

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**Pragmatic features of the deaf- a case of Ghanaian sign language and
Adamorobe sign language**

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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

2024

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF THE DEAF: A CASE OF GHANAIAN SIGN
LANGUAGE AND ADAMOROBÉ SIGN LANGUAGE**

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**A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign
Languages Education, submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Applied Linguistics)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

SEPTEMBER, 2024

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **PRISCILLA ABOAGYEWAA DANSO**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or in whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

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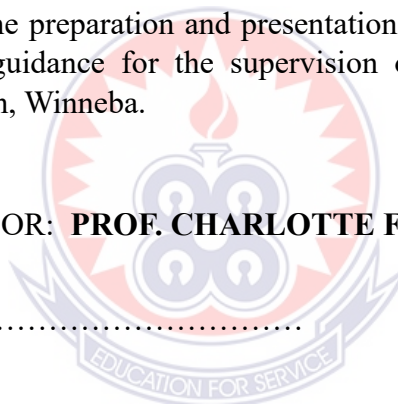
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidance for the supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **PROF. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY**

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and loved ones



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank God for his blessings and grace.

With a grateful heart I will like to extend my warmest gratitude to the following individuals and the many more who I may not be able to mention for the various ways in which they helped to make it possible for me to come this far. First, to my supervisor, Prof. Charlotte Fofu Lomotey, I am very grateful for the numerous assistance, lessons and for your useful comments needed in producing a quality work that meets the standard set. I will forever appreciate the motherly role you have played in all the moments I have come to know you.

An endless appreciation to the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba, for the numerous ways they have contributed to me developing interest in the study of Linguistics and the knowledge they have imparted on me. So, to Prof. Rebecca Akpanglo- Nartey, Dr. Kwaku Ofori, Dr. Rogers Krobea Asante, Dr. Sefa Owusu, Dr. Abraham Bisilki, I say “thank you and God bless you all”. To my colleagues and friends, I am grateful for how we continuously encourage one another to bring out the best in us. Every moment shared is an unforgettable memory. Finally, I want to thank my family for the love and their unwavering support.

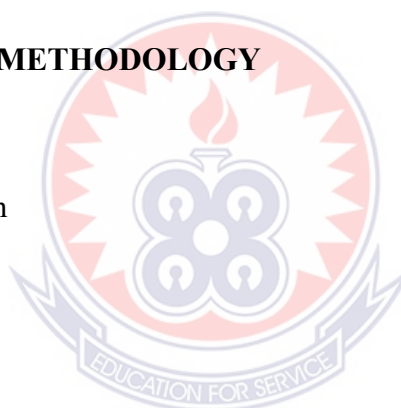
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ABSTRACT

This study explored the pragmatic features of the Deaf using Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language, and how these features are used in communication. Using Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model of human development as the framework, the study discussed the linguistic choices signers make, whose appropriateness are judged through a cultural lens, in producing some speech acts, indicating prosody, deixis, and address terms. This ethnographic study analyzed data qualitatively, using data gathered mainly through a discourse completion task (DCT) and observation. The findings revealed that the linguistic strategies the Deaf use ultimately involve a direct reference to the illocutionary force of the expression. The use of indirect strategies was equally noticeable. However, the differences in their uses were determined by the power balance between interlocutors and the degree of imposition of the acts, whereas more direct strategies were used in context where the addresser was of a lesser social status the contrast is true for indirect strategies. An array of strategies were combined for mitigation effect under all contexts but more especially when face threat seemed imminent. The functions of these pragmatic features included showing a discourse style or a cultural expectation that is direct and involvement-oriented, and has indirect and independence tendencies. Some of complex and compound strategies intensified the perlocutionary effects. Other use of these pragmatic features included expressing grammatical information, encoding emotional and affective functions, and an indication of appropriate deference and demeanour that is mutually accepted. Exposing the Deaf and the world to various pragmatic features in Sign Language implies that the Deaf can better preserve their cultural identities by utilizing the pragmatic features appropriately in various context, enhancing their control over their communication intentions and outcomes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter serves as the introduction to the entire work. It presents the background of the research, the problem statement, the objectives, the research questions, and also significance of the study. Also, the delimitation and the limitation of the study as well as how the entire thesis has been organized, are presented in this chapter.

1.1 Background to the Study

Sign language is a full-fledged human language with well-defined linguistics description, which is contrary to the perception of language being only synonymous to speech. Mulrooney (2010) argued that Sign language was initially not recognized as a full-fledge language, with any linguistic component worth studying until the work of Stokoe and two additional researchers, Dorothy Casterline and Carl Croneberg, in American Sign Language (ASL). According to Edward and Akanlig-Pare (2021), the Milan conference in 1880 made it exceptionally hard to accept the legitimacy of this claim since it ruled out that oral education is better than manual (sign) education and thus banned the use of sign language in schools. Once this resolution was passed, “the focus of deaf education shifted from teaching students reading, writing, history, and math to teaching them how to speak and lip-read” (Mulrooney, 2010, pp. 4-5). This act almost stifled the growth and recognition of sign languages. Thus, Stokoe’s monograph “not only revolutionize how educators viewed sign language, now referred to as ASL, but he altered how linguists viewed language in general” (Mulrooney, 2010, pp. 5-6).

This has led to several research works in both theoretical and applied linguistics in sign language, leading to its legitimization. There have been a number of linguists

around the world who have dedicated themselves to researching the linguistics of sign languages used in different parts of the world. Stokoe, with his monograph, is considered one of the pioneers. According to Edward and Akanlig-Pare (2021), after Stokoe's monograph, other researchers have conducted research on the internal structure of sign languages, the sociolinguistics of Deaf cultures, and the socio-dynamics of the lives of the Deaf. These researchers include linguists, anthropologists, educationists, language therapists, and other researchers in related fields. For instance, in the quest to describe ASL as a language that is equally capable of being used by people to express any idea, feeling, thought, or experience they may have, researchers like Valli and Lucas (2000) have helped introduced and discussed some fundamental areas of linguistic inquiry (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and the use of sign language (ASL). Mulrooney (2010) describes how ASL uses different modalities and capitalizes on the visual aspect to express meaning by reflecting on theories of the linguistic structure of ASL. Likewise, studies like Sandler and Lillo-Martin (2006) explored how non-manual features convey both linguistic and paralinguistic meaning in signed language. More specifically, studies like George (2010); Hoza (2007, 2008), Roush (2011), and Mapson (2014, 2015) explored how non-manual features are key to conveying linguistic politeness in Japanese Sign Language (JSL), ASL, and British Sign Language (BSL) respectively.

In Ghana and Africa, one can find different types of sign languages which are the indigenous sign language, home sign, foreign-based sign language or the foreign sign language. The majority of foreign-based sign languages spoken in Africa are thought to have originated from ASL. However, Edward and Akanlig-Pare (2021) are of the opinion that most indigenous deaf communities in Africa, before the introduction of foreign sign languages, used sign languages as their primary mode of

communication. They had their own culture, shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and shared institutions before they were gradually influenced by the foreign sign languages that were introduced into Africa, especially the Sub-Sahara region, through evangelism. Some communities have been able to withstand this kind of infiltration better than others; one such community is the Adamorobe community in Ghana. Apart from the use of indigenous sign languages, there are also the uses of home signs for communication among the deaf communities. Home sign system, as defined by Coppola and Newport (2005), is a way of communication that develops as a result of the use of gestures that often develop on their own. Typically, this happens when a deaf child is raised in a hearing family where no one is fluent in a conventional sign language and the deaf person does not have access to other deaf people who use sign language. In Ghana, the Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) is viewed as a foreign-based sign language. It evolved from Andrew Foster's (1957) introduction of sign language, to a larger population of Ghanaian deaf communities, which was a reflection of the Ghanaian culture and society. Edward and Akanlig-Pare (2021) are of the view that despite the fact that Ghanaian sign language is not yet recognized as an official language, it is already being utilized in classrooms, news broadcasts, and some urban religious gatherings.

Numerous researches have been conducted on a variety of sign languages used in Ghana, including the indigenous local AdaSL, as well as and home sign languages, and the Ghanaian sign language. Nyst (2007) undertook a descriptive analysis of Adamorobe Sign Language. This reveals its structural information such as its phonology, certain semantic fields including the integration of aspects of the Akan language such as simultaneous mouthing of certain Akan words and related sign words of colour, number, and kinship terms. Adamorobe Sign Language (or AdaSL) also

makes use of a limited set of fixed signs to express the relative and absolute size of an entity; shapes are expressed by using a body part (arm) as a *measuring stick*. Edward (2015) conducted a comparative analysis of strategies of iconic representation in AdaSL and GSL by focusing on the statement of time, size, and shape, directional verbs, affective, and cognitive indicators.

Other studies on the phonology, morphology, and syntax of GSL have been conducted by Akanlig-Pare (2013, 2014) and Edward (2014). These efforts have resulted in a thorough analysis of the grammar of GSL, including its phonology, morphology, and syntax. Phonological descriptions in articulatory parameters (Handshape, Orientation, Location, and Movement) and non-manual markers (facial expression, position of the body, tilting of the head, shrugging of the shoulders, eye brow raising, head nod), minimal pairs, and free variation, based on recorded data, consider the importance of manual form in the production of Ghanaian Sign Language. The morphology of classifiers and verb agreement are discussed together with affixation and reduplication. Edward (2012)'s undergraduate thesis at the University of Ghana, explored several areas of GSL morphophonology as well.

Among the concerns of these Deaf communities are issues of identity and/or custom of the Deaf, the dissemination of information (from politics to religion), and, more recently, the promotion of Deaf-centered education delivered in an accessible language (i.e., signed language) and the struggle to have signed languages recognized as official languages of a country (Edward & Akanlig-Pare, 2021). Thus, there is the need for continual and constant investigation into the language structure as well communication in sign language while critically examining socio-cultural influence on the use of sign languages. This study seeks to contribute to this body of works by

exploring the pragmatic features of the deaf in GSL and the AdaSL as well as how they function in communication.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Paatsch and Toe (2016) elucidate that pragmatic skills are dynamic and are influenced by context, conversational partners, and personal growth and development. Thus, at the centre of any communicational activity is context and in a larger sense, the culture of a group of people. Bowe et al. (2014) define culture to be “the customs, symbols and expectations of a group of people, particularly as they affect their language use” (p. 2). Numerous researches about the Deaf in different communities, especially ASL and BSL, revealed a cultural expectation that is more involvement-oriented and consequently a communication style that is more direct, straight talk or blunt, which is judged as face-threatening by people with different cultural expectations.

In studies like Mindess (2006) and Roush (1999), the Deaf were reported to be direct, particularly when speaking about pertinent information about their health, relationships, work, travel plans, and other significant aspects of life. They are also more likely to use direct strategies when making request and there were no reports of indirect strategies (Roush, 1999). Some researchers, however, disagree with this characterization of ASL signers. For instance, Hoza (2007) believes that it is erroneous to make such stereotypical generalizations. Hoza (2007, 2008) has therefore argued against the stereotype of Deaf as being blunt, and inconsiderate of face threatening acts, by bringing to light some non-manual mitigating factors they use, like pursed or tight lips, a tight smile, a grimace or face frown, a head or body teeter, and handwaves, when making request and rejecting. Each of these features mentioned can be used alone or in combination with other features to indicate various degrees of forthcoming

face threat, as well as a way of mitigating it. The tight lips mouth gesture has been identified as the default polite expression in ASL used for moderate face threat both in involvement and independence-oriented strategies.

Sander and Lillo-Martin (2006) found that facial expressions in sign language function like the use of vocal cords to make intonation in speech. These non-manual features reflect communicative intent more than sentence structure. For example, supported by Dachkosky's (2004 as cited in Sandler & Lillo-Martin, 2006), brow raises in polar questions predicts that some relevant information follows the first part of the utterance, not just grammatical form. Also, Mapson (2014) realized the use of raised eyebrows, in BSL, together with the sign 'CAN' to indicate polar questioning and also to contribute towards mitigation of the request by minimizing degree of imposition.

In Sign Language, both manual and non-manual cues, as well as the use of signing space, are crucial for effective communication. Researchers like Coppola and Senghas (2010) and Liddell (2000) highlight how signers use physical and imagined spaces to convey meaning in ASL and NSL. Additionally, sign names play an important role in Deaf culture, serving for identification, expressing solidarity, and showing deference, particularly through initialized signs for authority figures (Mindess, 1990; Paales, 2011).

The conclusions made from these studies suggest how members of these communities are aware and conscious of these features. They therefore make deliberate effort to use them appropriately in everyday communication as their acceptance into these communities depends on it. Competence in sign languages is a means of marking group solidarity and identification of group members in deaf communities (Lane, 2005; Reagan, 1995). However, it was realized that this array of features also perform numerous functions, making definition of their roles difficult, particularly when

attempting to connect them to classification schemes based on spoken language. This is why stereotypical over-generalization poses a threat to intercultural communication. To effectively navigate intercultural communication, speakers must be aware of their own speech norms and the different expectations of different languages. Understanding how other cultures manage interactions is crucial for mutual understanding.

In the case of GSL and AdaSL there is lack of literature exploring the pragmatics of the deaf in the Ghanaian context. This absence means there is not enough knowledge to help both the Deaf and hearing to understand what influences their language choices in social interactions and how those choices impact those around them. Evidently, without an understanding in any intercultural communication, the hearing can interpret any difference in communicative style as a lack of pragmatic competence on the side of the Deaf. This study sought to explore the pragmatic features of Deaf using GSL and AdaSL and how these features function. This study is needed in creating awareness and understanding the peculiarities in the linguistic choices made by the Deaf, which leads to communicating in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to apply Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological System Model to study the pragmatic features of the Deaf in GSL and AdaSL as well as their functions. Moreover, a detailed analysis of the pragmatic features of the Deaf in GSL and AdaSL is done by taking into consideration the probability of environmental factors contributing to any differences there may be.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to address the strategies the Deaf use to communicate in GSL and AdaSL. This is achieved by pursuing some specific objectives. The specific objectives that underpinned this study are to:

- i. explore the pragmatic features of the Deaf in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language.
- ii. examine how these pragmatic features are utilized in the Ghanaian and Adamorobe Sign Language.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives for the study, answers are provided to some pertinent questions. These research questions that guided the study are:

- i. What are the pragmatic features utilized in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language?
- ii. How do these pragmatic features function in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study into some pragmatic features of the Deaf in their use in GSL and AdaSL provides insight into particular features in linguistic and paralinguistic expressions that are unique to these two sign languages. This exposes to the world the communicative style of the Deaf in both language communities. As it has already been stated, in general, the linguistics of GSL and AdaSL has been understudied; there is the hope that through studies like this, the *true nature* of sign language, especially its pragmatics, will be revealed. Thus, this study is significant because it helps clear certain misconceptions about sign language use. Although in Ghana some studies have been conducted on the phonology and morpho-syntax of sign language, to the best of

the researcher's knowledge there seems to be none conducted on the pragmatics of Ghanaian Sign Languages. Thus, the study serves as foundation for future studies into the pragmatics of sign languages in Ghana.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study primarily examines the pragmatics of the Deaf in GSL and AdaSL. However, it does not provide comprehensive findings on all facets of this particular field of linguistics. It is thus limited to the examination of speech acts, prosodic features, deixis, address systems, and certain politeness strategies. Therefore, while the discussion in this research is highly comprehensive, they cannot be deemed exhaustive in terms of encompassing all facets of these features.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The research was not devoid of its limitations. Primarily, the study was significantly limited by time constraints. The researcher had to complete the research within a specific timeframe. Consequently, the study was limited to a single setting of deaf individuals, specifically the school setting of the GSL users. Also, even though literature on sign language in Ghana shows evidence of different varieties used by the Deaf, this study is limited to the users of GSL and AdaSL. Ideally, researchers propose the use of spontaneous conversation in studies that seek to understand how people communicate. However, as a result of limited timeframe, the study had to resort to the use of instruments that readily helped the elicitation of the features to be studied. Unfortunately, this resulted in the elicitation of data that are not completely naturally occurring. Furthermore, the native AdaSL users exhibited reluctance in engaging in the data collection procedures due to prevailing sentiments of mistrust within the AdaSL deaf community towards researchers. Consequently, the study had a smaller number of AdaSL participants than expected. Additionally, other areas that could have been

covered in the study include pragmatic skills such as turn-taking, greetings, as well as topic selection, introduction, and maintenance, and implicatures in Ghanaian sign languages.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 is designated as the Literature Review. It examines pertinent literature that preceded this study. Significantly, the chapter also provides an exposition and analysis of the theoretical framework that underpins this study. The chapter that follows, Chapter 3, discusses the methodology employed in the execution of the study. This section provides a comprehensive overview of the research approach and design, population selection, sampling procedures, instruments utilized, and the data analysis procedure employed. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the data collected for the research. The results include the realization that more direct strategies in speech acts were used in situations signers addressed persons of lower social position. However, they were not made without a considerable number of redressive strategies. The use of conventional indirectness (want statements) was realized more under situations where signers were of less social position than their addressees. Combinations of strategies were also used to increase perlocutionary effects. The results also indicated that the Ghanaian Deaf community has both independence and involvement-oriented discourse styles. The study is concluded in Chapter 5. It provides a concise overview of the findings, highlights the implications for communication, and offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is made up of eight sections: The first section presents the concept of deafness, consisting of types of hearing loss and then common causes of deafness. The next section includes Deaf education in Ghana, Sign Language and Ghanaian and Adamorobe sign language. The subsequent section presents an exposition on the concept of pragmatics. Features of pragmatics in Spoken language follows, with various sub-section including Speech acts, politeness, deixis, prosody and address systems. The theoretical framework that anchors this study is Bronfenbrenner's bioecology model of human development, under the fifth (2.5) section. Features of pragmatics in sign languages outside Ghana are all reviewed under the section 2.6. Subsequent sections are on the functions of pragmatics features in sign language and, related studies. The conclusion of the chapter is present in the last section.

2.1 The Concept of Deafness

From a purely physiological point of view, being deaf may be regarded as hearing loss resulting from an inherited or acquired defect in some part of the hearing mechanism. In other words, a deaf child is one who wholly or partially lacks the sense of hearing (Levitz, 1991 as cited in John, 2009). There have been several discussions on how to identify individuals with these conditions. Without referencing any specific culture, the term "deaf" is used in lowercase to describe a larger group of people with condition of hearing loss. There is the convention of using uppercase "Deaf" when describing the cultural practices of a group of individuals with the aforementioned condition.

To be able to clinically understand the features of deafness and the parameters by which it is defined and described, it is necessary to describe the anatomy of the ear and the way sound waves are processed. John (2009) describes the ear as an organ that “consists of three major sections, namely, the outer ear or external, middle ear, and inner ear. The outer ear includes the auricle and the external auditory canal. The middle ear consists of the eardrum (tympanic membrane) and a small cavity containing the three smallest bones of the body. The inner ear includes the cochlea which contains sensory cells that stimulate the auditory nerve impulses” (John, 2009. p. 41).

The visible outer ear traps the sound waves via the pinna or oracle. The sound waves are first transmitted to the eardrum, which separates the external auditory canal from the middle ear cavity. The eardrum transmits sound waves to the middle ear through vibration as the sound waves beat against it. The three tiny bones, namely, the malleus (hammer), incus (anvil) and stapes (stirrup) in the middle ear cavity also conduct the sound vibrations from the eardrum (tympanic membrane) across the middle ear cavity to the oval window, which leads to the inner ear. The inner ear, which is a cavity filled with fluid called the perilymph, is the most complex section. It consists of two main parts, namely the cochlea and the semicircular canals. The structure concerned with hearing is the cochlea which converts information transmitted through the oval window into electrical nerve impulses. These are then passed to the brain, where the information is made sense of through a complex process of analysis by cochlea nerves. The individual then must decide how to respond. A healthy auditory system “depends on the normal functioning of the three separate sections. Loss of hearing is “a result of malfunctioning of one or more of these sections of the ear” (John, 2009, p. 42).

2.1.1 Types of hearing loss

The nature of hearing loss can differ in so many ways. Since hearing loss is the result of malfunction in the outer, middle, or inner ear, the hearing loss may be inherited or congenital, or caused by disease, infections and traumatic events. The type of hearing loss is thus dependent on the part of the ear that is affected. Northern and Downs (2002) describe three types of hearing loss: sensorineural, conductive, and the mixed hearing loss. Northern and Downs (2002) explain that conductive hearing loss occurs when, as a result of damage to or obstruction in the external auditory canal, sound waves cannot be transmitted to the inner ear to stimulate the cochlea to facilitate hearing. Therefore, the inner ear may be functioning normally but there may be an incidence of hearing loss. A person with conductive hearing loss can understand speech or hear sounds depending on pathways for the transmission of sound waves directed to the inner ear by bone through the skull or temporal bone as normally perceived (Northern & Downs, 2002).

