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Rethinking Inclusion as Mundanity: Insights from an Experimental Bilingual Kindergarten Classe LSF at École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus in France

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Abstract In this article, I demonstrate how hybrid language practices allow for children to make use of their full linguistic repertoire in negotiating the social and communicative demands of the school environment (Axelrod in Early Child Educ J, p 1–8, 2014). I argue that the unusual case of classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus directly challenges mainstream progressive assumptions of inclusion that effectively exclude deaf children from their deaf peers. Current so-called progressive models of inclusion often isolate deaf learners in mainstream classroom settings with non-deaf classmates and adults. Classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus offers insights for rethinking inclusion in early childhood classrooms in the ways that it provokes us to consider the inclusive potential of hybrid linguistic spaces for bilingual learners.

Keywords Bilingual education · Early childhood education · Deaf education · Translanguaging · Language learners · Linguistic diversity

A Typical Day at École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus

Located on the outskirts of the historic, national capital Toulouse in southern France, classe LSF is the Ministry of National Education's model deaf bilingual kindergarten. Teaching in both French written and sign (LSF—Langue des Signes Française), the school is housed in the neighborhood public preschool, École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus in Ramonville-Saint Agne. On this sunny June morning in 2011, it is recess time and the playground is full of children, some of who are deaf and some who are not. Vanessa Andrieu, the lead teacher of classe LSF, is standing next to a climbing wall that is part of a larger play structure. Vanessa, who is deaf, is signing with her young student Raina, who is complaining that a non-deaf child named Dax hit her. Dax is currently one of several children clambering up the climbing wall. Vanessa and Raina have this exchange in sign

Vanessa: Who? Which one?
Raina: That boy!
Vanessa: Him? Dax?

Using her voice, Vanessa calls, "Dax!" He doesn't notice Vanessa calling him so she reaches out to tap Dax on his shoulder.

Vanessa: Dax, come here

With the young girl and boy standing before her, Vanessa looks at Raina, signing, "Was he the boy that hit you?" Raina signs, "Yes." Vanessa gets down on her knees to be eye-level with Dax. She speaks, "You shouldn't hit her." That hurts. Don't do it again. Sign to her, "I'm sorry."

Dax signs, "I'm sorry," then quickly runs off to play with a waiting friend. Vanessa turns to Raina,

Vanessa: Are you OK? He didn't do it on purpose. He was just careless.

Introduction

In many ways this scene is unremarkable and resonates with similar playground scenes around the world. But classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus are

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remarkable because of the way this class, school, and community conceptualize language diversity and put into practice bilingual education in hybrid deaf and non-deaf spaces. This exchange on the playground between a deaf student and a deaf teacher with a non-deaf student in the same public school is remarkable because of its rarity. As I will argue in what follows, École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus provides an innovative example of inclusion that takes into account language diversity as it relates to bilingual deaf and non-deaf learners. Class LSF is unique in that there is a critical mass of deaf children and adults within hybrid deaf and non-deaf language spaces, which maximizes the potential of linguistic, academic and social development—for both deaf and non-deaf learners—through exposure to deaf and non-deaf signing and speaking peers (Kellerhals 2004; Leroy 2013).

As I will demonstrate, this model of inclusion[1] addresses many of the most pressing problems in contemporary deaf education for young children, most especially a devaluation of sign language[2] and of the importance of deaf children interacting with deaf *and* non-deaf peers and adults in hybrid sign and spoken-language spaces. In what follows, I will argue that it is the mundanity of this playground exchange that makes it important to the accomplishment of inclusion, because it is precisely these kinds of exchanges that make up the material of a shared social life. This case example from France provides American readers with insights that go beyond issues of deaf education, into considering the ways communicative difference can help us to reimagine how we think about inclusion and exclusion in our increasingly pluralistic classrooms and societies. The case of classe LSF also addresses the problems of bilingual education more broadly by decoupling language difference and disability as it relates to inclusion and inclusive settings.

