees as well as different registers would affect the language use of signers. However, little research has been done on the language variety based on race, especially Black South Africa Sign Language (Black SASL).

One Black Deaf male signer was chosen as a main participant to this study He was asked to give a formal presentation to an audience of mixed race. Then he was asked to have a one-on-one conversation with a Black participant, and a one-on-one conversation with a White participant. The topic for these three registers was the same (voting in South Africa). The participants in this study have never met before. Five linguistic features (mouth patterns, eye gaze, choice of handedness, size of signing space, and speed of signing) and four discourse features (turn-taking, repetitions, cohesion and conversation repairs) were used for the analysis. It was found that the Black signers did indeed change his way of signing depending on the race of the addressee as well as different contexts.

Various theories on register variation in sign language, as well as Hall (1975)'s notions of high and low-context cultures were used to explain such adaptation by the Black signer.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Research Problem

The aim of this study is to investigate the language variation of Black[1] Deaf[2] people and understand if and how they adjust their signing when talking to people with different racial backgrounds in South Africa. Language variation can be observed at phonological, syntactic and lexical levels, and can be caused by different factors such as geography, social class and education, gender, ethnicity and age.

We have the history of apartheid that divided people in South Africa including the Deaf community. Black and White Deaf children went to segregated schools until 1990. Now all schools are multi-racial but racial differences remain strongly in the South African Deaf community.

This research project originates from what I observed as a Black Deaf person. One day I noticed my Black Deaf friend communicated differently with two different people. With his Black friend, he was comfortable to talk in his 'usual' signing style. In contrast, with his White colleague, he signed very differently – for example, he used mouthing more frequently to complement manual signs to accommodate his White colleague. The question here is what triggered him to adapt his language use.

I intend to investigate how and why the racial differences between the signers influence their conversation styles and language use in South African Sign Language (SASL). There are many features that characterise variations due to the race of one's interlocutor. I would also like to take into account the factor of level of formality. Black Deaf people often experience a different (often less intimate) relationship with people from different races. There is no specific literature that deals directly with this issue, but this study aims to offer empirical evidence on what influences language use in conversations in SASL.

[1] I will use capitalised Black and White to indicate races to represent their own cultural and historical identities as "the lowercase black is a colour, not a person" (Wong, 2020).

[2] I will also use capital 'D' for Deaf people who form a linguistic cultural minority group, following the convention that started with Woodward (1976).

1.2. Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify how SASL exhibits situational variation influenced by the race of the interlocutor as well as by different levels of formality. It is important to note that SASL does have language variation, just like spoken languages. This research will especially focus on how a Black signer adjusts his/her conversational style depending on the racial background of his/her interlocutor and it explores what linguistic features characterise each conversational style.

According to Woodward (1976), the way you speak, or sign is not dictated by your skin colour but by "the attitudes and educational policy, [and as a result] Black signers have developed different varieties of signing from Whites" (Woodward, (1976: 211). Language varieties are formed by social factors related to race, socioeconomic status, age, gender, or religion and there are several examples of such varieties in South Africa.

I propose to find out about racial adaptation in SASL since we do not have this kind of research readily available in South Africa. Croneberg, (1965: 315), cited in Woodward, (1976:212) states in relation to American Sign Language (ASL) that, "a study of ASL dialects of the Black Deaf will constitute an important part of a full-scale sign language dialect study" and given this, it is important to learn about racial variation in our language, SASL.

In order to study language variation, one needs to collect empirical data to show how variation in SASL take place. My main focus is to find a participant who identifies as a Black Deaf person living in South Africa as well as White participants for comparative purposes. All participants must be fluent in SASL and active members of the Deaf community to ensure they share the same general cultural background.

1.3. Research Questions

- Does a Black signer adjust his/her signing depending on the race of his/her addressee (interlocutor)? In other words, are there any differences in conversations between signers of the same race as opposed to those between signers of different races (Black and White)?

- If yes, what are the unique features of Black-Black signing compared to Black-White signing?
- Does the level of formality influence such adjustment in signing?

1.4. Research Rationale

Hill (2012) states that “all languages in the world have variation” and it applies to sign languages too. A variety of language refers to any different use of a language which is based on social, situational, historical, regional and contextual factors. It is important to realise that not everyone signs in the same way because Deaf people come from different backgrounds. If there are different communities with a sizable number of signers, you will see the variation. There is even variation within one race in SASL.

However, very little research has been conducted on variation in SASL even though we have majority of Deaf community in South Africa that use SASL. There is an urgent need to develop research on variation within SASL and this research will be the first of its kind. In South Africa, the Department of Education has started the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for SASL which ensures that the Department follows the provisions of the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996) which recognises SASL as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT). The CAPS for SASL therefore heralded a new era in the educational experiences of Deaf learners in the system and plays a critical part in improving the quality of education for Deaf people in South Africa.

Since CAPS for SASL was first introduced, there have always been debates on the standardisation of SASL – i.e., there must be one sign for one concept which is appropriate to use in school textbooks and other teaching materials. There was not much understanding of language variation. Unfortunately, there are few experts who understand the sociolinguistic nature of SASL and who have the knowledge of language variation to confirm that SASL has variation in the language. This research serves as a good ground to explain that SASL has a variety of signs, and one cannot just agree on one sign for one concept, and even the same person may sign differently depending on the context and on the social experience.

To position myself in this research, I am a Black Deaf SASL user myself. I have also previously conducted an Honours research project on situational variation in SASL Mkhize (2016). I believe I have enough knowledge and experience to conduct this research project at Masters level.

1.5. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 (this chapter) has served as an introduction to my research, stating the research problem, purpose and research questions. Chapter 2 will provide a literature review on which my research builds. Chapter 3 will explain about the methodology utilised in this research project. Chapter 4 will present findings and discussion based on what I found. Chapter 5 is a conclusion in which I summarise my main findings

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the previous studies on sociolinguistic variation focusing especially how race and the level of formality influences one's signing.

My research falls under the field of sociolinguistics, which is the study of language in use in society. It allows me to study South African Sign Language (SASL) in its sociocultural context. Sociolinguistics of sign language has matured as an independent field of inquiry over the past few decades, and many studies have been conducted on issues such as language variation, multilingualism, language contact, language attitudes, and so on (Bayley et al., 2015, McCaskill, et al. 2011).

My focus is sociolinguistic variation. According to the linguist Rickford (1999: 320), cited in Hill, (2017), "All languages, if they have enough speakers, have dialects - regional or social varieties that develop when people are separated by geographic or social barriers".

Variation explains how speakers/signers change or adapt their language use depending on social, cultural, and other factors, such as social class, race, age, identity, gender, region, and so on. Adaptation is also caused by situational factors, including whom the person is speaking to. For example, a Black Deaf person can adapt his or her signing when talking to people from different races and/or in different situations.

As explained in the previous chapter, this research will observe how a Black Deaf person uses SASL in different contexts and with different interlocutors, focusing on race as a central factor (but also focusing on the level of formality), and consider these contexts to help us have a better understanding of the meaningfulness of variation and adaptation within SASL discourse.

Although this research is primarily data-driven, I will make use of several theories which will inform me about how and why variation takes place in SASL and which will be integrated in this dissertation. The theories I will implement for my research are as follows.

i. Social, historical and linguistic background of Black signs

ii. Conversation analysis
iii. Register variation
iv. Linguistic features
v. Discourse features
vi. Hall's (1976) knowledge of cultural factors

2.2. Social, historical and linguistic background of Black signs

Before I explore how a Black Deaf person would *adjust* his/her signing, it is important to understand and establish how they would sign *naturally* which is known as 'Black signs' – particular linguistic and stylistic features that characterise signing by Black people.

Researchers need to explore what causes language variation. The study of language is not simply about the structure of language itself, but it is more about how it is increasingly used as a way to identify with a particular cultural/linguistic group. Woodward (1976) emphasizes that Black signers developed a variety that differed from that of White people as a result of linguistic attitudes and educational policies. The use of a Black discourse style is socially and culturally meaningful, and within this framework Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006) cited in Hill (2017) explains that the physical and social factors at play are important when it comes to observing how language variations emerge. Language variation between White and Black communities can be seen in conversation, whether the person is Deaf or not, although a Black Deaf person may experience social segregation and oppression on a more intense level than a Black hearing person in the hearing community.

Identities often cause variation in language because people express their collective identity which reflects their attitudes, beliefs, feelings, behaviours, and their attitude toward language and dialect. Collective identity refers to people's sense of who they are, or in other words, their sense of ''feeling'' or ''belonging'' (Ogbu, 2004). The linguistic choice of a Black Deaf person may be a conscious choice based on his/her collective identity.

2.2.1. Black ASL

In America, ASL has been known to have a distinct variation used by Black American people, known as Black ASL. Smith, et al. (2022: 255) state that “the Black Deaf community embraces Black ASL as symbol of solidary and agency, make it a vital part of their ethnolinguistic identity.”

One of the earliest studies into Black ASL was conducted by James Woodward in the 1970s. He found that Black signers from the South exhibited lexical and phonological variation. For example, Black signers preferred a variant that is produced on the body or hand, whereas White signers would use a face variant Woodward (1976).

Aramburo (1992) cited in Lucas (1995) compared the language use of two African American Deaf male signers when they are communicating to each other and when they are talking to White signers. They use less exaggerated facial expressions, fewer body movements, and a smaller signing space when conversing with the white deaf participant than when conversing with each other (Aramburo, 1992, cited in Corbett, 2002). This, in turn, suggests that Black signs consist of exaggerated facial expressions, more body movements, and a larger signing space.

Lewis et al. (1995) & Lewis (1998) cited in McCaskill,et al. (2011) analysed the signing of African American Deaf signers in different registers. They confirmed Aramburo’s findings of the features of Black ASL but also noted that not only the racial identity of the conversation partner but also the topic of conversation can affect their linguistic choice.

Later research (Lucas, Bayley, and Valli, 2001, Metzger and Mather, 2004, in cited Schembri and Johnston, 2012) identifies that Black signs have their unique features, including using a lot of repetition, less mouthing (compared to White signers), a larger signing space, more constructed action, as well as lexical differences between Black and White ASL.

In 2011, McCaskill, et al published a book that is dedicated to Black signs, titled *The Hidden Treasure of Black ASL*. Their study involved 96 Black Deaf signers in southern America, divided into two age groups (55 and older, and 35 and younger). They identified eight features of Black ASL:

1. Variation in handedness: Black Deaf signers use more two-handed variants
2. Forehead or lowered locations: Black Deaf signers use more non-lowered variants
3. Size of signing space: Black Deaf signers use a larger signing space
4. Borrowing from AAE (African American English): Black Deaf signers incorporate lexical items from AAE
5. Repetition: Deaf Black signers use more repetition
6. Role-shifting: Deaf Black signers seem to use more role-shifting
7. Mouthing: Deaf Black signers use less mouthing.
8. Lexical differences: Black Deaf signers exhibit lexical variation from the White variation

So, the differences between Black and White signing are clear, but McCaskill et al. claim that these features of Black signs are changing, as younger Black people exhibit less of them.

Hill (2009) cited in Schembri and Johnston (2012) emphasises the link between the Black Deaf community and the Black hearing community. It indicates that Black Deaf people have been exposed to Black hearing people's practices in their communities, and thus it is logical to assume that there are elements of Black culture that appear in Black ASL such as lifestyles of the Black community and the use of words and phrases that typically are used in the Black communities. This means that a Black Deaf person, in signing to a White signer, uses the signs differently from the way they would have signed to a Black signer.

In 2018, a 30-minute documentary titled "Signing Black in America" was broadcast, celebrating the history and use of Black ASL. It received positive reviews and helped raise awareness and interest towards learning more about Black ASL (Smith, et al., 2022).

While it is not the focus of my study, Black signing has inevitably been judged against White signing and received racism in many forms. Smith, et al., (2022: 256) state that "this is myth that white ASL is better and black ASL is not so good". Ford (2021) cited in Smith, et al (2022) reports that Black ASL interpreters tend to be seen as 'less good' than White interpreters. In the academic field, research into Black

signing has been marginalised until recently (Hill, 2012, cited in Kusters and Lucas, 2022). Such negative attitudes towards Black signs may have influenced the way Black Deaf people adapt to more mainstream signing.

2.2.2. Black SASL

In South Africa, research into Black SASL is non-existing, except for a few references in interpreting research (Parkins-Maliko, 2015). South Africa has a rich mix of cultures and languages. We have eleven official languages. South Africa Sign Language is not one of them, but there has been a movement to have it recognised as a twelfth official language.

South Africa also has the unique history of Deaf education, combined with race, which stems from the era of apartheid. According to Aarons and Akach (2002: 342) a “Deaf school can be considered as the cradle of the deaf community in South Africa.” Aarons & Reynolds (2003) explain that Deaf communities evolved largely out of school contacts, and because the schools were racially divided in South Africa, Deaf communities tended to be racially divided too. When two Deaf people meet for the first time in a South African context, they tend to ask each other which school they attended as a form of identifying their background. The socio-historical impact of the physical and social segregation and oppression through the establishment of separate schools or departments for Black Deaf children during Apartheid is visible through language variation today in certain signs which have developed over time. In other words, segregation of Deaf schools gave rise to language variation in SASL as each school often uses different signs.

While there is no official research, anecdotal evidence suggests that there is distinct variation of SASL used by Black Deaf people in South Africa, which - similar to ASL - is “a Black way of signing used by Black Deaf people in their own cultural milieu” (McCaskill, et al., 2011: 2).
One example is the recent movement initiated by the Pan South Africa Language Board (PANSALB) to revise and update the SASL translation of the South African Anthem because the Deaf community felt that the existing translation was ‘too White’ and English-influenced (PANSALB, 2022). The Black Deaf community in South

Africa felt that their Black signs should be included as part of the South African Anthem. While the South African Anthem has used five official languages of South Africa (isiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans and English), the old translation only reflected White Deaf signs which are closely linked to English (such as using English mouthings). This whole movement indicates that there are racial variations within SASL – and that White and Black signs are different from each other.

2.3. Conversation Analysis

Having understood some basic features of Black signs, I would like to focus more on how they can change when signers have conversations with different people. Conklin (1912) cited in Sundari (2014) explains that “conversation is a form of interactive, spontaneous communication between two or more people”. Conversational Analysis (often abbreviated as CA) is a way to investigate the nature and structure of human interaction with a focus on verbal interactions. It is “designed to reveal the complexity and fluidity of spoken interaction” (Seedhouse, 2022: 1). Having its origin in spoken conversations, CA tends to focus on ‘voices’ but the importance of the use of ‘body’ and ‘gestures’ in conversation (which is more relevant to sign language conversation) has also been pointed out (McCleary and de Arantes Leite, 2013).

According to Malinowski (1923) cited in Ben-Amos (1993) there are two important types of conversation based on their contrasting functions: functional conversation and small talk. Functional conversation is designed to convey information in order to help achieve successful communication among individuals or a group. For example, a lecturer gives a talk to the students to help them understand a certain concept or a priest preaches to the congregation to help understand the Bible.

Small talk is “a casual form of conversation that ‘breaks the ice’ or fills an awkward silence between people” (Wahab, et al., 2021: 55). In other words, the topic is less important than the social purpose of establishing and maintaining the social bonds with people or managing personal relationships such as seen between a couple who are casually chatting to each other. Small talk serves many functions in helping to

develop the relationships between friends, colleagues, and new acquaintances. It helps new acquaintances to explore and categorize each other's social position.

2.4. Register Variation

It has been reported widely that language use changes depending on the level of formality and the parties involved in conversation. This concept is known as *register*. Register is “a linguistic outcome of a particular social situation; in different social situations people alter the way they use language” (Stone, 2011: 121).

The appropriateness of language depends on situation. For example, in South African English, you may not say “sharp sharp” as a greeting in formal situation (such as greeting to your boss). On the other hand, it would be very strange to greet your close friends very formally (“Good morning, Miss XXX”).

2.4.1. High and Low Varieties

Simanjuntak, et al. (2019) explain the notion of *diglossia*. Diglossia refers to the speakers’ use of one language in different situations with different people. In a diaglossic situation there are two varieties of a language, which are the low variety and the high variety. The low variety occurs when you are using the language in everyday situations, when socializing with friends or family. The high variety occurs when you use the same language in a more formal setting, such as giving a presentation or a lecture. The language used in such situation would be very different from the way it is used when talking to a friend or a family member.

SASL high and low varieties. For example, the sign for TSOTSI may be used as one-handed or two-handed sign. Most Deaf South Africa community know TSOTSI as a two-handed sign with the non-dominant hand in 5 handshape and the dominant hand in O handshape moves together. One-handed sign for TSOTSI uses closed handshape on the nose and the body moves stealthily as if you were committing a crime. This is a low variety of the sign TSOTSI as it is only used in an informal setting with a limited number of signers who know this sign. The two-handed variant is more widely accepted and would be used in a formal presentation or lecture.

2.4.2. Halliday's Field, Mode and Tenor

Halliday (1968, 1978) cited in Zimmer (1989) proposed basic factors that influence the characteristics of register/style. There are three key factors: *field*, *mode* and *tenor*. They play a very important part in creating a particular style of conversation.

Field refers to the subject matter or content being discussed to the nature of the social action. It includes different processes and activities of each interaction, and different contexts/occasions in which it takes place. For example, a lecturer standing in front of many students in a lecture hall creates a very different field from when a lecturer teaches in a smaller venue, walks around the room, and interacts with students.

Mode refers to the channel of the communication: For example, a spoken conversation or written communication, or different genres such as formal speech, lecture, interview, or debate.

Tenor refers to the participants in a discourse, their relationship to each other and their statuses and roles.

The tenor is the main focus of my research because it is about explaining how the participants form their relationship and how it influences the use of language in the conversation.

2.4.3. Joos' Five Clocks

Next, I will explain Joos' seminal work (1961) on the description of register variation which is based on the relative level of formality or informally in a particular situation. According to Joos (1961), register, or style, is a label for the way we vary our speech or sign when we communicate with people in different settings; and this depends on the closeness or distance we feel to our addressee because of power relations, goal of conversation, or distinct levels of acquaintance. Joos categorise registers into five different speech styles, which he called 'five clocks'.

The breakdown of Joos' five speech styles is as follows:

The first register is called 'intimate' and it is described as the level in which people know each other very well and interact on a regular basis. For example, two people

who have been connected for a long time and have a deeper understanding of each other such as a brother and sister or husband and wife communicate in a unique way.
The second register is called ‘casual’. It shares the style of intimate conversation but with less reliance on shared knowledge and more need of clear use of language like two friends who may not be as close as a couple but know each other well.

The third register is called ‘consultative’ and it describes a style a person uses in everyday conversation with someone they may or may not know well (such as colleagues).

The fourth register is called ‘formal’ that describes a situation in which the speaker conveys clear and unambiguous information to the addressee(s) whom they do not know. For example, a conversation between a lawyer and their clients, or giving a formal talk to a large audience.

The fifth and last register of speech is called ‘frozen,’ and it describes a very formal situation in which the use of language is fixed and authorised. This authority may stem from a Governmental Structure, like in a Court of Law, or in religious tradition, such as when a priest marries a couple, saying "I now pronounce you man and wife".

Conversation between two Black signers is likely to be ‘casual’ since they both are identified as coming from the same racial background, and the conversation between a Black signer and a White signer can be more of a ‘consultative’ register as they do not share the same background. Joos’ classification will allow me to explain differences (if any) between Black-to-Black and Black-to-White signing in terms of the level of formality.

2.4.4. Zimmer’s analysis of register

The other framework I would employ is another classic study done by Zimmer (1989). According to her, notable characteristics of formal register are:

- A smaller signing spaces
- More English influence
- Two-handed signs remain so (not reduced to one-handed signs)

- Little phonological assimilation occurred
- Less nonmanual features used
- More indexing used
- More conjunctions used
- More rhetorical questions used

Building on Halliday, Joos, and Zimmer, studies on register variation in sign language have been conducted in different sign languages and across different features. For example, Stone (2011) takes an in-depth look at register variation in BSL, Crasborn, et al., (2008) looked at the use of mouth actions in different registers; Quinto-Pozos and Metha (2010) cited in Quinto-Pozos and Parrill, (2015) focused on the use of constructed action across registers.

2.4.5. Mkhize (2016) on SASL situational variation

In SASL, few studies have been conducted on register variation. My previous study (Mkhize, 2016) is, to the best of my knowledge, the only study on register variation in SASL. I investigated the difference between an intimate register (conversation between siblings) and a more formal register (conversation between strangers). One Black Deaf male signer was asked to have a conversation with his sister, and then with another Deaf person he did not know. I observed several interesting features that distinguished informal and formal registers in SASL, which are summarized in the table below.

	Conversation with a sibling	Conversation with a stranger
Register	Informal (intimate in Joos' clocks)	Formal (consultative in Joos' clocks)
Reliance on the context	High (no full details given)	Low (details explained)
Speed of signing	Faster	Slower
Size of signing	Smaller	Bigger

Turn-taking	Fewer turns (= one person holds the floor longer) Indicated by subtle eye contact and body posture	More turns Indicated by eye contact, clear pause, wait until hands down
Attempt at clarification	Very few – only when the addressee gave nonverbal cues (e.g., frown)	Verbal clarification – asking questions to see if the addressee understood
Discourse structure	Jump from one topic to another	Topics clearly sequenced without overlap
Grammar	More influence from English Grammar may be 'incorrect'	Full SASL structure Attempt to sign 'correctly'
Number of hands	Tend to drop one hand (e.g., SOCCER)	Both hands tend to be used even when not necessary (e.g., PLACE)
Errors and repairs	More errors, more self-corrections	Fewer errors and fewer repairs
Lexical features	Use colloquial forms (YOU-KNOW with index finger)	Use citation forms (YOU-KNOW with B-handshape)
Code-mixing with English	Frequent (e.g., SHOOT-A-GOAL, UNDER 18)	Very few Only fingerspelling for names
Repetition	Fewer	More

Table 2.1. Register Variation in SASL Mkhize, (2016)

The findings from Mkhize (2016) mostly conform to what have been identified by Zimmer (1989) with a few differences. One difference is that in Mkhize (2016), it was found that a more informal register uses a smaller signing space. Another interesting difference was that intimate register did exhibit more influence from English (more code-mixing and more mouthing, less strict SASL structure). It was as if the main signer felt relaxed with his sister and did not feel the need to use 'proper' SASL structure, whereas with a stranger he made sure his SASL was seen as more 'proper'.