Most conductive hearing loss can be medically treated. It is important to note that most of the causes of conductive hearing loss are “impacted cerumen, foreign objects in the ear, external otitis (infection of the outer ear), otitis media (infection of the middle ear) and perforation of the tympanic membrane” (John, 2009, p. 49), which can all be prevented. Individuals with this type of hearing loss are sometimes referred to as “hard of hearing” because of their ability to perceive sound in one way or the other. However, some researchers like Padden and Humphries (1988) discussed how the Deaf dislike such terminology. The Deaf perceive this term as derogatory, implying that they are broken or diminished and in need of repair. This implication, thus suggests an avoidance of this term. Sensorineural hearing loss, on the other hand, occurs when the sensory organ in the cochlea is damaged or as well as the malfunction

of the auditory nerves. The damage cause is usually permanent and irreversible. Mixed hearing loss may be a result of obstruction in the conduction of sound together with sensorineural damage. For example, a child could have a congenital sensorineural hearing loss of genetic origin and have an ear infection.

Another way to categorize hearing loss is based on the timeline of its onset, which leads to two main types: pre-lingual and post-lingual deafness. Pre-lingual deafness refers to hearing loss that occurs before any significant language development, typically prior to the age of three, when children are beginning to acquire spoken language. In contrast, post-lingual deafness develops after an individual has already acquired some level of spoken language ability (Northern & Downs, 2002). Individuals who are post-lingually deaf often retain some spoken language skills, but usually require assistive devices such as hearing aids or cochlear implants to support communication. On the other hand, those who are pre-lingually deaf generally depend on sign language as their primary mode of communication.

2.1.2 Common causes of deafness

Through his study, Dery (1981) discovered that about 50% of deaf cases have unknown causes, and so categorized them as congenital. This predominant group of “‘unknown’ cause is likely to be made up of hereditary causes and maternal infections during pregnancy (rubella, effects of drugs, nutrition deficiency)” (Dery, 1981, p. 70). One of the most known causes among the sample studied is diseases and infections such as high fevers (which parents generally refer to as convulsion), measles, ear infections and meningitis. These infections could probably be prevented by mass vaccination of new-borns and children. When the pregnant woman is malnourished during pregnancy, it can cause the child to lose their hearing. Because the baby is still forming and some delicate organs are not fully formed, nutrition deficiency may lead

to malformation of the mechanism of hearing, sight, and brain cells. Likewise, drug abuse can also seriously harm the baby. As such, pregnant women are advised to only take drugs under strict prescription by qualified medical personnel.

Also, an infected mother can equally lead to hearing impairment in the unborn baby. An example of such infection is rubella (or German measles). There are a couple of complications, during labour or delivery that can affect hearing. Dery (1981) reports that during prolonged labour and difficult delivery, there may be inadequate supply of oxygen to the baby, and this can adversely affect hearing. Birth injuries can also occur with serious damage to both the hearing and brain of the newborn. Apart from diseases, deafness may also be acquired because of accidents. During play, children may introduce foreign objects such as stones and leggos into their ears, causing considerable damage to the eardrum. Physical abuse in the form of beating or slaps can also damage the eardrum and should be avoided. Finally, deafness may result from hereditary causes: one parent just happens to be a carrier of the dominant gene of deafness, even though he/she may not be deaf. Depending on certain genetic explanations, some of the children of such couple will be deaf while others will be normal. However, according to John (2009), the number of children born deaf because of their mothers contracting German measles (rubella) during pregnancy has decreased since the introduction of vaccination.

2.1.3 Summary

The discussion has enlightened us on the fact that, the ear consists of three parts: outer, middle, and inner, with sound waves transmitted via the auditory canal and electrical nerve impulses processed by the brain. Hearing loss can thus occur when congenital diseases, infections, or traumatic events cause damage to any of these three parts. These make it possible for different types of hearing loss (sensorineural,

conductive, and mixed hearing loss) to exist. It has been proven that about 50% of deaf cases are unknown, with common causes being genetics, maternal infections, drug effects, and nutrition deficiency. Vaccination and proper drug use during pregnancy can help prevent some types of hearing loss. Hearing loss can lead to deafness and can cause speech and language delays, emotional and social issues, and academic failure, if not detected and treated early.

2.2 Deaf Education in Ghana

Formal education for the deaf was introduced in Ghana in 1957 by the late Rev. Dr. Andrew Jackson Foster, an African American, a graduate of Gallaudet University, and deaf member of the American Deaf cultural community. The Rev. Dr. Foster aimed to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to deaf individuals. He also introduced them to literacy and numeracy through sign communication (Oppong & Fobi, 2019). According to Oppong and Fobi (2019), Rev. Dr. Foster started home tutoring some individuals over the ages of 10 years at both his private residence in Accra and the homes of the deaf students. During weekends he often held classes with his students in primary school buildings. In 1959, he relocated his special school from Accra to Mampong-Akuapem in the Eastern Region. His method of instruction was a blend of American and Ghanaian signs, which later developed into Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL). Students were taught to read and write using the grammatical structure of GSL and to count in sign language. The fundamental academic subjects comprised literacy, numeracy, and conventional vocational training such as basket and doormat weaving, tailoring and sewing for boys and girls respectively.

The formal education of individuals, who are deaf, according to Fobi et al. (2020), began with the implementation of the Education Act of 1961 and Article 32(8) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana. All school children were guaranteed Free

Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) under these laws. Nevertheless, these policies failed to consider the integration of individuals who are deaf into educational institutions. Upon the establishment of private and public schools for the education of the deaf, children were granted admission based on the submission of assessment reports. These reports include the child's audiogram, the placement form from the Ghana Education Service (GES), and general medical reports from a certified medical practitioner and mandatory counselling sessions and sign language lessons for parents and children, which continued even after admissions (Fobi et al., 2020). Parents and children are mandated to visit the special school for at least three times in a year so that the children can learn to socialize with the other students. Through that parents can be taught how to communicate with their children in sign language, serving as sociolinguistic facilitators for them at home. Oppong and Fobi (2019) posit that Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) children develop both socially and linguistically, especially during their preschool period.

Prior to the establishment of the Secondary/Technical School for the Deaf in 1975 in Mampong-Akwapem, basic school education served as the highest formal education for the deaf children in Ghana. This educational institution introduced the teaching of electives such as General Arts, Home Economics, Visual Arts, and technical subjects like Metalwork, Building and Construction, and Woodwork. Additionally, core subjects including Mathematics, English, Social studies, and Integrated science were taught. According to Oppong and Fobi (2019), a survey conducted discovered that there are thirteen public special schools for the deaf spread across Ghana, one Senior High school, and one public college of education that trains teachers for basic and secondary education practices of inclusion for the deaf and the blind. Some of the tertiary institutions that practice inclusion for the deaf are

University of Education (UEW), Winneba and the University of Cape Coast (UCC), both in the Central Region, and the University of Ghana, Legon, in the Greater Accra Region.

Before the year 2000, Ghanaian deaf students who qualified for tertiary education could not attend due to a lack of professionals and support services. Thus they studied abroad at Gallaudet University in the United States of America. The first public university in the country to offer tertiary education to qualified deaf students was the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) in 2006, according to Fobi et al. (2020). Since then, UEW has admitted qualified deaf students to four-year bachelor degree programmes in various departments. Moreover, as noted by Oppong and Fobi (2019), the University of Education, Winneba has the highest population with not less than 10 students every year and as the time of the study; they were more than forty-nine students.

2.2.1 Sign language

The use of sign language in educating the deaf and establishing it as an official language for the deaf has not been without doubt and contention. There was, and still is, the controversy of whether the deaf should be educated using an oral approach (lip reading training) or through manual communication (sign language). The Milan Conference of 1880 setting preference for oral education made it more difficult to use sign language in educating deaf children (Edward & Akanlig-Pare, 2021). However historical studies into sign languages indicate that deaf education started with the use of manual signs as a mode of communication (Amoako, 2019). Amoako (2019) observes that deaf education is believed to have begun in Spain in the 16th century, during a time when Spain was a wealthy and influential country. A wealthy family, the Velasco family, had deaf sons and daughters who struggled with reading and writing, causing

concern for their ability to make future wills. Already existing at that time was a special system of signs and fingerspelling used by the Benedictine monks (a group of monks in Spain) for religious rites. Later, in the 16th century, Fray Melchor de Yebra, a Benedictine monk published a manual fingerspelling chart, influencing one-handed methods in Europe and North America. This led to people specializing in manual signs and one of them was Ponce de Leon.

Pedro Ponce de Leon taught deaf children and was hired by the Velasco family. He published one of the first books on signs and established a school with the Velasco family as students. Spain played a role in documenting a manual alphabet but not recognized as global pioneers of deaf education. This is because by the time a school for the deaf was established in 1805, a deaf school had already been established in France by Abbe Charles Michel de l'Epee. He was a French priest who pioneered deaf education in France in 1755 by establishing the National Institution for Deaf-Mutes in Paris. He is considered the founder of signed-based pedagogy, following the documentation of the one-handed sign language manual alphabet in Spain. According to Amoako (2019), following in this act were countries like Germany, Britain and then the United States of America in the introduction of deaf education in its educational system during the periods between 1778 and the early 1800s. However, unlike the other countries, the founder of deaf education in Germany was more incline towards the use of oral approach. Further development and use of sign language led some educators to realise that sign language was a distinct linguistic system independent of spoken language and one of these educators was William Stokoe.

2.2.1.1 Ghanaian sign language (GSL)

Similar to other sign languages, Ghanaian sign language (GSL) is a non-verbal system comprising handshapes, lip patterns, body movements, facial expressions, and

body movements that serve as a means of communication for the deaf population in Ghana (Amoako, 2019). Events after the arrival of Rev. Dr. Andrew J. Foster led to the introduction of GSL to some members of the Ghanaian deaf community, mostly those who enrolled in his educational programmes. As previously mentioned, Rev. Foster's school utilised sign language for communication which has since evolved into the widely recognised GSL. The initial manual communication system that Rev. Dr. Foster introduced from the United States and used for teaching was American Sign Language (ASL). According to Amoako (2019), some literature indicates that GSL likely emerged due to the impact of AdaSL on the ASL used by Andrew Foster.

According to Amoako (2019), certain ethnographic studies that have also documented the history of the deaf community of Adamorobe, recorded interactions between the deaf people in Adamorobe and Rev. Dr. Foster, wherein the former taught the latter their AdaSL signs in exchange for teaching the former ASL. Oppong and Fobi (2019) noted that GSL also progressively developed when children from diverse backgrounds enrolled in the school (established by Rev. Foster) and began sharing their distinct *home signs* with their peers and teachers. These signs were sometimes adopted and improved upon by the teachers, who then incorporated them into their repertoire of signed concepts used for instruction. Subsequently, GSL has been acknowledged as the sign language utilized in Deaf education in Ghana and the language of the urbanized deaf community (Edward & Akanlig-Pare, 2020).

2.2.1.2 Adamorobe sign language

One of sign language in Ghana is the Adamorobe Sign Language (AdaSL) which is an indigenous sign language in Ghana. According to Nyst (2007), Adamorobe Sign Language (AdaSL) is the sign language that has been developed and used by the people in the village of Adamorobe in the Eastern Region. Evidence suggests that the

deaf community in Adamorobe had developed their own sign language prior to the arrival of Rev. Foster in 1957 (Amoako, 2019). The AdaSL has a longstanding history of being used by both individuals who are deaf and the hearing. Prior studies conducted in Adamorobe revealed that nearly all individuals in the village possessed the ability to communicate using sign language. However, recent research on AdaSL suggests a decrease in the population of hearing signers.

“The village is situated at the foot of the Akuapem Mountains, close to Aburi and has a high incidence of hereditary deafness. “Adamorobe is known nationwide as the “deaf village” because of its unusually high incidence of deafness” (Nyst, 2007, p. 17). There are numerous reasons in literature concerning the cause of high incidence of deafness in Adamorobe; some of which are mythical and others medical. The legend concerning the high population of deaf people, in comparison to other communities, is mainly about the manifestation of the god of the land who happened to be deaf, whose identity has not been correctly identified, in the literature, as to whether it is Adamorobe Kiti or Ayisi. Dery (1981) posits that legend has it that children born deaf are a punishment to parents who have offended the gods. Another mythical explanation is that once you break the taboo of not going to a stream on certain days or use the water fetched from the stream for domestic purposes, you will be punished with a deaf child.

According to (Dery, 1981), another story is that long ago, there was a mysterious handsome strong man who was deaf, and every woman desired to have a child with him and those who did, gave birth to children who were deaf. However, Amedofu et al. (1999 as cited in Nyst, 2007) argue that the mysterious man was not as mysterious as legend has it that it was rather one of the founders of the village. The last legend by Dery (1981) was that while warring with a neighbouring town and on the

verge of losing, the totem of the people transformed into human and came to aid them win the battle. These creatures later manifested into deaf children after they refused to go.

Nyst (2007) however presents some medical views in her study of Adamorobe Sign Language. During a medical survey in 1961, Sir Alexander Drummond noticed an unusually high incidence of deafness in Adamorobe. Out of a total sample of 400 inhabitants, 45 were found to be deaf at that time. Deafness was then estimated to occur in more than 10% of the population at that time. In 1963-1964 an ear, nose and throat consultant, J.B. David, upon the request of the Ministry of Health in Ghana, investigated the high population of deaf people in Adamorobe and concluded that the incidence was because of migration of deaf people to the place. Later, another investigation followed, including J.B. David and a group of medical professionals, and they concluded that the incidence was stemming from genetics than mere incidence of migration. Later studies of this research team, “a joint project of the Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine in Kumasi and the Bernard Nocht Institute for tropical Medicine in Hamburg, identified a recessive R134W mutation in the connexin 26 gene as the cause of the hereditary profound sensorineural hearing impairment in Adamorobe” (Nyst, 2007, p. 22). Other medical studies showed how these have mutated over the years and the fact that it must have commenced centuries ago.

2.2.2 Summary

This section has revealed that Rev. Dr. Andrew Jackson Foster introduced formal education for the deaf in Ghana in 1957, teaching literacy and numeracy through sign language. The Education Act of 1961 and Article 32(8) of the 1992 constitution made establishing formal education for the deaf easier, resulting in the

creation of a basic school and a secondary/technical school in 1975. Throughout the years, the mode of educating the deaf has grandly been debated on, as to whether to use sign language or not. Meanwhile historical studies suggest that deaf education began with sign language, a system of manual signs with its distinct linguistic system. In the Ghanaian context, the system of manual signs introduced by Rev. Dr. Foster Language gradually evolved to be GSL. However, before GSL, there was already an indigenous sign language known as AdaSL, developed by the deaf community in Adamorobe. It was a community with high hereditary rate of deafness.

2.3 Pragmatics

Communication is one of the simplest functions regarding a language which establishes when the people want to convey their meanings that are behind their intentions. Without language, it is almost impossible to relate to others and be a significant part of a conversation. It is the study of pragmatics that is closely linked with field of semantics as these both are concerned towards meaning making and its elaboration. Semantics establishes the relationships between the verbal and the description that produce it, in the form of speaking and writing (Yule, 1996). Whereas the field of Pragmatics deals with the study of form and its user, how they use different given forms in different ways within a conversational field (Siddiqui, 2018). Crystal (2010) explains pragmatics “as the studies of factors that govern our choices of language in social interaction and the effect of our choice on others. In theory we can say anything we like but in practice, we follow many social rules (most of them unconsciously) that constrain the way we speak” (as cited in Bowe, et al 2014). This means that in every interaction there in an unspoken or hidden rule which is dictated by the context of the communicative processes.

Context, as defined by Igiri et al. (2020), refers to the situation, within which one uses language. It may be the physical environment including the participants involved in the conversation, the settings where the conversation is taking place; the social context or institutional situation, including events, time, culture, or social conventions that can influence language use. The *channel* (speech, writing, non-verbal etc.) and *code* (dialect, style) of communication can also be form part of what is referred to as the linguistic context. How words co-occur can help influence the interpretation you give to one another. Being able to identify these rules and communicating results in competent communication skills: the ability of the speaker to know when to speak, when not and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner.

2.4 Features of Pragmatics in Spoken Language

This section leads to the discussion of some features of pragmatics which includes speech acts, prosody, deixis, address system and politeness.

2.4.1 Speech acts

According to Siddiqui (2018), the idea of the speech act was first introduced by the British philosopher John Langshaw Austin (1911-1960) who delivered his ideas of *How to do things with words* in a series of lectures which were published before his death in 1962. Austin's idea of how to do things with words was to differentiate between constative and performative utterances. Constative utterances reflect truth or falsehood in the world. Thus, the phrase *it is raining* can be understood as revealing the truth if it is indeed raining. Performative utterances are actions, not just words, about the world. However, Zhang et al. (2020) in their analyses of utterances being either constative or performative noticed that Austin himself made some criticism of these claims. There was no clear cut distinction between the two kinds of utterances. Thus,

Austin concluded that an utterance can be about *saying* and *doing* something, so both constatives and performatives can be used to do things.

According to Archer et al. (2012), this led to distinguishing three types of acts performed by an utterance: locutionary act (refers to the words uttered), perlocutionary act (signifies acts that have certain effect on action and thought of the hearer) and illocutionary act (this refers to what is *done* when the words are uttered). Austin proceeded to classifying illocutionary acts into Verdictives, Exercitives, Comissives, Behabitives, and Expositives. The philosopher John Searle continued the work initiated by Austin by redefining some concepts. Examples of the concepts Searle proposed differently from Austin are the types of illocutionary acts which are Representatives (involve stating the what the speaker believes as the truth, such as affirming, concluding, denying, reporting, and believing), Comissives (includes acts in which the words commit the speaker to a future course of action, such as promising, offering, declining, refusing, guaranteeing, pledging, swearing), Directives (involves acts in which the words prompts someone to action like commanding, requesting, praying, forbidding, inviting etc.), Expressives (acts in which the words state what the speaker feels, such as apologizing, praising, congratulating, deploring, regretting, welcoming, thanking), and Declaratives (some examples of these phrases are *I bet*, *I declare*, and *I resign*. When these are used, they change the external status or condition of an object or situation) (Leech, 2014).

Bowe et al. (2014) stated that a speech act is mostly concerned with understanding the intentions and conventions linked to an utterance. Thus, to understand the force of a speech act, background knowledge and cooperative conversation are needed. This suggests that even when interlocutors are from the same culture, messages can be misinterpreted. Nevertheless, cross-cultural communication

increases the risk of miscommunication. What usually causes such miscommunication is when the illocutionary act performed does not directly match the literal meaning of the utterance. This may be termed as indirect speech act. However, “when there is a conventional relationship between sentence type and the speech act (illocutionary force), we have a direct speech act” (Archer et al., 2012, p. 41). An example is the relationship between a directive and a command.

Also, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) draw attention to the fact that these acts are mostly conventionalized, or standardized, to the extent that it is readily interpreted as intended by the speaker. The ability of the hearer to correctly infer or perform an illocutionary act other than what was said is based on certain conventionalized conversational routines in a particular speech context. Thus, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) describe three levels of speech acts directness: the direct level, conventional indirectness, and nonconventional indirectness that can be expected to be manifested across cultures in speech act strategies. The conventionally indirect level, “are commonly referred to in speech act literature as indirect speech acts; an example would be ‘could you do it’ or ‘would you do it’ meant as requests” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). The nonconventional indirect level consists of indirect strategies that give *hints* by referring or depending on contextual elements and clues for their interpretation as well as performance of the act. For example, *Why is the window open?* and *It’s cold in here*. Some examples of speech acts and their realizations include:

2.4.1.1 Request

Requests are directive speech acts. Sithebe (2011) explains requests as speech acts that ask the hearer to do something, provide information, or grant permission. Requests can threaten the speaker’s and hearer’s faces because “requests are pre-event acts in that they express the speaker’s expectation of the hearer with regard to

prospective action” (Sithebe, 2011, p. 9). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) divide request utterances into segments and all segments of an utterance may not be used to perform the speech act. According to Sithebe (2011), some of these request sequence components may function as alerters (an opening element preceding the actual request: address terms) and supporting moves. In Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), some of these support moves are downgraders, which include interrogatives, negations, past tense, embedded clauses, understatement, hedges, and intensifiers (e.g., disgusting and bloody mess). Blum-Kulka (1987) explains that the potential face-threat of request informs the speaker’s decision on the level of directness for performing an act. This led to the examination of nine request-making strategies. The nine strategies are mood derivable (imperative), explicit performative, hedged performative, obligation statement, want statement, suggestory formulas, query preparatory, strong hints, mild hints. A summary of these strategies and how they may be realised will be presented in a table in the Appendix III (Table 2.4.1.1).

2.4.1.2 Apology

Bowe et al. (2014) describe an apology as an expressive. Searle (1969) characterizes an apology as a speech act in which the speaker makes known his or her attitude about a proposition to the hearer. Apologising provides a way for one to acknowledge and accept responsibilities for wrongful deed committed against another, and thus reduces guilt, and also an opportunity for one to forgive one’s self (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Apologies embody a loss of face for the speaker and support for the hearer, or both. Apologies may take different forms for these reasons. Cohen & Olshtain (1981 cited in Bowe et al., 2014) identified six key apology components. These are presented in the Appendix III (Table 2.4.1.2).