In this article, I use a discussion of screenshots from a film of this playground scene and the case example of classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus as a starting point in order to demonstrate how hybrid language practices allow for children to make use of their full linguistic repertoire in negotiating the social and communicative demands of the school environment (Axelrod 2014). I argue that the unusual case of classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus directly challenges mainstream progressive assumptions of inclusion that effectively exclude deaf children from their deaf peers. Current so-called progressive models of inclusion often isolate deaf learners in mainstream classroom settings with non-deaf classmates and adults. Classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus offers insights for rethinking inclusion in early childhood classrooms in the ways that it provokes us to consider the inclusive potential of hybrid linguistic spaces for bilingual learners.

As Valente and Boldt (2015), Snoddon and Underwood (2014), Fjord (2001), and others have written about in sociocentric societies worldwide, the burden of deaf communicative difference does not—in an inclusive environment—solely reside in the deaf individual. Because children are dependent on their parents, families, communities, and schools, Snoddon and Underwood assert that we must understand both the deaf child and others in their families and communities "as plurilingual learners of signed language in recognition of the need to broadly support and endorse their emergent, hybrid, yet often functional linguistic and cultural competences" (p. 4). Here, developing linguistic and cultural competence is assumed as important for both children and for their larger support networks, because both are understood as benefitting from communicative success across multiple caring communities.

Background and Literature Review

Deaf Learners, Sign Languages, and Schools for the Deaf

Researchers in education, anthropology, linguistics, and elsewhere have long argued against pathologizng assumptions which have historically marginalized deaf learners, sign languages, and schools for the deaf (e.g. Erting 1978; Klima and Bellugi 1979; Johnson and Erting 1984; Valente 2011). In deaf schools and programs around the world, sign languages—if introduced at all—are typically assumed to be the second, not first, language to be acquired by a deaf child (Valente 2011). The nearly universal assumption that deaf children are disabled (an audiological deficit perspective)

[1] Progressive-seeming inclusion policies that aim to provide least restrictive environments for children with disabilities are, in fact, detrimental for deaf children because such policies call for practices that place deaf children in mainstream classrooms without proficient signing peers and adults. In this paper, I define the term inclusion to mean the meaningful academic, social, and language participation of deaf children in classrooms with deaf and non-deaf peers and adults who are skilled signers. For more discussion about inclusive deaf bilingual education, please see Valente and Boldt's (2016) article "The Curious Case of the Deaf and Contested Landscapes of Bilingual Education".

[2] Linguists characterize sign language as a complex visual-gestural language with linguistic processes functionally equivalent to spoken language (e.g. French, English) phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (e.g. Cuxac 2000; Valli et al. 2011). For readers interested in learning more about sign languages around the world, visit the World Federation of the Deaf (website at http://wfdeaf.org). The World Federation of the Deaf is an international non-governmental organization and central body that represents almost 70 million deaf people worldwide and 133 country membership associations charged with the aim to ensure the legal protection and linguistic rights of deaf people through the recognition of the approximately 138 sign languages worldwide.

rather than a sign language minority (a visual/gestural-orientation perspective) is further complicated by the fact that ninety to ninety-five percent of deaf children are born to non-deaf parents who have little or no prior knowledge about the critical importance of their children having early access to sign language and deaf peers and adults (Valente 2011). Many parents and early childhood educators are unaware of research that shows that deaf children engaged in spoken-signed dual language acquisition demonstrate language development equivalent to or better than deaf children in spoken language-only environments (e.g., Grosjean 2010; Lantos 2012; Petitto et al. 2011). Likewise, many parents and educators are also unaware that deaf children with better sign language skills have stronger literacy outcomes, regardless of whether or not their parents sign (Leeson and Saeed 2012; MacSweeney 1998; Valente and Boldt 2015).