I will look at some of these features in more detail in the following two sections.

2.5. Linguistic Features

In my research which focuses on race, I will build on some of the studies mentioned above regarding the different varieties of signing based on the social differences. I will also look into the idea that Black Deaf people tend to adapt a White variation when talking to a White person. In order to identify variation, we need to analyse *linguistic* features of each variety.

Features of SASL which I will be looking at and describing are: mouth patterns, gaze patterns, one or two-handed signs, the speed and size of signing, and semantic variations such as buoy, phonological, morphological, and syntactic variations.

2.5.1. Mouth Patterns

Mouth patterns in sign language refer to the signer's use of their mouth that co-occur with their manual signs. Mouth patterns perform various functions, and both manual signs and mouth patterns are considered part of sign language.

There are different types of mouth patterns. The two main categories of mouth patterns are mouthing and mouth gestures. Mouthing in sign language refers to "the production of visual syllables with the mouth while signing" (Boyes-Braem & Sutton-Spence, 2001, cited in Sutton-Spence, 2007). For instance, most of the signers include a mouthing of an English word 'hello' with the sign HELLO or an isiZulu word 'ngijabulile' with HAPPY.

Mouth gestures, on the other hand, are those that derived from sign language and, as the name suggests, are more gestural. Crasborn, et al. (2008) categorised mouth gestures into four types: adverbial, echo, enacting and as part of the whole face activity. Mouth gestures are used as adverbs in a morphological complex sign such as VERY-GOOD (the mouth intensifies the notion of 'good' through pursed lips). Echo mouth gestures refer to a mouth pattern that follows the movement of the mouth. An example is when a signer shows how a car is moving smoothly and he or she uses their mouth to release the air from the mouth smoothly. Enacting, for example, is the verb EAT which can be accompanied by a mouth gesture of chewing

the food. Lastly, a mouth pattern as part of the whole face activity is when the mouth is part of the larger facial expression such as smiling or showing anger.

In this research, due to the limited time, I will only focus on the two main types of mouth patterns: mouthing and mouth gestures and will not explore the sub-categories within mouth gestures.

It is important to use one's mouth to support the manual signs in an appropriate manner. Otherwise, it would not make sense. For example, in the following SASL sentence CAR-MOVE-SLOWLY with the B-handshape facing down moving forward, with a mouth gesture of blowing out the air and a face expression show that you are driving slowly. You cannot use mouthings for this sentence as it does not consist of separate lexical signs, i.e., CAR, MOVE, SLOW but of one depicting sign that visually shows how the car is moving.

Having said that, mouth patterns can be used differently depending on registers. Fontana (2008:109) states that "mouth gestures can be replaced by mouthings either according to who the addressee is, the subject and the aim of the conversation or, more generally, the nature of the communicative event or following the function of the sign".

For instance, Zimmer (1989) reported that in formal ASL signers would use more mouthings to show their knowledge of English. Use of mouth gestures happens more when they are engaged in an informal interaction. However, Zimmer's research may be outdated as the same prestige may no longer be attached to English. As mentioned earlier, in my research Mkhize (2016), it was found that signers in an informal setting used more mouthings as they were free from the pressure of adhering to 'proper' SASL structure.

Woodward (1976) noted that a Black participant used mouthing with a White signer more than with a Black conversation partner. McCaskil, et al. (2011) explained a Black teacher's experience of interacting with White students and state that "she imitated the way White students mouthed words at the same time as they made manual signs for them." Building on these studies, I would like to investigate if a Black Deaf signer of SASL would adjust his use of mouthing in different contexts.

2.5.2. Gaze patterns

Gaze pattern refers to the direction of signer's gaze, such as looking at the interlocuter when they are signing in the interaction, or looking at their hands, or looking at somewhere else. Huang, et al., (2015: 1) explain that "eye gaze is particularly important in understanding a person's attention and intention". They are many ways of using the gaze for communication as well as attention-getting. I am focusing on three different types of eye gaze patterns identified by Kaneko and Mesch (2013): gaze to the interlocutor, gaze on hands, and character's gaze. Gaze to interlocuter refers to the signer's gaze directed towards his or her conversation partner while signing. For instance, the teacher is looking at the children directly while teaching in the class or the pastor is looking at the audience to get their attention to preach. In sign language, eye contact in conversation is important to maintain the communication. Bayley, et al. (2017: 27) state that "maintaining eye contact has an important discourse function in ASL conversation and breaking eye contact is considered impolite".

However, signers do not always focus their gaze on the interlocutor. It is because sign language is a visual language and signers often switch their gaze to different parts of the signing space. Another example of eye gaze is toward one's hands. Gaze on hands often highlights the location or movement of the sign (Kaneko and Mesch called it a 'spotlight gaze'). It refers to the "gaze that gives, conveys and clarifies information" (McIntyre, 2016:13). For this reason, gaze on hands is often used with verbs (rather than nouns), in which the movement of the hands often implies actual movement of the referent. For example, in signing AEROPLANE-FLIES the signer's gaze often follows the movement of the sign to highlight the trajectory of the plane. Another example is when you describe the tallest building in the world in sign language, your gaze would follow the hands that indicate how tall the building is.

The last type of gaze is character's gaze. It means that signers use their eyes to enact different characters in role-shifting. For example, it happens when the signer personifies a tree and uses the eyes as a tree to look down on people. Another

example is to represent a child looking up to his or her parents; or when you pretend to drive the car as the driver.

Gaze behaviours can vary depending on signers or registers Emmorey, et al., (2009). My focus is whether the Black signer would use his gaze differently in different registers. Bayley, et al. (2017: 27) note that “Black Deaf people do not maintain eye contact during a conversation”, even though the gaze is important in giving and receiving information from others.

2.5.3. One or two-handed signs

This refers to the use of one or two hands when conversing in sign language. In terms of the citation form (the form cited in the dictionary), some signs are produced with one hand, for example DRINK, WHY, SISTER, and others are two-handed, for example COFFEE, BROTHER, UNIVERSITY. However, many signs can be produced either way (in other words, signers can drop one hand from a two-handed sign or add a hand to one-handed sign, and still can refer to the same concept). For example, in SASL sign LET- GO can either be produced as a two-handed sign or one may drop the non-dominant hand to make it a one-handed sign. Another example is HELLO which is usually a one-handed sign but can be produced with both hands. When both variants are possible, signers in the context of actual language use have a choice to use one or two-handed signs. This is possible since the use of one or two hands would usually not change the meaning of the sign Bayley, et al., (2017). For instance, a sign for IRON in SASL (an appliance for ironing clothes), can be signed as a two-handed sign, or you may drop to the one hand. However, the two-handed variant of IRON is considered to be more traditional and standard, which is also a citation form. But the choice of handedness may be different depending on social and situational factors.

Zimmer (1989) explained that a signer may add or drop a hand depending on the relationship of the signer and the addressee or on a different situation. For example, in the formal situation a person may use both hands because he/she wants his/her signs to be seen clearly and easily by the audience. For example, when an SASL teacher teaches hearing people, he or she may use both hands to be clear and easy for students to pick what you taught them.

In formal setting, a signer may use a *buoy* to make one-handed sign into two-handed sign. Buoy refers to the "signs produced with the weak hand that are held in a stationary configuration as the strong hand continues producing signs […] they help guide the discourse by serving as conceptual landmarks as the discourse continues" (Liddell, 2003: 239). For example, the non-dominant hand may preserve the previous sign while the dominant hand continues to sign new (one-handed) signs. This allows both hands to be visible in the space (even though the non-dominant hand is stationary) to keep the signing symmetric. Or the non-dominant hand can be used as a base for 'listing' (which will be explained below) and the signer points at each finger to organise discourse (equivalent of saying 'firstly, secondly, thirdly…' in English). This will help the viewer recognise and have a clear understanding of who or what the signer is referring to in a formal setting. For example, when the signer wishes to explain about six people, s/he would keep pointing at his/her non-dominant hand.

In contrast, a person in an informal situation may use only one hand (i.e., 'drop' the other hand) because s/he does not feel the need to accurately produce two-handed signs, assuming that his/her interlocutor would be able to understand even with the use of one hand. Using both hands require more physical effort, and in informal setting, you can be 'lazy' and not to produce two-handed signs. For example, a conversation between a long-married couple, both signers tend to drop one hand unless it is absolutely necessary to use both hands, but there is no problem in understanding each other. Or if you are doing something else (eating, driving), a signer may only use one hand to communicate with friends who are with them, but once again, meaning is conveyed without a problem. This will not be the case if they are seeing a medical professional and report their health problems. They are likely to use proper signs to communicate clearly.

As explained above, Black Deaf signers are said to use more two-handed signs than White Deaf signers (McCaskill, et al., 2011). However, this changes when they interact with different people in different situations. In other words, the number of hands is an important indicator of adaptation according to race. The earliest study by Woodward (1976) presents evidence of variations in the handedness of signs, meaning that production involving one hand versus two hands changes depending

on two people interacting in the conversation, and he also presents evidence of differences in the handedness of signs when interacting with a person from a different race. Woodward and Desantis (1977) cited in Schembri and Johnston (2012) explain that Black ASL signers produced more two-handed signs when interacting with White Deaf signers than with Black Deaf signers.
I will focus on finding out if signers will adjust the number of hands when interacting with people of the same or different race in SASL discourse.

2.5.4. Speed and size of signing

The speed of signing refers to the rate of speed (how fast or slow one signs). It is difficult to determine what the 'regular' speed is, but we can observe how the same signer's signing speed changes, depending on the situation.
The size of the signing space refers to how a signer takes up space while signing and interacting with someone. The use of signing space is 'regular' when the signer uses his/her space between shoulder to shoulder, from the head to the waist.

These may be dependent on the situation (spatial awareness) and maybe considered to be equivalent of the speed of talking and loudness of a speaker. For example, in a formal situation, a speaker may speak slow and loud, and a signer may sign slow and big, due to the fact the person wants to clarify the content for the addressee. If one is lecturing in SASL, they would use a bigger space and slower pace so that you can make yourself understood by the audience. In contrast, in an informal situation the speaker may speak fast and soft, and the signer may sign fast and use a small signing space. For example, if two close friends are signing to each other, their space can be smaller, and they may sign faster (but they still understand each other).
However, these findings on the speed and size of signing are controversial. Zimmer (1989) states that the signing space can be well-contained and thus smaller in formal setting, and that the signer may sign faster in formal setting (as they know what they are going to say) compared to some informal situations where signers may hesitate, look for signs, or pause.
It may also depend on the physical environment in which signing takes place. When a person is standing on the stage with a large audience, s/he may use a much bigger

signing space to sign. If a person is sitting right next to the addressee, they may use a smaller signing space.

Lewis et al. (1995) and Lewis (1998) cited in Shambourger (2015) noted that a Black ASL signer uses a bigger signing space when having a conversation with another Black Deaf signer, which exceeds the regular signing space. When the same signer interacts with a White signer, he signs by using a small space below the chest area and signs with a slower speed. This suggests that the signers' signing space and speed of signing are the indicators of adaptation according to race. I would like to compare this finding in ASL empirically with my data in SASL.

2.5.5. Phonological variation

Having understood some features of sign language, I would like to illustrate different linguistic levels in which they occur. Just like spoken languages, sign languages can be analysed according to different linguistic levels: phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and so forth.

Firstly, phonology is the study of rule systems that dictate how the smallest building blocks of the language, sounds or components of signs, are structured. Sign language is conveyed using five parameters: namely, handshape, location, movement, palm orientation and non-manual features. Signs are made by simultaneously combining these five parameters (Stokoe, (1960) cited in Schermer and Koolhof, 2010). For example, in the SASL sign for WORK, the handshape will be a B-handshape placed on the top of other hand, palm away from the body, tapping twice (with no particular nonmanual features, potentially a mouthing).

Phonological variation takes place when the same sign is produced with a difference in one parameter (but still considered to be the same sign). One example is TALL in SASL, which can be produced either with Irish 8 handshape or with D-handshape, while other parameters remain the same. The phonological process can highlight the process of simplifying the production of complex words or signs (such as assimilation of locations).

In terms of phonological variation in relation to race in spoken language, one of the most well-known examples is AAVE (African American Vernacular English), which was formerly known as Black English Vernacular. It shows how African American people use English differently from White American English speakers. It extends to

different levels, but phonology is one of them. They would pronounce an English word differently, yet the meaning of the word or phrase remains the same.

In sign language, Woodward, et al. (1976) claimed that White signers produced more facial expressions (the parameter of nonmanual features) than Black signers did, and their signs were more away from the body (parameter of location), which may result in the use of a bigger signing space. McCaskill et al. explained that “all ASL signers use these [phonological] features, but Black signers may use them to a greater or lesser degree.” (2011, https://gupress.gallaudet.edu/excerpts/HTBASLone4.html). This is similar to racial variation in spoken languages hen speaking, African Americans have a tendency to exhibit more facial expressions and possibly more exaggerated body movements (Lewis, 1998) cited in Shambourger, 2015).

It is also said that Black signers use less mouthing than White signers (McCaskill et al. 2011). For example, in SASL, while a White signer sign I-KNOW with an index finger moving outward from the temple twice accompanied by a mouthing (“know”), a Black signer would use the same sign without a mouthing.

Mouthing in SASL can be interesting as we have different spoken languages. For example, in SASL, most of the Deaf community members use the sign LEKKER with L-handshape with the twist twisted twice (an initialised sign borrowed from a popular expression in Afrikaans, meaning ‘good’ ‘lovely’), but mouthing can differ depending on the spoken language with which the signer is most familiar with. So, a White signer may mouth ‘lek’ for ‘lekker’, but a Black signer may mouth ‘uuu’. See the following example to see how mouthings can differ:

White signer:
YESTERDAY LEKKER
“yesterday” “lek”

Black signer:
YESTERDAY LEKKER
“Izolo” “ uuuu”

In terms of interacting with signers from different races, the signer may be changing the form of signs when signing to White or Black signers which may result in

phonological errors. As Woodward and DeSantis (1977) cited in Schembri and Johnston (2012) noticed, a Black ASL signer shows more phonological errors when interacting with a White signer compared to when signing to a Black signer. For example, when a Black Deaf person meets a White Deaf person for the first time, they may produce more errors as they tried to find the way to communicate with each other. Woodward also identified that when two Black Deaf signers meet, their language adapts to bigger signs (i.e., location and movement changes, while the sign remains the same). When interacting with a White signer, a Black Deaf signer may use small signs and use mouthing more to meet their differences with the white signer. Zimmer (1989) explained that in an informal setting, a signer in general shows mouthing less than in a formal setting. So, an increased use of mouthing in Black-to-White signing indicates that the signers are approaching the interaction as more formal.

I will investigate whether a Black Deaf signer would maintain the use of the Black\Deaf sign variation or adapt to more neutral signing when signing with Black or White Deaf signers. If adaptation happens, it shows that the Black Deaf signer changes their phonological features when talking to people from different races

2.5.6. Lexical Variation

The lexicon is a mental dictionary which contains words and their meaning and grammatical information. Lexical variation can be seen in the choice of particular signs by different people or in different contexts. Sign languages are known for having a great deal of lexical variation for social, geographical or situational reasons.

It indicates that the choice of signs used may differ between Deaf individuals from the Black and White communities as Lee (1982) cited in Swisher and McKee (1989) describes that there is lexical variation between signers from two different races. Sometimes they may have no problem to understand each other and other times they may struggle to understand what the other signer says, and so they may need to fingerspell the equivalent word in English. As Schermer (2004) cited in Schermer and Koolhof, (2010) explained this may increase awareness of the variety of signs. Zimmer (1989) identified the role of formality as a potential cause of lexical variation. For example, in SASL, there is a lexical sign for FEE but not everyone knows this

sign. So, when signers meet a new Deaf person, they may use fingerspelling F-E-E instead. In contrast, if you are interacting with your close friend, you would use your sign for FEE and can be confident that the other person would understand you.

Although there is no research into Black lexical variation in SASL, anecdotal evidence suggests that Black Deaf signers have their own lexical items. For example, I have illustrated the citation form of WORK above, but there is a Black version to it, which is produced with W-handshape palm facing outward, produced in front of the chest with facial expressions. However, they tend to adjust to White lexical variation (which is often the citation form of a sign) when communicating to a White Deaf signer or to a mixed audience. I would like to explore if it happens in SASL.

2.5.7. Morphological & syntactic variation

Morphology is the study of the structure of the word and explores the meaning of words. It allows us to alter existing words (or signs) systemically and to add and create new words and signs. For example, in SASL, a basic verb such as WORK or READ can be morphologically inflected to show additional meaning, such as WORK-HARD or READ-A-DIFFICULT-BOOK. There is a variation to it – some signers may add facial expression to add the meaning of hardness or difficulty; others, who may add a separate lexical item such as HARD or DIFFICULT.
Syntax is the study of the rules of sentence structure and arrangement in a language. It describes the rules concerning how signs relate to each other to form sentences and describes well-formed sentences of that language.

As Lee (1989) cited in Swisher and McKee (1989) explained that signers may be adapting their signing depending on the different situations, which can extend variation to the levels of morphology and syntax. For example, a signer in a formal situation may use some sort of speech (mouthing) and sign at same time, especially when a hearing person is present, which may alter their syntactic construction to something closer to that of English (although, as explained above, opposite results were found by Mkhize (2016). for SASL.

I will look into the morphological and syntactic variations in a Back signer's use of SASL and how he adapts these depending on the level of formality and to whom he are talking to. According to McCaskill,et al. (2011) syntactic variation is evident in Black ASL. However, these changes depend on who they are talking to. Woodward (1976) states that Black signers code-switches — i.e., they take on more White ASL structure than that of Black ASL with White signers, showing a more structured, clear concise use of ASL sentence. However, with Black signers, they follow Black standard ASL. Guggenheim (1993) cited in Senghas (2003) reports that African American signers often feel pressure to produce a more standard variety of ASL

Aramburo (1989) cited in Shambourger (2015) noted: "Casual observation reveals that the signing of Black Deaf individuals varies as a function of the race of the other participants in a conversational setting". I will look at this in my research to show the difference in language use in SASL, depending on the race of the participants, which also leads to the notion of formality (Black-Black conversation can be considered more intimate and casual than Black-White conversation).

The table below summarises potential linguistic changes between Black-Black signing and Black-White signing, which I hope to identify.

Linguistic Features	Black-Black signing	Black-White signing
Mouth Patterns	More mouthing and facial expressions	Less mouthing but more facial expression
Gaze Patterns	Do not look at the interlocuter	Look at the interlocuter
One- or two-handed signs	One handed sign	Two-handed signs
Use of signing space	Faster and bigger	Slow and small
Speed of signing	Faster	Slow
Phonological variation	More phonological errors (Assimilation, anticipation and preservation) may occur	Fewer phonological errors Fewer instances of assimilation, anticipation and preservation
Lexical variation	Use more colloquial forms	More citation forms

Morphological & Syntactical variation	Use more morphological processes (inflection) to convey meaning More topicalization	Relies more on syntax to convey meaning Less topicalization

Table 2.2: Linguistic variation between Black-Black and Black-White signing

2.6. Discourse Features

Discourse analysis is the study of how language (written, spoken and signed) exhibits strategies depending on how people interact.

Winston and Roy (2015:95) explain:

> In discourse analysis, we study how people interact by expressing meaning using language within a context. This includes much more than just studying the words or signs that make up an utterance. It includes all the aspects of those utterances: pacing, facial expression, body shifting, gestures, and any other features that add meaning to an utterance. It is also concerned with an overall structure of an utterance, from beginning to end, as it develops in real time.

Sign language discourse also influences language variation. Winston and Roy (2015) identify the features of sign language discourse which can be used to describe different registers. The features they identify are as follows: turn taking, repetition, conversation repair and cohesion. These features will be useful as I am looking into how conversational features of Black-Black and Black-White interactions can be identified and analysed using discourse features.

2.6.1. Turn-taking

Taking turns is a type of organization in the conversation and discourse where two or more people alter turns, so that one person speaks/signs at a time. Discourse analysts who study conversations note that “speakers have systems for determining when one person's turn is over and the next person's turn begins. This exchange of turns or 'floors' is indicated by such linguistic means as intonation, pausing, and phrasing’’ Baker (1977) cited in Coates and Sutton-Spence (2001).

Research has shown that signers, like speakers, prefer to stick to a single, ‘one-at-a-time’ floor (i.e., one person talks/signs at a time) and when overlaps happen they try to resolve them (McCleary and de Arantes Leite, 2013). However, the approach to

turn-taking differs significantly depending on a particular social setting. In a formal situation, signers may prefer one-at-a-time single floor and turn-taking occurs with a clear signal (such as a pause) before starting to take the floor. In informal situation, however, turn-taking happens casually and may overlap a lot. Most of these overlaps are considered 'cooperative' which means that both parties contribute to the conversation in a constructive manner. This is also called a 'collaborative' floor (Coates & Sutton-Spence, 2001). For instance, a conversation between two close friends often overlaps as they know each other well and feel comfortable to interrupt or to be interrupted. For example, see the following conversation by two friends:

A: HEARD IX… "I heard that she…"

B: [interrupts] WHO "Who?"

A: JUDY BUSY WRITE MA THIS WEEKEND "Judy. She is busy writing up her MA dissertation this weekend"

B: MEAN CANNOT COME…. "Does that mean she can't come to…."

A: [interrupts] PARTY YOUR RIGHT "…your party. That's right."

Speakers (using spoken language) may use "lexical (turn-final expressions), syntactic (clause boundary) paralinguistic (turn-final intonation, drop in loudness, drawing out of syllables) and gestural (termination of gesticulation or relaxation of tense hand position – or not, when the intention was to suppress turn incursion" (Duncan, 1972: 286–287, cited in McCleary and de Arantes Leite, 2013). Signers, in contrast, use strategies such as slowing down the pace of signing (eventually leading to both hands being lowered and static), holding the last of the sign, using nonmanual features (eye gaze, body posture), to indicate a turn.