2.4.1.3 Complaints

Razzak and Jamil (2016) noted that complaints express disapproval, displeasure, annoyance, discomfort, guilt, dissatisfaction, unease, or rebuke. These emotions are directed at the hearer's unsatisfactory behaviour, to rebuke or get some action done to redress the harm done. Razzak and Jamil (2016) observe that Trosborg (1995) identified three functions of complaint: to request repair, to threaten, and to request forbearance. They stressed that complaints can be made directly or indirectly. Direct complaints are face-threatening because they confront the party responsible for or the party that can remedy the perceived offence (Razzak & Jamil, 2016). Due to the possible face threat, linguistic realisations and interactional dynamics for complaint vary. Several researchers have suggested complaint strategies. Most important is explicitness - direct or indirect. Trosborg (1995) suggests eight ways to complain; from indirect to explicit. Based on Trosborg's (1995) complaint definition, Decock and Depraetere (2018) proposed six complaint strategies based on the four constitutive components: (a) past or ongoing action or occurrence (the complainable), (b) disapproval or negative judgement, (c) assumption of the complaine's agent role, and (d) desire to remedy the offence. These strategies and how they are realised are found in the Appendix III (Table 2.4.1.3).

2.4.1.4 Appreciation/gratitude

Gratitude, like apologies and complaints, is an expressive, retrospective act (Perez, 2005). Unlike complaints, Grando (2016) indicated that gratitude/appreciations are phatic in nature (though not exclusively), which means they serve functions of social solidarity among interactants. Gratitude can be defined as the act of "recognizing that one has obtained a positive outcome and recognizing that there is an external source for this positive outcome" (Emmons & McCullough, 2003 as cited in Allen,

2018, p.10). Okamoto and Robinson (1997) state that gratitude expressions are varied and influenced by the interlocutors' relationship and the hearer's action, particularly, the weight of imposition of the action on the hearer; be it effort, time, or money. This study adopts Aijmer's (1996) description and categorization of gratitude expressions to explain the ways of expressing gratitude in GSL and AdaSL. Aijmer (1996) suggests eight ways to strengthen gratitude expressions through lexical, prosodic, and other means. These are summarised in the Appendix III (Table 2.4.1.4).

2.4.2 Politeness

According to Hoza (2007), each utterance has four levels of meaning. The content refers to the specific information conveyed in an utterance, while the function represents the speaker's intentions. The textual meaning indicates how the current statement is connected to the previous part of the conversation, and the social meaning conveys the speaker's underlying message about relationships, attitudes, and the context of the conversation. Hoza (2007) states that politeness is primarily focused on the social meaning, more specifically, on the expected behaviours of individuals in specific situations. This prompts an examination of various perspectives on politeness. Politeness, according to the social norm view, is when an action aligns with the societal norms of a specific culture. Furthermore, there exists linguistic politeness which refers to the linguistic decisions that individuals make when communicating to convey specific social meaning. Linguistic politeness manifests itself in various forms. Popular among them is the face-saving view.

According to Bowe et al. (2014), linguistic politeness was proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978/1987). It includes face, face-threatening acts (FTAs), and politeness strategies. A positive social value claimed by an individual is what Goffman (1967 cited in Archer et al. 2013) referred to as face. A person can have a positive face,

which is the desire to have an accepted, appreciated, and approved self-image, and a negative face, which is the desire to be free from imposition, intrusion, and interruption and respect for personal space. Face-threatening act on the other hand may humiliate, or make one lose face. Thus, the Brown and Levinson model attempts to explain how speakers avoid threats to a face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The *Model Person* (MP) concept “recognizes that since people can be expected to defend their face if threatened, and in defending their own, threatens others’ face” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 85). This makes face-threatening acts impossible to eliminate in speech. Thus, speakers use redress strategies to reduce the risk of most speech acts by considering “the relative power between the speaker and hearer (P), social distance between speaker and hearer (S), and the relative degree of imposition involved (R)” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 54). This leads to the concept of positive politeness (or involvement) and negative politeness (or independence) (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Brown and Levinson (1987) also proposed that how this act of politeness may be projected or understood is based on the defining terms of the overarching cultural schema of the communication setting. Sharifian (2006) defines schema as the “unit of human knowledge that results from the cognitive process of deriving patterns either from our perception or from our construal of the world” (p. 11). Thus, the units of knowledge we have, derived from a particular culture, are the cultural schema.

2.4.3 Deixis

The term deixis comes from a Greek word “*deiknynai*” meaning to *show*. Words (objects, events, activities, and speakers and addressees) related to deixis refer to a process whereby expressions are seen to rely utterly on context (Stapleton, 2017). Yule (1996) states that deixis can be used to indicate people (I, me, you), places (here, there), and times (now, then) in a speech event. Deixis in English includes *pronouns*: I,

me, you, they, *demonstrative expressions*: this, that, adverbs: now, then, yesterday, tomorrow, *adjectival phrases*: last Tuesday, last month, *calendar dates* (November 22, 1963), or *clock time* (8:00pm). Interlocutors who share the same context have better chance of understanding deictic expressions than otherwise (Yule, 1996). The basic distinction among deictic expressions is distance, spatial and temporal concepts: near the speaker (proximal forms: here, now) or away from speaker (distal form: there, now). Distance refers to the location of things and people mentioned or the speech event in relation to time. Although deictic expressions refer to the physical, they can also refer to psychological processes or orientation. Psychological distance is illustrated by using this/these for concepts, views, or attitudes the speaker agrees with and that/those for the opposite. Time of utterance and hearing determines the interpretation of temporal deixis. Psychologically, objects or events moving towards or away from the speaker are proximal or distal respectively (Yule, 1996). In temporal deixis, the remote or distal form can convey distance from both current time as well as reality (Yule, 1996). Social deixis encodes speakers, addressees, and social identities and relationships (Archer et al., 2013).

2.4.4 Prosody

Content is crucial to understanding utterances. Content can be based on what is said, where it was said, or how it was said. Therefore, prosody is essential when discussing speech. According to Archer et al. (2012), prosody is the speaker's tone of voice or vocal resources that convey attitude or emotion. Most "prosodic properties of spoken language are intonation, rhythm, tempo, stress, lengthening, volume, and pausing" (Archer et al., 2012, p. 96). Prosodic features include stress, tune, and pitch, (Wilbur, 2022). Wilbur (2022) defines stress as word, phrase, and clause prominence. Tune uses high and low tones for pitch accent, intermediate phrasal accent, and

intonational phrase boundary tone. Finally, pitch relates to frequency of the tone. Another prosodic feature is intonation, “the pattern of relative highs and lows of frequencies across phrases and sentences” (Wilbur, 2022, p. 144). Each prosodic property can convey information on focus, utterance type, topic structure, or conversational turns. Archer et al. (2013) suggest that while punctuations and capital letters may indicate the boundaries between sentences, clauses, and phrases in written English, listeners must use prosodic features to determine the beginning and end of such references in spoken language. Wilbur (2022) cites Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg (1990) and Grosjean and Deschamps (1975) who argue that tones (pitch) and pausing indicate phrase ends.

2.4.5 Address systems

According to Archer et al. (2013), address forms include names (first and last), titles, honorific terms, and pronouns systems. The way to address someone depends on familiarity, age, group affiliation, language, and individual and collective preferences in each setting. Pronouns could also play a role in social contexts as well as in grammatical structures to provide cohesion. It can be used to identify individuals within a community by indicating social ranks and relationships. These pronouns are usually used with second-person pronouns in Italian, French, Spanish, and German. The singular second person pronouns (tu, du) replace singular nouns, while the plural second pronouns (voi, vous, vous, ihr) replace plural nouns. In social context, these two terms represent different dichotomies, indicating power and solidarity between speaker and hearer. This distinction between familiarity, intimacy (T) and politeness, reverence, and formality (V) is referred in some literature as the T/V distinction. However, according to Kretzenbacher (2005 as cited in Bowe et al., 2014), what the interlocutors agree on expresses politeness, not necessarily the T or V form. Knowing

that an inappropriate address form can cause friction in relationships, especially when interacting with people from different cultures, can make choosing address forms for cross-cultural communication difficult. Besides, pronouns, nouns like names, kinship terms, titles (honorifics), and others can indicate personal and group identities. Thus, first names, last names, and nick names express similar phenomena in languages like English that lack pronominal distinctions. For instance, first names indicate familiarity or informality. According to Bowe et al. (2014), British and American cultures may accept the use of first names by strangers or in asymmetrical power situations to ease communication and not indicate impoliteness, while other cultures may find it over familiarizing. Nicknames, such as diminutive forms of first names, can also create a sense of familiarity and friendliness, particularly in English-speaking countries (Bowe et al., 2014).

2.4.6 Summary

In sum, the various concepts discussed in this section talk about, firstly, speech acts, introduced by John Langshaw Austin, in the quest to differentiate between constative and performative utterances. They can be classified into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Cross-cultural communication increases the risk of miscommunication, which is what usually calls for the different strategies. This work specifically discusses requests (directive speech acts), apologies, complaints and gratitude (which are expressive speech acts). Secondly, politeness was discussed as a phenomenon focused on social meaning, which may include conformity to expected behaviours or refer to linguistic decisions made when communicating to convey specific social meaning. Additionally, deixis, a Greek term meaning to point or indicate with language, was discussed. It refers to the spatio-temporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance. Lastly, Address systems, including names, titles,

honorific terms, and pronouns were discussed in terms of the role they play in social contexts and grammatical structures.

2.5 Theoretical Framework: The Bioecological Model of Human

Development

Grant and Osanloo (2014) explain theoretical framework as “the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study” (p. 12). Thus, the theoretical framework that grounds this work is the Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological model of human developments. The bioecological model, together with its corresponding research designs, is an evolving theoretical system for the scientific study of human development over time (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Before the term bioecological model of human development from the mid-1990s, it was first known as *the ecology of human development* during the 1970s and 1980s. It was later termed as the *ecological systems theory*, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

According to Tudge et al. (2017), Bronfenbrenner was born in 1917 in Russia, to a father who was a neuropathologist. Tudge et al (2017) reveal that his study into the ecology of humans started from the experiences he had from his father who was constantly worried that the views of the world on patients with mental disability as *morons* rendered them unable to live a productive life. Thus, Bronfenbrenner started thinking about the interdependence of the organism and its environment. Subsequently, he included an ecological approach into his study of children and families. In Crawford’s (2020) work, he defines ecology as the relation between organisms and the environments in which they live. He indicates that Bronfenbrenner felt that the only way to understand child or family development was to study it within its naturally occurring context. And, in our case, this theoretical approach will help us understand

the deaf and their communities, how this environment influences them, and how some communicative peculiarities or the unique language used may be as a result of these factors.

As mentioned, the study of human development began to consider the ecology of the environment to provide a more reliable and valid way of analysing development behaviours that are more *in-context* than *out-of-context*. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), early human development research focused on individual traits rather than environmental influences on behaviour and development. And even with the few of such research that exist, the attention on the environment and its effects had certain shortcomings. They tend to downplay the non-social aspects of the environment, which are the substantive nature of the participants' activities. Second, and more importantly, they limit the concept of environment to a single immediate setting containing the subject. This limitation emerged because many of these experiments involve unfamiliar, artificial, and short-lived situations and necessitate unusual behaviours that are difficult to generalize to other settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). He argued that the environment which has been said to be relevant to developmental processes is not limited to a single, immediate setting but also included to incorporate interconnections between such settings, as well as to external influences coming from the larger surroundings. Initially, in his work in 1979, Bronfenbrenner purported four of these socioecological systems. These were microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Later, in 1986/1995, an additional system, chronosystem, was named (Mulisa, 2019).

The changes made in earlier versions of the model, according to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), were not totally to disclaim earlier propositions made but rather to mark a "shift in the centre of gravity of the model, in which features

of earlier versions are first called into question but then recombined, along with new elements, into a more complex and more dynamic structure” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 794). Bronfenbrenner realized that while the study of human development in context became prevalence, something was neglected, which was that these studies were concentrated on “context without development” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 795). Thus, there was the need to review prior versions of the theory and present a better form which will not only focus on the importance of the environment in which the child grows but also highlight the influence of the “continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 793).

The new and still evolving model involves four principal components and interactive relationships among them. The first of these, which constitutes the core of the model, is *Process*, more specifically, the proximal processes. Within the scope of this construct are particular forms of interaction between the individual and the environment that operate over time and are posited as the primary mechanisms producing human development. However, the power of such processes to influence development is presumed, and shown, “to vary substantially as a function of the characteristics of the developing *Person*, of the immediate and more remote environmental *Contexts*, and the *Time* periods, in which the proximal processes take place” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 795). An early critical element in the definition of the bioecological model is *experience*, which indicates that the scientifically relevant features of an environment for human development not only include its objective properties but also the way in which the properties are subjectively experienced by the person living in that environment. The bioecological model draws attention on how insignificant the external influences, without experience, are in

affecting human development, thus both objective and subjective elements are posited as driving the course of human development.

2.5.1 Process

The bioecological model made two propositions, each describing the defining properties of the model. The first proposition simply states that “human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a regular basis over extended periods of time” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p.797). What this proposal suggests is that after a continual participation in this proximal process, the individual does not only gain the ability, the drive, determination, knowledge, and skill to engage in such activities with others, but the individual also becomes one who brings about or ensures their own development. The second proposition, which expands on the first, states that:

The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person, the environment - both immediate and more remote - in which the processes are taking place, the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration, and the social continuities and changes occurring over time through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 798).

Therefore, some the distinctive features of the proximal process are that:

- i. Firstly, for the proximal process to be effective the person must participate or engage in an activity regularly, and over an extended period with increasing levels of complexity.
- ii. They are not unidirectional, requiring influence in both directions. For example, in “interpersonal interaction, this means that initiatives do not come from one side only; there must be some degree of reciprocity in the exchange” (p.798).
- iii. Interactions in these processes are not only restricted to people but also involve, objects, and symbols; whiles drawing attention, exploration, manipulation, elaboration, and imagination for reciprocal interaction.
- iv. Proposition II outlines moderating factors that affect the content, timing, and effectiveness of these processes. As children grow, their developmental capacities increase, requiring more extensive and complex proximal processes. Intervals between periods of progressively more complex activity can be longer, but they must occur regularly. The main people with whom young children interact change over time, from parents to teachers, peers, and co-workers.

2.5.2 Person

As it has already been discussed, for the person to develop, the person must engage in an activity. There are certain characteristics that will determine how best the person interacts with the environment. Tudge et al. (2017) discuss three characteristics of the person as purported by Bronfenbrenner. These are demand, resource, and force. The demand refers to the personal stimuli, motivation, and drive that influence the person to be an agent of his own development. The resource refers to all the qualities

the individual possesses that affect how he or she interacts with the environment to ensure development or not. Some examples of the resources are previous experiences, current abilities, gender, physiological, or psychological impairment. Finally, force characteristics are those having to do with things like temperament, motivation, and persistence.

2.5.3 Context

Bronfenbrenner wrote that context refers to “the environment, both immediate and more remote, in which the (proximal) processes are taking place” (Tudge et al., 2017, para. 3). According to Tudge et al. (2017), context is a model in which proximal processes are of most importance. Of the four levels of context about which Bronfenbrenner wrote, the microsystem is the most important. A microsystem “is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). Proximal processes only occur within microsystems, *immediate* environment because this is the environment where the individual has direct engagement with. And the environmental factors that can trigger and cause psychological growth are those that have meaning to the person in each situation, those that have been experienced by the person. More so, it is the importance the individual places on these lived experiences that have a way of steering their behavioural path. Lewin (1917, as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and Bronfenbrenner (1979) distinguished three of the determining factors likely to take prominence in steering the growth and development of the person. According to Lewin (1917, as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979), one of the factors is the “ongoing activity”, it refers to the tasks, operations or activities in which an individual sees himself or others as engaging. The second is the interconnection between the individual and people in the setting that

includes how convinced the individual is, of being part of group who are engaged in common, complementary, or independent undertakings. The third factor proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is the person's awareness of the role he or she is to play; the person knowing the expectation associated with his or her position in the society (such as that of mother, baby, teacher, friend, and so on), or in the task or operations he or she engages in with others.

The next level of the socioecological system, the mesosystem, is made up of the interrelations among the microsystem in which the individual resides and actively participates in. It includes setting like the relations among home, school, and neighbourhood peer group, among family, work, and social life. Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes that it is how the microsystems in the mesosystem interrelate or are organized that will determine how easily the individual will transition from one to another like from the home to school. Thus, microsystems in the mesosystem with contradictory characteristics may present some difficulties to the individual. This is not to say that Bronfenbrenner thought that there needs to be a close fit between different microsystems in order for children to succeed; in fact, "it is clearly helpful for children to learn that different types of environments require different types of behaviour and afford the learning of new roles and new ways of acting and interacting" (Tudge et al., 2017, para. 2).

As the model has made it clear, development never occurs simply in one ecological system, no matter how important it is. The growing child may not necessarily be an active participant of the said environment. This is what is referred to as the exosystem. An exosystem "refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person"

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). The final aspect of context is the macrosystem, which has been related to culture, whether considered as an entire society or a racial, ethnic, regional, or socioeconomic group within a society. A macrosystem includes people who share values, beliefs, practices, access to resources, and a sense of common identity. The macrosystem organizes microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem interactions. The cultures of the collective group, system-created opportunities, and group exchange patterns are more emphasized. More recently, Bronfenbrenner added that social exchange is another important macrosystem component.

2.5.4 Time

This is the fourth and final aspect of the PPCT (Process, Person, Context, and Time) model. Jaeger (2017) explains that the *chronosystem* explored in earlier version became an important element under this property in the bioecological model. According to Mulisa (2019), the chronosystem, which was later added to the ecological system, can be understood as the impact on a person's developmental changes and continuities over time in the environments they inhabit. This system centres on the life trajectory of an individual as they mature, considering the passage of time and the socio-historical context of the specific community. It encompasses significant life transitions.

According to Tudge et al. (2017), it can be thought of in two different ways: The first is that cultural values, beliefs, and practices are dynamic; thus, always changing over time. This means that what governs a group of people in a specific period may not be that same thing other successive generations may grow up to know. So, under this property Jaeger (2017) posits that Bronfenbrenner's emphasis was on the impact of human development processes and outcomes on societal expectations and events, as well as the reciprocal influence of the larger society on individuals across

generations. The second way pertains to the ongoing changes happening within a specific proximal process. Therefore, as previously mentioned, to allow for the proximal processes to be efficient, they need to happen consistently and with increasing levels of complexity. Figure 2.5 is a diagram that captures the framework:

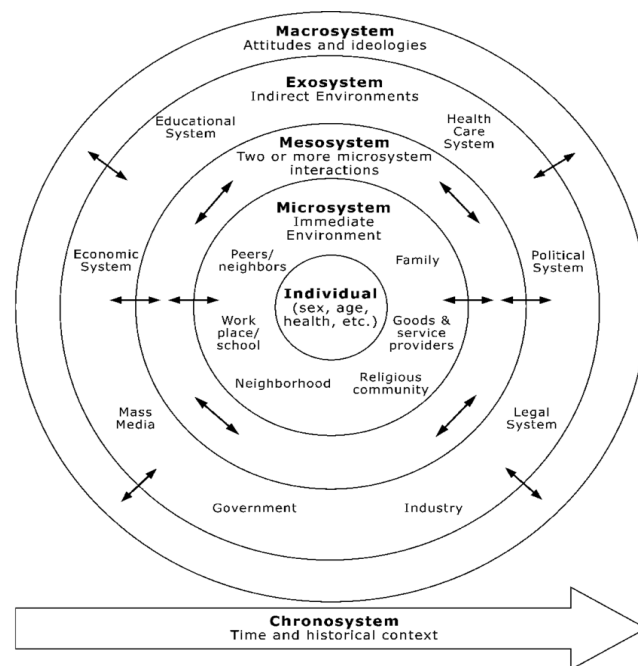


Figure 2.5: The bioecological model of human development
(adapted from Brown & Strommen, 2018)

All these nested systems go to justify the underlying factors that determine how some literatures have captured how the deaf communicate. Lane (2005), for instance, identified two groups of American deaf people. According to Lane (2005), some deaf Americans do not identify as members of the *Deaf-World*, whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL). Instead, they identify themselves as hearing people with disabilities and reject its language, values, organizations, and mores. This is partly because the deaf world had been and is judged as inferior, and partly because most of them live in an environment of mostly hearing people, have conventional schooling, and in some cases have become deaf after acculturation to hearing society. Their spouses are hearing, so they prefer to communicate in English or one of the spoken

minority languages and comply with all the rules. Like the bioecological model, it is the activities the person experiences and the person's characteristics like resources, demand, and force that steer the proximal process to development. Thus, a person in this group of deaf people has certain experiences and characteristics that make them naturally inclined to participate only in certain activities; hence, learning to communicate in a way that will help them identify with a superior language group.

The other set of deaf people are those that identify themselves with the Deaf-world. Americans in the Deaf-World do indeed feel a strong identification with that world and show great loyalty to it. And Kannapell (1989) observes that they mostly show this loyalty by using ASL in communication. The ASL functions also as a powerful tool of identity and power in the American deaf community. The ASL, being one important requirement for admission into the core of the American Culture, leads to a preference for its use among Deaf people, not only for its use but compliance to cultural norms and values attached to it.