Worldwide today, the majority of deaf children are not being provided access to sign language education (Grosjean 2001). This absence has dire consequences for deaf learners. For instance, Luft (2012) describes how early language delays experienced by deaf children materializes into significant deficiencies in academic skills. Central to arguments against the use of sign language in educational settings are misconceptions about language emergence that suggest learning more than one language simultaneously will impede or slow down a child's ability to develop language fluency (e.g. Grosjean 2001; Souto-Manning 2006, 2007; Valente and Boldt 2015). Non-deaf parents, concerned that their deaf children be able to communicate with them and others in the non-deaf world, are often anxious to maximize competencies in spoken language reception and use. Myths and misconceptions that bi/multilingualism is a deficit continue to be pervasive in policies that shape approaches to deaf education despite research demonstrating learning multiple languages can, in fact, enrich students' linguistic as well as academic, social, and emotional development (Grosjean 2001; Axelrod 2014; Flores and Rosa 2015). While France and the European Union do not track statistics on education outcomes for the deaf such as unemployment, European Union reports do show the risk for living in poverty is significantly higher for those with identified disabilities and with the contemporary financial crisis, budget cuts have lead to the "direct budget cuts; closure and merging of services; cuts in staffing, pay, and conditions; cuts in independent living support; delays in payments; delay of developments and reforms; longer waiting lists; more standardised/institutional services; non-indexation and deductions; users charge and cuts in benefits; and changed conditions for entitlement" (http://www.eud.eu/news/deaf-and-employment-crisis/).

French Deaf Bilingual Education

In France, Law no. 91-73 of 18 January 1991 guaranteed deaf children an education and offered parents the "freedom of choice between a bilingual communication, sign language and French language, and communication in the French language" as a fundamental language right. The chief aim of the 1991 law was to facilitate deaf children acquiring a language, whether French or French sign language (interview, June 15, 2012). This was followed by Law no. 2005-102 of 11 February 2005, which guaranteed the right of children with disabilities to be placed in integrated settings in local schools. While in some ways these French national policies on deaf education may be seen as progressive, in practice these policies in France (as in the U.S. and elsewhere) have not led to the widespread provision of sign language in deaf children's mainstream or segregated classrooms. Within France, only four percent of deaf schools/programs approach LSF as the deaf child's first language and use LSF as the primary language for classroom instruction and for organizing class life (Leroy 2013). In these LSF classrooms, written French is taught as the second language. Ninety-one percent of deaf schools and classrooms use spoken and written French as the first language and LSF is considered either a "tool" or the second language (Leroy 2013). Most deaf schools or programs that provide classes for students to learn LSF, typically offer LSF classes 2 hours per week. Within these recognized bilingual schools and classes, there is a split between classrooms in which teaching takes place through sign language and those in which LSF is a language course offering. Courtin (2010) maintains that there are only three schools in France (Paris, Poitiers, and Toulouse) that have the sign proficient staff as well as structural, educational, and political supports to implement bilingual education programs that employ LSF effectively and as the primary mode of instruction. The current structure of deaf schooling, Courtin (2010) argues, deprives deaf learners of optimal opportunities for linguistic and cognitive development. Critical for each of the three schools is that they have an adult fluent in LSF as the lead teacher or co-teacher. Courtin states that most bilingual schools and classes offering courses in LSF use "a mixture of spoken French and sign supported systems" (p. 185).

As my research demonstrates, classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus provide an exemplar of inclusive bilingual education for deaf and non-deaf children. In the next section, I provide an overview of the comparative study of deaf kindergartens that brought me to classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus.