The notion of *stroke* has been reported to be useful in determining one's turn (Vos, et al., 2016). A stroke refers to the actual phonological content of a sign, excluding preparation and retraction movements. If you know a sign, that means you know when the sign starts and ends, and as a conversational partner, one can interrupt the other person's signing at the end of the stroke, without waiting for the complete end of signing (with hands lowered completely). In other words, out of all the movements a signer would make, his/her interlocutor can focus only on the movements that are actually part of the execution of the sign (stroke) and disregard the movements

before or after the stroke (Vos, et al., 2016). For instance, one signer does not wait for the other signer to pause, but s/he interrupts just before the last hold of the sign. It often happens with people who know each other's signing style very well. When two parties do not know each other well, they tend to wait for the other person to finish signing completely.

It is also important to understand who controls turn-taking. This also depends on situations and the relationship one has with their partner. If someone is giving a presentation, he or she is in control of the talk, and people in the audience need permission to interrupt (which can be granted or denied by the presenter). In classroom setting, a teacher or a lecturer is in charge of the floor and in deciding when or which students can talk. They are in the position to control the conversation and at the same time to allow students to receive the attention that they need (Tannen, 1989, cited in Tannen, 1994). This is in contrast to a conversation in which both parties are equally contributing to the conversation, regardless of using a single floor (they take turns clearly and regularly – this tends to happen when they do not know each other well) or a collaborative floor (all parties join the conversation without clear turns – this happens when they know each other well).

When speakers/signers have different assumptions about how turn exchanges are signalled, they may inadvertently interrupt or feel interrupted, and adjustments are required to resolve the problem. This suggests that cultural/racial differences between the conversation partners may result in a shift in their turn-taking patterns. A Black Deaf person may show more overlapping in turn taking while conversing with another Black Deaf person, and less with a White Deaf person. Research in ASL by Aramburo (1989) notices that a Black Deaf signer tends to wait longer to take his/her turn when interacting with a White signer. Cultural differences in turn-taking can lead to communication breakdown or misinterpretation of the intention.

There are also differences between the turn-taking tactics of Black and White signers due to their general communication preferences. As Kochman (1981) cited in Kochman (1990) explained, White people often use the linear and logical line of thought when communicating with people (one idea followed by another; one person talks at a time). In contrast, in Black people's conversation mode, communication is more holistic and both parties contribute. Kochman notices that Black signers signal

each other via facial expression and body language, and there is an overlap between the two people. The question is what will happen when a Black person and a White person meets to converse, which is the focus of my inquiry.

2.6.2. Conversation repair

Conversation repair refers to the process in which the speaker recognises a problem in communication and repeats what has been said with self-correction. According to Schegloff, et al. (1977: 361), “repair is the treatment of trouble occurring in interactive language use or a mechanism that operates in conversation to deal with problems in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk in conversation”. ‘Trouble’ here can include articulatory mistakes, choice of wrong words, unavailability of appropriate words, lack of understanding or misunderstanding of the conversation partner (Byun, et al., 2019).

Conversational repair takes place in the form of “error correction, searching for a word, hesitation pauses, immediate lexical changes, false starts, and instantaneous repetitions” to ensure his/her message was understood by the receiver (Hoa & Hanh, 2016: 2).

Error corrections take place when signers realise that they made a mistake in sign production, pause, and repeat with the ‘correct’ sign (Lee, 2015). Searching for a word occurs when the speaker/signer is trying to find the correct or better words to explain what they are trying to say. Hesitation pause occurs when the speaker could not find the word to express. She or he may pause while looking for words. It occurs frequently in formal signing or when a signer meets a new person, where they tend to pause to find the right sign which can be understood by the ‘listener(s)’ (Hoa & Hanh, 2016: 2).

Immediate lexical change refers to the speaker may change the word (lexical item) while speaking. This may not include articulatory errors but choice of different words. This happens with sign language. For example, the signer may use the sign HEADACHE as a one-handed sign (dominant hand produces a flickering movement

by the head), but if this sign is not understood, he or she changes to another variant of HEADACHE (Flat-O handshape facing up in neutral space) to adapt to different 'listeners'.

Repetition is when a signer repeats the same sign. This happens when the signer wants to emphasise the word or when the partner shows lack of understanding (Hoa & Hanh, 2016: 2). Repetition is an important strategy of self-repair as Schegloff, et al. (1977: 362) mention that "self-correction is not only repairing to errors and correction, but a speaker tries to emphasise someone's name or details in the conversation by repeating or clarifying themselves". We will talk more about repetition in the next section. False start occurs when the speaker begins with the 'wrong' word and corrects him/herself immediately by starting a sentence from the beginning (Hoa & Hanh, 2016: 2).

To these different types of repairs, Fromkin (1973) cited in Sacks, et al. (1978) adds *neologism* (using newcreated words), *word substitution* (choose a different lexical item to convey the same semantic content) or *disordered constituent* (parts of the sentence that demonstrate the phonological, morphological and syntactic differences).

The number of errors and repairs is often determined by the level of formality, as well as the (un)shared background between the speaker and the partner. In formal communication (such as speeches, presentations), there may be only a few errors as the speaker has prepared what to say in advance, thus repairs may not happen so frequently. However, Brown and Levinson (1987) point out that self-correction is related to an issue of politeness and saving face for the person with the floor. In this sense, it is possible that repairs may take place more frequently in the formal register. So, in a presentation, if a presenter makes a mistake, he or she is likely to stop and try to fix it.

This is different in informal communication, where the speaker may make a lot of errors, but they are rarely corrected. The signer may not correct errors because he or she may assume that their conversation partner knows and understands despite a number of mistakes made.

Repairs also happen more frequently when the speaker and conversation partner do not know each other very well. For example, when a Deaf person meets another Deaf person for the first time, they may make errors in the production of signs and so they may pause to clarify the signs so other person may understand them better.

Byun, et al., (2019) pointed out that conversation repair is an important feature in *cross-signing*, which refers to unconventionalised signing strategies between signers who do not share a language. Cross-signing can be applicable in the context of signers from different racial backgrounds. Lightfoot, (2008) reports that Black signers, when communicating with White signers, often need to change their signs so that they can be understood by White signers (lexical substitution) or they need to pause and clarify before continuing with the conversation. Lightfoot also found that Black people tended to use a more mainstream version of the language, rather than their Black variants. Cross-signing often occurs in the context of interpreting. For example, Shambourger (2015) states that Deaf Black signers are often required to repeat their signs for White interpreters who do not understand them.

2.6.3. Repetition

Repetition clarifies the meaning and ensures the message was conveyed successfully Tannen (1989) cited in Tannen (1994) Repetition is seen as a feature of Black ASL. Woodward (1978) shows that Black signers may use clausal or phrasal repetition more than White signers do, as seen in the following examples in ASL:

HAVE SON NOW, HAVE SON (“I have a son now.”)
LAST-YEAR PRO. I VISIT NEW-YORK, NEW-YORK, NEW-YORK (“I visited New York last year.”).

While repetition can be an inherent characteristic of Black signing, it is also an important discourse marker as an attempt to emphasise or clarify. Many linguistic studies on ASL have shown that Deaf signers use repetition in different ways in different registers, across phonological, lexical and syntactic levels (Mak & Tang, 2011). Formal communication makes use of many repetitions to ensure understanding. Often, repeated parts are signed slower in order to ensure clarity and

understanding. On the other hand, informal communication uses less repetition because most often, their understanding is secured by shared background and experience.
Repetition is also used if one party asks for clarification (Winston 1993, 1995). So, when there is lack of understanding on the part of the conversation partner, the speaker/signer is often required to repeat the word.

2.6.4. Cohesion

Cohesion in discourse refers to the linguistic feature that allows conversation to be contrasted and understood in a coherent manner. It can be identified as a referring term such as using a pronoun to refer to a lexical noun. For example,

A man comes into the room. He asked for water.

In sign language, signers use lexical, grammatical and spatial reference to refer to concepts and locate objects and people coherently in the signing space (Winston, 1993, 1995). This is done by the feature of index, which is to point to a particular location in the signing space to refer to people and objects in conversations. According to Baker, et al. (2016: 79) to use “a linguistic form like index to link sentences is called cohesion”. For example, in SASL:

HAVE TWO STUDENTS FROM JOHANNESBURG IX-LOC
“There are two students that are coming from Johannesburg.”.

In this example, JOHANNESBURG is established at a particular location in the signing space, and later in the same discourse the signer can refer to Johannesburg again by pointing at the same location. In this way the signer can make reference to previously mentioned ideas without having to repeat the lexical sign.

Formal register in sign language often uses spatial reference to indicate the referents clearly and it means that indexes are used more frequently. The use of space is relative to the signer. Indexing is often used to contrast two ideas. For example, the signer may want to highlight an advantage and disadvantage of something. S/he

may point to his right to refer to disadvantages and to his left to refer to the advantages:

POSITIVE IX(l) NEGATIVE IX(r)

Later in the conversation, the signer can come back to refer back to disadvantages by simply pointing at his right. This allows the addressees to see the signer's argument more clearly.
Once a location is established for a particular person/object/concept, it may not necessary to use index but a signer can simply use their gaze to refer to it (cast a glance to that particular location in space).

Indexes can also be used in place of conjunctions. Conjunction refers to the word uses to connect the phrases and the words, such as 'and' 'but' or 'if'. For example, in English we say: "The boy is sick and he stays at home". In sign language, they may use indexes as conjunction to connect words or phrases. One example is 'listing' using one's non-dominant hand. For example,

SHOP DIFFERENT HAVE WHAT CLOTHES IX SHOES IX HAT IX JEWELLER
"The shop has many things that you can buy such as clothes, shoes hats and jewellery."

FAMILY MEMBERS HOW-MANY FIVE IX FATHER IX MOTHER IX ME IX SISTER IX BROTHER
"My family has five members: my father, my mother, me, my sister and my brother"

For this sentence, the signer would use his/her non-dominant hand as a base and point at each of its finger to 'list' or 'count', instead of signing AND every time.

Sometimes one can omit some words or phrases and still make the conversation cohesive. This is called ellipsis. Ellipsis is when a word or a phrase is omitted because it is obvious from the context. For example, in English, one would say "I want to go to town, but I can't" instead of "I want to go to town but can't go to town" as the second 'go to town' is not necessary as it can easily be understood from the

contextual clues. Ellipsis happens a lot in sign language as many contextual clues are possible in visual modality. For example,

BOY RUN-FAST FALL-ON-THE-STEP
“The boy ran so fast. He fell on the step”.

For this sentence, one does not need to say who fell on the step, as it is clearly referring to the boy in the previous sentence.

Informal communication uses less cohesive devices and perhaps more ellipsis. Informal conversations are usually between the two parties that know each other very well. So, cohesion can be achieved by shared knowledge or context, not by explicit cohesive devices. Such reliance on the assumed shared knowledge with the conversation partner is well represented by the frequent use of the sign YOU-KNOW in informal conversation (Mkhize, 2016). However, interestingly, Mkhize (2016) also found that intimate conversation in SASL used more spatial references (quick indexing instead of repeating full lexical items). In the conversation with a stranger, the signer used a limited number of indexes. Instead, he ensured that his signing had a clear sequential order and repetition of lexical items to be understood by his partner.

Summary of discourse and hypothesis
Using the studies explain above, I will investigate if a Black Deaf signer would adjust his signing depending on different types of registers as well as the racial background of his conversation partner.

Discourse Type	Level of formality	Taking Turn	Conversation Repair	Repetition
Presentation by Black signer to a mixed audience	Formal	No turn-taking (due to nature of one-way presentation)	Fewer errors expected	Some repetitions may happen for clarification and emphasis

Black-Black conversation	Less formal	More turn-taking	Errors may occur but repairs may not happen	Few repetitions
Black-White conversation	More formal	Less turn-taking	Repairs may happen frequently due to the need of clarification	More repetitions

Table 2.3: Discourse variation between Black-Black and Black-White signing

2.7. Hall's theory of high and low contexts

In this research I will look at the linguistic or discourse variation seen above, but I would also like to understand why it happens. According to Brockway (1981) cited in Sasamoto and Wilson (2016) the field of sociolinguistics is not solely concerned with the structural (syntactic, phonologic, morphologic, lexical, and semantic) attributes of language, but also with the 'how' and 'why' of language use. In my research I will also need to look at the signers' background to understand a Black variety of SASL and how it is adjusted to a more standard form. I will also try to explain in terms of the level of formality and the race of the interlocutor.

Another possible explanation for language variation between Black-Black conversation and Black-White conversation is their different degrees of reliance on context (shared knowledge and understanding).

I will look into Hall, (1976)'s cultural theory of high and low context where he explains that the situation or culture difference can influence the interaction or conversation between two people. For example, in a high context culture or situation, a person may rely heavily on the knowledge and views shared by his/her interlocutor, so this person may say only a few words without giving too many details, because s/he knows the other person will understand. In a low context culture or setting, a person provides details in the language itself, using the language clearly and unambiguously, because this person does not rely on shared knowledge.

Mindess (1999) observes that American Deaf culture in general tends to be high-context. However, this may change depending on the *tenor* – whom you are signing to. Black signers may sign a clearer and more explicit language to a White person as they do not share a common context. Hall's theory of high and low-context cultures

provides a framework to identify different features that describe how Black-Black and Black-White signing differs. Below is the table that summarizes expected outcomes of the two registers.

	Black to Black signing	Black to White signing
	High context (shared background)	Low Context (no shared background)
Information	Information is internalised in the context Conversation can be short. People are expected to 'read between the lines' to access full information.	Information is externalised in the language Conversation can be substantial to convey all the information.
Verbal or nonverbal	Non-verbal communication is important. Words or signs are not as important as context. Communication relies more on nonverbal systems, such as the signer's tone of sign or intonation, facial expression, gestures, and posture, to emphasize interactive relationships.	Verbal communication is important. Words or signs are important as context. Signers use explicit and detailed words and expect them to be taken literally.
Organisation of discourse	Disarray Many things are left unsaid, letting the listeners to infer. Word choice becomes very important since a few words can communicate a complex message very effectively.	Sequence The speakers value logic, facts, and directness. Solving a problem means lining up the facts and evaluating word after another.

Table 2.4: Context-reliance variation between Black-Black and Black-White signing

2.8. Summary

In this literature review, I provided an overview of the history and status quo of Black signs. Then I have looked at conversational analysis and register variation as important areas of sociolinguistic inquiry. I have explained the five linguistic features and four discourse features that I will be looking into in my research. In summary, previous studies have indicated that there is a distinctive way Black signers sign, but they tend to adjust their signing when communicating to a White person. I would like to investigate this in the context of SASL.

In Chapter 3, I will explain the methodology used in my research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, and how I as the researcher designed the research method to answer my research questions. As explained earlier, the main aim of this research is to identify if a Black signer uses different linguistic or discourse features to adapt his signing depending on the race of his conversation partners.

3.1. Participants

There are four participants in this research project. They were recruited by word of mouth. They are all Deaf and fluent signers of SASL. All four participants completed high school. At the time of this research, all participants lived in Johannesburg and had a full-time job. The first participant is a Black man in his 30s, who is the main participant of this research project and whose signing was analysed in depth. The second participant is a Black woman in her 30s. The third participant is a White woman in her 40s who attended two 'White-only' schools during apartheid (these schools are now multi-racial). The fourth participant is a White man in his 50s who went the same school as with White Deaf woman but he has not seen Black people in those time when he was in school. The participants did not know each other, and they only met for the first time on the day of the recording.

I have given pseudonyms to the participants for ease of reference while protecting their identities (since the Deaf community in SA is small, people could easily be identified by their first names). I will refer to the main participant (Black male) as Tshepo, the second participant (Black female) as Xolile, the third participant (White female) as Mandy, and the fourth participant (White male) as Jan.

3.2. Ethics

This research was conducted following the ethical codes of the University of the Witwatersrand. Schurink (2005: 43) states that ethics in research pertains to "the concerns and dilemma that arise over the proper way to execute research, more specifically not to create harmful conditions for the subjects of inquiry". It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that all participants are fully informed about the research. Before participants agreed to take part in this research, they were informed of the research content and what participation to this research entails (in SASL, as

both the researcher and participants are Deaf, as well as in written form). They were given an opportunity to ask questions. They signed the consent form (including the consent to be filmed) before participating in this research.

3.3. Data collection

Due to SASL being a visual language, all data was collected in the form of a video recording (filming).

Data collection took place face-to-face, on one weekday after work hours. The participants were filmed in three different settings. First, the main participant gave a formal presentation to the audience which consisted of the rest of the participants (Participants 2-4). The topic of the presentation was about voting. When the presentation was over, Participant 4 left, and Participant 3 was asked to wait outside. The main participant and Participant 2 (Black woman) stayed in the room and had a conversation. The topic of the conversation was a follow-up on the presentation, and it was conducted in the manner of the main participant asking questions about his presentation (e.g., “What did you think about my presentation?” “Do you think it is important to vote and why?”) to which Participant 2 responded. After that, Participant 2 left, and Participant 3 was called in and had the similar conversation with the main participant. Each session lasted for about 10 minutes. Table 3.1 below summarises each session.

Session	Level of Formality	Race	Tasks	Participants
1	Formal	Mixed group	Main participant gave a presentation to an audience of mixed race	Tshepo, Xolile, Mandy and Jan
2	Semi-formal to informal	Black - Black	Main participant had a one-on-one interaction with another Black Deaf person	Tshepo and Xolile
3	Semi-formal	Black - White	Main participant had a one-on-one interaction with a White Deaf person	Tshepo and Mandy

Table 3.1: Summary of the sessions

Formal register is often described as where the addresser or the presenter prepares and gives a formal presentation or discusses a topic with an audience, such as teacher interaction with students in classroom. Register 1 is considered as a formal register as Tshepo prepared and gave a speech about the benefit of voting to the audience of a mixed race (whom he is not familiar with). He controlled the interaction with the audience.

The two conversations that followed, between Tshepo and Xolile (Black-to-Black) and Tshepo and Mandy (Black-to-White) are considered 'semi-formal'. It is not a formal presentation, but two participants in these registers did not know each other at the beginning and were told to discuss a topic of voting (for which Tshepo is still seen as an 'expert' following his presentation and he controlled the conversation), which made the interaction relatively formal. However, the Black-to-Black conversation quickly became more informal, as they became more comfortable talking to each other.

In this manner, I managed to collect data which looks at the impact of race in one-on-one communication (whether the main participant would adjust his signing depending on the race of his conversation partner) as well as the impact of register (what style the main participant would use in a more formal setting, and whether that variety would be similar to his signing style in less formal one-on-one conversations).

The researcher met with the main participant three days before and gave him the topic of his presentation. Then, the main participant himself prepared a presentation as well as the follow-up questions to other participants (the main participant was not informed of who the other participants were). It allowed the main participant to "structure the conversation in a coherent way in order to accomplish their goals" (Midgley, 2003: 59). The main participant was the only one who knew about the topic in advance. Other participants did not know, which allowed the conversation to be more natural and spontaneous. The main participant was only informed of the topic of the conversation, and not of the linguistic and discourse features the researcher was analyzing based on the literature review.

The video camera was set up by me as the researcher. I had to stay in the same room as the participants during the recording in order to ensure that the camera was operating. However, I did not take part in the conversation at all.

I decided to use only one camera during the recording session as it was sufficient to capture the manual and nonmanual features of the main participant.

3.3. Transcription and analysis

After the video data was collected, I spent four months to transcribe and analyse data so it could provide insights into the variation evident in the language.

As explained above, each session lasted approximately ten minutes. I glossed the first eight minutes of each session for all interactions that took place (i.e., signs produced by all participants). For detailed analysis of the linguistic and discourse features, I only used the first four and a half minutes of each session, and only transcribed the signs produced by the main participant. I transcribed each linguistic and discourse feature using ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator) which allows the transcription of video data. Figure 3.1 below is a screenshot of an ELAN transcription.

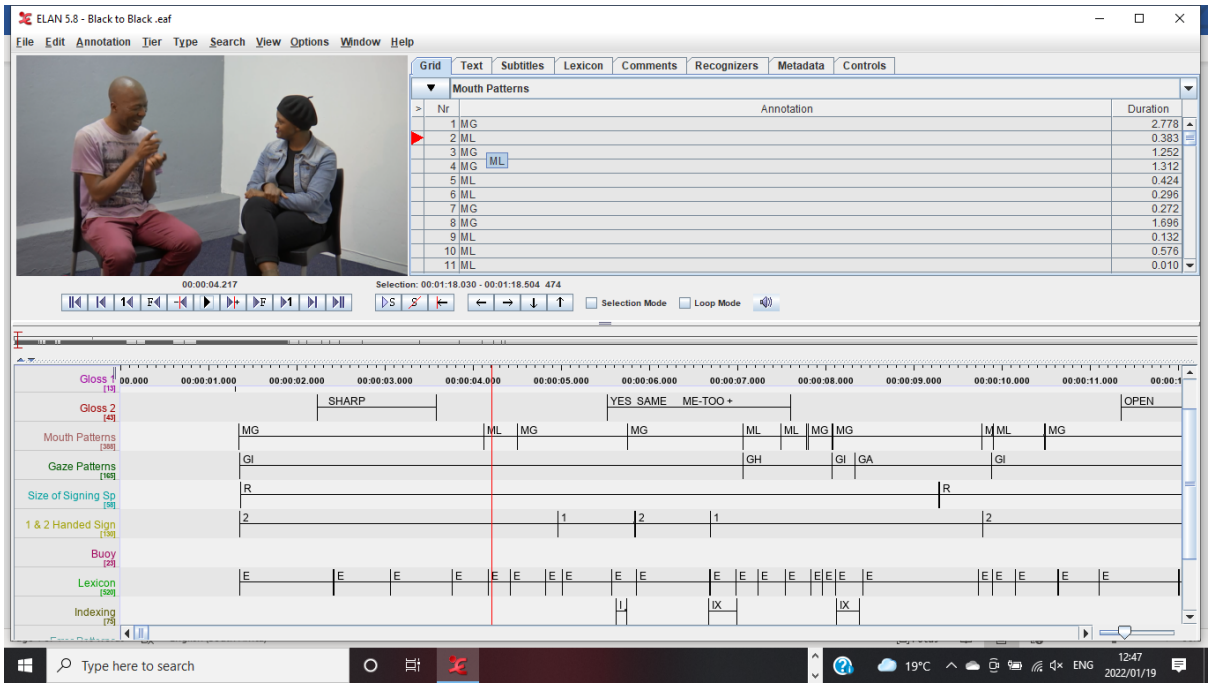


Figure 3.1: ELAN transcription

As explained in my literature review, there are two main features that I investigated which are linguistic and discourse features. For linguistic features, I chose five features: mouth patterns, gaze patterns, use of the signing space, one or two-handed signs, and speed of signing. The distribution of different types/categories within each feature will be compared across three different registers. Mouth patterns are divided into two types: mouthing and mouth gestures (Sutton-Spence and Boyes Braem, 2001). Gaze patterns have three types, which are the gaze to the interlocutor, gaze on hands, and gaze of the characters (in the context of role shifting) (Kaneko and Mesch, 2013). The use of signing space is divided into three categories, which are the big, regular and small. This was decided based on the notion of a regular signing space (Klima and Bellugi, 1979). Signs are also divided into one-handed signs or two-handed signs. Lastly, speed of the signs for each register is compared by focusing on the number of signs produced per minute.