This sense of loyalty and allegiance also makes them mindful of behaving in a manner that accurately reflects the cultural norms of the group. Lane (2005) explains that "in ... Deaf culture, there are norms for relating to the Deaf-World: for decision making, consensus is the rule, not individual initiative...." (p. 292). Lane (2005) further elucidates that the most esteemed qualities among them include consensus in linguistic rules including information management, discourse construction, status acquisition, and debt management. They adhere equally to the group's established norms for initiating and ending interactions, for engaging in conversation by alternating speaking turns, for expressing opinions frankly/bluntly, and for communicating with politeness, as well as its own set of prohibited behaviours. The collective value of loyalty is also demonstrated by culturally significant names and the

prioritization given to things that give evidence to being a member of the culture. As it has already been indicated, environmental factors that contribute to an individual's development are those that hold significance and meaning to the individual. An individual will only permit such proximal processes to occur when they feel a strong sense of connection to the environment. And, Lane (2005) explains that most times the Deaf community becomes more immediate to Deaf Americans because it gives them what they could not find at home. They get to have a surrogate family, where there is easy communication, a positive identity.

In addition, according to Kannapell (1989), communication within the deaf community involves more than just conveying ideas; it is also a process of sharing emotions and expressing the significance of things to themselves and others. According to Kannapell (1989), deaf individuals communicate meaning of things to each other, as they often have distinct perspectives compared to those who can hear. As a result, deaf individuals establish a profound connection in communication due to their shared experiences, including the history of the deaf community, school experiences, family experiences, stories, and jokes. The establishment of effective communication and a close bond, along with shared cultural values and beliefs, fosters a sense of equality among individuals who are deaf. This feeling of interconnectedness has led to a communicative style in the American deaf community, precisely in their use of ASL that most scholars (e.g. Hoza, 2007, 2008; Valli et al., 2005) describe as direct and involvement-oriented. All of these are evidence to the claim by Bronfenbrenner (1979) that all the systems under ecology are further impacted by society and culture.

Similarly, as suggested by the chronosystem, a group of organisms exposed to time is susceptible to evolution. Consequently, the Deaf community has experienced anticipated transformations in their customs, norms, and values. Horejes (2012) argues

that the contemporary Deaf culture is undergoing changes and embracing novel methods of communication, socialisation, education, and engagement with digital technologies. The present-day Deaf culture may exhibit variations from its previous, yet it remains a dynamic and significant entity. One could argue that this evolution has led to the differences in the conclusion made by research conducted at different time periods regarding the communication style of individuals in the Deaf community. For example, studies conducted by Roush (1999) and Zimmer (1992) found a limited number of strategies used by ASL users when performing certain speech acts. However, Hoza (2007, 2008), Roush (2011), and Valli et al. (2005) discovered a wider range of strategies that are probably influenced by acculturation with spoken languages. Furthermore, the *Time* component of the model incorporates the concept that proximal processes, which contribute to developmental changes, vary depending on the historical period in which they take place.

Likewise researches into the Deaf communities in Ghana have primarily distinguished between two deaf communities: the urban deaf communities and the rural deaf communities. The urban deaf communities are usually mentioned in connection with the educated Deaf. The urban deaf communities have also been associated with the use of GSL. The language found in the school environment, with influence from Ghanaian languages, English, home signs, rural sign languages, and the induction of ASL, significantly inspired GSL's development. As a result of this, Mac Hadjah (2024) revealed that this urban signing is usually “encompasses three distinctive signing varieties, each with unique characteristics and features” (p. 22). These signing varieties were labelled as ENGLISH, LOCAL AND BROKEN. The ENGLISH which has been identified to have close approximation to ASL and the English grammar is usually used in formal settings like education or certain religious activities and attached to it is a

sense of high prestige. The LOCAL have lexemes that are sourced from local signs that are largely not influenced by ASL and English and thus its grammar is different from English. They are used in informal settings like interactions with family and friends in households. The BROKEN signing variety exhibits significant influence of local and ASL on its signs. However it has its own unique grammar that is different from that of ENGLISH. The choice to use it in both formal and informal contexts will be deemed appropriate. The description of the deaf community in Ghana by Mac Hadjah (2024) is parallel to Batibo (2005) description of most African countries, as found in Mac Hadjah (2024). According to Mac Hadjah (2024), Batibo (2005) described many African countries as having a triglossic language patterns. This triglossic structure consists of three distinct languages (ex-colonial languages (foreign), dominant indigenous languages, and minority indigenous languages) that complement each other in their coexistence. In the context of the Ghanaian deaf community the interplay of the English Language, ASL, some local signs (with influence from spoken local languages) present a triglossic language pattern, and these seem to influence how the Deaf communicate.

Mac Hadjah (2024) noted that ENGLISH represents a standardized and relatively stable variety (having its lexemes often featured in GSL dictionaries). It is recognised as more prestigious, usually casting a shadow over the existence of the other signing varieties, leading to the perception that ENGLISH generically defines the term GSL. Mac Hadjah (2024) realized that the ENGLISH has been presented as the more prestigious variant of GSL because of its affiliation to formal education, strengthened by its connection to ASL (an internationally recognised sign language). The more preferred and dominant usage of ENGLISH, by the educated Deaf usually leaves the LOCAL and the BROKEN in marginalized and stigmatized position in such

settings (Mac Hadjah, 2024). Most researches on the education of the Deaf in Ghana reveal how the growing Deaf child spends most of their time in boarding schools for the deaf. Thus the school usually presents a more immediate environment where the individual directly and actively participates in activities and a place where he or she is surrounded by a group of people with similar physiological traits and goals, providing a sense of belongingness. Thus just like Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed, the school environment have profound influence on the development of their communicative competence. This fact does not completely disregard the importance of the home (an avenue for the Deaf child to be more exposed to the local languages and all its norms) but like proposed in the framework how the individual subjectively experiences these environments has the power of steering growth and development.

The contact variation of the GSL may lead to the conclusion that the nested system, most especially the macrosystem, proposed by Bronfenbrenner may indeed influence the linguistic choices of the Deaf in these communities. For example users of English language and ASL have been defined as linguistic communities that may be more independence-oriented or involvement-oriented respectively. This indicates that since the influences of these two languages are still evidenced in GLS then consequently both orientations may be equally realised among users of GSL depending on context and the variation of GSL they choose.

Mac Hadjah (2024) also stated that since the Deaf in Ghana primarily acquire GSL (ENGLISH, BROKEN, and LOCAL) in the context of deaf schools, where English and ASL-based signing forms the base for communication, it further creates a disparity in competence where your level of education determines your proficiency in GSL. And the highly educated signers tend to be more proficient in ENGLISH. “In essence, the signing practices among educated, semi-educated, and non- educated

signers can differ, reflecting the diverse usages of GSL” (Mac Hadjah, 2024 p.23). Relating this to the framework, shows that indeed the *Persons* resources (abilities, experiences) indeed contributes how a person develops, and in this case developing linguistically, which may contribute to limited linguistic choices or otherwise.

With regards to the *Time* (Chronosystem) aspect, proposed in the framework which speaks of the dynamic nature of customs, practices and experiences overtime. Edward and Akanlig-Pare, (2021) make it clear that ASL is continually being used and promoted by certain individuals and religious groups, and more ASL materials are made readily available for teaching and learning. This makes the influence of ASL still present, even after a long period of its initial contact, in the evolution of GSL. One noticeable acculturation process that could take place is the plausible influence from the dominant indigenous spoken languages on sign languages in Ghana. For example, Nyst (2007, 2013) mentioned the influence of the surrounding dominant spoken language, which is Akan, on the indigenous sign language (AdaSL). In the literature, AdaSL is known to be one of the sign languages for the rural communities in Ghana. Some of the acculturation processes includes the assimilation of certain cultural concepts into AdaSL, notably in the expression of motion (deictic expressions) and the naming system in AdaSL. It is likely that “the high proportion of hearing AdaSL signers with Akan as their dominant language is in part accountable for this....” (Nyst, 2013, p. 79).

2.5.5 Summary

The ecology of the environment was considered to analyse human development in-context rather than out-of-context. Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that developmental processes are affected by interconnections between settings and external influences. He suggests the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem

socioecological systems. The evolving new model emphasises the importance of a child's environment and the processes that lead to change. The core of the model is the proximal processes, which are primary mechanisms producing human development. This goes to prove that deaf individuals, with regards to the community they identify with, communicate in a way that portrays the cultural values and mores of the community they uphold.

2.6 Pragmatic Features of Sign Languages

This section presents the discussion of some pragmatic features of the Deaf in some Deaf communities around the world. The discussions hinge on researches that have been conducted on sign languages outside the Ghanaian context. The pragmatic features covered are speech acts, politeness, prosody, deixis, and address systems. Most of these capture the linguistic choices the Deaf make and the strategies used in communication as a result of compliance to contextual norms and expectations.

2.6.1 Speech acts

In Blum-Kulka & Olshtain's (1984) report on the cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns, they categorized three request strategies that are valid to apply cross-linguistically or might be manifested universally. In Hoza's (2007) research into American Sign language (ASL) concerning request making, it was discovered that ASL users used both direct and indirect strategies. The factor that determines the choice of strategy to use in making request was the power balance between the individuals. The data in Hoza revealed that the only instance of using an imperative form, in making a request, was when the superior was addressing a subordinate. It was realised that the imperative forms were not made without forms of redress. Apart from the actual request itself (the head request), the requester utilizes other face-work elsewhere in the request. But how extensive the redressive action were, were dependent

on the degree of imposition. It was also revealed that more mitigation actions are employed in situations of higher imposition. For example, in one instance, the supervisor first uses apologies, signals the upcoming threat to face, and then uses more intensive non-manual modifiers (NMMs). Some common request strategies that ASL signers used included

The direct strategy of (a) using an imperative form (command); the independence strategies of (b) being conventionally indirect, (c) question, (d) hedge, (e) being pessimistic, (f) minimize the imposition, and (g) apologize; the involvement strategies of (h) giving or asking for reasons, and (i) offer/promise; and the indirect strategy of (j) violating Relevance maxim, that is, give hints. (Hoza, 2007, p. 64)

According to Hoza (2007), they have these in common with American English language speakers. As it has already been stated, just as English speakers use conventionalized indirectness (CI) in request, ASL signers also use them, although the distribution of the type of CI used by each language group may vary considerably. Hoza (2007) classified CI according to how they relate to the hearer's ability, willingness, or desire to perform or accept the requested act; or the speaker's claim, suggestion, or questioning of their own ability, willingness, or desire to engage in the act. For example, *ability* Can/Could you ..., I was wondering if you could..., *willingness*: Will/Would you...., Would you mind....?, and *desire*: I want you to...., I would like you to..., I'd like to.....

The most common type of CI used in the ASL request data is the *willingness* type which is marked by the *DON'T MIND* sign. An example cited by Hoza (2007) includes "DON'T MIND BORROW FIFTY DOLLARS tight lips [translation: Could I

borrow 50 dollars?]" (p. 70). There were also evidences of the *ability* type of CI in the data collected by Hoza (2007). For example, "YOU CAN PROGRESS FINISH CAN YOU, QUESTION-MARK (wiggle) (nondominant hand)/pg,q (pg: polite grimace, q: question) [translation: Do you think you could manage to get all the work done, do you think you can?]" (p. 72). There was no evidence of desire forms of CI in the data collected for the study apart. Comparatively, Hoza (2007) discovered that the *willingness* type was realised more in the ASL data than the English data. And the English request data revealed the use of more CI of *ability*. Hoza (2007) thus concluded that the difference in CI type between the two language groups may be an indication of the difference in relative face orientation. And that, "the *willingness* CI may be geared more toward cooperation and one's social identity as a member of a group, and *ability* CI may be geared more toward autonomy and individual identity" (Hoza, 2007, p. 74). A summary of the strategies used is presented in the Appendix III (Table 2.6.1).

Another way for ASL users to incite indirectness is using the non-manual grammatical markers that mark every sentence type. Kristin (2010) discussed how direct speech acts in ASL can be quite distinct from spoken language precisely the English Language. In ASL, different types of sentences are grammatically marked by non-manual signals, which are mostly facial expressions and movement of the upper parts of the body. Declaratives/statements are different from interrogatives/questions by the movement of the eyebrow and the torso. In asking polar questions (yes/no questions), the "signer's eyebrows are raised; the head and upper torso lean slightly forward, and the eyes may be widened as the signs are produced" (Mulrooney, 2010, p. 51). Hoza (2007) also discussed an additional non-manual marker to the polar question which is a direct eye gaze.

WH-questions are marked slightly different, with the furrowing of the eyebrows, and the head and torso slightly tilted forward. In the Wh-questions, while signers may choose to use lexical signs like who, what, why, which, where, when, how, or not, the WH-questions non-manual signals will always be used. This is because the non-manual signal is enough to signal that a question is being asked” (Mulrooney, 2010, p. 148). On the contrary, there are no movements like that on the signer’s face when making declaratives/statement, which is termed as a neutral facial expression. The non-manual signal that accompanies a command/imperative is a direct eye contact with the addressee and a frown or serious expression. The non-manual signs may undergo modifications when the signer tries to convey paralinguistic qualities such as politeness or conventionalized indirectness.

2.6.2 Politeness

The focus of this section is to discuss politeness as the act of maintaining face for the speaker and/or addressee by using linguistic strategies to mitigate a face-threatening act or reinforce a face-flattering act. And also, try to understand politeness at the cultural and interactional level of analysis. Cultural differences imply different assumptions on politeness which also means that different language communities may use different linguistic forms and have different politeness expectations (e.g., involvement vs. independence) (Hoza, 2007). At the interactional level, contextual factors affect linguistic decisions made by linguistic community members during specific speech acts. In the literature, the Deaf has been categorized as being direct, which seems to be undesirable (polite) in cultures where indirectness is cherished. Hoza clarified that the direct strategies reflect the politeness expectations of the Deaf community and are limited to specific contexts. Moreover, Hoza (2007) argues that ASL signers and English speakers do not always conform to the direct or indirect

communication patterns described in some available literature. Instead, they adapt their communication strategies based on the specific context. However, their cultural orientation determines their tendency to be more direct or indirect.

In the situation of potential risk to face, spoken language mitigates this risk by some redress strategies, which are culture dependent, like the use of apologies, hedges, and indirectness. Roush (2011) and Hoza (2007, 2011) identified several manual lexical as well as non-manual lexical politeness markers in ASL that perform some face-saving functions. Both cultures may rely on different linguistic elements to perform same functions. Hoza (2007, 2011) identify signs used to indicate both positive and negative politeness. They are realised in the form of alerters, expressions of surprise, preparatory statements, and hedges. According to Mapson (2015), Hoza (2007) reported that while Native American speakers may use a person's name as an alerting device, ASL users use two manual markers glossed as *handwave* and *hey* as politeness markers. They are also used to signal introduction of new topics, which may be used together with non-manual markers for extensive mitigation.

It has been established earlier that ASL users do not rely only on manual modifiers to perform mitigation acts; there is a set non-manual modifiers available to them. Hoza (2007, 2008) discovered some unique linguistic elements, NMMs, in addition to the markers that were initially discovered by Roush (2011), in mitigating face threatening acts in ASL requests and rejections. Roush (20011) and Hoza (2007, 2008) identified a total of five key non-manual politeness markers: the polite pucker, polite grimace and body/head teeter. Later, Hoza (2007) identified two other features: the tight lips and polite grimace-frown. These non-manual mitigators can be used alone or together with a manual sign. The politeness markers were ranked according to the degree of imposition they are used to mitigate, that is, while some impositions are

thought of as severe and pose greater risk to face, others do not. A summary of the non-manual features is presented in the Appendix III (Table 2.6.2).

2.6.3 Deixis

Deixis as has been discussed earlier is about *pointing* or *showing* in order to make references. Discussions on deixis earlier indicated, that it may relate to a spatio-temporal coordinate on a timeline according to a specific speech context. This timeline “provides detail about how different types of events occur, how they occur in relation to one another, and how they occur in relation to the speaker” (Mitchell, 2016, p.31).

On this timeline, the present, which is the zero point, is *now*, the future is ahead of the zero point and the past is behind the zero point. Mitchell (2016) noted how the signs for the present, past and future represent a similar conception about spatio-temporal coordination as it occurs in spoken language (English). In ASL the path of the time relies on the facing of the body. Signs indicating time move along a “line” where the present is close and vertically aligns with the front the body, with those of the future performed in the space in front of and further from the signer’s body; those concerning the past are behind, over the shoulder. Also, Farnell (1994) made the assertion that the distinction between proximity and distance, in ASL, with deictic expressions is indicated by the direction of hand. For example, in ASL the distinction between *here* and *there* is relative to the closeness of the sign to the body; in signing *here* or *the place of where the speech act occurred*, an index finger points down and close to the body of the signer, and an index points down and away from the signer when signing *there*.

In sign language, Lillo-Martin and Meier (2011) purport that although pronouns exist, pointing is also used to refer to people. They also emphasized how important locations are in making reference in the case of ASL. Nominal points help identify

referent whiles locative points help show the location of the referent. According to Lillo-Martin and Meier (2011), the ASL signer points to the centre of his or her torso in order to make reference to him or herself. They stated how certain sign languages have a variant form of first-person reference. For example in the Japanese Sign Language (JSL) first person reference could entail the signer pointing to his or her nose instead of the torso. To make reference to second and third persons, the space around a signer is used. A point to “such an abstract location can also be analysed as a deictic pronoun, picking out the referent previously associated with that location” (Lillo-Martin & Meier, 2011, p. 99). This means that frame of reference is used to establish points of reference for objects, people, and places that the signer can always refer back in making reference to the same referent, in a conversation.

Coppola and Senghas (2010) also made a similar assertion that the signer is assigned certain locations in space to referents. The signer can then “incorporate those locations into other signs in order to refer back to the referent or to link other signs grammatically with the referent” (Coppola & Senghas, 2010, p. 6). For instance, it is possible for a signer to establish a connection between *a man* and a certain spatial position on the right side. Subsequently, the signer may generate the sign *PAY* in the direction of the right side, to convey the notion that the man was paid. Coppola and Senghas (2010) made two distinctions that can relate to deictic expressions: direct and indirect deixis. The direct deixis is associated with referents present during the time the utterance is made, that is, it references the object, people, and activities in the immediate environment whiles the speaker or signer uses the indirect deixis to indicate what is beyond the immediate environment. This means the referents (people, places, and times) that are not present during time of the utterance.

2.6.4 Prosody

Sign languages exhibit their own form of prosody, which involves rhythmic patterns, prominence, and meaningful variations in body movements, facial expressions, and head tilts (Winston, 2000). Just as intonation conveys information in spoken languages, non-manual features (such as facial expressions) play a crucial role in sign language prosody and they have similar function as prosodic cues in spoken language. Winston (2000) notes that one of the prosodic features that are often used to indicate boundaries in ASL is eye gaze. It is also used to mark prominence. According to Winston (2000), ASL also marks the beginning and end to listing in utterance by starting with an upward movement which tends to move downwards on the last sign of the listing ending.

Other studies suggest that body leans mark stress-prominence, focusing the signer on new and highlighted information. Wilbur and Patschke (1998) and van der Kooij et al. (2006) examined how ASL and NGT (Nederlandse Gebarentaal: Sign Language of the Netherlands) sign language (respectively) use body leans to indicate stress. Signers' body lean when they "take the form of a slight or exaggerated backward and forward movement of the body, shoulders or head, relative to the position held in the rest utterance" (Wilbur & Patschke, 1998, p. 279). American Sign Language and NGT use body leans for contrastive focus differently due to the direction the body takes in the signing space (van der Kooij et al., 2005). American Sign Language signers lean forward to emphasize new information in response to interlocutor questions or concept expansion. Signers use backward leans to emphasise the exclusion of a previous submission. In corrective focus, signers using ASL mark the rejected unit by a backward lean, followed by a forward lean to correct information (van der Kooij et al., 2005).

Wilbur and Patschke (1998) illustrate that:

Lean: backward forward

ASL: PRO.1 NOT SAY 'DEATH', PRO.1 SAID 'BET'.

English: I didn't say 'DEATH', I said 'BET' (p. 296).

A NGT signer assigns the left and right sides of the signing space in front of the body to the referents in the utterance, and the body leans towards them to draw attention to correction. Thus, it is repeated and the *false* referent is set to the left with a negative head shake, while the correct information is set to the right with a forward movement. There were exceptions to these observations. Evidence suggests that sentence constituent type determined stress marker type. Subjects of sentences are marked by forward lean after the left-right spatial distinction, while with objects of sentences the body is held still and upright, with a backward head tilt, and a gaze at the interlocutor's face. Winston (2000) observed how eye gaze can also be used to mark prominence; where signers look at their hands to direct the addressee to watch what they are signing and indicate the saliency of what they are signing, and by shifting their gaze from one hand to the other, they mark boundaries between one utterance and the next.