Kindergartens for the Deaf in Three Countries Method and Project

The study of classe LSF is part of a larger cross-cultural, comparative video ethnographic research project, "Kindergartens for the Deaf in Three Countries: Japan, France, and the United States," funded by The Spencer Foundation. The project examines the language socialization and the initial schooling experiences of deaf bilingual kindergartners in classrooms that use bilingual pedagogies and are taught by teachers themselves deaf (Tobin et al. 2010). In brief, my colleagues and I made ethnographic films of a typical day in Japanese, French, and American bilingual kindergarten classrooms to use as cues for interviewing teachers, administrators, parents, and stakeholders about bilingual education. We adapted Joseph Tobin and colleague's *Preschool in Three Cultures* video ethnographic methods for the project (Tobin et al. 1989, 2009). Ethnographic interviews over the course of three years with the teachers and supervisors overseeing classe LSF provide insights into the language and educational ideologies of this unique class, school, and community.

The children in classe LSF spend the majority of their day with deaf peers in their own classroom engaging in typical kindergarten activities of early literacy, mathematics, science, and the socialization of young children into school life, all conducted in LSF. During lunchtime in the cafeteria, playtime on the playground, gym class, and other schoolwide activities, the deaf children of class LSF join together with their non-deaf peers. Occasionally non-deaf students visit with classe LSF students for joint activities organized by partnering non-deaf and deaf teachers.[3]

Classe LSF is an experimental bilingual classroom originally established by parents who convinced local educational officials "to accept a class of deaf children, meeting in their own classroom and operating independently, who would participate fully in all aspects of school life, including breaks, the cafeteria, and so forth. In this way, deaf and hearing children were placed in the same environment" (Brusque 1994, p. 140). The French Ministry of Education has carefully monitored the outcomes of classe LSF in order to understand if it is a more effective approach to the education of young deaf children. Central to their work is that the teachers are deaf or native and/or fluent signers themselves and use both written French and French Sign Language (LSF), with the primary modality for classroom instruction and organization of classroom life being LSF.

Notably, Vanessa Andrieu is one of the first certified kindergarten teachers in France to be deaf. It also is significant and unusual that it is a bilingual class embedded within the local public preschool. At the time of the interviews with informants from École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus, there were only fourteen programs using LSF as their first language in operation across France, but Vanessa and Sophie's class was the only classe LSF to be formally recognized as part of the Ministry of Education and their class was beginning to be touted as a model bilingual education program. This growing recognition of the success of the Maternelle Gabriel Sajus is due to their pioneering implementation and development of an adaptive pedagogy that meets the precise academic requirements of the French National Curriculum. Far more than just translating the National Curriculum into sign, classe LSF teachers adapt the curriculum, their teaching practices and the organization of classroom life to match visual-gestural-embodied dynamics that characterize sign interactions. In collaboration with non-deaf colleagues at École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus, classe LSF teachers also strategize about how to adapt for hybrid deaf and non-deaf spaces through whole school community and shared classroom projects.[4]

Video Data Findings and Analysis

Negotiating Hybrid Language and Community Spaces on the Playground

Why does understanding classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus as a hybrid space matter? I argue that understanding hybridity as it relates to both language and inclusion allows for much more fluid and complex understandings of language use in inclusive multilingual settings. I extend this perspective on hybrid language use to argue for a notion of hybridity in inclusive learning spaces, allowing for the recognition of the multiple, shifting interactional contexts in which we all live and learn. In this instance, I am focusing on an event on a playground that occurred between a deaf teacher and student and a non-deaf student. My point is that the experience of successfully negotiating these mundane daily events is at the heart of what inclusion means for both deaf and non-deaf children.

To understand the term "hybrid", I point to Gutiérrez et al. (1999a, b) whose sociolinguistic research draws attention to how language diversity in learning environments are "immanently hybrid" (p. 287). Hybridity allows

[3] While the school administrators recognize that they have not yet achieved a true two way model in full time classroom interaction, they describe themselves as engaged in a process and working toward that.