For discourse features, there are four features that the researcher investigated: turn-taking, repetition, cohesion, and mistakes and repairs. For turn-taking, I counted the number of turns that were taken (a stretch of signing by one person was counted as one) as well as instances of overlaps. I also looked at the duration of each turn. The instances of repetition were also counted in numbers with the words and phrases being repeated. Cohesion in this context refers to the use of indexing (pointing) as cohesive devices, which was also quantified. Lastly, errors and repairs were also counted in the number of occurrences. Each feature was counted per *minute* which allows a fair comparison.

I used symbols to transcribe the elements within each feature. Table 3.2 below shows the list of symbols used for linguistic features and what they refer to. Table 3.3 shows the same for discourse features.

Linguistic Features	Symbols	Description
Mouth Patterns	ML	ML is a symbol for a mouthing. It means that the signer 'pronounces' a corresponding English word.

	MG	MG is a symbol for a mouth gesture. It means that the signer uses his mouth gesturally, not following corresponding English words.
Gaze Patterns	GI	GI is a symbol of the gaze to the interlocutor. It means that the eyes of the main participant gaze to the interlocutor while signing.
	GH	GH is a symbol for the gaze on hands. It means that the signer's gaze follows the hand(s) when signing with the interlocutor.
	GC	GC is a symbol of the gaze of a character (through role shifting)
1 or 2 handed Signs	1	1 indicates one-handed signs. It means that signer uses one hand when signing
	2	2 indicates two-handed signs. It means that signer uses both hands when signing
Use of signing space	S	S stands for 'small'. It means that the signer uses space which is smaller than the regular signing space
	R	R stands for 'regular'. It means that the signs are contained within the regular signing space.
	B	B stands for 'big'. It means that the signer produces signs outside the regular signing space
Speed of signs	E	E is used to indicate each separate (established) sign. This was used to count the number of signs per minute.

Table 3.2: List of symbols for linguistic features

Discourse Features	Symbols	Description
Turn- taking	P1	P1 is a symbol to indicate a pause from the main participant as Tshepo. Turn-taking usually takes place after the pause.
	P2	P2 is a symbol to indicate a pause from the Black partner as Xolile.

	P3	P3 is a symbol to indicate a pause from the Black partner as Mandy.
Repetition	Words and phrases+ (e.g., FOOD + and PROBLEM WHAT +)	
Cohesion (indexing)	IX	IX is a symbol for indexing. It means that signer points at a referent using an index finger.
Conversation Repair (Error and Correct)	EC	EC is a symbol for errors followed by immediate corrections.
	EWC	EWC is a symbol for errors that were not corrected.

Table 3.3: List of symbols for discourse features

After the data was transcribed, I exported the transcription from ELAN to Excel, so that it can show not only the individual occurrences but also the precise duration of each instance.

Below is an example of how I exported the transcription from ELAN to Excel:

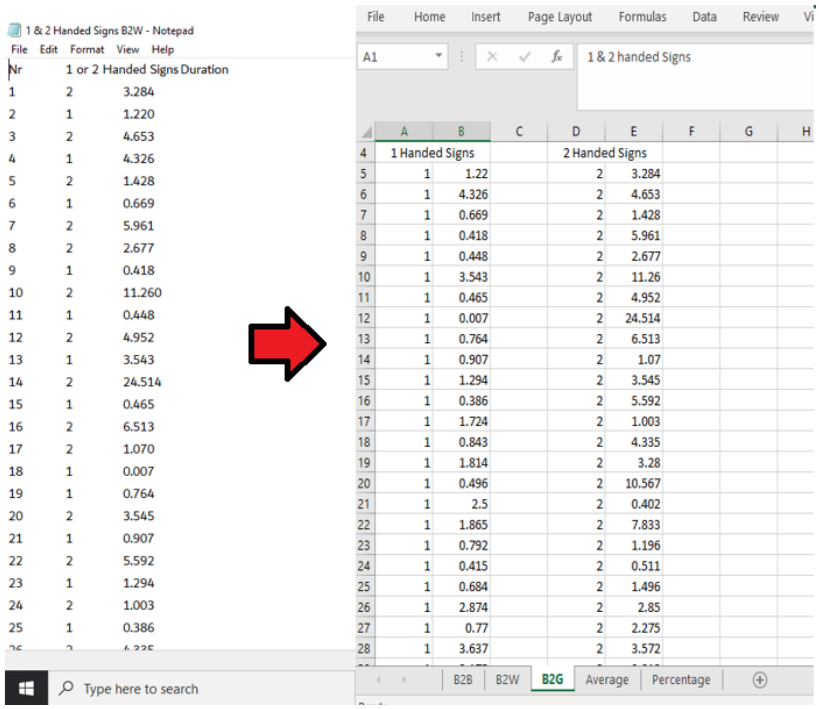


Figure 3.2. ELAN to Excel

After this was completed, I analysed how the main participant used each feature in each register. I quantified the occurrences of each feature and compared across the three registers. The next chapter will present findings from this research.

Chapter 4: Analysis & Discussion

This chapter focuses on the research findings on how a Black Deaf person adjusts his signing depending on his conversation partner as well as the situation.

As explained in the previous chapter, the data was collected from three sessions where the main participant interacts with different participants in slightly different settings (registers). This allowed me to compare different registers according to five linguistic features and four discourse features.

The three registers are, once again, as follows:

Register 1 - Formal: The Black main participant (Tshepo) gave a presentation to an audience of mixed race

Register 2 – Semi-formal to informal: Tshepo asked questions to Xolile (Black)

Register 3- Semi-formal to formal: Tshepo asked questions to Mandy (White)

The distribution of each linguistic or discourse feature will be shown through three pie charts, each representing each register. I will focus on the use of each feature by the main participant, Tshepo, in three registers. Comparison will be made through *percentages*. This is because, while each register was analysed for the same duration (four and a half minutes), the time Tshepo signed varied. For example, he signed almost entirely through Register 1 by himself as it was a presentation by him, while Registers 2 and 3 were conversations, so he took turns with his partner.

I will first go through the linguistic features in the following order of:

1. mouth patterns,
2. gaze patterns,
3. one or two-handed signs,
4. use of the space, and
5. speed of signing.

Then I will present data about the four features of discourse function, which are

1. turn taking,

2. repetition,
3. cohesion, and
4. conversation repair

Again, each feature will be analysed in terms of how Tshepo adapted them in different contexts.

After the results are shown, I will offer a discussion as to why these patterns are found, with reference to the literature view.

4.1. Mouth Patterns

This section identifies the use of mouth patterns of the main participant in different registers. As discussed in the literature review, there are two types of mouth patterns: mouthing and mouth gestures Boyes-Braem & Sutton-Spence, (2001). Mouthing in sign language refers to the use of the mouth to articulate a corresponding word or a sequence of words in spoken language while signing. For example, in SASL sign for THANK-YOU, most of the signers would ‘pronounce’ the English words ‘thank you’ while signing. Mouth gestures refer to the use of the mouth which does not have any relation to a spoken language but an independent iconic sign. For instance, when you describe a slim person, you would make a narrow opening of the mouth, allowing the air to escape continuously but slowly. They both are considered as part of sign language. Otherwise, it will be meaningless. In my research, mouthing was coded as ML and mouth gestures as MG.

4.1.1. Overall distribution

The table and pie graphs below demonstrate how the main participant uses his mouth patterns in three different registers. Duration is indicated in seconds.

	Register 1		Register 2		Register 3	
	Sec	%	Sec	%	Sec	%
ML	67.118	40%	95.576	55%	110.502	51%
MG	100.677	60%	116.732	45%	104.561	49%
Total	167.795	100%	213.693	100%	214.543	100%

Table 4.1. Distribution of mouth patterns (duration and %)

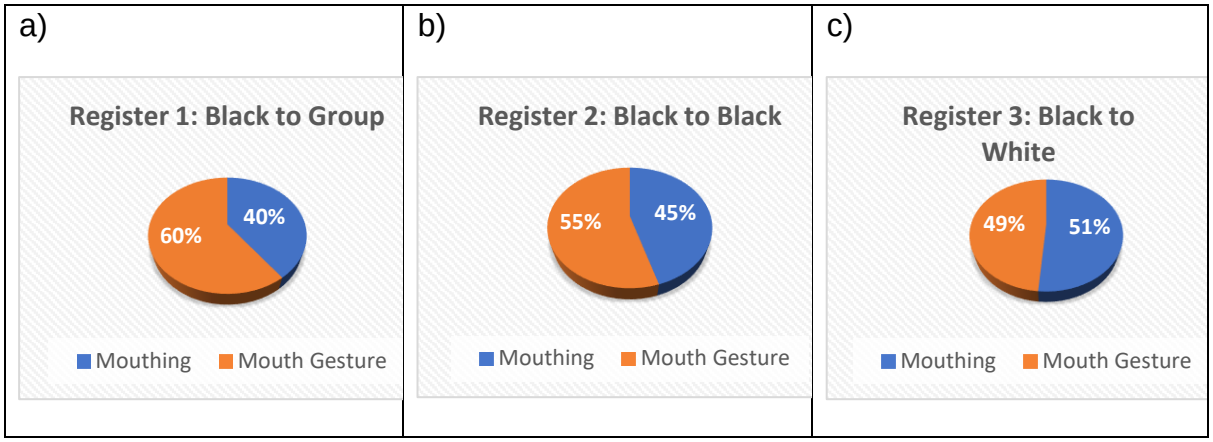


Figure 4.1. Distribution of mouth patterns

Table 4.1. below shows the occurrences of ML and MG across three registers in seconds and in percentage. First of all, the main participant (Tshepo) did not use mouth patterns all the time, which is why the total number of seconds is not 270 (equivalent of 4.5 minutes that were analysed). In Register 1 (formal presentation to the group), only for 168 out of 270 seconds (62%), Tshepo used mouth patterns while signing. In Register 2 (interaction with the Black signer) and 3 (interaction with the White signer), roughly 80% of Tshepo's signing was accompanied by a mouth pattern.

What was interesting was that at the beginning of each session, Tshepo (the main participant) greeted and introduced himself to the audience/his conversation partner, but during this time, he rarely used any mouth pattern. He only started using his mouth once he started discussing the topic about voting.

Let us now look into the distribution of ML (mouthing) and MG (mouth gestures). Figure 4.1. shows the distribution of ML and MG in each register. In Register 1 Tshepo used 40% ML and 60% MG; In Register 2 he used 45% ML and 55% MG; in Register 3 he used 51% ML and 49% MG. The difference in distribution is not huge but each register does seem to exhibit unique characteristics regarding mouth patterns.

4.1.2 Mouth patterns in Register 1

In Register 1 (formal presentation), Tshepo used MG 60% of the time, which is the highest across all registers. This may seem contradictory to earlier studies (such as Zimmer, (1989) which claim that formal register is accompanied by mouthing more frequently than informal registers.

One reason could be the frequent use of role shift in Register 1. For example, when Tshepo explained how Deaf people tend to wait for the government to help them instead standing up for themselves, he transformed himself to different Deaf people.

STAND-UP NO PERSON-WAITING-FOR-A-TAP-ON-SHOULDER
roleshift

> "[Deaf people] do not stand up for themselves but just wait [for the government] to assist them"

For the underlined part of the above sentence, Tshepo became a small, disempowered Deaf person and used his mouth to show lack of motivation with drooped shoulders. Tshepo often uses such role shift when he illustrates the negative feeling of Deaf people towards elections. Role shift involves "mouth, face, and body movements that contribute to utterance meaning" (Perniss, et al., 2020: 2). It implies that mouth gestures are used with the body movement as gesture which provides meaningful information in Tshepo's presentation.

Another reason is that Tshepo used a morphologically complex sign instead of a succession of morphologically simple (monomorphemic) signs. These morphologically complex signs cannot be accompanied by mouthings as they cannot be separated into signs that have English equivalents. For instance, he spoke about how frustrated he was that many Deaf people were depending on a Disability Grant. He expressed how Deaf people would passively wait for something to arrive in one sign which would be the equivalent of the whole sentence in English.

MOST THEY-STAY- HOME-DOING-NOTHING
"Most Deaf people are staying home, doing nothing (and waiting for the grant)."

He does use mouthings at the beginning of the sentence. It occurred when he introduced and established the topic of the discussion (McKee, 1993). See the following example:

MOST IX DEAF GOVERNMENT IN WORK THERE NOT
“most” “deaf”
“There are few Deaf people work for government.”

After he established the topic, he will elaborate on it in sentences to follow, which are mostly accompanied by mouth gestures. The audience was able to pick up what he was talking about as they were made very clear at the first sentence with the use of mouthings.

Mouthings can be partial, which makes it slightly hard to distinguish them from mouth gestures. See, for example:

LIFE EASY LIFE DIFFICULT
“Life” ee “Life” “diff”
“Life is not easy”

4.1.3. Mouth patterns in Register 2 and 3

Register 2 and 3 shows (subtle but) interesting contrast. In Register 2, when he interacted with Xolile, the Black participant, Tshepo used more ML (45%) than MG (55%). In Register 3, when he interacted with Mandy, the White participant, he used both types almost equally but slightly more ML (51%) than MG (49%). So, on the surface, the numbers seem to suggest that the main participant uses more mouthings (and less mouth gestures) when talking to a White person; and more mouth gestures (and less mouthings) when talking to a Black (same-race) person.

One example may further support this idea. Tshepo asked both Xolile (Register 2) and Mandy (Register 3) “Have you voted?”. When he signed the sign VOTE as part of this sentence, he used a mouth gesture ‘mm’ for Xolile and used a clear mouthing ‘vote’ for Mandy. For the following sign FINISH, he used a mouth gesture ‘ff’ for both partners.

VOTE FINISH
'vote' 'ff'

VOTE FINISH
'mm' 'ff'

Moreover, Black-Black interaction (Register 2) uses mouth gestures together with facial expressions to fulfil various roles which range from the lexical to the morphemic (adjectival or adverbial) function. For example, the SASL sign CORRUPT is normally signed without a distinct mouth pattern (See Figure 4.2a below). When Tshepo articulates it in Register 2 (to Xolile), it is accompanied by a mouth movement that resembles an act of blowing out candles on a cake). This mouth gesture intensifies the degree of corruption, creating a meaning that officials in South African are *very* corrupt. Such adjectival/adverbial use of mouth gestures were not frequent in Register 3 (with the White participant).


Figure 4.2a.

Another example is a productive sign when he refers to people coming from different provinces to Gauteng. With Xolile in Register 2, Tshepo used a mouth gesture 'brr…' together with his face (see the sentence below) Such a mouth gesture provides "additional onomatopoetic information by reproducing the rhythmic movements" which functions in a similar way as tone in spoken language does (Fontana, 2008:110).

DIFFERENT-PEOPLE-FROM—DIFFERENT-PROVINCES-COME-HERE
'brr…..'

In contrast, when he produced a very similar sentence with Mandy, the White participant, he signed with mouthing as shown below.

PEOPLE	DIFERENT+++	PROVINCE+++	COME HERE
'people'	'diff'+++	'province'+++	'come'

These examples may lead to an understanding that interaction with a White signer (different race) may render more use of mouthing. However, it is not as simple as it appears on the surface. When I looked at the regular interaction between Tshepo and Mandy, I noticed that Tshepo used many more mouth gestures than mouthing, similar to the distribution of Register 1 (60% mouth gestures and 40% mouthing). However, in the Black-to-White interaction, two distinguished phenomena occurred.

First of all, Mandy often did not understand what Tshepo said, so Tshepo needed to repeat what he said using clearer signing, for which he often added a mouthing. Thus, a more precise argument to make is that many instances of mouthing (ML) with the White partner took place as a result of clarification attempt. It is a way of emphasizing a particular word to prevent misunderstanding. Tshepo used a mouth gesture for the same sign for both partners in the first instance. However, the White partner often did not understand the sign, so the main participant needed to repeat the sign with a mouthing to clarify the meaning. For example, the main participant produced the sign for PRETORIA with a MG ('pf…'), which was immediately understood by Xolile in Register 2, but not by Mandy in Register 3. For the latter, Tshepo repeated the sign with a clear ML ('Pretoria') so that his partner could understand. I also noted that when he repeats, he tended to sign and mouth *slowly*, which counted more towards the percentage of ML.

Secondly, Tshepo used mouthings in his responses to Mandy, such as 'okay' 'same' 'yes'. He made similar responses to Xolile, but without any mouthing. They were rather accompanied by a mouth gesture (e.g., 'mm…' with protruded lips to mean 'okay'). This also increased the percentage of ML in Register 3.

While these clarifications and responses are important part of their interaction, if we focus on the part Tshepo mainly narrates, the differences between the two registers

(i.e., different races of conversation partners) regarding mouth patterns do not seem to stand out. We cannot simply conclude that the Black-White interaction contains more mouthing. It could be that Tshepo would use mouth gestures to both partners, but they "can be replaced by mouthing either according to who the addressee is, the subject and the aim of the conversation or, more generally, the nature of the communicative event or following the function of the sign" (Fontana, 2008:109).

Lastly, there is one interesting finding in the use of mouthing in Black-to-Black and Black-to-White interaction. While the language used for mouthing is exclusively English with the White partner, with the Black partner Tshepo used African languages as well (isiZulu, Sesotho and Tswana). For example, in the following sentence, he used the mouthing 'vuma', an isiZulu word for 'agree'.

WHY AGREE WHY IX
'why' 'vuma' 'why'
("Why are you agreeing?")

ANCESTOR ANGRY
'amadlozi' 'angry'
("Our ancestor is upset")

He assumed that Xolile could understand these African words since she was the Black person. Many Deaf Black people know at least two spoken languages to communicate with their family since they are speaking an Africa language, as well as knowing English as a lingua franca.

In summary, the purpose of using mouthing when Tshepo interacted with Mandy was mainly to clarify and emphasise since Mandy tends to get lost in the conversation. So, his conversation is to be "working in consonance with mouthing to create effective communication" (Racoma, 2012, cited in etranslationservices.com)

4.2 Gaze Patterns

This section explains Tshepo's gaze behaviour during the interaction in the three registers. Eye gaze refers to where the speaker or signer is looking at during the interaction. It has different functions and provides different information. Eyes are important for Deaf signers as they are used to communicate and understand each other (equivalent of ears to hearing people). I investigated gaze patterns to see whether the main participant is using his gaze "to comprehend and signal a variety of meanings, such as desire to communicate" (Cañigueral & Hamilton, 2019: 2).

As discussed in the literature review, there are three gaze patterns: gaze to interlocuter, gaze on hands and character's gaze. Gaze to interlocuter refers to the signer keeping eye contact with the person s/he is interacting. Gaze on hands refers to the signer 's eyes following his or her hands when signing. Character's gaze happens when the signer takes on a character (in role shift) and uses his/her eyes to represent the eyes of that character.

4.2.1. Overall distribution

The table and pie graphs below demonstrate how the main participant uses his gaze patterns in three different registers.

	Register 1		Register 2		Register 3	
	Seconds	Percentage	Seconds	Percentage	Seconds	Percentage
Gaze to Interlocuter	79.534	47 %	89.784	42%	88.608	49%
Gaze on hands	61.669	37%	75.727	35%	107.906	41%
Gaze to the character	27.311	16%	48.553	23%	21.194	10%
Total	167,514	100%	214,064	100%	217,708	100%

Table 4.2: Distribution of gaze patterns across three registers

Table 4.2 indicates the occurrence of GI (gaze to interlocuter), GH (gaze on hands) and GC (Gaze's character) in the three registers in seconds and percentage. Note that I only identified gaze patterns when Tshepo is signing, and not when he is 'listening' others with his hands down. This is why the total length of time is not 270 (4.5 minutes) that was analysed. In Register 1, only 167,514 seconds are analysed in terms of eye gaze, as this is the time Tshepo produced signing - the rest of the time (roughly 100 seconds) he was 'listening' each of the participants introduce his or her name. In Register 2 (interaction with the Black signer) used gaze pattern

214,064 seconds and register 3 (interaction with the White signer) used 217,708 seconds. It means that Tshepo signed roughly 80% of the total time (270 seconds) that was analysed. The reason that Tshepo's signing time increased in Register 2 and 3 is that there was no longer need for each participant to introduce him or herself.