According to Winston (2000), signs that are made smaller or larger than expected create prosodic patterns, likewise the speed of articulation. Also, the use of one hand or the use of both hands when that is not what is expected to create that sign indicates prosodic features. Eyeblinks are another signed language prosody cue. Eyeblinks are also used to mark intonational phrase boundaries. Wilbur (1999) suggested that inhibited involuntary eyeblinks can mark intonational phrase boundaries, while voluntary eyeblinks can indicate emphasis and the final sign in a portion of information. In Israeli Sign Language (ISL) and other sign languages, raised eyebrows indicate yes/no questions and continuation between parts of a

sentence, (Sandler et al., 2020). Another shared characteristic among various sign languages is the use of furrowed brow expression to indicate wh- (content) questions.

2.6.5 Address system

Name signs in American Deaf Culture, like names in other cultures, identify people and express cultural values and social norms (Mindess, 1990). In sign languages, personal sign names vary by deaf community. Paales (2011) identified four deaf sign name categories in Estonia. First, initialized or arbitrary sign names use the person's first and or last name initials. Second, descriptive name signs refer to the person's appearance, behaviour, clothing, peculiarity, or special characteristic. It represents a part of the person or compares to attributes, making it metonymic and metaphoric. The third method combines the referent's initials with a concept or exterior feature. The last strategy is borrowing sign names if the referent's name has significance in another culture or community or given a sign name based on homonymic characteristics shared with another word. Mindess (1990) discovered two categories of sign names: descriptive and arbitrary sign names. The descriptive category was further divided into two categories: one for hobbies, physical appearance, or behaviour and the initials of the person's name; the other for physical features without initials. According to Paales (2011), Estonian deaf people use visible features like moles, scars, missing limbs, and freckles to create sign names. In such deaf communities, the question raised is whether such personal name signs are personal names or nicknames, as nicknames are defined as identifications that refer to a person's character, appearance, behaviour, or a certain event related to that person (McClure, 1981 as cited in Paales, 2011).

Like spoken languages, personal name signs and nicknames emphasise solidarity because having a sign name, whether deaf or hearing, signifies being part of

the deaf community. The moment of attributing a personal name sign signifies the entry of that person into the sign language community, by creating a connection with the history and language of the group (Paales, 2011). Deaf people have been isolated from hearing people until recently. This means that until recently, little priority was given to how they refer to hearing people. Constant contact with the hearing demanded that those in close contact with the deaf (hearing family members, teachers, sign language interpreters, deaf advocates, researchers) and people who matter to the deaf or are talked about in the deaf community (politicians, athletes, celebrities, religious personalities) are assigned sign names. According to Paales (2011), the major strategy for forming sign names for the hearing is through descriptive name signs and loan signs.

Mindess (1990) found that name signs may focus on physical appearance, the negative aspect, but the important thing is being noticed and being given a name is something to be proud of and there is no other way they will have it. Mindess (1990) found that in ASL, signs for teachers, bosses, and administrators must convey respect by using arbitrary or initialized sign names, especially surname initials instead of first names. Thus, deaf teachers who used their first names' initials often change their sign language because it is considered inappropriate for students to address a teacher by their first name initials. Thus, Mindess' (1960) respondents showed how deaf people revere surname name signs. According to Paales (2011), signers do not use sign names to call each other's attention in conversations. Thus, personal sign names are used to refer to third parties rather than as call signs.

2.6.6 Summary

The body of works discussed has brought to the understanding that ASL signers use direct and indirect strategies, with individual power balance influencing their approach in their request making. And, one common indirect move is conventionalized indirectness (CI). Non-manual grammatical markers like facial expressions and upper body movement are also used to incite indirectness. Deixis in sign language also refers to a spatio-temporal coordinate on a timeline, with the zero-point representing the *present* and *now* of the body in space and time. Additionally, indexicals in sign languages include pointing handshapes which could be locative points, with direct and indirect deixis. Prosody in sign language could simply be captured in expression made through eye aperture, head movement, body leans, and eye gaze. Lastly, in American Deaf Culture, name signs play a crucial role in identifying people and expressing cultural values and social norms. Deaf people often use descriptive and or arbitrary name signs and loan signs to form sign names for hearing people, while personal sign names are used to refer to third parties rather than as call signs.

2.7 Functions of Pragmatic Features in Sign Languages

According to the National Deaf Children's Society (2024), in sign language, pragmatics is essential to enabling successful communication. This is because sign language users can effectively and clearly communicate their intended meanings through pragmatic features. Users of sign language can modify their communication style according to various contexts due to certain pragmatic features. For instance, signers can signal when a situation is formal or informal through modification of the speed or intensity of their signs, and appropriate eye contact when having a conversation with a stranger or close friend. Knowledge in pragmatics further helps users in comprehending the context-dependent meanings of signs and to use it in a

manner that is appropriate. An example is using spatial references, also known as deictic signs, because they involve pointing to places or making references to people, things, or events. Specifically, in some instances, pointing to the left might refer to something mentioned earlier in the conversation. Without these features, communicating coherently will be difficult. Moreover, pragmatic features aid in the expression of deference, politeness, and respect among signers by assisting users of sign language in understanding social norms and expectations. For example, the use of appropriate body language and facial expressions can show deference.

Pragmatics enables sign language users to navigate social interactions. Pragmatic features facilitate the smooth flow of conversations because they specify when to take turns, how to express agreement or disagreement, and whether to pause or continue signing. For example, using head nods or raising eyebrows can indicate active listening or a willingness to respond. Also, successful sign language communication requires the ability to interpret nonverbal cues as some features enable signers to smoothly transition between topics, like signalling topic shifts, ensuring coherence, and avoiding abrupt changes. Also, raising eyebrows or making specific gestures, for example, can be used to introduce a new topic. Pragmatic features enable people to build rapport with others. Sign language users foster a positive social environment by utilizing appropriate greetings, introductions, and conversational norms. Even in the face of misunderstandings, pragmatic features help to repair communication breakdowns. Users can clarify their intended meaning, rephrase sentences, or request confirmation from their conversation partners. To summarize, pragmatics in sign language functions as the link between knowledge of language and efficient communication, enabling signers to express meaning, navigate social exchanges, and adjust to diverse circumstances.

2.8 Related Studies

Mapson (2015) examined the non-manual features of British Sign Language (BSL) and their functions in expressing politeness. The study initially emphasised the significance of non-manual features, such as facial expressions and upper-body movements, in expressing politeness in signed languages such as American Sign Language (ASL) and Japanese Sign Language (JSL). Such studies followed Brown and Levinson's model of politeness and the notion of face, elucidating how non-manual features are used to express positive and negative politeness strategies. In Mapson's (2015) works, the additional fact was that attention was given to prosody in relation to politeness. The pivotal role prosody (pitch, timing, volume, and rhythm) plays in effectively expressing emotion and attitude in verbal communication was considered. Mapson (2015) demonstrated that certain prior research in spoken language has established a connection between pitch and politeness, where a higher pitch frequently signifies politeness in languages such as Japanese and English. Several studies on sign languages have indicated potential parallels between prosodic characteristics in spoken language and non-manual features in signed languages. For instance, raised eyebrows in signed language may correspond to higher pitch in speech (English).

Mapson's (2015)'s study employed a methodology that consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with five Deaf professionals. The purpose of these interviews was to investigate the concept of linguistic politeness within British Sign Language (BSL). The interviews involved the elicitation of speech acts such as requests and apologies to analyse the utilisation of non-manual features. The results indicated that non-manual features, specifically tight lips, polite grimace, raised brows, squint, side tilt, and polite duck, in British Sign Language (BSL), play a more crucial role in expressing linguistic politeness compared to manual signs. Notably, there are

similarities in the characteristics employed to convey politeness in BSL and those that have been previously recognised in American Sign Language (ASL). It was established that non-manual features in signed languages convey both linguistic and paralinguistic meaning. After reaching the realization that the intent associated with the sign is usually provided by the accompanying non-manual features, the analysis of non-manual features for politeness challenged the existing frameworks. The framework developed for spoken languages, such as the internal modifications outlined by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), which primarily focus on lexical/phrasal and syntactic downgraders. According to Mapson (2015), in British Sign Language (BSL), internal modification can be expressed solely through non-manual features, typically using multiple features simultaneously. For example, polite duck can serve as a politeness marker, a downtoner, a consultative device, or an appealer. In general, this research provides insight into a commonly neglected aspect of politeness: the utilisation of intonation and non-manual features in signed languages such as BSL.

As a result of the importance of prosody in conveying meaning, in spoken and sign languages, and Sandler and Lillo-Martin's (2006) research emphasises its role as a universal component of human communication. In sign language, non-manual signs and facial expressions are used to indicate intonation; these are known as superarticulation (Sandler & Lillo-Martin, 2006). For instance, raising the brow, widening the eyes, and the head forward movement are common indicators of yes/no questions in ASL and ISL. Similar to this, standard WH-questions are identified by lowered eyebrows and a forward head. A further typical systematic facial expression in Danish Sign Language and ISL is a kind of squint (lower lid contraction) that is used to indicate shared information (Sandler & Lillo-Martin, 2006). Some researchers believe that the meanings assigned to these sequences of non-manual features are independent

of the sentences with which they are articulated. The ability of the super articulations to combine with sentences whose syntax or lexical meaning does not directly match serves as an example of this independence. For instance, sentences that syntactically qualify as WH-questions may be accompanied with different facial expressions if their pragmatic intent differs from that of a WH-question, even though traditional WH-questions are characterised by the articulatory array of lowered brows and head forward. This may also mean that super-articulatory arrays in sign languages can be combined to create more complex arrays with more complex meanings.

According to Sandler and Lillo-Martin (2006), Dachkovsky (2004) suggested that raising one's eyebrows communicates a prediction. So, a structure accompanied by eyebrow raised indicates that some pertinent information or a consequence will follow the first portion of the utterance. Thus, in a simple yes/no question without eyebrow raise, it can be taken as an indication that a response is not coming or expected. This analysis demonstrates that "the meanings associated with each action unit in the system are broad, gaining specificity and adding subtlety by combining with each other and with the meaning of the sentences they characterize. Intonation works like that" (Sandler & Lillo-Martin, 2006, p. 260). To put it briefly, superarticulation is the innovative way in which sign languages adjust to their physical modality by substituting facial expressions for vocal intonation. It recognises the distinctive qualities of sign languages while highlighting the universality of some linguistic principles.

In the case study of Nicaraguan Sign Language (NSL), Coppola and Senghas (2010) demonstrated how gestures used by Spanish speakers were reanalyzed into pronominal features in NSL. It investigates the common process of grammaticalization that occurred. The participants were divided into three groupings, each consisting of

four participants, who represented different stages in the evolution of NSL from the home sign. All the participants were required to watch a cartoon and recount to someone else in NSL to gather comparable language samples. For comparative analysis, the same cartoon was to be narrated by a fourth batch of strictly home signers. The first question posed was to ascertain whether gestures in sign language discourse are different from lexical signs. It was discovered that one way of creating indexical in NSL is through pointing. Coppola and Senghas (2010) state that because pointing is so widely accepted, it is easy to ignore the careful consideration that goes into understanding them. Compared to NSL signers, home signers were observed to point to objects more frequently in the environment. This is probably because home signers have a smaller vocabulary and are more reliant on their physical surroundings for communication. The study looked at how pointing gestures, which home signers use as a communication tool, change into linguistic components in NSL.

As was mentioned in previous section, Coppola and Senghas (2010) referred to deictic expressions as being either direct or indirect. Points in NSL narratives were classified as nominal (referring to entities or characters) or locative (referring to locations). The majority of the pointing signs were instances of indirect deixis, such as referring to a tablecloth in the cartoon by pointing at a nearby tablecloth or using body parts to represent objects, such as a telephone pole represented by the forearm. Signers of NSL do not only point to signing space, but they can equally point to parts of their bodies to represent an entity and can point back to that part of their body as referencing point to that entity. It was also discovered that pointing to the chest is not only used by the signer to refer to him/herself but the signer role shifts and become a reference to a character in a narrative or a character they are about to describe.

Pointing in space for locative purpose in NSL is mostly done simultaneously with eye gaze. An example is a situation in which a home signer points above his own head to refer to a location above the head of the cat in the story. These types of indexical were recorded with all participants of the second and third grouping who were representative of signers of the more evolved NSL. Additionally, it was discovered that there was a linguistic evolution evident in the rise in complexity and frequency of nominal deictic gestures among the various cohorts of NSL signers. And, the use of various pointing gestures indicates the creation of a referent indicating system, which might incorporate NSL pronominal reference. In essence, this work focused on deixis in sign language, the grammaticalization process, a particular case study on NSL, and the variables influencing language emergence.

Paales (2011) delved into a fascinating facet of communication in the Deaf community with his work on name signs. The name signs used in the study came from a variety of sources, including manuscripts (written notes the author possessed from information gathered from the Estonian Deaf community), oral and written information (obtained from Estonian Deaf people and sign language interpreters, information received by email, and drawings by some researchers), and publications (international research, digital and printed media). The name signs mentioned in the article were chosen with the intention of symbolizing various social groups and approaches to name-forming. The article used 112 name signs in total, which were linked to 103 individuals, some of whom had multiple names. It was discovered that language and cultural context can have a significant impact on how one expresses and uses their personal name. In the Deaf community, people who are the deaf identify themselves through name signs, which are signs that correspond to their names, whereas hearing people can use and hear their phonetic or official names. Four categories of personal

name signs were found in the study: descriptive, arbitrary, loan/borrowed, initialized-descriptive name signs. The research also looked at name signs that the Deaf community associates with hearing people.

There are three categories for hearing people who are given name signs: individuals with ties to the Deaf community, religious leaders, and public figures who may be outside the deaf communities. For instance, Toomas-Hendrik Ilves, the former president of Estonia and the president at the time of the research, was given a sign name in allusion to his obsession with bow ties (Paales, 2011). According to Paales (2011), some of these name signs emphasise a person's physical attributes, particularly those judged as negative. As a result, people outside of these communities may perceive deaf people as impolite, thoughtless, and insensitive, and they may also perceive the address of public figures (politicians, for example) as politically incorrect. For the deaf, these name signs served as a symbol of identity and solidarity. According to Paales (2011), "a name sign is a linguistically efficient personal denotation; a cultural anchor for coping both in the sign language community and hearing society" (p. 49). In conclusion, Paales' (2011) research illuminates the intriguing world of name signs, highlighting their cultural significance, linguistic patterns, and the distinctive ways Deaf people identify themselves and others.

2.9 Conclusion

In general, the chapter commenced by discussing mechanisms through which hearing occurs. Hearing loss thus happens because of damage to any part of the auditory canal. Subsequent sections revealed that a missionary introduced formal education for the deaf in Ghana, teaching literacy and numeracy through sign language. With this, the Education Act of 1961 and the 1992 constitution have made it easier, creating basic and secondary schools. Deaf education in Ghana thus began with

American sign language, which evolved into GSL from contact with an indigenous sign language developed by the deaf community in Adamorobe. The concept of pragmatics was also discussed with a discussion on areas such as speech acts, politeness, deixis, and address systems as viewed in spoken language.

Generally, strategies for cross-cultural communication and its role in social contexts were explored. The theoretical framework, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development, analyses human development in-context and considers interconnections between settings and external influences. Bronfenbrenner's model emphasizes the importance of a child's environment and proximal processes, highlighting how deaf individuals communicate with their community, demonstrating their cultural values and mores. The discussion of pragmatic features in sign languages revealed that in ASL, signers use direct and indirect strategies, with individual power balance influencing their choice. Conventionalized indirectness (CI) is a common indirect strategy, while non-manual markers like facial expressions and upper body movement incite indirectness, likewise, deixis, and prosody capture expressions through, hand movements, eye aperture, head movement, body leans, and gaze. Additionally, name signs in American Deaf Culture identify people and express cultural values and norms as well. All these features prove that sign language pragmatics helps signers express meaning, navigate social interactions, and adapt to different situations. Related studies were also provided to explore and provide evidence of how these features are realised in other sign languages.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Dörnyei (2007) proposed that research can loosely be defined as trying to find answers to questions, an activity regularly performed to gain knowledge or learn more about the world around us. In a more scientific sense, it is a “disciplined inquiry” (Dörnyei, 2007, p.15). Thus “research methodology concerns the principal process of getting to know and coming to terms with the world around us....” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 20). In this chapter, the various procedures that were followed in conducting this research work are outlined. The discussion includes the research approach, design, the research population, and the sampling technique. The rest are on the sample and the instruments for gathering the data, data collection procedures, reliability and validity of the study, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

This research utilized the qualitative approach to research. Qualitative research is defined as “research that relies mainly on the reduction of data to words (codes, labels, categorization systems, narratives, etc.) and interpretative argument” (Benson, 2013, cited in Lew et al, 2018, p. 80). Qualitative research can also be defined as a research approach that uses “inductive method that seeks to draw general principles, theories or ‘truth’ from an investigation and documentation” (Muhartoyo, 2007, p.12). Statistical tools are not employed in this investigation; instead, basic enumeration and computational techniques are occasionally utilized. Lew et al. (2018) observe that qualitative findings generally depend on particular ways of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in specific contexts. Likewise, Dörnyei (2007) points out that “qualitative research takes place in the natural setting, without any attempts to

manipulate the situation under study” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). Therefore, in order to present adequate and sufficient detail about the natural context, when using the qualitative research approach, researchers usually conduct their investigations through “an intense and prolonged contact with, or immersion in, the research setting” (Dörnyei, 2007, p.38). Consequently, one can conclude that the core of qualitative research approach is to acquire primary data, through data collections like observations or interviews, about the social processes of a group of people.

Also, qualitative research focuses on the subjective opinions, experiences, and feelings of individuals. Consequently, Dörnyei (2007) proposed that the primary objective of this type of research is to investigate the perspectives of the participants regarding the situation under study. He further explains that a fundamental principle in qualitative research is that individuals ascribe and bring their own meanings to various situations. This means that it is only the participants themselves who possess the ability to disclose the interpretations and significance of their experiences and actions. Therefore, qualitative researchers “strive to view social phenomena from the perspectives of the 'insiders' and the term *insider perspective* has a special place in the qualitative credo” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). Some of these social phenomena are the processes of language acquisition and usage. Language is acquired or learnt through one’s interaction with others or socialization within one’s environments. And these environmental influences determine an individual’s way of communicating. Therefore, since this study aims at analyzing language use of some Deaf language groups in Ghana in terms of choices made in communicating intentions, the factors that govern such choices and the influence it has on others, it is pertinent to choose a research approach that encourages a prolong contact with the research setting, enough to be

exposed to certain social activities of the group of people while understanding the meaning and significance they attached to these activities.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell (2014) describes research designs as various styles of inquiry encompassed within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, which offer explicit guidance for the procedural aspects of a research study. The research design for this research is Ethnography. Ethnography is a methodological approach derived from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, wherein the researcher examines the collective behavioral patterns, linguistic practices, and acts exhibited by a cohesive cultural group inside an authentic environment, for an extended duration. According to Dörnyei (2007), the aim of an ethnographic research “describing and analyzing the practices and beliefs of cultures” (p. 130). The process of data collection frequently encompasses the utilization of observations and interviews (Creswell, 2014, p. 42). According to Muhartoyo (2007), the research practices in ethnography is based on two sets of hypotheses about human behaviour which are the naturalistic ecological hypothesis and qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis. The naturalistic-ecological perspective posits that the conduct of individuals is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs. This implies that in order to gain insights into behaviour of a group of people, it is necessary to examine it within its natural settings rather than inside the confines of a controlled environment.

The qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis asserts that comprehending human behaviour necessitates more than mere objectivity on the side of the researcher; it requires the integration of subjective views and opinions held by both participants and the researcher. Consequently, to be able to have such valuable subjective views it is imperative for the researcher to engage in direct participation and get firsthand

experience. The fact that language acquisition is a social practice also means language and culture are inextricably bound, which signifies that there are system of norms and standards developed by a society throughout generations about language use.

Therefore, the reason for choosing this design for the study is that the research allows for a description of the culture of the targeted groups for a better interpretation of the findings of this study. Moreover, in an ethnographic study the researcher's role in interacting and observing the target population to obtain useful cultural information is considered very important. Hence, as the researcher is a member of the deaf culture by virtue of using sign language, for a considerable period of time and gaining some firsthand cultural experiences, bringing on board valuable views on some cultural phenomena of the targeted groups is warranted in this particular research design.

3.3 The Population

The population is the group of people whom the study is about (Dörnyei, 2007). A target population (or the sampling frame) “is a group of individuals (or a group of organizations) with some common defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study” (Creswell, 2001 as cited by Ocran, 2021, pp. 53-54). The population for this study consisted of deaf students and teachers of the Senior High Technical School for the Deaf as well as the Deaf that populates the Adamorobe Township. The students from the Senior High Technical School for the Deaf were targeted because first of all, the researcher wanted to work with participants who are young adults and fluent in Ghanaian Sign Language. And, the Senior High Technical School for the Deaf, being the only senior high school for the deaf in Ghana, is populated with people who are within such age range. The school also represented an ideal deaf community that predominantly uses Sign language in their daily communicative events, and also has shared objectives and as well as being saturated

with rich deaf culture. The study included both pre-lingually and post-lingually deaf participants. The findings revealed that individuals from both groups demonstrated equal inclination and motivation to use sign language. This is because the post-lingually Deaf participants were experiencing hearing loss that could not be improved by any form of hearing aid thus Sign Language serves as their primary means of communication. Both categories of Deaf people were needed for the study as any difference in the realizations of pragmatic features will contribute to the understanding of how they are influenced by difference in context, conversational partners, and personal growth and development.