[4] I am currently working on a description of the "adaptive pedagogy" that was developed and put into practice in part by Marie-Paule Kellerhals and her colleagues, with the goal of adapting the French National Curriculum for multiple classes LSF (kindergarten, primary, and secondary classes) in the local public schools.

for a dynamic understanding of the language and learning socialization processes of young bilingual learners. This sociolinguistic take on schooling is important for thinking about bilingual education and inclusion because "hybrid activities, roles, and practices" can be transformative and mutually constitutive (Gutiérrez et al. 1999a, b). Equally as important, hybrid language and community practices foster a culture of collaboration that is vital for sustaining equitable diverse learning contexts (Gutiérrez et al. 1999a, b). At École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus, hybridity materializes in the multiple interactional contexts bilingual learners navigate. In classe LSF, all adults and children use LSF for daily classroom life, but each individual has differing levels of fluency, age of acquisition of LSF and/or French (e.g. written, speech reading skills), deaf or non-deaf parents/siblings, etc. Hybridity also materializes in the multiple interactional contexts on the playground, in gym, or at school-wide events where all deaf and non-deaf students, teachers, and staff use French, LSF, and emergent forms of communication to engage one another.

The scene on the playground that opens this article is one example of the hybrid use of language that allows for the formation of inclusive spaces for deaf and non-deaf alike. Most obviously, the ways Vanessa moves fluidly between sign and spoken language in an exchange between a deaf child named Raina and her non-deaf classmate Dax evidences the nuances of negotiating hybrid language spaces. For readers unfamiliar with sign language, I will revisit the playground incident with screenshots of key moments to show how the hybridity functioned in this instance.

A Closer Look at the Playground Scene

The scene depicted in Fig. 1 opens with Vanessa being approached on the playground by Raina, complaining that a boy hit her. Vanessa and Raina use LSF to communicate with one another throughout the whole scene. Vanessa uses spoken French to communicate with the non-deaf student Dax, the classmate who slapped Raina and she asks the children to communicate with one another in LSF.

Though we cannot see this LSF exchange in motion, this screenshot (Fig. 1) shows LSF in use in the placement of Vanessa's right arm and her handshape—the thumb and pinky fingers extended and remaining fingers tucked in. Raina is beginning to point out the boy who hit her. She positions her body so that it includes both Vanessa and the boy in her field of vision. This is critical to allow her to stay in communication with her teacher. Notice both Vanessa and Raina space themselves throughout this whole scene in order to maintain face-to-face communication and to be able to obtain eye contact as needed.

In this next screenshot (Fig. 2), we can see Vanessa motioning to Dax with her right arm, reaching out to get his attention. It is the norm in LSF, as well as many sign languages around the world, to wave in someone's field of vision to get her/his attention, as this signals the beginning of a conversation. At the same time, Vanessa is voicing in French, "Hey, Dax!" trying to get his attention. However, Dax does not see her gesture and he cannot hear Vanessa, as the playground is too loud with the voices of so many children speaking at once, laughter, shrieks, and all the usual commotion of recess.

In Fig. 3, after failing to get Dax's attention by voicing his name and telling him, "Hey, come here…", Vanessa taps Dax's shoulder. The tapping of someone's shoulder to get their attention is another familiar feature of deaf cultural exchanges and sign language. In this screenshot, Dax realizes Vanessa is calling for him and he looks up to her face. Through past interactions with Vanessa in which she deliberately taught Dax and his classmates that the norms for deaf communication, Dax understands that to communicate with Vanessa who is deaf, he must position his body to be face-to-face. For those accustomed to sign language communication, it is understood that the accepted norm is to position oneself so that face contact can be sustained and

Fig. 1 Vanessa communicates in LSF with Raina

Fig. 2 Vanessa communicates in French with Dax

Fig. 3 Vanessa gestures and speaks to Dax

so that there is a clear view of the upper body. Sign language is made up mostly of a combination of non-manual facial expressions, handshapes, as well as the placement and movement of hands, arms, and body through space.

In Fig. 4, Vanessa gestures to Dax with a wave and voices that he "come here." Note Dax having initially made eye contact with Vanessa maintains face-to-face contact with her throughout the exchange.