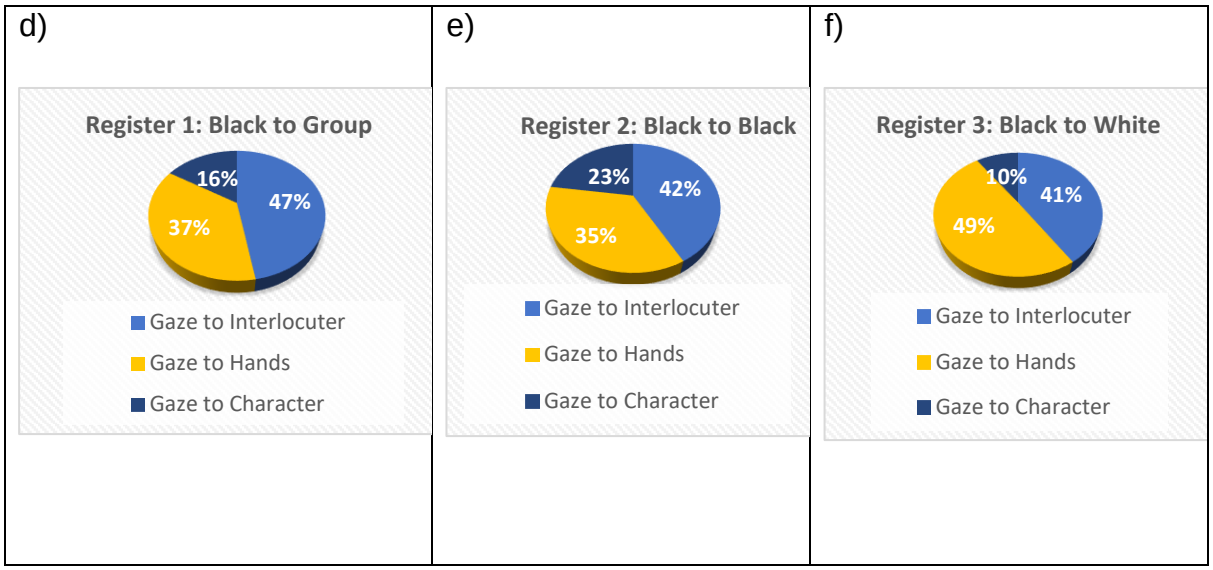


Figure 4.3 Distribution of gaze patterns (duration and %)

Figure 4.3 provides the same information in pie graphs, indicating the distribution of GI (gaze to interlocuter), GH (gaze on hands) and GC (Gaze's character) in each register. In Register 1 Tshepo used 47 % GI, 37% GH, and 16 % GC. In Register 2 (Black-to-Black conversation), he used GI 42%, GH 35% and GC 23 %. In Register 3 (Black-to-White conversation), he used GI 41 % GH 49% and GC 10%. Similar to mouth patterns, the difference is not huge, but each register shows unique characteristics regarding gaze patterns.

4.2.3 Gaze pattern in Register 1

While this is not a huge difference, Tshepo used slightly more GI in Register 1. This is perhaps because he felt the need to maintain eye contact with his audience and there was more than one person in the group. This supports existing studies on gaze in formal register – i.e., if a signer is giving a formal presentation, s/he tends to look at the audience.

Most of the time his eyes also followed his hands when signing but stopped often to take a glance at the audiences to make sure that they are following him before moving on to the next topic. For example, the following sentence was produced when he stated that the government needed to know the number of Deaf people in South Africa.

GOVERNMENT IX NEED DEAF SOUTH-AFRICA COUNT HOW MANY
"Government needs to know the statistic of Deaf people in South Africa"

The sign GOVERNMENT was produced with his gaze following his hands in the upper space. When he signed COUNT, his gaze followed each finger counting in the signing space. Then he shifted his gaze back toward to the audience with the final sign HOW-MANY.

In another example, fingerspelling is accompanied by gaze on hands like T-E-M-B-I-S-A was signed with gaze on hands, after which Tshepo used indexing (pointing) to the location of Tembisa (with his eyes following his hands) then shifted back to gaze to the participants. It seems like he uses gaze on hands to emphasize the location of something or some people, such as GOVERNMENT (people who are metaphorically in higher space) and TEMBISA (actual location of the township).

What is interesting was the way he used not only GI and GH but also GC (character's gaze). Character's gaze takes place when the signer uses role-shifting, which he did often in Register 1. When he described Deaf people who sat back to do nothing and waiting for the government, he enacted as Deaf people in a laid-back pose and looking up at the upper space to the government. His gaze was that of Deaf people's.



Figure 4.4.

WAIT-FOR-GOVERNMENT-TO-GIVE-US-EVERYTHING

“Deaf people wait for the government to give us everything”

4.2.4 Gaze pattern in Register 2

Register 2 (when Tshepo interacts with a Black person, Xolile) shows similar distribution of gaze patterns than in Register 1. However, looking at each register, the context in which each gaze pattern took place is slightly different.

GI (gaze to the interlocuter) in Register 2 seems to be triggered by Xolile’s active engagement in the interaction through facial expressions (nodding, headshakes, frowning, etc.). This seemed to get Tshepo’s attention and as a result he often looked at her. Xolile’s expressive gestures is communicative. As Gullberg & Kita (2009: 252) state, “the information expressed by such a gesture seems more likely to be integrated” as part of the conversation.

During the conversation, Tshepo mostly looked at his hands with occasional glances at Xolile. For example, when he told her a story about people whose job at the government was filing customer information on the system, his gaze followed the movement of the signs, then glanced at her and went back to look at his hands. In 4.5 below, Tshepo’s gaze was on his hands during OFFICER-TYPE-ON-COMPUTER, but he briefly looked at Xolile when he signed FINISH, then went back to look at his hands for INFORMATION KEEP-IN-THE-SYSTEM.



Figure 4.5

OFFICER-TYPE-ON-COMPUTER FINISH INFORMATION KEEP-IN-THE-SYSTEM

“Officer uses the computer to fill in all your information in the system”

Tshepo also used GC (gaze to character) when he enacts different characters of the people in the stories. It means that he used his eyes to show what the character is looking at, which can be anywhere. For example, he tells the story about an officer who pretended to help him, but he did not. He took on the character of this officer to show he was careless. His eyes became the eyes of the office who vacantly looked at Tshepo and signed OK HELP-YOU with a pretentious face. Then Tshepo shifted back to look at Xolile as Tshepo himself.

Tshepo seems to utilise role shift very often. When Xolile commented “I am not sure if people will support me”, Tshepo advised her not to stress about people. He did this by becoming Xolile and used his gaze to look down at invisible ‘people’ then sign NOT-WORRIED. He could have used a sentence in SASL without role shift such as PEOPLE LOOK-AT PEOPLE IX NOT-TO-WORRY- ABOUT- THEM. However, he chose to shift his role to Xolile. GC often appears with such role shift.

Another interesting finding, in contrast to Register 1, is the sequence when he referred to Tembisa. As mentioned above, in Register 1, Tshepo fingerspelled (gaze on hands) then pointed the direction of Tembisa (gaze on hands), then looked at the audience (gaze to interlocutor). In Register 2, Tshepo simply used the sign TEMBISA (he did not use his fingerspell), followed by pointing, but kept his gaze on

Xolile throughout. This is probably because Tshepo assumed Xolile was familiar with Tembisa's location, so did not feel the need to emphasise it by looking at his hand. The majority of Deaf Black people from different parts of the country come to live in Tembisa where they are renting backrooms as cheap accommodation. It is also close to Midrand and ORT International Airport, where many Deaf people are employed. So there is a lively Deaf Black community in Tembisa.

4.2.5 Gaze pattern in Register 3

In Register 3 (Black-to-White interaction), the length of GI is similar to Register 1 and 2, but there was more use of GH and less use of GC.

Tshepo spent more time looking at his hands, facing away from Mandy, his conversation partner, which often happens in situations where people meet for the first time Blakely, (1981:4). Two people who may not know each other would share a short gaze. It applies to the White partner in that Tshepo rarely showed his prolonged gaze to Mandy.

When he shifted his gaze to her, the gaze movement was very slow, and it was not triggered by Mandy as she rarely showed reactions through facial expressions or gestures such as nods or headshakes. One example is when he explained how Deaf Black people had to move from backroom to backroom in Soweto. He signed MOVE three times from right to centre and to left, which was echoed by his head movement and his gaze that followed his hand movement (moving up and down three times). During this sequence, he did not look at Mandy at all. In fact, he was so attentive to his hands and oblivious to the presence of Mandy that Mandy had to tap his shoulder to get his attention because she didn't understand one sign that he had expressed. This made Tshepo realise that Mandy might not be understanding what he was saying, so from this moment, his use of GI increased.

As mentioned above, his gaze to Mandy was more prolonged (while with Xolile, gaze shifts were quick).

DEAF PEOPLE DIFFERENT+++ PROVINCE++ COME-TO

"Deaf people from different provinces come to Gauteng"

The sentence above shows how Deaf people from different provinces come to Gauteng, the first two signs were produced with his gaze fixed on Mandy. Then he started to look at his hands during DIFFERENT (repeated several times), PROVINCES (repeated several times) and COME-TO (gaze follow the movement of his hands). And then he shifted his gaze back to the participants very slowly.

During the sequence of Tembisa, he first used the sign but when Mandy did not understand he fingerspelled T-E-M-B-I-S-A (as explained in the mouth pattern section). Then he pointed at the direction of Tembisa. His gaze shifts here were very slow, from gaze to Mandy to gaze on hands (during fingerspelling) then his gaze followed his hand pointing at the direction of Tembisa, then he slowly looked back at Mandy.

When Tshepo talked about specific people in his narrative, he kept shifting between GH and GI to clearly show Mandy who he was talking about.

IX PRINCIPAL IX TEACHER IX DEAF ASSISTANT

“There was this principal, then a teacher, then a Deaf teaching assistant….”

The sentence above explains how the government worked with a Deaf school and what people were involved. Whenever he indexed (IX), he looked at his hand, but when he signed the actual signs (PRINCIPAL, TEACHER, ASSISTANT, etc.), he looked at Mandy to ensure she understood. These transitions were slowly conducted because he was determined to make sure that Mandy were following. Cohen et al. (1990, cited in Simms, et al., 2008) explain that most Black Deaf people experienced the discrimination from both *Black* hearing people and *White Deaf* people. So, they may not be comfortable to look at the White person (hearing or Deaf) too long because in South Africa we have a history of oppression where Africans were not allowed to look at the White people as equal. It may affect the way he looks at the White participant.

While this is out of the scope of this research, it would have been interesting to look at the impact of gender as well. As Blakely (1981: 12) pointed out “perhaps adult men use the steady gaze slightly more in their everyday lives since they are interactionally on the dominant side of the dyad, or at least are seen as not

subordinate to their interlocutor, more often". While I did not see much evidence of this in my data, if my main participant were female (and/or if the conversation partner were male), the results might have been slightly different.

4.3 One or two-handed signs

Signs can be one-handed or two-handed. One handed sign refers to signs that are produced by one hand only (usually the dominant hand of the signer). Two-handed signs are produced with both hands. As explained in the literature review, whether a sign uses one hand or two is lexically determined, but it can change depending on the context. In other words, adaption of one- or two-handed signs may depend on where and what situation you are in and whom you are talking to. For example, the citation form for the SASL sign BUS is two-handed (bent V-handshape by both sides of the signer's head), but it can be signed using only one hand in an informal context. I investigated the frequency of one- or two-handed signs by the main participant in three registers to see if there are any differences depending on the context and whom he was talking to.

4.3.1. Overall distribution

The table and pie graphs below demonstrate the distribution of the use of one or two hands by the main participant in three different registers.

	Register 1		Register 2		Register 3	
	Sec	%	Sec	%	Sec	%
1 handed signs	38.65	23%	72.099	34%	49.969	23%
2 handed signs	128.935	77 %	139.472	66%	163.367	77%
Total	167,585	100%	211,571	100%	213,336	100%

Table 4.3. Distribution of one- or two-handed signs (duration and %)

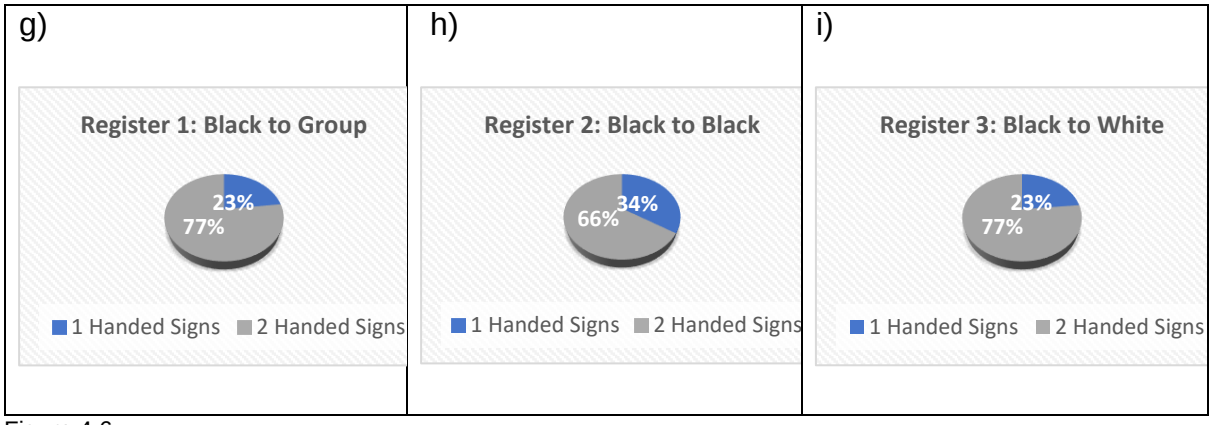


Figure 4.6

As you can see from Table 4.3 and Figure 4.6., the majority of Tshepo's signing across all registers are two-handed. In both Register 1 and 3, Tshepo spent 77% of the time signing with both hands and 23 % with one hand only. In Register 2 two-handed signs dropped to 66% and one-handed signs increase to 34%. So his use of hands is similar in Register 1, a formal presentation to the group, and Register 3, an interaction with the White signer. For Register 2, an interaction with the Black signer, Tshepo behaved slightly differently and used more one-handed signs. Below I will discuss this in more details.

4.3.4 One or Two-handed in Register 1 and 3

As mentioned above, Registers 1 and 3 exhibit the identical distribution of one- and two-handed signs. What interested me was that in both registers Tshepo made signs that are usually one-handed into two-handed signs. IDEAS, GIVE-ME, DO-NOT-KNOW, PEOPLE-WITH-DISABLILITES. One example from Register 1 is when Tshepo explained how the government did not give him any housing subsidy when he applied for it. He demonstrated using the following sentence structure (4l). The verb GIVE in SASL is usually one-handed (the signer's dominant hand, in flat O-handshape, moves from the giver to the given), but here, Tshepo signed GIVE-ME using both hands moving towards him.



Figure 4.7.

GOVERNMENT IX GIVE-ME HOUSE NOTHING

“Government doesn’t give me housing (subsidy)”

Another example is the sign IDEA. This is usually a one-handed sign, but when he signed it in Register 1, he produced it as a two-handed sign, each hand (I handshape) placed either side of his head.



Figure 4.8.

Another example is DO-NOT-KNOW, which is, once again, usually a one-handed sign (the dominant hand in B handshape ‘wipes’ the signer’s forehead). However, both in Register 1 and 3, Tshepo produced this sign as a two-handed sign. It may be because he wanted to emphasise the fact he did not know.

Two-handed signing can be as a result of the presence of “buoys”. Buoys can be defined as the signer’s weak hand maintained (passively) in the signing space while the dominant hand continues signing. For example, in the following sentence (4m) from Register 1, Tshepo explained how he had seen how the government manipulate people and make them feel stupid.

IX GOVERNMENT IX MAKE US FOOL IX

“The government makes us feel like a fool”

After he signed MAKE with two hands, his left hand remained in the signing space while he continued to sign the rest of the sentence. This made this sequence two-handed signing, even though the signs are one-handed (US FOOL IX).

This also happens frequently in Register 3 with the White person. In the sentence below, Tshepo is explaining to Mandy about the experience of submitting the document to municipality for the RDP. RDP refers to Reconstruction and Development Programme and it provides the subsided housing for people who cannot afford to buy a house by the government of President Nelson Mandela in 1994.

MUNICIPALITY IX DOCUMENT SUBMIT

“I submitted the document to municipality”

He articulated the first two signs (MUNICIPALITY and IX) with his right hand only. DOCUMENT was signed with two hands. SUBMIT is usually a one-handed sign, but in this particular sentence, he kept his left hand in the signing space as a buoy (maintaining the handshape from DOCUMENT) while his right hand signed SUBMIT. Altogether, this became two-handed signing.



Figure 4.9.

Having buoys not only results in two-handed signing but also leads to the consistent use of one's dominant hand as the active hand. One-handed signs are usually signed with one's dominant hand, but it is possible to switch to the non-dominant hand. In Register 2 with the Black partner, Tshepo sometimes switched his hands and signed one-handed signs using his right and left hand, alternatively. However, with the White partner, he did not do so. He stuck to his right hand to produce all one-handed signs. In the above example, MUNICIPALITY, IX and SUBMIT are all signed by his dominant hand.

Another example is when he explained the fact that that he came from Kimberley and now lived in Johannesburg.



Figure 4.10.

JOHANNESBURG TRUE FROM WHERE KIMBERLEY

“(Now I’m in) Johannesburg but I am actually from Kimberley.”

Another example in which he used a buoy from holding HOUSE and let his right hand to continue signing with new signs. As you can see below, his both hands were visible throughout this sequence.



Figure 4.11.

RDP-HOUSE ME LOOK-OVER- WITH IX HOUSE-UNSUCCESSFUL

“I do not see many Deaf people get the RDP housing subsidy from the government”

Sometimes, the choice of different lexical items for the same meaning resulted in the difference in terms of the number of hands used. For example, for the meaning of KEEP-QUIET, Tshepo used one-handed sign with the black signer (Register 2) which is produced by his right hand in T-handshape in front of his mouth to imitate the action of ‘locking’ (to show his lips are sealed). For the White signer (Register 3), he used a very different sign for the same concept, which is a two-handed sign with both hands moving closer to each other in front of the chest while closing from 5 handshape to A handshape.



Figure 4.12

4.3.3. Register 2

As mentioned earlier, Register 2 exhibited slightly different patterns – more one-handed signs (34%) than Register 1 and 3 (23%) and less two-handed signs (66%) than the others (77%).

One distinct feature of Tshepo's use of hands in Register 2 is the constant alternation of active hand. He uses his right and left hand to produce one-handed signs. It does create the impression that he uses both hands constantly, but it is a succession of one-handed signs produced alternatively by each hand. This sentence shows how Tshepo explained to Xolile how he goes to the government to apply for housing subsidy and comes back home to wait for their response.

4u. SUBMIT FINISH COME-BACK WAIT

"I submitted (the housing subsidy) and waited for the result to come back"



Figure 4.13

SUBMIT (one-handed sign) was signed by his left hand and COME-BACK (one-handed sign) was signed by his right hand, while the other two signs (FINISH and WAIT) were two-handed signs.

Using both hands alternatively for one-handed signs can be confusing, especially for pointing, as it can create the impression that the signer is referring to different objects or persons. The signer is supposed to use one hand to point to the same place to help the viewer understand who/what is being talked about. But Tshepo, with the black partner, often uses different hands to refer to the same referent. He could do this to Xolile as she did not seem to be confused by this and she fully understood what he was referring to. This was not the case for Mandy, the White signer, so Tshepo was more careful and consistent with the use of his dominant hand as the active hand. In other words, Tshepo seems to decide the use of his hands depending on whom he is talking to.

This is supported by my previous findings that signers do change their number of hands (one-handed or two-handed) depending on the situation (Mkhize, 2016). Normally in the formal register, most signers use both hands to sign and ensure the audiences can see what they are signing. This explains why Register 1 (formal presentation) has more use of two-handed signs. Register 3 is a conversation with a White partner – while this is less formal, it is likely that the main participant felt the need to ensure her understanding by using clear two-handed signs. In contrast, in Register 2 with the Black signer, he used less two-handed signs.

4.4 Size of Signing Space

This section will focus on the difference in the size of signing space exhibited by the main participant in different registers. In general signing is contained within the signing space, the area in front of the signer's body between the waist and the head and within one's shoulder width (Klima & Bellugi, 1979, cited in Poizner, et al., 1981). But the size of signing space can change, depending on the level of formality. This corresponds to a hearing speaker speaking loud and clear when s/he gives a formal speech. Similarly, a Deaf signer may use a larger signing space to articulate clearly when talking to a large audience. So the signing space can be an indicator of different registers. As Wilcox & Martines (2020: 2) explain, "space plays a role both conceptually and expressively, signers point to and use physical locations in space to achieve intersubjective reference in discourse"

In my analysis, the size of signing space was categorised into three groups. Big (B) refers to the use of signing space outside the regular signing space (i.e., beyond the height of one's head or under one's waist; outside one's shoulder width; signs produced not right in front of the body but further away from the body). Regular (R) represents the use of regular signing space. Small (S) refers to the use of space which is distinctively small, such as one-handed signs that are produced on the face or at the very centre of the body.

4.4.1. Overall distribution

The table and pie graphs below demonstrate the distribution of the use of signing space by the main participant in three different registers.

	Register 1		Register 2		Register 3	
	Sec	%	Sec	%	Sec	%
Big	35.202	21%	29.434	14%	71.48	33%
Regular	130.396	78%	183.234	86%	142.553	65%
Small	2.086	1%	1.027	0.5%	4.005	2%
Total	167, 684	100%	213,695	100%	218,038	100%

Table 4.4. Distribution of one- or two-handed signs (duration and %)

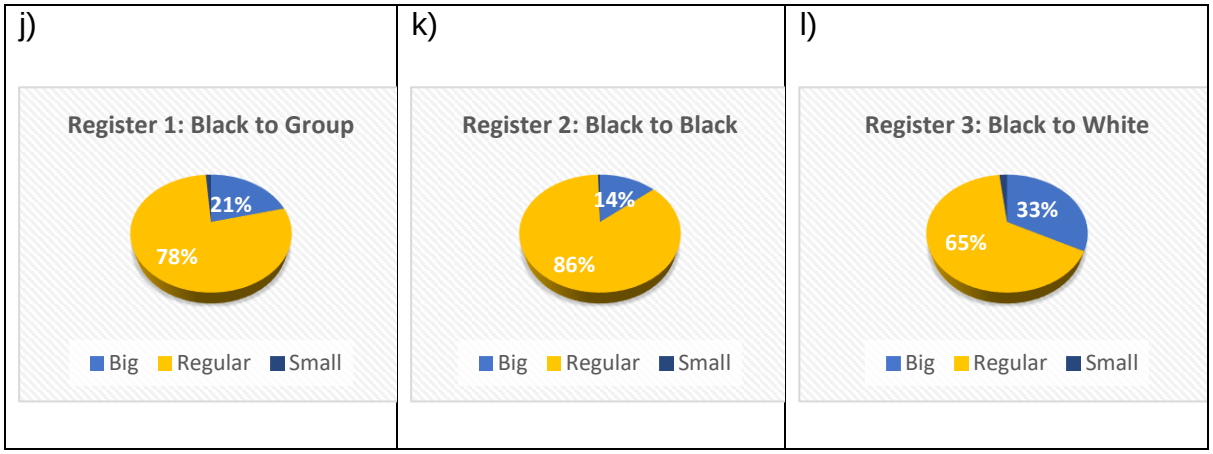


Figure: 4.12

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.12. indicate that Tshepo adapted the signing space differently during the interaction in three registers. In Register 1, formal presentation with the audience, Tshepo used the regular signing space 78% of the time and used a bigger space for 21% of the time. He used smaller space only sparingly (1%). In Register 2, interaction with the Black signer, his use of regular space increases to 86%, and the use of big signing space decreases to 14%. The instances of small signing space are rare (0.5%). In Register 3, interaction with the White signer, the use of big signing space increases to 33% in contrast to the regular signing space which decreases to 65%. The use of small signing space is 2%. These results show that Tshepo, the main participant, adjusts the signing space according to different registers. Below I will discuss each register separately.