The assistance of some teachers was needed in the data collection process because apart from being part of the school community, they have been using sign language and exposed to the deaf for a longer period of time. They are also professionally trained to attend to the special needs of the deaf and are better exposed to issues that are encountered by the deaf. The population of Adamorobe also represents one of the very few indigenous sign language users in Africa. The indigenes of Adamorobe are Akans, precisely Akuapems. However, over the years some indigenes of Ga from the nearby Ga communities have migrated to Adamorobe resulting in situation of multilingualism. The records and documentations available indicate that, currently out of the entire population of one thousand four hundred (1,400) people, there are thirty (30) deaf individuals out of which are nineteen (19) males and eleven (11) females. Majority of them (28) are between teenage years and adulthood, two of them are between the ages of 11-12 years. The AdaSL is not used only by the Deaf but the hearing as well, who are even majority users of the language. Because the researcher was least competent in the Adamorobe sign language and was being exposed to it for the first time, participation of the hearing (who used Adamorobe

Sign Language in the Adamorobe community) was significantly counted on. They equally participated in the activities proposed by the instrument used in the collection of data and also acted in the capacity of interpreters.

3.3.1 Sampling technique

According to Dörnyei (2007) there is a limit to the number of participants as well as research sites to be used in any research work. Therefore, it falls on the researcher to select a principle or guide on how to select these participants or research sites, if or when to add additional participants and decide on when the data collected is enough. Therefore, the sampling technique used in this research is the purposive sampling technique. The main goal of sampling is to arrive at having data that maximizes what we learn through individuals or settings that can help you obtain detailed and diverse insights into the phenomenon under study, as is the goal of most qualitative studies (Dörnyei, 2007). This can adequately be attained “by means of some sort of ‘purposeful’ or ‘purposive sampling’” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126). A purposive sampling technique is a sampling principle which describes the sampling parameters (participants, settings, events, processes) that is in line with the purposes of the study.

Creswell (2009) also establishes that researchers purposefully select participants or sites that to a very great extent assist them in understanding the problem and the research question. Therefore, the deaf students and the teachers at Senior High technical school for deaf and the users of Adamorobe, were chosen because of their membership in their respective deaf communities, thus being previewed to the cultural meaning attached to events, processes, activities that are peculiar to them and their prolong use of the sign language makes them competent and have a high level of pragmatic awareness. The deaf students, some of whom were born deaf and others,

who became deaf at a very young age, predominantly communicate with sign language. The teachers comprised of one teacher who became deaf at a very young age and has been communicating in Ghanaian sign language ever since. The other teachers have been teaching with and using sign language for more than ten years.

The participants in the Adamorobe deaf community who were sampled for the study have been using sign language all their lives; this is the situation for both the hearing and deaf. The hearing sampled have relatives who were born deaf thus, they had to learn the sign language simultaneously as they learn their spoken language. The categories of participants were purposefully selected for this study because they each possessed rich information and experience of the various deaf cultures and context based communicative features that were needed for the research.

3.3.2 Sample

Dörnyei (2007) describes the sample as a group of participants that the researcher directly observes in an empirical study. An ideal sample should closely resemble the target population in terms of key overarching attributes, such as age, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, academic aptitude, social standing, or socioeconomic status. Additionally, it should also encompass the more specific characteristics that have been identified as relevant to the variables under investigation in the study (Dörnyei, 2007). The entire population was observed in the data collection process. However, a sample size of twenty-six (26) people, which included twenty (20) deaf students, and six (6) participants from Adamorobe community, participated in the DCT. The population of the study is presented in the table below.

Table 3.1. The sample size for the study

Participants	Male	Female	Total
Deaf Students	10	10	20
Adamorobe participants	3	3	6
Total number of participants	13	13	26

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The data utilized in this study was obtained via the methods of observation and field note-taking, as well as through the administration of Discourse Completion Tasks.

3.4.1 Observation and field notes

Creswell (2009) explains a qualitative observation as the process in which the researcher records field notes pertaining to the behavior and activities shown by individuals within the research location. Within these field notes, the investigator documents the activities taking place at the research location in an unstructured or semi-structured manner, incorporating predetermined questions that the researcher seeks to address. Qualitative observers have the ability to assume many roles, ranging from a nonparticipant to a total participant. Typically, these observations are characterized by an open-ended approach, when researchers pose general questions to the participants, thereby granting them the freedom to express their perspectives without constraint. In this study, the researcher observed the members of the various communities as they perform certain activities; while taking notes. This led to the realization of some features which buttressed what was realized in the DCT.

3.4.2 Discourse completion task (DCT)

Hoza (2007) describes discourse completion test/task as a data collection instrument that provides discourse contexts to which the participant responds to. Ogiermann (2018) proposed that DCTs can be designed to elicit different realization of

any speech act across a variety of situations, which can lead to the documentation of a variety of semantic formulae, within different ranges, by which a given speech act can be implemented. This becomes very essential, most especially “when investigating languages which have not yet been described pragmatically and for speech acts which have not been described in languages which are better documented” (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999 as cited in Ogiermann, 2018, p. 229-230). The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) is used as a data collection instrument in numerous researches, most especially in cross-cultural pragmatics and in interlanguage pragmatics. According to Ogiermann (2018), these areas of research usually include establishing patterns that are culture-specific in speech act realization or the pragmatic features of a specific interlanguage situation. Situations like that rely on large quantities of data. Because a DCT “is the only available data collection instrument that generates sufficiently large corpora of comparable, systematically varied speech act data” (Ogiermann, 2018, p. 229), that is of great value to these types of investigation.

One of the primary criticisms levied against DCTs is the contention that the elicited replies may not accurately represent the speakers' actual utterances in the given scenarios, but rather their perceived responses. However, according to Ogiermann (2018), this does not necessarily invalidate DCT findings. Because DCTs are usually implemented in cross-cultural pragmatic studies, which establishes culture-specific patterns of language use, whether the participants would use the exact expressions spontaneously in real life interactions (as has been described in the DCT) is not really critical as long as they regard their responses as socially and culturally appropriate.

DCTs are made up of a number of scenarios which provides context demanding certain reaction from the participants. According to Leech (1983 as cited Ogiermann, 2018), the focus of most pragmatic studies is on the linguistic realization of the

illocutionary acts (pragmalinguistics) as well as how they vary across different context (sociopragmatics). Thus, DCTs scenarios are designed to include contextual variations which are influenced by some social variables like social distance (D), social power (P) and the degree of imposition (R); as well as sex and in some instances, age. There were two sets of DCTs designed for this study: one for the GSL deaf community and then another for the Adamorobe deaf community. The DCTs in this study was designed to elicit participants' strategies for making requests, apology, complaints, and showing appreciation. Twenty-four (24) scenarios were created which included considering two social variables: social distance and the degree of imposition. The twenty-four (24) scenarios were in three major divisions influenced by three varying social distance situations, between the Signer (S) and the Addressee (A), i.e. ($S < A$, $S > A$, $S = A$). Under each of the three context, two scenarios (according to varying degree of imposition: +R, -R) were created to elicit responds from the participant for each of the speech acts (requests, apology, complaints, and showing appreciation).

The scenarios were designed to model after situations in which the participants would be familiar with, because according to Sacristán (1999 as cited in Perez, 2005), if the participants are put in an unfamiliar situation, they are more likely to produce responds that would be what they perceive others will say in the given situation and not what they will say. This was done to avoid the “artificiality” that may come with the participants adopting roles that would be completely unnatural or foreign to them. This was one of the reasons that accounted for the creating of two different DCTs; because the difference in the demographics of the two deaf communities under study suggested that they may not be exposed to similar context or playing similar roles.

3.5 Validity

The term validity pertains to the extent to which our measurement instrument accurately assesses the intended construct (Litosseliti, 2010, p. 56). Creswell and Miller (2000 cited in Creswell, 2009) points out that the strength of qualitative research lies in its validity, which involves assessing the accuracy of the findings as seen by the researcher, the participant, and the readers of the account. Thus, the method used to ascertain the validity of this study was through the use of member checking. According to Creswell (2009) member checking is a method employed in qualitative research to assess the accuracy and validity of findings. It involves presenting the final report, specific descriptions, or identified themes to the participants involved in the study and seeking their feedback on the accuracy of these findings. This process allows researchers to gauge whether participants perceive the information to be a faithful representation of their experiences or perspectives. The aforementioned approach may encompass organizing a subsequent interview with the participants involved in the study, so affording them the opportunity to offer their insights and commentary on the instrument's accuracy in measuring what was intended. Therefore, to ensure the validity of this study an interview was organized with some of the participants to get their feedback. First of all, certain linguistic concepts, which seemed to be outside the expertise of the participants, were explained. After much discussions and deliberations, the participants agreed on the accuracy of the instruments.

3.6 Data Collection

The data collection started by first of all taking two introductory letters from the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba. Upon entering the Secondary Technical School for the deaf, one of the letters was presented to the headmistress. After getting to know what the research would really entail, the

headmistress assigned one of the teachers to assist in all the research processes. Before that, introduction to the teaching Staff had already taken place. This was followed by a selection of the sample for the study. The main activity included administering the DCT to the selected participants. At the start of every data collection process, for every participant, some questions were asked to collate bio-data on them, providing information on their background. The data collection processes were scheduled in a way that they did not interrupt classroom activities: sometimes data were taken during break time after they were done taking their meals, after class, and during the weekends. Fortunately, the subsequent weeks for the data collection coincided with some sporting activities which meant that there was no classroom activity. This resulted in having ample time for the data collection. On the average, a data collection procedure, for an individual, lasted for twenty (20) minutes.

Dörnyei (2007) observes that because the goal of ethnographic study is to describe in depth the life of the community as well as the cultural meanings and beliefs the participants attach to their activities, events, and behaviours, instruments for collecting data should include participant and nonparticipant observation while the researcher takes note in their own diary with field notes and journal entries. Thus, another phase of the data collection procedure was observation, which occurred simultaneously with the administering of the DCT. Some of the situations observed included how students interact with teachers in the Staff room or outside the classroom and with their peers on campus.

The Adamorobe township presented a different case, because it is not organized like the school setting. Since it was the first time entering the town, locating the needed participants was quite challenging. Upon arrival, the assistance of a shop owner was sought because they were the first to come into contact with. The shop owner

proceeded to giving direction to a household with people possessing all the characteristics needed for the data collection. Upon reaching the household the needed introduction was made with the letter of introduction presented to them to validate all claims made. In the household were five (5) people who were fluent in AdaSL. Unfortunately, since it was a weekend, and being a farming community, most of them had gone to the farm and those were the only AdaSL users available. Upon making a return trip, the AdaSL users expressed their reluctance in participating in the data collection procedure, due to the fact that they feel unduly overexploited by other researchers. This is because their images have been used in publications they did not give consent to and so they feel their integrity has been threatened in some way. No amount of persuasion could convince them that it will not be the case for this study. However, one person agreed on the basis that their face would be obscured in the video recording. In all, only six (6) people availed themselves for the recording.

3.7 Data Analysis

The transcribed data were thematically analyzed. The transcription involved reducing the expressions in the video into a written form. The transcribed was to provide a detailed multimodal account of the video data, using a range of descriptive dimensions to describe every eye aperture, gesture, movement or body posture that provided useful information, written down simultaneously with expressions they occur with. In the transcripts, columns were provided for systematically labeling (coding) the participants, themes, and certain variables to be analyzed. The themes were developed according to the pragmatic features analyzed. They include Speech Acts (Request, apology, complaints and Gratitude), Prosody, Deixis and Address Systems. The speech acts of request produced by the participants were analyzed using the classification of the request strategies proposed by Blum-Kulka (1987), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain

(1984), and Hoza (2007). The strategies proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Blum-Kulka (1987) are the mood derivable (imperative), explicit performative, hedge performative, obligation statement, want statement, suggestory formulas, query preparatory, strong hints, and mild hints while Hoza (2007) presents the use of an imperative form, using please signs, being conventionally indirect (suggest, claim or question willingness, ability or desire, using question strategy, hedge, pessimism strategy, offer /promise), and violating relevance/quality maxim, as the request strategies in ASL. Out of all these strategies, the ones identified in the data were the use of mood derivable (imperative), explicit performative, want statement, and the use of some mitigation devices like ‘please’, ‘thank you’, ‘giving reasons’, and offer or promise of recompense’.

Also, from the analysis, the realization of apology, complaint, and gratitude were analyzed and discussed with the consideration of Cohen and Olshtain’s (1981) six major components of apology, Decock & Depraetere’s (2018) six (6) strategies of complaints, Olshtain and Weinbach’s (1993) five (5) realization patterns, and Aijmer’s (1996) eight (8) strategies in producing gratitude expressions, respectively. Cohen and Olshtain’s (1981) six major components of apology are illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), explanation of account, taking on responsibility (explicit self-blame, lack of intent, expression of self-deficiency, expression of embarrassment, self-dispraise, justify hearer, refusal to acknowledge guilt: deny responsibility, blame the hearer, pretend to be offended), concern for the hearer, offer of repair, and promise of forbearance.

The strategies used in the data were Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) specifically the use of ‘sorry’ and ‘forgive’, explanation of account, taking on responsibility (explicit self-blame, expression of self-deficiency), refusal to

acknowledge guilt (blame the hearer), concern for the hearer, offer of repair, and the promise of forbearance. Decock and Depraetere's (2018) Category 2: Explicit reference to the speech act of complaint, Category 3: Explicit reference to one constitutive component, Category 4: Explicit reference to two constitutive components, and Category 5: Explicit reference to three constitutive components were realized in the data for complaints. The only evidence of Olshtain and Weinbach's (1993) five (5) in the data was the use of accusation and warning. For Aijmer (1996)'s eight (8) strategies in the expression of gratitude, the only strategy used is explicit thanking in combination with some supportive move such as "God bless you", the use of repetition of the thanking strategy, intensification using adverbs, promise of repaying or giving reward, the giving of reason for the appreciation (Perez, 2005).

The other themes like prosody, address system and deixis were analyzed and discussed according to the proposition made by Sandler et al. (2020), Wilbur and Schick (1987), Paales (2011), Mindess (1990), Coppola and Senghas (2010) in their respective studies. For instance, Mindess (1990) and Paales (2011) recognize strategies for the formulation of sign names used in identifying individuals like the use of initialized or arbitrary sign names or descriptive name sign, because it makes references to the person's appearance, behaviour, clothing, peculiarity, special characteristic or a combination of the person's initials and descriptive name signs; or borrowing of sign names. Each of these name signs has a way of embodying cultural values and social interaction patterns. In the data, there were the realizations of arbitrary sign names in GSL to embody the culture's way of identifying individuals and showing deference. In the AdaSL data a situation of "borrowing" terms from the Akan culture was used in the identification of an individual.

According to Coppola and Senghas (2010), one way of using direct deixis in Nicaraguan Sign Language (NSL) is by pointing to real-world persons or objects such that the signer can incorporate those locations into other signs in order to point to the referent, or to grammatically link other signs with the reference. Such was the situation in GSL and AdaSL. Wilbur and Schick (1987) note how signers frequently use facial expressions such as eyebrow furrowing or raising, puffed cheeks, labial plosions, tongue thrusts, and clenched teeth, to indicate that a particular sign or phrase is stressed. In addition to these facial expressions, body movements including head tilting or movements can be used to lay emphasis to any sign or phrasal grouping. Similarly, Sandler et al. (2020) propose the use of raised eyebrows to signal yes/no questions as well as to show a continuation between parts of a sentence. The prosodic features realized in the GSL data were speed modification (rapid or increased signing speed), enhanced manual characteristics of signs like displacement and intensity, eye widening (brow raised), and pouting or extension of the lower lips.

3.8 Reliability

Dörnyei (2007) explains reliability as the degree to which measurement devices and techniques yield consistent outcomes across various conditions within a specific population. Similarly, Gibbs (2007) explains reliability in qualitative studies to pertain to the consistency of the researcher's approach across several researchers and projects. The method that was to determine reliability in this study is the inter-rater reliability. The American Psychological Association (2010) defines inter-rater reliability as a measure employed to analyze the level of agreement among many judges to indicate consistency in their assessments. In order to ensure reliability of methods, it is expected that both raters will agree on assessment processes. Two of the video recordings were given to someone very competent in the use of sign language; in teaching, interpreting,

and in daily communication, to analyze to. Considering the two videos the sign language expert and the researcher each elicited a total of 48 distinct varieties of utterances. Thirty-five (35) out of the total number were claimed by the Sign language expert to be accurate representation of actual utterances used in such contexts in sign language. Subsequently the rest of the remaining utterances were discussed until a consensus was reached. The researcher obtained the coefficient by dividing the sum of all agreed utterances by the sum of all utterances from both raters; the resulting coefficient was 0.81.

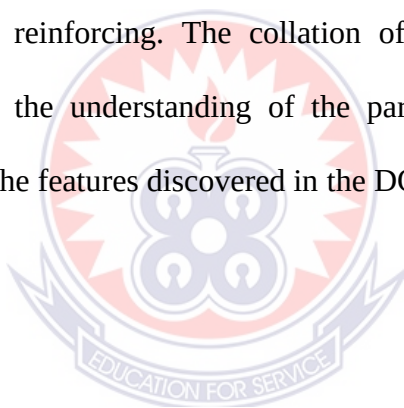
3.9 Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2009) emphasised that because research entails the acquisition of facts from individuals, or abouts people, it is important for researchers to prioritize the protection of their participants, establish a trustworthy relationship with them, uphold the integrity of the research process, safeguard against any instances of misconduct or impropriety that might potentially tarnish the reputation of their respective organizations or institutions, and effectively address any problem that may emerge. This is what is referred to as ethical conduct of research. Permission from the appropriate authorities was duly sought to obtain access to the research site. Also consent was sought from the participants before involving them in the data collection process. In order to ensure that the privacy of the participants and their identities were protected, as proposed by Creswell (2009), their names were not included in the coding process. And throughout the data collection process, effort was made to interrupt the activities of participants as little as possible as well as disruption of the setting.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methods employed for the study. The study encompassed various components, including the methodology employed, the research design utilized, the target population under investigation, as well as the sampling techniques and processes implemented. Additionally, the research report included a description of the data gathering instruments employed in conducting the study. The methodology used considered to be highly appropriate for providing important insights into contextual variables and effects.

It was established that what can determine the appropriate sample size for a research study could be purpose of the investigation. The instruments demonstrated a propensity for becoming mutually reinforcing. The collation of bio-data provides contextual information to enhance the understanding of the participants and provide a more comprehensive view of the features discovered in the DCT.



CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents results of analysis regarding the pragmatic features of the deaf in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language and to examine how these features are used in these sign languages. This chapter has been divided in two sections: The first section presents analysis of the pragmatic features of the deaf in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language. These features are speech acts, prosody, deixis, and address system. The second and final section presents discussion on how these features are used. The use of these pragmatic features identified in this study were showing direct and involvement-oriented discourse style, indicating indirect and independence tendencies, intensifying perlocutionary effects, expressing grammatical information, encoding emotional and affective functions, and indicating appropriate deference and demeanour that is mutually accepted.

4.1 The Pragmatic Features of the Deaf in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language

The data for this study were collected mainly through DCT and observation. The DCT was made up of 24 scenarios, organized according to three varying social distance situations that might influence differences in illocutionary acts performed. Thus, the Signer (S) may assume a position of lower or higher social status than the Addressee or equal to the Addressee (A), ($S < A$, $S > A$, $S = A$ respectively). Each of these situations can be interpreted as having different level of impositions: higher (+R) and lower (-R) imposition. The process of observation also revealed the occurrences of these acts in real-life contexts. Concerning the pragmatic features explored in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language, four themes emerged. These are

speech acts, prosody, deixis, address systems. These themes include the linguistic choices signers make that are deemed culturally appropriate. The discussion draws distinction on most used strategies or frequently occurring ones which may indicate conventionality and context-influenced occurrences.

4.1.1 Speech acts

Data collected on speech acts in Ghanaian and Adamorobe Sign languages centred on four main sub-themes: request, apology, complaint, and appreciation. These units of speech acts were elicited from expressions produced by the participants in response to the contexts in the discourse completion task. Each of these speech acts is analyzed together with an underlying theme. This involves how each of these speech acts is produced to mitigate potential face threats.