In these consecutive screenshots (Fig. 5), we can see Vanessa, positioning her body in front of Dax but her face is looking downward toward Raina, make a motion that signs "a slap" to confirm with Raina that, indeed, Dax is the boy who hit her.

Finally, in this screenshot (Fig. 6), we can see Vanessa kneeling down with a side view to Raina and Dax, who are facing one another. Vanessa, tells Dax in spoken French, "You shouldn't hurt her. Don't hit her again. Sign to her you're sorry." Dax now looks directly at Raina and she looks intently at him. She grasps her arm to show him where he has hurt her. His right and left-handed palms face one another as he makes the handshape and motion to sign, "I'm sorry." He turns and runs to play with his friend, another non-deaf child with the red ball cap on backwards who has been watching this scene unfold.

Fig. 4 Vanessa positions her body in front of Dax and Raina

Analyzing Hybrid Language and Inclusive Community Practices on the Playground

To argue that this scene of hybrid language use is simultaneously mundane and significant, I make use of sociolinguistic theories that challenge the boundaries that we typically assume to make up language. These theories point out that in the identifying of a language there is the presupposition that there is something in opposition, that is, modes of communication that do not count as language, which effectively denies or overlooks the ideological characteristics of what distinguishes between language and non-language (Irvine and Gal 2000). For instance, Jørgensen et al. (2011) explain how the typical conceptualizations and conventions of labeling language use contexts as "English" or "Spanish" are, in fact, ideological constructions that do not accurately reflect the heterogeneity and complexities of everyday communicative practices. Importantly, Orellana et al. (2012) point to, "the tendency to dichotomize home and school, everyday and academic, formal and informal ways with words, and to treat language in bounded ways" (p. 373). Hybrid conceptualizations of language practices allow for attending to the multiple linguistic tools we use to relate to one another.

Within this new sociolinguistic research on the hybrid features of language interactions (e.g. Agha 2007; Rosa 2015), the concepts of heteroglossic and transglossic perspectives of language have been put forth in order to describe the language practices of bilinguals as complex, dynamic, and fluid processes. The longstanding dominant monoglossic perspective of language views bilingualism as a "double monolingualism" and adheres to monolingual norms for language development and practices (Flores and Rosa 2015, p. 153). In contrast, a heteroglossic perspective originates from Bakhtin's use of heteroglossia to describe not only different language practices but also the differing cultural forces that drive them (Garcia and Wei 2014). In other words, Flores and Rosa (2015) explain heteroglossia captures how "languages are seen as interacting in complex ways in the linguistic practices and social relations of multilingual people" (Flores and Rosa 2015, p. 154). Moreover, Flores and Rosa (2015), in describing this hybrid conceptualization of language practices as heteroglossic, build on García and Torres-Guevara's (2009) as well as Rymes' (2010) work on the heterogeneous communicative and community practices that are a characteristic of all language users. Rymes offers the notion of "communicative repertoires" to indicate "the collection of ways individuals use language and literacy and other means of communication (gestures, dress, posture, or accessories) to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate" (Flores and Rosa 2015 citing Rymes, p. 528, 2010).

Fig. 5 Vanessa speaking in French tells Dax to apologize to Raina in LSF

Fig. 6 Dax apologizes to Raina in LSF

Vanessa's exchange with a deaf and non-deaf child using multiple languages and modes evidences the relational improvisational processes and heterogeneous tools used to navigate hybrid linguistic and cultural spaces (Wortham 2012). Raina begins this exchange by approaching Vanessa, who is familiar to her because she is her teacher in classe LSF. Raina has the expectation that she can communicate with Vanessa and receive the justice she is hoping for. Vanessa understands her concern and responds by using multiple modes to gain Dax's attention, allowing the exchange among the three to begin. She then communicates to Dax using spoken language but inflected with what we might call a deaf sensibility in the positioning of her body and lines of sight. All three participants move and position themselves throughout the exchange in ways that maximize access to visual and physical features of their communication. Vanessa then makes the decision to require that the non-deaf child apologize in sign language—*not* spoken French—sends a message that not only is the deaf child an equal but that sign is valued as a form of communication that is accessible in this instance to both children. What is important to note is that both spoken and sign language blend with physical and gestural features, combining them into one hybrid event in which neither can be said to stand alone as a discrete language.