4.4.2 Register 1

Zimmer, (1989) explains that in formal register, Deaf signers usually use a bigger signing space so that the audience can understand the signing clearly. This was observed in my data for Register 1 (formal presentation). Tshepo, while presenting to the group, often used signs that occupied a larger signing space than its citation form. He often produced signs at a location higher than his head or away from his body, especially when he points at a referent. In doing so, he proximalises his signs – in other words, he uses larger joints and makes the signs bigger.

For example, when Tshepo mentioned that he heard that people in the (Deaf) community talking (rumouring) about voting, he produced the sign RUMOUR[3] larger than its citation form, by moving his shoulder joints and not the elbows. He also repeated the movement of this sign and made it last longer.



Figure 4.14

ME HAVE COMMUNITY RUMORS ++ ABOUT VOTE

“I’ve heard that the community is talking about voting”

Another example is indexing. When Tshepo refers to people, objects or ideas in his presentation, he tends to index them away from his body using his shoulder joints. In Figure 4.15 below, he indexed OVERSEA quite far away from his body.

[3] This sign is probably better translated as ‘talk about’ but Tshepo mouthed the English word ‘rumour’ as he signed it.



Figure 4.15.

OVERSEA IX LIFE EASY HERE DIFFICULT LIFE

“[People] Overseas have a good life compared to South Africa”

The above examples can be seen as *phonological* as the bigger signing space is the result of a simple change in movement or location, which does not change much of the meaning. However, the signing space can also be altered by a morphological process of intensification. For example, when Tshepo complained how the government did not support the Deaf community in South Africa (see the sentence below in Figure 4.16), he intensified the verb HATE by changing the movement, facial expression, and body posture. A similar example is found when he said he would support fully those Deaf people who refused to vote (the verb SUPPORT was intensified). Interestingly, for both examples, Tshepo even used his leg to show the degree of his hatred or enthusiasm in his willingness to support.



Figure 4.16

ME REALLY-REALLY-HATE

“Ï do not really like them [government people]”



Figure 4.17

ME SUPPORT-FULLY

“I am fully agreed with them [Deaf people]”

Having said the above, Tshepo’s signing space was mostly contained within the regular signing space (78%). This was mainly when the audience was following him and showing their understanding through nodding or other positive responses. Tshepo would still sign slowly and clearly but did not expand the size of his signing.

Tshepo rarely used small signing space as he usually kept his both hands in front of him and signing clearly.

4.4.3. Register 2

It is interesting to see that Tshepo used much less big signing space when he talked to his Black partner, Xolile. He mostly used smaller joints and not shoulders, which resulted in most of his signs being contained within the regular signing space.

For example, his indexing is mostly in the regular space, not pointing too far away from his body, as he does not move his shoulder joints. For instance, when he asked Xolile where most Deaf Sowetans lived, and she responded by answering ROOM (meaning not in a house but in a backroom), he responded quickly YES IX (THAT-ONE) BACKROOM++ and moved on to a new topic. His index (THAT-ONE) was made within the signing space, and he did not add any emphasis to it.

Tshepo used a number of quick indexes with Xolile within regular signing space. This is in contrast to Register 3 with Mandy, in which he indexed outside his signing space (such as above his head) to emphasise what he was referring to. With Xolile, such emphasis was rather done through role shifting. For example, when he wanted to criticise the government, he would become a government employee and enact how that person is not doing his or her job. With Mandy, he would keep pointing at a higher location in the signing space to refer to the government (equivalent of repeating "THEY do not do their job").

Another reason why Tshepo did not use big signing space with Xolile may be because he signed at a faster pace and his signs were often assimilated into the next sign. In order to achieve that, he needed to keep his signs within the regular signing space. For example, the sequence of TELL NINETY-NINE, an idiom in SASL, in which 'ninety-nine' stands for 99%, which in turn means telling something honestly (i.e., "99% true"), was signed not as two distinct signs but an assimilated one sign. He did not keep all parameters of the two signs but merged them to seamlessly create one sign. Such assimilation is common in Black-to-Black signing, as pointed out by Woodward (1989) cited in Zimmer et al (2000). This could not have taken place if his signing space was big.

The more frequent use of regular signing space in Register 2 can also be due to the fact that his signing to Xolile was simplified compared to that to Mandy in Register 3. Tshepo frequently omitted information when he talked to Xolile, whereas with Mandy, he used many more signs to explain, give details, or elaborate.

One example is the sequence in which Tshepo explained how Deaf people from different places come to Johannesburg. With Xolile, he simply used two signs DEAF ALL-COME-HERE, which was produced at the lower end of his regular signing space. He did not exaggerate the movement to show that these people come from all over the places. With Mandy, he added additional signs such DIFFERENT+++ and he signed them outside his regular signing space (using his shoulder joints, making the signs bigger). But for Black-to-Black signing this was not necessary, and Tshepo kept his signs within the regular space.

4.4.4. Register 3

Tshepo used a lot more large signing space in Register 3 (33%) compared to the other two. Interestingly, however, he was mostly signing within the regular signing space at the beginning. The shift to a larger signing space occurred when he realised that Mandy was not quite understanding what he was saying. This made him articulate each parameter much more clearly, including larger movements. This use of larger joints (bigger signs) continued until the end of this conversation.

One example is again indexing. When he signed FILADELFIA IX (referring to Filadelfia Special School in Soshanguve), his index was produced to his right and away from his body. He used his shoulder joint, making his sign very big. His intension seems to produce this sign very clearly.

This need for clarification seems to be the main reason for his use of bigger signing space (as well as slower signing speed, which will be discussed in next section), as Mandy, the White participant, often did not understand what Tshepo was trying to say. For instance, when Mandy clarified the meaning of the sign ROOM, Tshepo used a large signing space to provide detailed description of how a room could be located at the back of the house. This is an attempt to make “everything intersubjectively accessible to the interlocutors as the basis for communicating at a

given moment in the flow of discourse" (Langacker, 2016:108, cited in Wilcox and Martínez, 2020).

Another factor contributing to the use of a large signing space is that Tshepo uses a more 'correct' or 'full' version of signing without assimilating signs or omitting information, as he did with Xolile. In the same sequence of explaining how Deaf people from different provinces come to Johannesburg, instead of just using two signs (as he did with Xolile, see above), he articulated a full sentence containing different signs. For the sign DIFFERENT+++, he would use the space above his head to emphasise how Deaf people from all over the country came to Johannesburg.

DEAF MORE DIFFERENT ++ PROVINCE + + COME-TO JOHANNESBURG

"Deaf people from different province come to live in Johannesburg"

In summary, Tshepo's behaviour regarding the size of signing space mostly supports Zimmer (1989)'s idea that in formal register (with a large audience, or when the signer is not familiar with the audience) the signer would use a larger signing space, which creates visual ease for the audience. Tshepo used a large signing space when he gave a presentation (to the group) and when he was talking to the White person with whom he did not share the same cultural background. With the Black signer, he did not have to use a large signing space because his partner could follow his signing.

4. 5 Speed of signing

This section will be focusing on the signing speed of the main participant in the three registers. The rate of signing (whether a signer signs at a faster or slower rate) can be affected by the level of formality, and it often works in conjunction with the size of signing, discussed in the previous section. For example, in a formal situation, a speaker may speak slow and loudly, and a signer may sign slow and big, due to the fact the person wants to clarify the content to the addressee Zimmer (1989). In

contrast, in an informal situation the speaker may speak fast and soft, and the signer may sign fast and use a small signing space.

The rate of signing was simply calculated as the number of signs per minute in each register. The larger the number is, the faster the signing was.

4.5.1. Overall distribution

The table below shows the result:

	Register 1	Register 2	Register 3
Signs per minute	35	116	62

Table 4.5. The number of signs produced by the main participant per minute

The result indicates that Tshepo, the main participant, signed very slowly in Register 1 (35 signs per minute). His signing became much faster in Register 2 (116 signs per minute). In Register 3, his speed of signing is moderate (62 signs per minute). This will be discussed in more detail below.

4.5.2 Register 1

Register 1 is a formal presentation to the audience. Zimmer (1989) explains that in the formal register, a signer tends to use the citation form of signs and signs slowly to ensure that the audience is able to understand what the signer is saying. This is observed as Tshepo used citation forms of SASL signs and signed very clearly, and he took sufficient time to do so.

It was also found that he paused at the end of a sentence when giving his presentation. It was as if he was giving the audience time to think or understand what he had said. For example, when he introduced the topic of his presentation, he paused several times, and held the last sign of the sentence, then moved on to the next sentence. Sentence A shows how such pauses were inserted. During the pause, Tshepo did not use any manual signs, but did use his gaze to look at the audience and nodded at them to ensure his message was conveyed. As Liddell (1977 & 1980) cited in Zimmer,et al, (2000) explains, signers may use head nods to emphasise, assert, and so on.

Such pausing occurred frequently in his presentation.

NOW [pause] TOPIC [pause] VOTE [pause while the sign being held].

“Today I will discuss voting.”

Sometimes, Tshepo increased the duration of one sign by repeating its movement. In the following sentence, he signed the first three signs in a normal signing speed, but the last sign (IN-BETWEEN) was produced in a prolonged manner. This was still counted as one sign as Tshepo was repeating the movement of the same sign, not producing separate signs. This repeated movement seems to suggest that he was really “in-between” the two ideas- whether to go for voting or not.

ME HAVE A-BIT IN-BETWEEN + +

“I am having a bit of a doubt [going to voting]”

Some signs Tshepo used were highly morphologically complex (i.e., containing a lot of information in one sign), which naturally increased the duration of the sign in which it was produced.

For example, when he wanted to express how the government only gave very little money to the disability grant, he used a very creative sign of PUT-A-SMALL-AMOUNT-OF-MONEY-AT-A-TIME. His left hand was in T-handshape, representing a small ‘pot’ of money (referring to the disability grant), and his right hand imitates the gesture of ‘pouring into the pot’ (referring to the act of giving funds to the disability grant), but it was done minimally. This gesture of pouring money into the grant was repeated as the entire manual sign continued moving upward.

This sign took much longer than a regular lexical sign, as Tshepo signed slowly to emphasize the meaning of this creative expression. Tshepo used such descriptive, morphologically rich signs frequently in his presentation, which explains why his rate of signing in Register 1 was much slower than in the other two registers.

4y. MONEY PUT-A-SMALL-AMOUNT-OF-MONEY-AT-A-TIME

[The government] only gives a very small amount of money [to the disability grant]”

4.5.2 Register 2

Tshepo signed much faster in Register 2, when he talked to Xolile, a Black signer. The main reason seems to be that he hardly ever produced the full, citation form of the signs (all parameters sinned clearly from the beginning to the end of a sign) but produced them in an incomplete form, which allowed him to sign much faster. Transitions were smooth. There were pauses in his interaction to Xolile, but he did not hold his signs and moved to the next phrase or sentence quickly.

For example, when he tried to explain why he did not go to vote, his reasons were vague and not well-structured. He jumped from one reason to next. First, he was talking about how the government did not support the Deaf community, then how they did not give house subsidy to poor people as promised, adding that his grandmother still had not received it. Then he went on to talk about EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters, one of the opposition parties in the South African political arena) and how he supported them more, because they promised to fight to bring their land back. Then he went back to the topic of house subsidy. He kept changing topics in this manner, and he signed quickly in order to do so.

It was interesting to see that Register 2 became almost informal (not semi-formal) even though Tshepo and Xolile have never met before this meeting. Tshepo seemed confident that Xolile was following what he was saying, even though he went very fast.

4.5.3. Register 3

The rate of signing for Register 3 is faster than Register 1 but slower than Register 2. I noticed that in the beginning of the conversation Tshepo signed relatively fast. However, he slowed down when he realized that Mandy did not understand him. He adopted the techniques similar to those in Register 1: signing clearly, using the citation forms of the signs, frequently pausing and holding signs. He also nodded constantly to check if she understood what he said. He used morphologically complex signs with Mandy. This means each of his sign contained a number of nonmanual features within itself (as a result, it often took longer to produce). For example, when he used an index (pointing sign), he would not just produce this

manual sign but also moves his head to the direction of the sign as well as raised his eyebrows for emphasis. For HOLD-YOURSELF, he closed his mouth and made a frowned face. He rarely did this with Xolile but with Mandy it happened a lot. He also paused and took time to explain an idea one by one. See, for example,

IX DO-NOT-HOLD-YOURSELF pause EXPRESS-OUT+ + OKAY pause POSS PERSONAL OKAY pause

“You do not keep anything from me, feel free to talk to me anything about your personal experience, ok?”

Tshepo used a larger signing space for Mandy (see the previous section), pointing away from the body, which naturally took longer for him to produce signs. The fact that Tshepo’s rate of signing hugely varies in each register suggests that the speed of signing is not determined by the signer but depends on the interlocutor and the formality of the situation (presentation or dialogue).

4.6. Turn-Taking

This section will be focusing on the feature of turn-taking to see if (and how) the main participant changes his turn-taking strategies when interacting with different interlocutors. As mentioned before, turn-taking refers how the speaker and the listener alternate their turns in the conversation. It is also linked to floor-sharing strategies.

In a formal setting, turn-taking is often consciously done with the speaker giving a clue when it comes to the end of his/her conversation. Sometimes, one person (i.e., a chairperson) takes charge of who can speak at a given time (Sacks, 1972, 1992, Schegloff, 1968, cited in Heritage) (Gullberg, M. and Kita, S., 2009. 2001). Often, one person holds the floor for a long time.

In an informal setting, turn-taking happens in a less organised manner, and participants use a collaborative floor to engage in the conversation together.

I would like to find out how often the main participant in my data took turns in his signing in different registers, and if there was any difference depending on who he

was talking to. For this feature, I will only be looking at Register 2 (conversation with a Black signer) and Register 3 (conversation with a White signer).

In Register 1, Tshepo presented a talk to the audience, so there was very little turn-taking. He was a 'first starter' and was holding the floor most of the time. It means that he was in full control of the discourse during most of his presentation. I noticed that during his talk Xolile and Mandy raised their hands a few times, but Tshepho did not allow them to take the floor and carried on talking. It was only at the beginning when he let everyone introduce themselves and at the end when he asked the audience for questions or comments that he allowed turn-taking to happen. As a presenter, he was in charge of the discourse and others waited until he let go of the floor "thereby acquiring rights to a turn" Sack et al., (1978:13) cited in Schenkein, (2014)

Turn-taking happened mainly in the discourse he was constantly interacting with his conversation partner. Thus, I will focus on Register 2 and 3 below.

4.6.1 Overall occurrence

The table below demonstrates the occurrence of turn-taking in the two registers.

	Register 2 (Black to Black)		Register 3 (Black to White)	
	Tshepo	Xolile	Tshepo	Mandy
Turns taken per minute	6	6	6	6
The number of occurrences of turn-taking per minute	12		12	
Average duration of one turn (sec)	6.458	4.975	4.311	6.957

Table 4.6 Turn-taking in Register 2 and 3

Table 4.6 indicates how often the participants took turns in each register, and how long each of them held the floor. The number of turn-taking instances was fewer in Register 2 (six occurrences) than in Register 3 (nine occurrences). There is also a slight difference in the length of each person's turn in each register. More details are provided below.

4.6.2 Register 2

At the beginning of the conversation in Register 2, two Black Deaf participants, Tshepo and Xolile, held a collaborative floor, taking turns constantly and letting the other person talk. They did so probably because they did not know each other well and approached the conversation very cautiously. However, within a few minutes, Tshepo seem to have become comfortable with Xolile and started to take a longer turn. It did not mean that he did not give Xolile the opportunity to give feedback or respond to his questions. But Xolile's response was often brief and the floor went back to Tshepo quickly. See the following example:

(T: Tshepo, X: Xolile)
T: WHY ME REASON SEE? GOVERNMENT SEE CHANGE IMPROVE DEAF IMPROVE YOU FINISH YOU?
X: NEVER
T: NEVER YA BEFORE WELL THAT WHY FORCE ME VOTE [headshake]
X: [Nod]
T: YA +++ IX FINISH SEE DEAF FIND JOB PLACED ++ FINISH?
X: [Headshake]

English Translation
T: The reason I did not vote is because I have not seen the government make the change and improve the life of Deaf community. Have you seen them doing that?
X: No, I have never seen them doing that.
T: Agree, I have never seen them doing that either. That's why they cannot force me to go to vote [headshake]
X: [Nod]
T: Also, have you seen Deaf people finding the jobs in the government?
X: [Headshake]

The interaction between signers is often smoother than that of speakers, because signers utilise joint attention and visual access for the confirmation of turns (Coates and Sutton-Spence, (2001). The turn-taking strategies Tshepo used were *gaze*, *manipulation of speed*, and *pause*.

Eye contact is often used to get attention of others. As Coates & Sutton-Spence (2001: 513) explained, “optimum communication will not occur without the elaborate attention-getting.” In the case of turn-taking, eye gaze is used to indicate the end of one’s turn, and to urge the other person to respond or start taking his/her turn. Tshepo often used this strategy when he wants to end his turn and get a response from Xolile. This was very quickly and subtly done.

When Tshepo wanted to give an opportunity to Xolile to talk, or when he wanted to ask a question and receive her response, he slowed down his signing and eventually paused by holding his last sign. Pause is the “simplest systematics for turn-taking” (Schegloff, et al., 1978, cited in Vos, et al., 2016: 1).
As can be seen from the above example, Xolile’s responses were often short, usually a simple nod or headshake. This shows that Xolile did not interfere with the content of what Tshepo said, but constantly showed signs of ‘listening’. This was enough to give Tshepo a cue that he could retake his turn and move on to the next thing he wanted to say. When he resumed his turn, he often picked up speed and consequently signed in a smaller signing space.

There were some overlaps during turn-taking between Tshepo and Xolile. The research has shown that “signers may show greater toleration for overlapping due to the characteristics of the visual modality” (Emmorey, et al., 2009, cited in Vos, et al., 2016: 2) and that overlapping in sign language discourse “is presumably valued positively rather [than negative]”. It was said that overlaps often happen as a result of signers paying attention to the stroke of sign. As explained in the literature review, “a stroke refers to the actual phonological content of a sign, disregarding the pre-sign and post-sign movements” (Vos, et al., 2016: 4). In an informal setting, signers often interrupt just at the end of a stroke, without waiting for the signer to completely lower their hands.
In terms of turn-taking, this allows a signer to start his/her turn while the other person is still moving their hands (but the sign has been completed). Xolile seems to use this strategy. She did not wait for Tshepo to completely finish moving his hands. In fact, most of the time, Tshepo often continued or held his signing while Xolile took her brief turn. He did not lower his hands. It seems as if Xolile knew where to insert her turn (after a stroke of a sign) while allowing Tshepo to continue his signing.

(T: Tshepo, X: Xolile)

T: LEAVE-YOU OUT STORY IX BORED [interrupted] …
X: YES
T: DEAF NOTHING HEAR RIGHT IX DEAF IX
X: TRUE+ + +

English translation
T: [The government] does not care about your story because it is boring [interrupted]
X: Yes
T: Deaf people don't hear from the government.
X: Yes, that's true.

4.6.3 Register 3

At the beginning, I observed that the participants took a similar approach of carefully establishing a collaborative floor due to the fact that they were strangers.
Turn taking is organized systematically when conversational partners do not know each other well (Sacks, et al., 1978, cited in Zhou, 2020).
However, towards the beginning, Tshepo was holding the floor entirely without making eye contact to Mandy to indicate her turn. Mandy tried to interrupt when she did not understand but Tshepo carried on talking, until Mandy had to tap on his shoulder to stop.

(T: Tshepo, M: Mandy)

T: ROOM + + +

M: ROOM (frown face – showing lack of understanding)

T: MOVE-AROUND + + + (gaze on hands, not looking at Mandy)

M: (Shake head, tap his shoulder twice) ROOM IX WHAT?

T: OH-YES pause MOVE-AROUND. OH-YES R-O-O-M

M: ROOM GOT-IT

This made Tshepo realise that Mandy might not have been understanding him. He switched from one-at-a-time floor to collaborative floor. With Mandy, he also used similar turn-taking techniques as with Xolile, such as pause or holding the last sign of the sentence. However, the difference was that he did everything very slowly and cautiously. His pause was longer, and he held the sign longer, to ensure Mandy understood fully before moving to the next topic. His body displayed the signs of 'listening' by slowing down, not to cutting off the conversation, and showing particular nonmanual features "using eye gaze, over attention-getting gestures, body posture and tension, head position, filling of pauses with 'thinking' facial expressions, and explicit turn-offering gestures or questioning facial expressions" (McCleary, & de Arantes Leite, 2013: 126).

The other big difference was that Tshepo *did* stop signing entirely while he 'listened' to Mandy. He completely rested his hands on his laps while Mandy responded.

When he resumed his turn, his signing space was large, he used more two-handed signs, more mouthing ('okay' 'I see'), and he also used encouraging nonmanual features such as nodding.

Mandy's responses tended to be a full sentence, in contrast to Xolile (which is why her turn is longer than that of Xolile). See the example below:

(T: Tshepo, M: Mandy)

T: YOU GO-TO VOTE FINISH YOU?

M: YES, ME FINISH VOTE

T: WHY IX GO-TO VOTE WHY? PLEASE EXPLAIN-ME?

M: WELL, ME FEEL IF ME DO-NOT VOTE MEAN NOTHING TO HAPPEN SOUTH AFRICA WELL

T: [Nod]

M: ME DO-NOT-MATTER ME LET-GO MOVE-ON VOTE

T: [Nod, with a mouthing 'okay']

English Translation

T: Did you vote?

M: Yes, I did

T: Ok, can you please explain why you went to vote?