4.1.1.1 Requests

The classification of the request strategies in Ghanaian Sign Language was based on Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka (1987) and Hoza (2007), which have been simplified in Table 4.1.1.1, presented in the Appendix III. The DCT resulted in a total of 118 requests instead of 120 (six requests x 20 participants) because two of the participants (GS6, GS16) refused to give a response to the contexts in the DCT. In that particular situation, the participants deemed it unnecessary to make a request when they could just take it without asking for it. To the participants, the relationship between them and the characters in the scenario can warrant that without asking, they take whatever is needed and there would not be any repercussions. The request data from the GSL participants include 81 instances of using direct strategy, with 77 being an imperative strategy and four (4) performative strategies used. Table 4.1.1.1.1 presents the responses of deaf students to various DCT contexts, focusing on how they make requests in Ghanaian Sign Language.

Table 4.1.1.1.1. Responses elicited from the DCT that used mood derivable
(imperative)

	SA	Total
High imposition +R	5	14	20	39
Low imposition –R	10	8	20	38
Total	15	22	40	77

In GSL, mood derivable (imperatives) can be used in both high and low imposition requests. However, the distribution of mood derivable requests differs. In comparison to S=A and S>A situations, the request under S<A are used less under higher imposition (+R). However, in low imposition situations, they are more used under a S<A context. Comparatively, the mood derivable (imperatives) request is used more under the S>A context, both during situations of high and lower impositions. This aligns with studies like Hoza (2007) who indicates that the mood derivable (imperatives) requests are used more by people with power or authority (+P) to subordinates (-P). Examples of mood derivable (imperative) used include:

i. Context: STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(+R) As a student you lost your money and you want your classmate to lend you some. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS1: *Money give me* later I will give back. Thank you.

“Give me money. I will give it back to you later. Thank you”.

In the AdaSL data all the 36 elicited responses under request in the DCT were mood derivable.

ii. **Context: PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S< A)**

(-R) Your mother promise to give you some money to buy cake on your birthday and today is your birthday, what do you do or say?

AS1: Mum, money tell me birthday come *money give to me*

“Mum, the money you promise to give me on my birthday, today is my birthday so *give me the money*”

Another way of making request using the direct strategy is through the use of (explicit) performatives. With the (explicit) performative, instead of the mood of the verb marking the illocutionary act like in the imperative, the speaker explicitly utters that the illocutionary act be performed. The data indicated four (4) instances this strategy was used only under S=A context; three under +R, and one (1) instance under the -R context.

iii. **Context: STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A) (+R) As a student you lost your money and you want your classmate to lend you some. What do you do/say to him/her?**

GS: Money missing, *ask you please money lend me*, go
dormitory give back

“My money is missing; *I’m asking you to please lend me some money*, when we get to the dormitory, I will give it back to you”

The indirect strategy used in the GSL data involved request using *Want statements*. The *want statement* is an indirect strategy, as described by Hoza (2007), is a socially significant questioning technique that considers the ability, willingness, and desire of both the addresser and the addressee. It is readily understood as a request based on the

preconditioned means in the context, with the associated social significance of politeness. In the GSL data, the indirect strategy was not used more than the direct strategy as it was in the ASL data by Hoza (2007).

Table 4.1.1.1.2. Want statements used as a request strategy

	S< A	S= A	S>A	Total
High imposition +R	17	5	0	22
Low imposition -R	12	11	0	23
Total	29	16	0	45

The analysis of GSL data reveals that indirect requests use an expression of desire strategy, that is, expressing one's desire which is to be interpreted as a request. And, the indirect requests are not as commonly used as compared to the direct requests, with more instance in both +R and -R situations under S<A context. There was zero realizations of indirect strategy under the S>A context for both +R and -R situations. Also, it was discovered that some of these conventional indirect requests were used together with direct requests. Analysis of the data revealed that about 90% of the conventional indirect requests were used with direct level of request, suggesting that CI are rarely used alone. Some examples of indirect request using *want statements* in the data are:

- iv. Context: STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO AN AUTHORITY
FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A) (-R). You can't find your pen and you see
your teacher holding two pens you want him/her to give you one. What
do you do/say to him/her?**

GS7: Please *pen want me*.

“Please *I want pen*”

Hoza (2007) found how question strategy is used as a request in ASL. In ASL, request made this way normally involved the use of a *yes/no* question. A similar observation was made in the GSL data. Here, the strategy occurred four (4) times and all four strategies were signed together with direct, mood derivable (imperative), and request. Three out of the four instances happened under S>A context, specifically with the situation of higher imposition. Another realization of this level of directness is in the –R of the S=A context. An example of such realization in the GSL data is:

v. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY MAKES A REQUEST TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R) As a school prefect, you see students passing by litters, on the school compound, without picking. What do you do/say to them?

GS10: *Please can't you see environment dirty? Want get sick? Pick, clean, keep environment clean.*

“Please can't you see that the environment is dirty? Do you want to get sick? Pick them up and keep the environment clean”.

As already established, requests are deemed face-threatening as they impinge on the addressee's negative face; freedom of action and freedom from imposition and it is a well-established fact the direct requests pose a high degree of imposition. Thus, speakers or signers resort to some verbal tools or downgraders to mitigate the degree of imposition. And, such strategy could be referred to as the politeness strategy. The direct request, in the data indicates the use of some face-threatening act (FTA) mitigation strategies in GSL, which specifically are the use of *please*, giving or asking reasons, and offering/promising and appreciation. Additionally, the signer employs other strategies like addressing the addressee by name.

Table 4.1.1.1.3. Using mitigation tools

	S< A	S= A	S>A	Total
High imposition +R	25	35	6	66
Low imposition -R	29	29	9	67
Total	54	64	15	133

Unlike in Hoza (2007), where signers use extensive mitigation when making high imposition request (+R), the analysis indicated that extensive mitigation strategies are used for both situations of high imposition (+R) and low imposition (-R) and even more for what was perceived as a situation of low imposition. However, compared to situation where the addresser was of lesser power position or status, few mitigation strategies were used where the addresser was in high position and quite surprisingly, more strategies were used in situations when signer was addressing a peer. An example of using **please in a request**:

- vi. Context: **STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A). (+R) You can't find your pen and you see your teacher holding two pens you want him/her to give you one. What do you do/say to him/her?**

GS3: **Please** teacher, one, give me because my pen lost can't find pen.

"Please, Sir/Madam, give me one of your pens because I have lost my pen. I can't find mine"

An example of using ‘offer/promise of recompense’ strategy:

vii. Context: STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A).

(+R) As a student you lost your money and you want your classmate to lend you some. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS14: Lend me, **I get I will give to you**, sorry, thank you

“Lend me some money when I get it will give it back to you, sorry. Thank you”

4.1.1.2 Apology

An apology is a redressive action required when one is offended as a result of behaviour or the case of unfulfilled expectations. Apology has been found to be “the most effective strategy in times of crises, it has the power to repair harm, mend relationships and heal broken hearts, show respect and empathy for wronged person” (Anane, 2022, p. 40). It is assumed by some scholars that apology is common universally. Even though there seems to be some universality attached to apologies, there are some cultural diversifications in the strategies chosen to execute it. Elasar and Mustafa (2021) and Olshtain and Cohen (1983), for instance, suggest that while explicit expressions and IFID strategies are common in apologizing, cultural differences are evidenced in apology formulas. Thus, perceptions of offence are interpreted differently across cultures. This section analyzes the use of apology categories and their combination in GSL, considering Cohen and Olshtain’s major components of apology and Blum-Kulka & Olshtain’s two components: conventionalized expression of regret (IFID) and other linguistic elements for redress.

One of the strategies realized in the data was the use of IFIDs. The IFID used in this GSL data were the expressions of regret, that is, *I’m Sorry* and a request of

forgiveness like in *forgive me*. There was no realization of IFID in the form of offer of apology, for example, *I apologize* as identified by Cohen and Olshtain (1981). Table 4.1.1.2.1 presents the number of instances the illocutionary force indicating devices were used. The table indicates that there were 87 instances in the DCT where IFIDs were used, majority of which occurred during the S>A context. The second highest occurrence was in the S<A context, was in the S=A context. The majority of IFIDs are expressions of regret, that is, the use of *I'm sorry*, with 15 out of 87 realizations being requests for forgiveness as *forgive me*.

Table 4.1.1.2.1. IFIDs in the apology data

	S< A	S= A	S>A	Total
High imposition +R	20	13	19	51
Low imposition –R	11	8	18	36
Total	31	21	37	87

The *forgive me* forms were mostly used with the expression of regret *I'm sorry*; only five were used alone and all 87 occurrences were not due to choosing only the IFIDs, except in 23 instances where it was used alone. The example shows an instance of IFIDs used in GSL:

i. Context: STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(+R) You picked your classmate's sandals without his/her permission and it got torn. And he/she confronts you. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS19: **Sorry** use finish, later it tear. So, I fear so I hide it. **Sorry** sandals tear please **sorry forgive me**

“I’m sorry, after using the sandals it tore. I was afraid so I hid it.

I’m sorry I tore your sandals please I’m sorry, forgive me”

In the data, apologies in AdaSL are primarily made using IFIDs, specifically *sorry* and *forgive*, with 27 out of 36 expressions using only IFIDs, and one instance involving a promise of forbearance. Other strategies used include *explanation of account*, *taking on responsibility*, *Concern for hearer*, *offer of repair*, *promise of forbearance*.

Table 4.1.1.2.2. IFIDs used in AdaSL

	S< A	S= A	S>A	Total
High imposition +R	5	5	4	14
Low imposition –R	4	5	4	13
Total	9	10	8	27

ii. **Context: PARTICIPANT APOLOGISES TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)**

(+ R) You lied to your parents about going to classes when in deed you went to a friend’s house. They found out you lied to them. What do you do or say?

AS2: Father, mother tell you go school not go. My friend go (*extend hand away*), go stay (*extending in the same direction*) now come please ***forgive, always go to school.***

“Dad and mum, I didn’t go for classes as I said. I went to my friend’s *place* and I stayed *there*. I am now coming home. Please ***forgive me I will always go to school”.***

In the data elicited through the DCT, there were three (3) instances where participants explained the account that led to violation or offence as a way of mitigating the loss of face for the signer (S). All the three (3) instances of this apology

strategy were used in S<A contexts, one (1) in a situation of high imposition (+R), and two (2) in a situation of lower imposition (-R). An example of such apology is in:

**iii. Context: STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO AN AUTHORITY
FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)**

**(-R) As a student your teacher requested your presence in his/her office
you didn't go. She/he meets you, what do you do/say to him/her?**

GS9: When come to office rain appear

“When I was about coming to your office it started raining”

In Cohen & Olshtain's (1983) apology strategies, the *taking on responsibility* strategy was further divided into seven (7) sub-divisions. The *taking on responsibility* strategy involves the speaker acknowledging, accepting, or denying their involvement in perpetuating the offense. The GSL data showed four strategies used: explicit self-blame, expressing lack of intent, self-deficiency, and refusal to acknowledge guilt. The *refusal to acknowledge guilt* strategy involved denial of responsibility and blaming the hearer. Offers of apology were made 47 times using these strategies and scenarios under S<A recorded the highest instances of this realization. Out of the 47 occurrences, 16 instances of *taking on responsibility* were used alone. The Table 4.1.1.2.3 gives a representation of these instances.

Table 4.1.1.2.3. Taking on responsibility used as an apology strategy

	S< A	S= A	S>A	Total
High imposition +R	13	3	7	23
Low imposition -R	14	4	6	24
Total	27	7	13	47

A. Under the *taking on responsibility* strategies, there are numerous ways one can take on acknowledging responsibility of the offence. Offenders may *explicitly blame themselves* for the offence; they may likewise express how they did not intend for the

offence to happen. The analysis revealed five (5) instances of explicitly blaming themselves. They all occurred during a higher imposition situation: one during S=A context and four (4) during S>A context. Examples of an *explicit self-blame* strategy expressed in the data include:

iv. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY OFFERS APOLOGY TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A).

(+R) As a school prefect, you punished a student who you were not supposed to. After the whole ordeal you realize you punish the wrong person, what do you do/say to him/her?

GS8: Sorry because after investigate *I know I wrong you*, sorry.
 “I’m sorry because after investigating I realized *I wronged you*.
 I’m sorry”

B. In some instances, offenders admit to committing offenses but attribute the occurrences to factors outside their control, thus, it happens without them intending it to happen so. Four cases showed signers explicitly conveying the absence of their intention, all occurring within a context of S<A with low imposition. An example of such expression is:

v. CONTEXT: STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A).

(-R) As a student you teacher requested your presence in his/her office you didn’t go. She/he meets you, what do you do/say to him/her?

GS6: Because sick can’t come.
 “Because I was sick, I couldn’t come”

C. The utilization of the *take on responsibility* strategy in expressing an apology can also manifest through acknowledging that the occurrence happened due to a self-deficiency or incapacity. The predominant approach observed in the data regarding the

take on responsibility was characterized by an expression of self-perceived inadequacy.

In the data, the event took place on a total count of 33 occasions.

The *expression of self-perceived inadequacy* sub-strategy was the highest in *take on responsibility* in expressing an apology rarely occurred alone. Out of the 33 occurrences, 24 of them were made with at least one IFID. Specifically, there were seventeen (17) under the +R; and seven (7) under -R situation. It was also noticed that highest number of occurrence was under S<A contexts.

vi. CONTEXT: STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A).

(-R) As a student you teacher requested your presence in his/her office you didn't go. She/he meets you, what do you do/say to him/her?

GS16: *I forget*, was busy. I forget.
 "I was busy so *I forgot. I forgot*"

D. Contrary to accepting responsibility of the wrong-doing, in apology strategies, the addresser may deny being responsible for the offence and or blame the addressee. The analysis revealed five (5) instances of such occurrence. There were three (3) instances of *denial of responsibility*, all under the S=A under -R. The two occurrences were about *blaming the hearer* in the S>A, -R context.

vii. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY OFFERS APOLOGY TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A).

(-R) You accidentally stepped bumped into a student as you were in a hurry to go to class. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS7: Why bump me when walk? You not see not?
 Why did you bump into me? Didn't you see me?

Two occurrences were observed in which participants expressed *concern for hearer* as a means of addressing the violation of offense. Both occurrences were

present within the S=A context, and both in the +R and -R situation scenarios, all performed by the same individual. The distinction lies in how the apology strategy is used in both contexts. Specifically, in the situation (+R), the apology strategy was employed with an IFID as the approach for expressing apology. Conversely, in the (-R), the apology method was employed together with the *expression of regret* strategy.

viii. **CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY OFFERS APOLOGY TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A).**

You picked your classmate's sandals without his/her permission and it got torn. And he/she confronts you. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS5: **Calm down** please, sorry. **Calm down**
 "Please *calm down*, I'm sorry. *Calm down*"

As a means of expressing apology, certain individuals may opt to propose the act of rectifying the act that has caused harm. The data presented a total of 37 instances of such occurrences. Almost half, specifically 13 of these strategies were realized with other strategies mostly the IFIDs. All of the *offer of repair* strategies were produced during the S=A context, a total of 27 occurrences: 12 and 15 under the +R and -R respectively.

ix. **CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY OFFERS APOLOGY TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A).**

(+R) You picked your classmate's sandals without his/her permission and it got torn. And he/she confronts you. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS2: Sorry, **buy new sandals for you**
 "I am sorry. **I will buy new sandals for you**"

The *offer of repair* as a way of apologizing was also used in AdaSL, in 11 instances. They occurred only under the S=A and the S>A +R, -R situations. The data

also revealed that not all of them were used as the only strategy; two of them were realized with IFIDs under S>A +R context.

- x. **Context: PARTICIPANT COMPLAINS TO A CHARACTER SHE/HE IS OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN (S>A).**

(-R) After you misplaced your little sister's money, she asked you to keep, what do you say to him/her after she comes back to ask for it?

AdaSL: I spend your money. Tomorrow, go farm bring cassava sell, **give back to you**

“I have spent your money. Tomorrow when I go to the farm, **I will bring cassava, sell and give you back the money**”.

Also, there were three instances where a *commitment to restraint from future occurrence* was used as a strategy. These findings indicate that what was observed occurred with other strategies within the context of S=A, and under conditions of high imposition.

- xi. **CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY OFFERS APOLOGY TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A).**

(+R) As a school prefect, you punished a student who you were not supposed to. After the whole ordeal you realize you punish the wrong person, what do you do/say to him/her?

GS16: Please sorry because I know not, I wronged. **Next time I will investigate well.**

“Please I'm sorry because I didn't know, I wronged you. **Next time I will do a thorough investigation**”.

All the six (6) instances where the *promise of forbearance* was used to express an apology in AdaSL were under S<A +R and -R situation, three under each situation. Two of these expressions were used together with IFIDs.

xii. CONTEXT: PARTICIPANT APOLOGISES TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)

(-R)You break your mum's plate and you didn't tell her but she finds out and is angry, what do you do or say?

AS3: Mother today plate break. Next time look, next time wash look break not

"Mum today I broke the plate whiles washing it. I will be careful next time, next time when washing I will be careful so that I don't break any"

4.1.1.3 Complaint

The study analyzes complaint strategies based on Decock and Depraetere (2018) and Olshtain and Weinbach (1993). As mentioned in Chapter 2, Decock and Depraetere (2018) propose six strategies of complaints, which involve individuals referencing one or a combination of four constitutive components: (A) past or ongoing action, (B) disapproval or negative judgment, (C) assumption of the complaine'e's involvement as an agent, and (D) wish for the offense to be remedied. Likewise, complaints can also be made with explicit mention of the complaint speech act, such as a verb or noun that names the act of complaints. Similarly, Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) suggest that when expressing complaints, the level of face-threat may inform the speaker to engage in any payoff considerations or not. Thus, they can choose to avoid direct mention of the offensive event, express annoyance or disapproval, make explicit complaints, accusation and warning, or make threat. The expression of complaint in GSL was categorized based on these patterns. In this analysis, explicitness of complaint was defined by reference to any of the four constitutive components. In the analysis, the complainer made reference to one or combined two or more of the constitutive components of complaints, in complaining.

In the analysis, 37 instances were about reference to one of the constitutive components, which included explicit requests for the offence to be rectified, fulfilling previous expectations, or implementing a form of *compensatory* action like punishment or reprimand for the socially unacceptable act. Out of the total of 37 times, 24 of them occurred under the $S < A$ contexts, eight (8) under $S = A$ contexts, and five (5) under $S < A$ contexts. Constitutive component A recorded the highest frequency of this strategy use, having its highest occurrence under $S < A$ and +R situations. They occurred 13 times under the +R condition ($S < A: 12$, $S > A: 1$) and 15 times under the -R condition ($S < A: 11$, $S > A: 4$). Constitutive component B were realized once (1) in the data under $S > A + R$ condition. Constitutive component D were elicited eight (8) times, one (1) during the $S < A + R$ context and seven (7) under the $S = A - R$ context.

The data also revealed that in making complaints, it is possible for GSL users to make references to the past or ongoing action or occurrence (complainable) and the assumption of the involvement of the complainee as the agent (AC); or complainable and the wish for the offence to be remedied (AD); the disapproval or negative judgment of the complainable and the wish for the offence to be remedied (BD); or assumption of the complainee's involvement as the agent and the wish for the offence to be remedied (CD). The total number of times that two constitutive components were produced in the act of complaining was 37. The highest occurrences were recorded under the $S < A$ context and the least under $S = A$ context. Also, the +R situations recorded more occurrences than -R situation. The analysis revealed that the three constitutive components of complaint that was used to express censure in GSL were the expression of the complainable, assumption of the complainee's involvement as the agent, and the wish for the offence to be remedied (ACD). Out of the total of 13 times the ACD combination was elicited, none of them occurred under the $S < A$ context. Ten

(10) of these combinations were elicited from $S=A$ context, same frequency under +R and -R situations. The $S>A$ context had three (3) realization under the +R and none under the -R condition.

In the AdaSL data, the mention of only one constitutive component was made by references to the past or ongoing action or occurrence. All twelve (12) expressions referring to the past or ongoing action or occurrence were made in equal frequency under the $S<A$ +R and -R situations. The two constitutive components for complaint making, gleaned from the AdaSL responses to the DCT, were the combination of the complainable and explicit mention of the involvement of the complainee as the agent. This occurred six times: three under the $S=A+R$ and one under the $S=A-R$, and one each under the $S>A$ +R, -R.

The responses in the AdaSL data also revealed that referencing three constitutive components was possible. The combinations solicited from the data involved referencing the complainable, the assumption of the involvement of the complainee as the agent, and the wish for the offence to be remedied (ACD); and the complainable, the disapproval or negative judgment of the complainable and assumption of the complainee's involvement as the agent (ABC). A total of four (4) expressions were realized with an ABC and ACD combination. All occurrences of ABC were under the $S=A$ situation. The four expressions realized with the ACD combinations were under the $S=A$, -R and $S>A$ +R contexts. Some examples of complaints elicited from the data are as follows:

xiii. CONTEXT: PARTICIPANT MAKES A COMPLAINT TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER POSITION THAN HIM (S<A)

(+R) Your mum has been scolding you a lot even for offences that your siblings commit and you are not happy about it, what do you do or say to them?

AS4: Mother, always little siblings eat finish bowl wash not, make it dirty leave it. Always me elderly take wash.