Ramsey and Padden's (1998) ethnographic case example of deaf learners negotiating of hybrid language and inclusive spaces describe the children's creativity in their use of hybrid literacy practices in a classroom where ASL was used as the primary modality for instruction. Ramsey and Padden explain that children born to non-deaf parents, who typically come into contact with ASL later in life, all share the experience of negotiating always already familial and larger cultural-historical contexts that thrust them into the fragmented circumstances of first language worlds dominated by spoken languages. Senghas (2015), in explaining the complicated landscape deaf students navigate in an age of mainstreaming and inclusion, notes that "deaf students can often feel socially isolated even while physically situated within classrooms of (mostly or entirely) hearing students…and so these [deaf] students face communicative challenges that they would not experience if they were in classes with deaf peers" (p. 254). Deaf children, from the beginning, navigate a fragmented language life in which they have to find ways to make do, to fill in huge communicative gaps as they try to make sense of the world without spoken or sign language.

Not incidentally then, the non-deaf child watching the scene also suggests why a hybrid environment matters. As Hayashi and Tobin (2015) have written, it is critical to understand that learning occurs in school spaces not just between the obvious participants, but includes the children (and teachers) who are observing the scene, what they call "the gallery." In an inclusive setting, deaf and non-deaf children are immersed in daily scenes like this that allow them to take in the multiple spoken, signed, gestural and physical features of deaf/non-deaf communicative exchanges. Likewise, they experience both the possibility and the value of communicating across differences, and they are provided with important yet mundane opportunities to creatively and improvisationally develop emergent, responsive communicative strategies.

Long, in her (2004) study of an American child learning to speak Icelandic, demonstrates the critical importance of

playground and other out-of-classroom, lower stakes settings in bilingual language learning. I am arguing here that in addition to learning ways to communicate with one another across deaf/non-deaf difference, the attention to providing deaf children with full access to language and communication sets the groundwork that allows for true inclusion. That is, in these mundane exchanges where communication is successful and the children have experiences of being understood and supported, wherein their concerns, desires and grievances are met and responded to, children and adults are having true experiences of inclusion. In other words, I am arguing that inclusion means creating the necessary conditions for children to experience full, equal and reciprocal participation in a caring, responsive community.

Finally, the playground example points to the benefit of having the authority and expertise of a signing deaf adult in the lives of non-deaf and deaf child. The signing deaf adult is an insider-expert who shares many of the child's experiences of communicative and social challenges and isolation. They have both felt and learned knowledge of how to help deaf children to learn from deaf peers and adults about how to navigate hybrid non-deaf and deaf spaces, and how to interact successfully with non-deaf peers and adults. Equally important to the creation of an inclusive classroom and school community, non-deaf children are put in the presence of an authority—a teacher—who is deaf and who supports them in learning to communicate effectively with those who are deaf. In such a situation, it is not possible to marginalize or ignore the needs of deaf community members for access and participation. Dax, a non-deaf child does, in fact, sign his apology. This scene on the surface seems mundane in that children and teachers engage in these kinds of moments every day in schools all around the world. It is the dailiness of this communication exchange that makes it so significant.