M: Ok, I feel that if I did not go to vote South Africa will not improve.

T: [Nod]

M: It is not about other, but it is important to me and that's why I went to vote.

T: [Nod, with a mouthing 'okay']

There were also some overlaps, but as in Register 2, overlaps did not cause any tension but were accepted as natural phenomena (Sacks, et al., 1978, cited in Zhou, 2020).

4.6.4. Summary of turn-taking

While the level of formality at the beginning was the same for both registers (two strangers), the succeeding turn-taking strategies taken by the main participant differed, depending on the race of his conversational partner. With the White participant, when Tshepo understood that she was not following him, he adhered to clear turn-taking. With the Black participant, turn-taking was not marked very clearly (as he continued signing while Xolile responded).

4.7 Repetition in Discourse

This section will focus on repetition as a strategy of organising a discourse. Tannen (1989) explains that repetition is a device that repeats the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer.

Repetition of signs can include the following:

1. Repeating the same sign/movement to show pluralisation (to indicate that there are more than one of the referents)
2. Repeating the same sign to add emphasis, clarity, emotional and aesthetic effect, and so on.
3. Repeating the variations of the same sign for clarification or emphasis

Repetition may occur more frequently in formal setting. I will investigate how the main participant used repetition in the three registers.

4.7.1 Overall occurrences

The table below demonstrates the occurrence of repetitions by the main participant in the three different registers.

	Register 1: Black to Group	Register 2: Black to Black	Register 3: Black to White
The number of signs repeated per minute	4	7	10

Table 4.7 The number of repetitions in each register per a minute.

Table 4.7 above demonstrates the number of signs Tshepo repeated in each register (per minute). Tshepo utilised repetition in all registers, but the number differs. In Register 1, Tshepo repeated four signs. In Register 2, he repeated seven signs. Lastly, he repeated ten signs in Register 3. In other words, repetition happened most frequently in Register 3 and least in Register 1.

4.7.2 Register 1

Register 1 is a formal setting, but contrary to the expectation, Tshepo rarely used repetition. His presented his talk, from the beginning to the end, in a clear, coherent manner. It is assumed that he did not have to repeat himself for clarification purpose because he had prepared his presentation well and presented it smoothly, and the audience understood it well, too.

He used repetition when he wanted to emphasise the plural nature of the referent. For example, he repeated the sign RUMOUR ++ in the sentence below. This was to emphasise that there are (many) people in the community who were talking about voting.

ME HAVE COMMUNITY RUMORS ++ ABOUT VOTE
“I’ve heard that the community is talking about voting”

Other occasions, he repeated the same sign to add emphasis. In the following example, he expressed how frustrated he was with the government by repeating the sign DO-NOT-WANT (“I don’t want to work with the government”).

DO-NOT-WANT +++
“I do not want [to work with the government].”

Sometimes he produced lexical variants for a sign. His reason for using them seems to be to accommodate a mixed audience as not all people use the same sign for the same concept. One example is the sign DISABILITY. First, he used a two-handed sign in which his dominant hand in L-handshape moves on the non-dominant hand in 5-handshape (this is a standard sign for DISABILITY). Then he used another variant, which demonstrates the state of ‘hands being cut off’ (This may not be a politically correct sign, but some Deaf people use it to mean DISABILITY).
Another example is the expression GIVE-TO-ME. He first signs with his dominant hand (B-handshape) moving from his mouth to his chest. Then he signed a different sign with his dominant hand (flat-O-handshape moving towards him).

DISABILITY (variant 1) DISABILITY (variant 2) GOVERNMENT MUST ALL WORK
“Government said that all people with disabilities must work together”

WAIT-FOR COMPANY GIVE-TO-ME (variant 1) GIVE-TO-ME (variant 2) NOT
“We must not wait for the company to give us everything”

It seems that he was aware that audience came from different backgrounds, and he tried to accommodate them by using a variety of the signs that refer to the same concept.

4.7.3 Register 2

The total number of repetitions in Black-to-Black discourse is higher than Register 1 but lower than Register 3. In general, his interaction with Xolile was smooth, and she recognized most signs immediately without Tshepo having to repeat for clarification. This happened when Tshepo referred to place names. Xolile understood which places he was referring to, so Tshepo continued with his signing. This is in sharp contrast with Mandy, with whom he had to repeat the sign, spell the name of the place and describe it, in order for her to understand which place he was referring to.

So, with Xolile Tshepo did not need to repeat signs for clarification but he still used repetition for pluralisation and emphasis. For example, when he wanted to say the local governments (and asked if Xolile had seen Deaf people working for them), he repeated the sign GOVERNMENT three times.

GOVERNMENT+++ IX SEE FINISH?
“Have you seen [Deaf people work for] the governments?

Another example is to use repetition to show aspectual information – e.g., people are doing something all the time or habitually. In English, this will be expressed by adverbs (‘often’, ‘always’, ‘mostly’, ‘repeatedly’, etc.), but in SASL repetition can be used. For example, when he wanted to say Deaf Black people mostly live in a room, he repeated the sign LIVE-ROOM several times.

LIVE-ROOM + +
“Most [Deaf Black people] live in a room”

Repetition for emphasis was observed when Tshepo explained that governments had done nothing for people. He repeated the sign WILL+++ to describe how the government gives empty promises (they say “We will do” but they never do). This sign was repeated with a lot of emotion.

IX WILL ++
“Government always say “We will, will…” (their promises are empty)”

Repetition for emphasis can take place at a phrase level. When Xolile said she felt that she could not be a leader of the Deaf community, Tshepo emphasised that she could, by repeating the phrase YOU CAN three times.

YES YOU CAN +++
“Yes, you can do it”

The fact that Tshepo used repetition for emphasis and not for clarification supports Hill’s claim that the use of repetition in Black American Sign Language (BASL) signers is used for more pragmatic purposes rather then making emphasis. This was possible as Tshepo and Xolile come from the same racial background, so many things were understood between them without further explanation.

4.7.4 Register 3

Tannen (1989) cited in Tannen (1994) claims that the main purpose of repetition is clarification. This is particularly true in Register 3 because Tshepo utilized the repetition with Mandy to make sure that his signs were clear to her.

He did not only repeat a sign once, but often repeated it twice or more, as well as adding some explanation about it, as he realised that repeating the sign once often did not help Mandy (she still did not understand). So, he had to add more information. One example is when he tried to explain how Black people moved into a backroom. He used the standard sign ROOM (both hands in R-handshape drawing a square room in the air). Upon seeing this sign, Mandy misunderstood that each person lived in a separate room in a house, which was not the case in this context. So, he helped her understand more clearly by explaining that ROOM is indeed a room but is usually *outside* the main house (like a very small cottage), and most Deaf Black people from different provinces come here in Johannesburg live together in that small ‘room’. When he could sign one word or phrase, spelled the word of the sign, and then defined the meaning of the sign as he could have said BACKROOM but because he wanted to be more clarified by using the repetition

When he referred to TEMBISA, he first produced the sign, then fingerspell it as T-E-M-B-I-S-A. But Mandy still did not understand. She only recognised it after Tshepo

explained that it was a township close to Kempton Park. Tshepo also used a mouthing to clarify the meaning, when his fingerspelling attempt failed, which seems somehow an attempt to resort to English as a lingua franca.

Repetition for emphasis was also found in Register 3. In the following example, he repeated the phrase DEAF SUCCESS twice, using a big signing space, slow speed, and having a pause in between as phrasal repetition. With Xolile, he only signed the same sequence once (HEARD TEMBISA HOUSE SUCCESS).

TEMBISA IX DEAF 10 HOUSE SUCCESS DEAF SUCCESS++
“Ten Deaf people received the government housing subsidy in Tembisa”

Tshepo also used a variety of signs to explain the same concept, as Mandy often did not understand the first sign he used. When Tshepo said he ‘loved’ one party (EFF), Mandy did not understand the first variant of LOVE (one-handed sign with the fist hitting the chest twice). So, he used another variant (one-handed sign with the gesture of kissing on the fist).

LOVE-THEM [one variation] LOVE-THEM [two variations] EEF YES IX SUPPROT
“I loved one political party and I support this party fully”

In summary, Tshepo adjusted his use of repetition depending on the participants, so they were able to understand better. It shows that successful communication is not simply to choose the correct words/signs but to be able to repeat if necessary to adapt to the receiver.

4.8 Cohesion

This section will focus on the notion of cohesion in discourse. Cohesion in linguistics refers to the grammatical and lexical connection of words in a text allowing one or more sentences to make sense together. For example, English uses pronouns to refer to people who have already mentioned: “That woman likes to dance. She

comes dancing every week." "See the man there? He works for our company". These pronouns are used to connect the two sentences.

In sign language, indexing (pointing) is used as cohesive devices. The signer uses the index finger to point to a location in the signing space to refer to people, objects or topics, that have been established earlier (equivalent of pronouns or determiners). For example, WOMAN IX FOOD LOVE IX COOK GOOD ("The woman loves food. She is a good cook."). Indexing is the replacement of the actual sign and they are sometimes called pro-forms. It can be used for personal reference and demonstrative pronouns (Winston, 1991: 397). As explained in Literature Review, indexing takes place more in a formal register as the signer often consciously makes an effort to make the discourse coherent (Winston, 1995).

This section focuses on how the main participant-maintained cohesion through indexing in his signing in the three registers.

4.8.1 Overall distribution

The table below demonstrates the occurrence of indexes by the main participant (per minute) in three different registers.

	Register 1: Black to Group	Register 2: Black to Black	Register 3: Black to White
Indexes per minute	10	24	21

Table 4.8: Occurrences of indexes in three registers

Table 4.8indicates that Tshepo used indexes across the three registers. It is natural as indexes are part of the grammar of SASL. However, the frequency is different in each register. In Register 1 he used indexes least frequently – only 10. In Register 2, Tshepo used 24 which is most frequent. In Register 3, he used 21. I have observed and identified that he used indexes differently such as reference, conjunction, substitution, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion. This will be discussed in more detail below.

4.8.2 Register 1

I noticed that Tshepo used less indexing when presenting to the audience. This is interesting as it was somewhat unexpected. I will discuss possible reasons why this happened.

First, I would like to look at how Tshepo used indexes in general. Towards the beginning, he introduced the referents clearly by establishing their reference points in space (spatial reference). Use of spatial referent refers to establishing referents in the space by assigning a particular location to each referent. For example, when he referred to the government, he signed the lexical item first (PARLIAMENT) and pointed to the upper space to refer to it afterwards. Displaying the reference point clearly may help the participants to understand what he is referring to. It is very helpful in a presentation.

IN PARLIAMENT IX WORK

"The parliament, and people who work there"

After the above sentence, he carried on referring to the government at the upper space. He no longer signed the lexical item because he had already established the reference point for the government.

IX THINK SELF IX THINK OWN FAMILY IX THINK NOTHING

"It [the government] only think about themselves and their families – it does not think about us."

In contrast, Deaf people were established as a reference point in the lower area of the signing space (perhaps showing a metaphorical power relationship). Once established, Deaf people were referred to by indexing to the established location (equivalent of a pronoun "they"). See the example below.

RDP HOUSE IX HAVE NOT

"They [Deaf people] do not have the government housing subsidy".

He also used an index as a conjunction by pointing his finger to the next subject. As explained in Literature Review, Deaf signers often point to their fingers in the non-dominant hand to 'list' people, things or topics (equivalent of "First…, second…

third…" or "…. and….. and…."). This was observed in Tshepo's formal presentation. For example, when he talked about what the government did for the Deaf community, he 'listed' them on his non-dominant hand.

The reason the number of indexes was low in Register 1 could be due to frequent ellipsis of indexes. "Ellipsis is something left unsaid". The word "unsaid" here refers to the omission of a word or a phrase in the text. Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 142, cited in Volpone, 2014). Interestingly, because Tshepo established each reference point so clearly (e.g., the government in upper space, Deaf people in lower space), he did not need to point at them all the time. Instead, he simply directed his signs to (or cast a glance at) each reference point. For example, when he tried to explain that people can report to the government, he used one sign (GO-TO- REPORT) and directed it to the upper space as well as directing his eye gaze to the reference point of the government. This was sufficient for the audience to know that they must report to the government (GO-TO-GOVERNMENT-TO-REPORT)

VOTE FINISH RIGHT GO-TO-GOVERNMENT-TO-REPORT
"You have a right to complain or report to the government after voting."

4.8.3 Register 2

Tshepo used indexes most frequently in Register 2. This could be for several reasons. His placement of references was not as consistent as in his presentation (so he had to use more overt indexes); he used indexes during role-shifting; he used indexes for plural forms; and he rarely showed ellipsis of indexes in the interaction with Xolile. The examples will be shown below.

Lack of consistency was observed in his indexing with Xolile. Unlike Register 1, in which Tshepo established the location for each referent earlier in the discourse and maintained it, in Register 2 he often used different locations for the same referent. He was not as careful or consistent with indexing as he was in Register 1. This forced him to point at the reference point every time he established it. For example, he referred to the government, first using the upper space but later using the lower space.

Interestingly, at the beginning, Tshepo tried to maintain clear and coherent indexing. However, a few minutes later, when Xolile became used to his signing (and Tshepo knew that she was following him), he seemed to stop his effort for careful indexing.

For example, when Xolile said she was not sure if she could be the leader of the community, Tshepo responded by saying that she should not worry about if people would follow her or not. After pointing at Xolile (YOU), he enacted (role shifted) as Xolile and showed how she should not worry about (Deaf) people following her. Instead of his default location for Deaf people (lower space), he pointed at several spaces at the side of his body. The meaning was clearly understood through role shifting without reintroducing the lexical item (PEOPLE). Maier (2018) concludes that "role shift is not a form of quotation but the realization of an operator that manipulates context parameters (or context variables) in such way that indexicals in its scope receive a shifted interpretation".

IX DO-NOT-NEED-TO-WORRY-ABOUT IX IX-LEAVE-THEM-BEHIND

"You do not need to use people to follow you"

Another example is when Tshepo enacted the character as a person who works for the government. He located Xolile at the lower signing space (slightly towards the side of his body) and demonstrated how the government did not want to read her CV or cared about her. Then he immediately switched back to himself and told her directly that she was waiting for nothing. In this instance, IX is used to refer to a CV that the government official received. It was established within the role shifting.

CV YOUR RECEIVE READ IX CHUCK-IT-ASIDE YOU HEAR NOTHING

"[The government official] received your CV, had a look at it, and chucked it aside. You won't hear from them."

It seems to be Tshepo's strategy to use role shifting frequently with a Black Deaf participant. This has caused his referents to be assigned new reference points, which in turn increased the number of indexes. This was not a problem as Xolile understood him well.

Another reason why there are more indexes in Register 2 is that Tshepo used it for repetition. In other words, he used indexes as substitution for lexical items.

Substitution is a replacement of one word by another which has a similar meaning or function. Tshepo used indexes to replace lexical signs when he wanted to refer to its plural form. Plurals in SASL are often simply expressed by repeating the same sign for several times (GIRL+++). However, there is another way of making it a plural, which is by repeating indexing (GIRL IX+++). Tshepo opted for the latter in his interaction with Xolile. For example, when he wanted to say 'many governments', he would sign GOVERNMENT just once, followed by a repetition of indexes in the upper space. In other words, he used indexes to "avoid the repetition of a lexical item" (Jambak & Gurning 2014: 62). This is likely for the ease of articulation. He repeated the lexical items (INSIDE, GOVERNMENT) in the following sentence.

NOT INSIDE +++ GOVERNMENT ++ DEAF IX WORK THERE?

"Have you seen Deaf people work for the governments?

Unlike Register 1, he did not omit indexes, which also contributed to the high number of pointing in his conversation with Xolile.

4.8.4 Register 3

Register 3 is characterised by less use of indexing than in Register 2 but more than Register 1. It may be because Tshepo used the space much more clearly (especially after he realised that Mandy was not understanding him very well). Once spatial reference was clearly established, followed by indexing, there seemed less need to repeat it. For example, when he demonstrated the location of a room, he first signed the sign ROOM, described the room, and then pointed at its location just once, but very clearly.

ROOM HOUSE BACKROOM IX

"The room is at the back of the house"

With Mandy, Tshepo presents the information sequentially and in a logical order. Tshepo referred to people, objects or concept by using an established sign, followed by an index, and carried on describing what they are doing. Below is the same

sequence we explored earlier about how the government ignores people's CVs, but this time, Tshepo was signing to Mandy. He articulated GOVERNMENT and pointed at the upper space, then described what they were doing - READ-CV-PRESUMPTUOUSLY (in the neutral space in front of him) and CV-PUT-THEM-UNDER-THE-CHAIR (lower space). It seems that Tshepo made a very clear use of the signing space, so that indexing was not as necessary as in Register 2.

GOVERNMENT IX CV READ-CV-PRESUMPTUOUSLY CV-PUT-UNDER-THE-CHAIR

"The government did not always read their CVs and they hid them away"

I noticed that when he did not use the reference point with the White partner, she was lost. When Tshepo tried to explain how he moved many times without using a reference point (ROOM), Mandy did not understand what he was saying. It clearly shows that when he deleted the signs or words in the sentence, Mandy would not be able to follow what he signed, so he had to use the reference point to be transparent and more coherent.

ROOM MOVE-OUT + +

"I have moved out the room many times"

Coherence in Register 3 was also achieved by repetition (emphasising what he was talking about) and the use of conjunctions (mostly clarifying causational relations).

When he explained that he had to move out because the owner (landlord) did not understand him, he repeated the sign BACKROOM + + and then pointed at it once.

I noticed that he also used conjunctions to keep the discourse coherent. Conjunctions refer to make two phrases or sentences became one by using a clause marker such as WHY as it "is the marker that used to describe the relation between clauses and demonstrate a meaningful relationship between them" (Jambak & Gurning, 2014: 62) and he used WHY to replace the conjunction clause marker.

BACKROOM + + IX OWNER IX DON'T-UNDERSTAND IX ALWAYS COMPLAIN WHY ALWAYS ME LATE

“The owner of the tenant is not understanding and always complaining because I am always home late.”

In this way, the cohesion of the conversation was maintained. Indexing is frequently used as one of the cohesive devices but it is not the only method used by Tshepo.

The above discussion makes it clear that Tshepo, the main participant, used indexing differently in each register, together with other cohesive devices. The intention seems to be helping each participant “to focus well on the topic and for clearer emphasis and understanding” (Jambak & Gurning, 2014: 64).

4.9. Conversation repair

This section will be focusing on conversation errors and repairs. Errors refer to mistakes that are made in the production of language. There are different types of errors, phonological, semantic, or syntactic. Supalla, et al. (2014: 58) explained that “native signers make semantic errors consistent with automatic processing, storing the content in conceptual terms” while second-language learners or late first-language learners tend to make phonological errors.

Repairs refer to a speaker’s attempt to self-correct when s/he made errors in words or phrases. Self-correction in sign language occurs when a signer realises errors in signs and creates the right signs. This may involve brief pauses while holding the sign with his eyes closed, looking for the correct sign, performing the correct sign, and moving on. Holds refer to the reduction of movements (not only hands but the head, body, arm, etc.) while finding the right signs to make a sentence, to stay in control of the conversation (Schegloff, et al., 1977). I will investigate how often the main participant in my data produced errors, and how often he repaired his errors in three registers.

4.9.1 Overview

The table below demonstrates the occurrence of errors and repairs by the main participant (per minute) in the three registers.

	Register 1: Black to Group	Register 2: Black to Black	Register 3: Black to White
Total number of errors	2	11	8
Error signs with correction (repairs)	2	3	6
Error signs without correction	0	8	2

Table 4.9. Occurrences of conversation repairs in each register (per minute)

The first row gives the total number of errors per minute. The second row shows how many of them were corrected, and the third row shows how many of them were not corrected. The table suggests that in Register 1 Tshepo (the main participant) made only two errors, both of which were corrected. In Register 2, he made 11 errors and only three of them were self-corrected. In Register 3, he made eight mistakes and six of them were repaired. More details will be presented below.

4.9.2 Register 1

The number of errors was very small in Register 1 where he had prepared his presentation and took his time to deliver it to the audience. He used pauses and held the last sign of the sentence before moving on to the next sentence or topic.

The two repairs occurred when he decided to improve his choice of signs or a sentence structure. So, they were not phonological errors but more about finding better signs. He paused, held the sign with his eyes closed, briefly reflected on his sign and found the right (better) signs and moved on. It was not an attempt to rectify ‘mistakes’ but to find a more appropriate sign.

For example, when he referred to disabilities, he quickly realised that it was not the best choice of words and decided to use the sign DEAF as it was indeed what he was talking about with the audience, not people with disabilities in general. He started to sign (with a normal speed) STILL MOST DISABILITY, then paused, held the sign DISABILITY with his eyes closed, then corrected it with DEAF. Then he continued his sentence to explain that not many Deaf people work for the government.

STILL MOST PEOPLE-WITH-DISABLITY [pause] [self-corrected] DEAF IX DEAF GOVERNMENT WORK IN THERE NOT

“There are still not many Deaf people working for the government.”

The other ‘repair’ occurred when he wanted to express how strongly he felt about the government. He explained that government was useless. After he signed the word USELESS, he paused, closed his eyes, and seemed to have completed the sentence. But after a brief pause, he then found a word PLUS and decided to continue the sentence to say that they were also full of corruption. This may not be considered a repair as he did not correct any sign, but he changed where his sentence should end.

GOVERNMENT FOR-WHAT USELESS [pause]…PLUS CORRUPTION

“Government is useless and full of corruption.”

So, it seems that his purpose of using the conversation repair was to make it clearer and easier for the audience to understand. He clearly understood the strategy of sign language discourse: “sign, see and understand” (Mkhize, 2016).

4.9.3 Register 2

In Register 2, Tshepo made many mistakes but did not often do self-correction in the interaction with Xolile as he seemed to know that she had no problem understanding him, even with these mistakes.

When repairs did take place, he paused, held the sign, and corrected with a sign that made more sense, like in Register 1, but he did so very quickly and smoothly.

He did not often repair his mistakes because it seems that he prioritized getting his overall message across over small errors. He assumed that Xolile would understand him despite these mistakes.

In the following example, Tshepo was trying to explain that the government does not always keep to its promise and so he did not trust them. He made a preservation error of using the same sign PROMISE (which he used earlier) when he meant to say TRUST. They do not mean the same thing, but Xolile seemed to understand him, so Tshepo did not make any correction.

TRUE VOTE IX PROMISE IX NOW ME *PROMISE IX NOT

“I could go to vote, but the government did not always make a promise. So I did not promise (trust) them.”

Another example is when he explained that he did not want to vote or work with the government. He could not think of the appropriate expressions, so he went ahead to join two morphologically complex signs simultaneously to make a sentence, which are HATE-THEM and DON’T WANT. The sign HATE in SASL is a two-handed sign with both hands moving away from the body with the expression of frowning. DON’T-WANT is produced as a two-handed (or one-handed) sign, both hands in 5-handshape lightly stroke down the chest (WANT) with a headshake to add negation (DON’T). But he somehow combined them in one sign and produce it in one go. This is an error as such a morphological process is not possible in SASL, but once again, Xolile seemed to understand him, so he did not repair.

ME HATE-DO-NOT-WANT-THEM

“I do not want to be part of them”

As we can see, in Register 2, Tshepo made more mistakes but did not correct them. He seemed confident enough that Xolile would understand him despite these mistakes.

4.9.4 Register 3

In Register 3, I noticed that Tshepo made more mistakes than Register 1 but used repair strategies similar to Register 1. He paused, held the sign with his eyes closed as he was trying to find the correct or better sign. In the following example, he signed FAMILY first but then he paused to change it to FRIEND, as that was what he wanted to say.

SAME FAMILY [pause, hold and self-correct] FRIEND DEAF IX FINISH ENCOURAGE-THEM OR DISCOURAGE-THEM SELF THINK VOTE YOU?

“Ok, have you encouraged your friends to join to vote or you decide to do it yourself without them?”

Sometimes, ‘repairs’ in this register took place not to correct errors but as an attempt by Tshepo to find alternative words as Mandy did not understand the sign he used. So, Tshepo had to pause and search for different signs, or needed to explain more.

For instance, when Mandy asked what FILADELFIA is and where it is based, Tshepo paused, closed his eyes, and tried to find better words, which he could not find. Then he gave up and reverted to the same sign, and then explained it was a mainstream school for children with disabilities and Deaf children.

He also used mouthing a lot to clarify meaning with Mandy. Sometimes mouthing was corrected. He paused, held the sign and at the same time tried to pronounce the ‘right’ words in mouthing. The example below is when he tried to explain that a person was working for the municipality working with Deaf people in Tembisa. He first mouthed ‘under’ with the sign ASSISTANT and realized that he was wrong and changed to ‘assistant’.

MUNICIPITY HAVE ASSISTANT [mouthing: ‘under’] MUNICIPALITY HAVE ASSISTANT [mouthing: ‘assistant’] IN WORK DISABILITY IX PERSON

“Municipality has a person who is working as an assistant helping Deaf and people with disabilities too.”

So, it seems that with Mandy, Tshepo made an effort to sign correctly so that she can understand what he was trying to say. It did not mean that he did not care to clarify with the Black partner, but he knew that Xolile would understand him.
In terms of the types of errors, Tshepo rarely made a phonological error because of the slow pace of signing in this register, but the White participant still found it difficult sometimes to understand. This required Tshepo to spend extra time changing his signing and finding better expressions. This may be the general situation of Deaf Black signers which is “compounded by the fact that Black signers attempt to approach White signing in conversation with White signers” (Woodward, 1976: 214).

4.10. High and low contexts

The purpose of this study is to learn and understand if the Black main participant adapts his language depending with whom and where an interaction takes place. In

the previous sections, I have established that the Black participant does indeed adapt his signing in different situations. Now, I would like to find some explanations as to why he does so.

This section is focusing on Hall's ideas of high and low contexts introduced in Chapter 2. As explained previously, different cultures and different communication styles show different levels of reliance on explicit language as opposed to implicit contextual information. l would like to discuss here if the adaptation of the main participant's linguistic and discourse features could be explained in terms of 1) different degrees of reliance on context, 2) use of verbal and non-verbal features, and 3) the organisation of discourse.

First of all, in a high context culture or situation, a person may rely heavily on the knowledge and views shared by his/her interlocutor ("context"), so this person may say only a few words without giving details, because s/he knows the other person will understand. In a low context culture or setting, a person provides details in the language itself, using clear and unambiguous language, because this person does not rely on shared knowledge. For example, a consultation with a doctor is usually low context, as there is need to explicitly state one's health conditions for the doctor to understand (and in turn, the doctor may ask very specific questions). Answers cannot be vague.

Secondly, nonverbal systems usually refer to tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, and posture, that accompany speech. The distinction between verbal and non-verbal in sign language may not be as clear as in spoken language, but it can be understood in the way a signer would use more linguistic elements (e.g., established signs, indexes, classifiers) as opposed to more gestural elements (e.g., role-shifting, manipulation of size and speed, additional nonmanual features). The former conveys basic propositional content and can be seen as 'verbal' elements of sign language, while the latter rather *illustrates* or *elaborates* the content and can be seen as 'non-verbal'.

Thirdly, the organisation of discourse is closely related to high- and low-context as the discourse needs to be logically and clearly organised in low-context interaction to ensure understanding without relying on implicit information. A high-context

communication can afford disorganised discourse as the addressee is supposed to ‘read between the lines’ and fill up with gaps with contextual knowledge.

4.10.1 Overall occurrence of high and low contexts

The table below demonstrate how the main participant exhibits high and low contexts in three different registers.

	Register 1: Black to group	Register 2: Black to Black	Register 3: Black to White
	Formal register, low context	Semi-formal to informal register, high context	Semi-formal register, low context
Information	Information was externalised in the language. Conversation can be substantial to convey all the information.	Information was internalised in the context. Conversation can be short. Xolile is expected to ‘read between the lines’ to access full information.	Information is externalised in the language. Conversation can be substantial to convey all the information.
Verbal or nonverbal	Both verbal and nonverbal communication was used substantially	Mostly relied on verbal elements. Less frequent use of non-verbal elements, as there was less need to illustrate or elaborate. Word choice becomes very important.	Both verbal and nonverbal communication was used substantially
Organisation of discourse	Sequential and logical	Disarrayed Many things are left out.	Sequential and logical

Table 4.10 Summary of interactive features

Table 4.10 indicates that Tshepo demonstrated interactive features across the three registers differently. It is clear that Tshepo adapted his signing according to its use in social situations (Spolsky, 1998).

4.10.2 Registers 1 and 3: Low Context

Register 1 is understood to be a low context. It is because Tshepo gave a talk to a group of people (he did not know them) in a formal setting.

He made use of both verbal and nonverbal elements of sign language. He used clear lexical items to explain the facts. When he felt that one lexical item may not be sufficient to make the meaning clear, he used other variants to ensure all the content was conveyed clearly. The variety used in these contexts are ‘high’ variety – those signs that are generally accepted and used by the South African Deaf community,

not Black signs Tshepo would normally use (e.g., WORK as a two-handed sign with both hands in B-handshape touching each other, not WORK as a two-handed sign with W-handshape moving in circular movement).

However, he also elaborated on some ideas using role-shifting, exaggerated movements and larger signing space. For example, when Tshepo explained about people from different provinces, he would dramatically point at different locations in and outside signing space to illustrate that they are indeed coming from all over the country. It is just like the way speakers would use their tone of voice or gestures effectively in their formal speech. Another instance is when he explained different status of jobs or ranked the different types of people. He placed government officials in a clearly higher end of his signing space with his gaze directed towards that space. In contrast, he placed Deaf people at the lower end of the signing space.

GOVERNMENT IX MAKE US FOOL

Here, the index for the government was placed higher up, and the pronoun ‘us’ (referring to Deaf people including himself) was placed lower in the signing space. Such dramatic spatial contrast was not necessary in terms of the factual information, but it assisted the audience to understand visually the huge difference in the status of the government and Deaf people.

Most people who are in a low-context communication situation favour a logical, analytical, action-oriented way of communication, accommodating individual needs of each party involved in communication (Guffey, et al., 2014). When Tshepo gave a presentation to the group, he prepared well and gave the information in a logical, clear manner. For example, he first introduced the topic, then explained what it was about, before providing detailed information, so that audiences would naturally follow the logical progression of ideas and there was no confusion.

Register 3 is also understood as low-context as he interacted with Mandy as someone outside his own culture. He did not rely on contextual clues to convey his messages but tried to use clear and explicit language. Tshepo shared detailed information with Mandy. He did not only repeat the signs alone, but he also signed

the word, fingerspelled the word, located and pointed at the sign, and explained the meaning of the signs, and so on. This is a feature of low-context communication.

Like in Register 1, Register 3 also favours the use of both verbal and nonverbal elements. When Tshepo realized that Mandy did not understand his signs, he changed his strategy to use more nonverbal, illustrative elements to explain the concept. He also manipulated the use of signing space and speed to elaborate on what he was illustrating. For example, he made very clear references to people and places by pointing at different parts of the signing space, almost in an exaggerated manner. It seems that he paid attention to the details of the information and avoided the risk of confusion. Low-context cultures are said to pay extra attention to nonverbal messages and gestures when making conversation (Hall & Hall, 1990). Tshepo also used mouthing to illustrate what he was referring to. As mentioned earlier, it was as if English was at times used as a lingua franca for Tshepo and Mandy. It is just like when a Deaf person meets a hearing person, and they use mouthing to make themselves understood.

Repetition was also used to ensure Mandy understood him. Repetition can be considered as a feature of a low-context conversation, as the aim is to make understanding easy. Self-correction after errors is also important when you are engaged in low-context communication.

Tshepo used these low-context strategies in communication with Mandy because she came from a different racial and cultural background, so she had less knowledge about the Black Deaf community in South Africa where he comes from. As Rabiah, (2018) explains, language cannot be separated from culture, and if cultural background is not shared language has to change to accommodate such gaps in knowledge.

4.10.3 Register 2: High Context

The beginning of the conversation between Tshepo and Xolile is low context because they did not know each other well. As soon as he got to know her better (which was within the first few minutes), his conversation with her changed into that of a high-context one.

At the beginning, Tshepo asked questions to get to know Xolile. This happens in a semi-formal situation (meeting someone for the first time). This was the only time Xolile produced substantial signing. After Tshepo got onto his signing, Xolile seldom took floor and only responded in brief ways (nods, headshakes, saying YES or NO). It is where Tshepo became confident to speak with her freely without worrying about making mistakes. His conversation with her had become more informal.

Interestingly, in such high-context conversation, Tshepo mainly used lexical signs to convey the information. He did not elaborate much but carried on with what he wanted to say. The verbal elements used in this register can be 'low' variety, as they understood and shared a unique lexicon of Black signs, which are not understood by the general Deaf community in South Africa.

This is reflected by his signing space that was contained within the regular space. Tshepo hardly went out of the regular space to elaborate on people or objects. So, when he described the government and Deaf people, he simply placed them in front of him using indexes, without using a contrastive structure. i.e., placing the former at a higher space and the latter in a lower space. Also, for the example of Deaf people coming from different provinces, with Xolile, Tshepo simply signed one simple sign in a neutral signing space (DEAF-ACROSS-COUNTRY-COME-HERE-AT-JOHANNEBURG). He did not elaborate how people from different provinces would gather in Johannesburg, yet Xolile understood it perfectly well. A high-context culture tends to focus on the context of the story, rather than how words are used (Halliday, 1989).

The fact that his gaze was mostly focused on Xolile can also be explained in terms of less frequent use of nonverbal features. When a variety of gaze is used, it helps add different layers of effects. However, in Register 2, Tshepo did not really utilise this function of gaze and simply kept eye contact with Xolile and focused on conveying the information.

Other features of high-context communication identified in Register 2 included fewer repetitions, more errors, and fewer self-corrections. It was because he was focusing more on the internalized understandings of what is communicated (Nishimura et al., 2008). This was possible as Tshepo was confident that with Xolile language could be

used as a vehicle to convey such internalised understanding, not as something that he must pay attention to make it clear and explicit.

This allowed Tshepo to communicate much more content than he managed to do in Register 3 with Mandy as is evident in the discussion below.

For example, he provided more detailed information about what was actually happening to Deaf people in Tembisa. He started: “Did you hear that Deaf Tembisa has succeeded in getting the government housing subsidy?” and went straight into talking about how it happened and who made it happen. With Mandy, he spent most of his time trying to establish where Tembisa was, by signing, fingerspelling, explaining the location, and so on. The duration of the conversation was more or less the same for these two registers, but Tshepo managed to convey more information with Xolile, as he did not have to explain the background information.

In terms of the organisation of the discourse, with Xolile, he did not follow any clear or systematic structure. He jumped from one topic to another, sometimes covering five different topics in one stretch of his turn. For example, he talked about what happened to the ten Deaf people who live in Tembisa who succeeded in getting housing subsidies, explained how to apply the housing projects in general, how South Africa government has supported the Deaf community, and how he supported one political party in particular, why this party is important to him, how settlers found diamonds in the land of Black people and how the ancestors got angry, and so on. Then he went back to the same topic he has started (how Tembisa people managed to obtain housing subsidies). Such disarrayed presentation of information is characteristic of a high-context culture as the addressee was expected to reconstruct the information and understand the message.

4.11. Summary

Tshepo has shown that he adjusted his signing style depending on whom he was conversing with as well as different situations (presentation to an audience versus one-on-one conversation). While the degree of differences may vary, it was found that Register 1 (presentation to a mixed-race audience) and 3 (Black-to-White conversation) often shared similar features of formal register while Register 2 (Black-

to-Black) exhibited more features of an informal situation, for example, more one-handed signs, more errors, lack of self-corrections, less organised structure, and so on.

This can be explained by Halls' notion of high- and low-contexts. With a mixed audience, the interaction tends to be low-context as the signer cannot assume shared background knowledge. It is also a prepared presentation, so the aim was to deliver a clear and logical message. With a White partner, even though it was no longer a formal presentation, it is still a very low-context interaction as two parties came from very different racial and cultural backgrounds and could not rely on contextual clues. With a Black signer, the main Black participant quickly entered a high-context conversation, despite the fact that they met for the first time on that day. The understanding of shared culture changed their register to informal and subsequently change their language use and discourse strategies.

My findings support previous studies which indicated that Black signers have a distinct language variety which is not shared by the White members of the Deaf community, but that when interacting with a White person or with a mixed-race audience, the Black signer can, and does, change his/her ways of signing to achieve effective communication.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1. Summary of Research

The focus of my study was to investigate how people use language differently depending on the race of their interlocutor as well as different contexts. More specifically, this research aimed at exploring how a Black Deaf signer would adjust his signing across three different registers:

- Register 1: A formal presentation to an audience of a mixed race
- Register 2: A semi-formal conversation to a Black signer
- Register 3: A semi-formal conversation to a White signer

I have asked four Deaf people to be part of my research:

i. A Black Deaf male signer as the main participant
ii. A Black Deaf female signer to be a conversation partner in Register 2 as well as be part of the audience for Register 1
iii. A White Deaf female signer to be a conversation partner in Register 3 as well as be part of the audience for Register 1
iv. a White Deaf male signer to be part of the audience for Register 1

My research questions were as follows:

- Does a Black signer adjust his/her signing depending on the race of his/her addressee (interlocutor)? In other words, are there any differences in conversations between signers of the same race as opposed to those between signers of different races (Black and White)?
- If yes, what are the unique features of Black-Black signing compared to Black-White signing?
- Does the level of formality influence such adjustment in signing?

My answer to the first question is yes. The main participant did adjust his way of signing, depending on his conversational partner. His mouth patterns, gaze

behaviours, choice of handedness, size and speed of signing all exhibit differences when he talked to the Black and the White partner. Some features were relatively similar; others differ significantly.

In terms of discourse features, Black-to-Black and Black-to-White conversations shared the same or similar style of the conversation. For turn-taking, the main participant led the floor and his conversation partners responded when necessary – so there were not many turns taken in either register. This was the nature of the setting of their conversation. However, it was observed that turn-taking took place more quickly and spontaneously with the Black partner – for example, the main participant rarely waited for his partner to finish her response but started his turn overlapping with it. In contrast, turn-taking between Black and White partners is more carefully executed, with the main participant waiting his partner's turn to finish completely. So, he adapted to a more structured approach for White participant to finish the conversation. For indexing, repetitions, and conversation repairs, there were significant differences between Black-to-Black and Black-to-White signers.

With regard to Question 2, Black-to-Black signing was mainly characterised by more character's gaze (through role-shifting), more one-handed signs, regular signing space (not so big, not so small), fast signing speed, fewer repetitions, more frequent use of indexing, and more frequent errors (often without repairs).

With regard to Question 3, the level of formality does seem to play a part, as Register 1 (formal presentation) often exhibits different characteristics compared to Register 2 and 3 (one-on-one conversations). In all registers, the main participant was responsible for selecting a topic of conversation/presentation and lead the interaction. The difference was found in different ways of sharing the same information in three different registers.

Interestingly, sometimes Register 1 and Register 3 shared similar characteristics which was not shared by Register 2 (Black-to-Black conversation).

For instance, the main participant, for Register 1 and 3, signed clearly and slowly, using a bigger signing space, and using more citation forms of the signs. In Register 2 with the Black partner, he adhered to a regular space, signed faster, and used many ellipsis and assimilation of signs.

The main participant's consciousness toward his language use also differed in three registers. In Register 1, he seemed to pay more attention to *how* the information is presented (not so much about *what*, as he had prepared the talk and knew what he was going to say). For example, he often offered two variants of the same sign to accommodate a mixed audience. He would also look at the audience to check if his signing was understood. In contrast, in Register 2, he seemed to have focused on conveying the information, and did not pay much attention to the language itself. This is why he made errors and repairs, or repetitions only happened for clarification and emphasis of the content of what he was saying. In Register 3, he focused equally on language and information. He ensured that he would use the signs that would be understood by the White signer (if not, he fingerspelled or used another sign), or add more explanation to what he was saying so that his message was conveyed successfully.

In terms of the reliance on context, Register 1 has limited connection with the audience (all of them were strangers when the presentation started), and the relationship between them is characterised with low context. Thus, the main participant ensured his signing was understood through clear and explicit use of language. In contrast, in Register 2, the main participant relied heavily on the assumed shared knowledge with the Black partner. There was a lot of unspoken information which got transferred during communication, which is a feature of a high-context conversation. The relationship was high-context, even though they did not know each other at the beginning, because they shared similar cultural and racial background. They rarely showed evidence of miscommunication and misunderstanding even though the main participant made many errors or ellipsis (so his partner often had to 'read between the lines'). With a White partner, he reverted to a low-context way of communication as he could not assume his partner shared similar knowledge and background.

All of this suggests that the relationship between the signers as well as the context of conversation has a huge impact on the conversation style.

5.2. Limitation of Research and Future Recommendations

I know this research is not sufficient to provide a comprehensive view on register variation according to race and level of formality. The number of participants was small, and I only applied a limited theoretical framework – using other theoretical frameworks may lead to different results.

In future, we need to investigate more participants with different racial, cultural backgrounds.

If l were to conduct this study again, there are a number of changes l would like to make.

I would like to include different sets of participants, for example, a couple who are in a long-term relationship to see a variety of relationships and how they affect language use. We will need at least several main participants, and not only Black but White to get a greater perspective on racial adaptation (so maybe also focus on a White signer and if s/he would adjust their signing for a Black signer). This will allow me to identify, highlight, compare and discuss more examples, which will lead to more valid conclusions.

This is the study l managed to offer within the scope of Masters research. Even though it is small, the features identified in this project will hopefully provide insight for future researchers.

I hope in future there will be a wider range of studies which can offer a deeper understanding of what influences conversation in SASL.

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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Letter

Research Office R14/49 Mkhize

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: H18/05/10**

PROJECT TITLE Influence of race and formality on Black SASL (South African Sign Language)

INVESTIGATOR(S)

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Miss S Mkhize **DATE CONSIDERED** SLLM/ 18 May 2018 **DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

Approved **EXPIRY DATE** 30 September 2021 (Professor J Knight) 01 October 2018 **DATE CHAIRPERSON** cc: Supervisor : Dr M Kaneko

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DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____/_____/_____ _____

Date **Signature**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Simphiwe Mkhize and I am currently a Master of Art degree student with the Department of South African Sign Language (SASL) at the University of the Witwatersrand

I am conducting a research project seeking to understand the language variation in SASL. The purpose of this research is to understand why there is an adaption happens between two different people in the conversation.

I would like to invite you to be part of this research. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to give a short presentation on a given topic and have a conversation with another Deaf person. The entire process may take up to one hour. The conversation will be in a place where you are comfortable in. I will analyse my data and present it in my Master of Art's dissertation by transcribing and highlighting linguistic features.

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to give consent to be filmed. I will be using a pseudonym to refer to you as a participant in my research report. The information you give to me, as well as the video recording, will be kept securely on a password-protected computer and not disclosed to anyone else. However, please note the edited video clips and still-frames will be used in research outputs related to the project, for example publications in journals, an open access on-line data base, conferences, public seminars and seminars for the Deaf community. Thus anonymity will not be guaranteed.

Your participation to this project is voluntary and you can withdraw any time you like before analysis starts. You will not be remunerated. You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating.

If you agree to participate, please sign the attached consent forms.

If you have any questions more about my research report, please feel free to contact me: Simphiwe Mkhize by my mobile phone 0720300278 or via email at simphiwe@edeaf.co.za.

If you have any queries, concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), telephone + 27(0)11 717 1408, email hrec- medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za/ Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Your sincerely,

Simphiwe Mkhize

Appendix C: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Influence of Race and Formality on Black SASL (South African Sign Language)

I.....(Full names)

being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate for the above- mentioned research project. I have read the information provided. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.

5.

I understand that:

- I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions, without disadvantage.
- The research can be used for academic purposes, such as journal or book publications, conference presentations, workshops, and so on.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____/ _____

Appendix D: Videorecording Consent Form

VIDEO RECORDING CONSENT FORM

Influence of Race and Formality on Black SASL (South African Sign Language)

I, _____ (recorded person's full name), do hereby consent to the use of the recording of my signing.

I agree that video recordings shall remain the property of the researcher and Wits University.

I understand that my face is identifiable in these recordings.

I understand that the video or still image of my signing will be used for academic purposes, such as journal or book publications, conference presentations, workshops, teaching, and postgraduate students 'research projects.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____/ _____