Conclusion: Hybrid Language and Inclusive Spaces

Hybridity and the Importance of Deaf Multilingual Peers and Adults

Most children learn their first language(s) from their parents. As their communicative world widens, children learn to navigate one or more of these connected language communities. But for deaf children, their acquisition of a first language is unusually complicated because most are born to non-deaf parents (Snoddon & Underwood 2014; Valente and Boldt 2015), the majority of whom report knowing little or nothing about how to help their deaf child navigate the complex social, cultural, and linguistic landscapes that give shape to contemporary deaf childhood (Senghas and Monaghan 2002; Mitchell and Karchmer 2004; Valente 2011; Valente and Boldt 2015). For the majority of deaf children in France, the U.S. and in most countries, they are then placed in mainstream classrooms where they are again in a social landscape with others who do not share their experiences nor have the knowledge of how to help them navigate that setting.

With a visual orientation to language and social life, deaf learners' processes of language socialization must include the visual modality (Cicourel and Boese 1972; Erting 1982/1994; Preisler 1983). Even as some deaf learners may pick up fragments of spoken language, they are dependent on visual input for language, which for deaf children born to non-deaf parents typically leads to significant delays in the acquisition of a first language (Meadows-Orlans et al. 2004; Grosjean 2010; Petitto et al. 2011; Lantos 2012). Unlike non-deaf children whose reference group for learning their first language is their parents, deaf learners have to go outside of their families and homes to schools for the deaf to gain exposure to similarly visually oriented (e.g. lip- reading and/or signing) peers and adults. These deaf peers and adults are critical for fully maximizing the language socialization processes and potential of language users (Ramsey and Padden 1998; Erting and Kuntze 2008). However, few deaf children are given this opportunity due to mainstreaming policies and the predominance of spoken language-only education.

Deaf children's fragmented communicative existence navigating a larger speaking world compels them to improvise and be creative in order to meaningfully participate and negotiate heterogeneous and hybrid linguistic and cultural spaces encountered in their daily lives. Ethnographic studies of the language socialization of multilingual deaf learners point to children's resiliency and creativity in developing multiple communicative pathways and resources to communicate and how these children continuously learn to navigate hybrid interactional contexts and spaces across their lifetimes (Bagga-Gupta 1999; Erting and Kuntze 2008). These studies provide examples of the hybridity of language use and illustrate how language users participate meaningfully in interactional contexts using a heterogeneous collection of tools for mediating meaning making.

When connected to the scene from my research, the concept of language hybridity allows us to consider the ways deaf and non-deaf children are able to use social competencies to relate to one another and to position one another, how they make use of the teacher to get satisfaction, and all the ways they are using modes of communication to perform as competent social actors, moving into and out of positions of dominance, belonging, inclusion and exclusion that give shape to their everyday lives.

Importantly, while fully acknowledging the central role that LSF language socialization plays in the education of young deaf children, the pedagogy and curriculum in classe LSF is nevertheless a hybrid, favoring neither the French National Curriculum nor the teaching of LSF and deaf cultural norms, but holding each as critically vital outcomes. Equally important, the school's inclusion as a classroom within a larger non-deaf school allows for the possibility of hybridity occurring throughout the day, as the children mix with non-deaf children in both deaf and non-deaf spaces.

In this article, I have taken hybridity to mean the ability to negotiate and move between and among social situations competently as meaningful and equal participants in the community. The needs of deaf children compel us to rethink what is inclusion and exclusion. This is not the version of inclusion where people are just mixed with no capacity to interact. Rather, inclusion is not a noun but a verb (Valente 2016), an inclusion that emerges in the mundane events of daily classroom life. Classe LSF and École Maternelle Gabriel Sajus compel us to rethink how the potential of hybrid language and inclusive spaces allows for the meaningful participation of all children. Having a deaf bilingual classroom in a larger non-deaf public school maximizes the potential of hybrid spaces and, in turn, maximizes the potential of opportunities to learn how to be inclusive. What is key is that deaf and non-deaf children and adults interact in ways that appear to be insignificant, but in fact add up to the thousand, minute daily exchanges that are critical to overcoming exclusion for both parties. Such a hybrid inclusive space does not put the burden on the deaf person alone but it is shared with the group and larger non-deaf community.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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