“Mum, my siblings always leave the bowls unclean after they finish eating it. I’m the one who always wash them even though I’m older”

CD:

xiv. CONTEXT: STUDENT COMPLAINS TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL(S=A)

(-R) You noticed some of your classmates are roaming about, making noise and disturbing during prep hours. You are afraid they will be punished if they are caught. You want to them to stop. What do you do/say to them?

GS13: Please sit down. Teacher come, punish. Sit down sit down.

“Please sit down otherwise if a teacher comes, he will punish you. Sit down sit down”.

ACD:

xv. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY COMPLAINS TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R) Some students have been refusing to do the work you instructed them to do without any reason. You confront them. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS16: **Why refuse to work?** Now prepare, uniform change, go weed.
Work now.

“Why did you refuse to do the work? *Now make preparations to go and work, change your uniform, go and weed. Go and work now.*

The study by Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) identified accusations and warning as a complaint pattern. The analysis in this study revealed three (3) complaints made solely using accusations and warning, under the $S > A + R$ context. In addition to these realizations, there were instances where the accusations and warning were patterned together with other complaint strategies. Some of them include combination of accusations and warnings and AC patterns mentioning past or ongoing actions and the complainee's involvement as the agent. These patterns were observed in 13 expressions, with seven under the $+R$ condition and six under the $-R$ condition. They were realized only under $S=A$ and $S > A$ context. Additionally, participants expressed censure through accusations and warning, expressing the complainee's involvement as an agent and their desire for the offence to be remedied (CD) in an $S > A + R$ context. Participants also expressed complaints by mentioning accusations and warnings, past actions, complainee involvement, and wish for offence remediation (ACD). Four expressions were specifically found under the $S=A+R$ context and one under the $S > A+R$ context. All these indicate that most of complaint realizations made through accusations and warnings were mostly made in situations where the addresser was in a higher social position. An example of using accusation and warning in complaints from the data is:

**xvi. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY
COMPLAINS TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)**

(+R) Some students have been refusing to do the work you instructed them to do without any reason. You confront them. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS10: I report to teacher, I will multiply work.

“I will you to the teacher. I will multiply the work for you”

AdaSL participants used solely accusation and warning as complaint strategies in responses under S>A context; one under +R and two under -R situations. They also combined these strategies by referencing the ongoing action or occurrence and assuming the complaineer's involvement as the agent. This occurred twice in each situation under the S=A context. An example of threat and warning complaint strategy in AdaSL is:

**xvii. Context: PARTICIPANT COMPLAINS TO A CHARACTER
SHE/HE HAS MORE AUTHORITY THAN (S>A)**

(-R) Your younger siblings have not been doing their part of the house chores, what do you say to him/her?

AS6: Refuse punish you

“If you refuse to do the work, *I will punish you*”

4.1.1.4 Expression of gratitude

Out of 120 expressions of gratitude, 119 involved the strategy of *thanking somebody explicitly*. Some were used with other linguistic devices as modifiers or intensifiers. Perez (2005) suggests that the illocutionary force of an expression of gratitude can be modified with internal or external modifiers, such as supportive moves or external modifiers. They also proposed that some of these supportive moves could be used in some instances as indirect thanking strategies. Only one instance used a

support move indirectly as a thanking strategy without the signer making an explicit expression, involving a promise of gift. The expression used is found as follows:

xviii. STUDENT MAKES A REMARK APPRECIATION TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(+R) Your classmate did your house work for you because you were not feeling well. You meet him/her on your way to class. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS6: Buy water or food for help

“I will buy water or food for you, for helping me”.

The analysis found that modifiers were used 55 times to reinforce illocutionary acts. This means that in the GSL data, these modifiers function more as reinforcers to the illocutionary act they occur with. Some of these supportive moves are:

- a. The use of *God bless you*: Participants usually add *God bless you* as a way of being more appreciative. Such supportive act was realized eight (8) times. Three (3) were realized under the S<A context, four (4) under the S=A context, and one under the S>A +R context. A higher occurrence of this expression was under the situation of higher imposition.
- b. Repetition of the thanking strategy: The analysis revealed that the explicit expression of thanks was sometimes repeated in an utterance. Such repetitions were realized five (5) times: two occurrences under S<A +R context, two under S=A context; one each under +R and -R and for the S>A context one of such utterances was realized under -R.
- c. Giving reason for the appreciation: During analysis, one of the expressions that usually accompanied the explicit expression was the participants expressing the reason why they are performing the act of thanking. Such expressions were

used 19 times with a higher percentage occurring under S>A context and situations of higher imposition.

- d. Expression of emotion: The expression of emotions realized has to do with the participants expressing their contentment as a result of the favour granted. Such expressions were realized five (5) times mostly under S=A context; specifically, one for +R, two for the – R, and one under the S>A -R context.
- e. Intensification using adverbs: Adverbs like *very much*, *more*, and *so much* are commonly used to intensify gratitude expressions in the literature. In the GSL data, these expressions were used 10 times with explicit expressions of gratitude. They were realised more under the S<A context and situations of higher imposition.
- f. Promise of repaying or giving reward: The promise of rewarding the offeror of the favour or help seems to be a possible supportive act in GSL. Such expressions were recorded eight (8) times. All eight occurrences were under the situations of +R: one occurring under S<A, four (4) under S=A, and three (3) under S>A context.
- g. Expression affection towards the addressee: There was an expression of affection towards the addressee in the form of *I love you* in the performance of the act of gratitude. Some samples of expressions used in showing gratitude are:

xix. STUDENT MAKES A REMARK OF APPRECIATION TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)

(-R) As a student your teacher lends you one of his/her pens. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS11: Thank you. **I happy because you give me pen**

“Thank you. I am happy because you gave me your pen”

xx. STUDENT MAKES A REMARK OF APPRECIATION TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)

(+R) As a student you lost your money and your teacher gives you some amount of money. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS20: Thank you, **very much**.

xxi. STUDENT MAKES A REMARK APPRECIATION TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(+R) Your classmate did your house work for you because you were not feeling well. You meet him/her on your way to class. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS14: Thank you, **God bless, you. Will give food.**

“Thank you, God bless you. I will give you food”

xxii. STUDENT MAKES A REMARK APPRECIATION TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(-R) You classmate noticed that your gari has finished and gives you some of theirs, enough to last for a while. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS7: Thank you, **love you**. Thank you.

“Thank you, I love you. Thank you”.

Similarly, all the expressions of gratitude in the AdaSL data were explicit *thanking*. The only supportive act used were the *giving of reason for the appreciation* as illustrated in the example below.

xxiii. Context: PARTICIPANT SHOW APPRECIATION TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)

(-R) Your mum gives you money to buy anything you want on your birthday, what do you do or say?

AS2: Money buy cake give me, **thank you**.

“Thank you for the money you gave me for the cake”.

4.1.2 Prosody

This study examined the marking of intonation in GSL and how prosodic constituents may be used to indicate different syntactic structures. Studies in other sign languages suggest that these features can be achieved through increased sign velocity, displacement of signs, contrast marking through body leans, eyes widening/brow raise, and unusual hand usage. Sandler (2018) suggests that sign languages communicate linguistic information through articulations of various body parts. Wilbur’s (1999) study reveals that prosody in ASL can be expressed through displacement manipulation, with stressed signs being larger and going farther in distance, and increased peak velocity also being a kinematic characteristic. The present analysis was done by considering the work of Wilbur (1999), Sandler and Lillo-Martin (2006), and Scott (2017).

In the process of providing evidence of intonation in the GSL data, the identified (through perceptual cues) markers in the video were marked on the transcribed data. The prosodic features realized in the GSL data were that of speed modification (rapid or increased signing speed), enhanced manual characteristics of signs like displacement and intensity, eye widening (brow raised), and pouting or extension of the lower lips. The following illustrate the number of times rapid or increased signing speed was observed, the particular speech act it accompanied, and the contexts under which they occurred. The data revealed that some of expressions under the speech of complaint were signed more rapidly. There were 10 realizations

under the situation of +R, within the S=A and S>A context having five realization each. There were eight (8) expressions under the -R situation that were accompanied by increased signing speed: one under S<A, three (3) under S=A, and four (4) under S>A context. There was one incidence of increased speed under the speech act of apology under S>A -R context and this happened to be the speech act where the addresser blamed the addressee for the offence.

1. Out of the data, four (4) of the utterances were accompanied by eye widening/brow raised. All of these happened to be questions, one of them was elicited under request making precisely during an S>A +R context. Three of these occurrences were under complaints. Further analysis showed that these two occurred during communication under S=A, one during a situation of -R and the other during +R.

xxiv. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY MAKES A REQUEST TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R). As a school prefect, you see students passing by litters, on the school compound, without picking. What do you do/say to them?

br (brow raised)

FS (fast signing)

GS7: not see the environment dirty? You must act, pick because if
teacher or headmistress call me be angry?

“Can’t you see that the environment is dirty? You must start picking because the teachers or the headmistress will hold me responsible?”

2. The study found that participants often *protruded* their lips during speech acts such as request, apology, and complaints. Two types of cues were observed: a pout; and an extension of the lower lip. This cue was observed in situations

where the request involved $S=A$ +R situation, and in three situations where the apologies were made under $S=A$ context, both in +R and -R situations and $S>A$ +R situation. In situations where the request was made in $S<A$ +R and -R, participants used a pout.

**xxv. CONTEXT: STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO AN AUTHORITY
FIGURE IN SCHOOL ($S<A$)**

(+R) Your headteacher was addressing you but you didn't acknowledge him and you passed him/her by. She/he finds you and makes you aware of what happened. What do you do/say to him/her?

PLL (protruding lower lips)

GS12: not see you sorry

"I did not see you. I am sorry".

3. Manipulation of the data shows that hand displacement during sign production can be manipulated, involving the distance or size of the sign. This can lead to expressions that extend beyond the usual signing space or come together closer or tighter. For example, in a gratitude expression, the phrase *I love you* was expressed intensely with the articulators coming closer. Additionally, complaints were made in situations where the sign was signed beyond the perceived space. The data revealed five (5) situations of complaint making, majorly under $S=A$ context, where signing of the expressions were beyond the perceived signing space.

In the AdaSL data, the prosodic cues were not easily recognizable. They were sometimes masked by the mouthing that accompanied some of the expressions. But some of the cues that stood out were a facial expression that was like a *frown* and the drawing of the lips the causes wrinkle like features on both sides of the cheek. The

frown usually accompanied expressions used in situations of confrontation like complaints. Also, the drawing of lips downwards that causes wrinkle on both sides of the cheek was realized with mostly all apologizing acts or situations where participants wanted to show regret for imposing.

**xxvi. CONTEXT: PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A
CHARACTER WITH WHOM HE/SHE HAS EQUAL SOCIAL
STATUS (S=A)**

**(-R) It's break time and you have lost your lunch money and you will
like you friend to share his lunch with you, what do you do or say?**

DL

AS6: Please give me food
“Please give me some of your food”

4.1.3 Deixis

Coppola and Senghas (2010) observe that establishing deixis in sign language could be achieved by pointing, which is typically achieved by extending a finger or an open hand away from the body. One can also point by using other handshapes or other parts of the body, such as jutting an elbow or pursing the lips in the direction of the intended referent. Pointing in sign language is used to reference the one being spoken to as well as the one being spoken about (person deixis). It is used to provide information about the location or identity of a referent (spatial deixis) as well indicating timelines.

The GSL data encoded person deixis through personal pronouns and pointing, primarily indicating the speaker and the person spoken to. However, most of these expressions were cliticized to the verb that came before them. Cliticization of pronouns to lexical words is a very popular process in many sign languages. “..... pronouns can

cliticize to lexical words, losing some of their phonological integrity, and forming one prosodic word together with the host” (Sandler & Lillo-Martin, 2006, p. 247). Sandler and Lillo-Martin (2006) report evidence of cliticization of personal, possessive, and deictic pronouns in ISL, Quebec Sign Language (LSQ), and Danish Sign Language (DSL). This involves assimilation, which can be progressive or regressive, and involves losing underlying features of the sign such as handshape or orientation or movement or a combination of more than one phonological feature. Most of the personal pronouns employed in the GSL data, particularly second person pronouns, were cliticized to preceding verbs through regressive assimilation, losing phonological features like handshape and orientation. Expressions like *give you* are signed by extending the GIVE towards the referent, in instances of direct deixis (person).

The analysis showed the use of lexemes for third person pronouns like he, she, they, and them are rare in GSL conversations. Instead, signers use pointing to their front to identify the third person, which can be to the right or left. This allows the signer to reference these locations, in connection to the third person, at any point in the conversation.

**xxvii. CONTEXT: STUDENT COMPLAINS TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE
IN SCHOOL (S<A)**

**(+R) As a student, your working mate has refused to do their duties
and the house prefect has not taken actions. Then you go to your house
master/mistress. What do you do/say to him/her?**

**GS3: Student refuse work (pointing with an open hand to the right)
but dormitory prefect refuse punish. Punish (pointing to left
side).**

“This student refuses to work **over there** but the dormitory prefect refuses to punish him. Punish **him**”.

Reference to interactants found in the responses provided by the AdaSL included mouthing of their names, kinship titles, and pointing at them by using the index finger or an open hand. According Nyst (2007), in AdaSL, signers use generic directionals, whole body signs, or directional indexes. The spatial-temporal references in data for this study were made by generic directionals and directional indexes. Directional indexes are defined as “signs with a 1 hand or a B hand tracing the path of an entity, without representing features of the moving entity” (Nyst, 2007, p. 168). They are similar to how personal pronouns are sometimes cliticized to the verbs that precede them. Nyst (2007) examined directionals in her study, analyzing signs indicating motion away or towards a reference point. The terms *from* and *towards* were defined as glosses for the respective concepts. In the word *from*, the dorsal side is positioned towards the direction of motion or away from the deictic center, while in *towards*, the palm is positioned in the direction of the movement or facing the deictic center.

Thus, in the AdaSL data, analysis revealed that when participants wanted to show the persons of interest in a particular convention, they used the *from* and *towards* signs. First by considering themselves as the deictic center, they usually use the *towards* signs in reference to their agentive involvements and the *from* sign to refer to the second and the third person involvement. Apart from the use of these signs, in AdaSL, one could simply point towards himself or others. Pointing to signing space to make reference to objects that may not necessarily be present were also used for anaphoric functions to indicate *this* or *that* to make reference to something that has already been mentioned.

**xxviii. CONTEXT: PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A
CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<
A)**

**(+ R) You want to go out to a friend's party and have to ask permission
from your father, what do you do/say?**

AS4: Please party (**pointing away from the dietic center**) I want go

“Please there is an ongoing party **over there** and I want to go.

It was realized that pointing down in front of the signer could be used for temporal reference more specifically to refer to present time *now, today*, and behind the signer to refer to the past, both in GSL and AdaSL.

4.1.4 Address system

The analysis revealed that methods of forming sign names in GSL included the use of just arbitrary signs. The arbitrary sign names made reference to the initial of the person's surname or both the first name and the surname. All the sign names were addressed to teachers: one was during a communicative event of making a request, specifically in an S<A +R context and the other was during a complaint made under S<A-R. The sign names had same orientation and movement of the right hand. The palm of the left hand in front of the body faces the right side while the right hand, in the shape of the initial alphabet of the surname of the teachers (S and A) for Semenhyia and Adutwumwaa respectively), moves to touch the palm of the left hand.

**xxix. CONTEXT: STUDENT COMPLAINS TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE
IN SCHOOL (S<A) (-R) Your mother promise to give you some money
to buy cake on your birthday. And today is your birthday, what do you
do or say?**

GS18: Teacher (**sign name**), please good morning, please today not
happy.....

“Madam **Adutwumwaa**, please good morning, I am not happy today...”

Nyst (2007) identified three categories of name signs in AdaSL: conventional names, nicknames, and names derived from the GSL system. Conventional names are denotative, based on physical appearance or behavioural traits. In AdaSL, names can be created according to day names in the Akan naming system, which are initialized using the GSL initialization procedure. Males and females have names starting with *K* and *A*, except for Thursday-born individuals. Given that most names of individuals of the same gender typically begin with the same letter, name signs are differentiated by varying the positions of individual name signs. The use of day-names in the data was however realized differently. They were used in the form of loan translation. For example, one of the participants referred to the other interlocutor as *Ama*, the name used for females born on Saturday, signed it as *Saturday born*:

xxx. PARTICIPANT SHOWS APPRECIATION TO A CHARACTER

WITH WHOM HE/SHE HAS EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS (S=A)

**(+R) Your friend finally agrees to lend you his/her shoe for the event,
what do you do or say?**

AS5: (Saturday-born) shoe give me, me bring.

“Ama, I have brought back the show you gave me”

4.2 Functions of Pragmatic Features

This section is on the discussion of how these pragmatic features function; most importantly, how their usage signifies a sense of solidarity with members of their community and members outside the community. The functions of these pragmatic features include showing direct and involvement-oriented discourse style, an indication of indirect and independence tendencies, intensifying the perlocutionary effects, expressing grammatical information, encoding emotional and affective functions, and

an indication of appropriate deference and demeanor that is mutually accepted. These are discussed as follows:

4.2.1 Showing direct and involvement-oriented discourse style

Every language has different evaluations of face threat when it comes to speech acts and the strategies used to mitigate them. As proposed by Hoza (2007), “a language community’s expectations and perceptions regarding the mitigation of threats to involvement and independence reflect a way of interacting that is unique to that community” (p. 205). An involvement-oriented language community, having at its very core a sense of solidarity and acceptance in common membership, does not view any form of speech as impeding on the action and values of the addressees and speakers may be less concerned with threat to face. Such communities are usually direct in their way of speaking. According to Hoza (2007), the American deaf communities using ASL have been characterized as direct and involvement-oriented.

Analysis of the data in GSL and AdaSL revealed that both communities are direct and involvement-oriented. The most common strategy to convey the illocution of the speech acts were the direct strategy or an explicit mention of their IFIDs. For example, the most used strategies in GSL in making request is the direct strategy, that is, the mode derivable. In Hoza (2007), the use of some direct strategies, as in the ASL study, were only noticed when superiors communicated with their subordinate (S>A). This is contrary to the GSL data, where direct strategy is used under all three contexts of S>A, S=A and S<A and almost equally under each perceived weight of imposition (+R, -R). However, majority (51%) of their occurrence were under the S>A context and a lesser percentage (20%) under the S<A context. In the AdaSL data, all the strategies used in making request are direct under all contexts. An example is shown as follows:

viii. Context: PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)

(-R) Your mother promised to give you some money to buy cake on your birthday. And today is your birthday, what do you do or say?

AS4: *Please* my birthday time. **Money give me**, you say give me money buy cake.

“Please it is time for my birthday. **Give me the money** you promised to give me to buy cake.”

One factor that can reinforce the way of speaking of a group of people is cultural schema of the bigger setting which Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to as the macrosystem. Both GSL and AdaSL are situated in an even bigger community, the Akan community, the largest community in Ghana. Eighteen (18) of the GSL participants come from an Akan community. Apart from that, the schools (for the deaf) they have attended and the current school, where they spend most of their time, are located in an Akan community. They also interact with people (teachers, other staff) who are from various Akan communities. The bio-data revealed that only two of the participants are not from any Akan community, with one of them having had their primary education in a predominantly Akan setting. With this, it is safe to say that the Akan community is the larger community most of them find themselves, which has had some influence on how they communicate with other deaf members, hearing members, and users of the Ghanaian Sign Language, as well as non-users of sign language.

According to Obeng (1999), the Akan society is distinguished by a strong sense of cultural collectiveness. As a result, requests are generally not perceived as impositions on recipients, and direct requests do not appear harsh or impolite, unless the requesters and recipients disregard their interpersonal relationship. Thus, “although requests in Akan society may cause discomfort or inconvenience to a requestee, they

are tolerated in the interest of group or societal cohesion” (Obeng, 1999, p. 231). This indicates that in the Akan society, one could opt to use direct or indirect request without the person being thought of as rude or not. These characteristics make it appropriate and socially acceptable for speech to be made frequently using a direct strategy. This characteristic is similar to the GSL community that has been observed to be governed by an *involvement* cultural expectation.

In the analysis of the AdaSL data, it was discovered that situations are similar. The AdaSL, like most sign languages, show evidence of influence of spoken languages they are in contact with, which in this case is Akan. Two of the participants who use AdaSL as L2 were Akan speakers, their expression help reveal a peculiar case of contact-induced language changes on some linguistic features in AdaSL. According to Nyst (2007), the presence of structures caused by *source language agentivity or imposition* distinguishes AdaSL from other sign languages. Languages in most cases of multilingualism sometimes cause changes to one another. The changes could occur in the dominant language (L1) from influences of the non-dominant one (L2), which is known as *recipient language agentivity or borrowing* or changes to the non-dominant language (L2) from the dominant one (L1). This is known as *source language agentivity or imposition*. In the case of AdaSL, the influence of the Akan language on the deaf individuals could be attributed to two factors: the deaf individuals having AdaSL as their primary language and modifying it through their interactions with the Akan community, or hearing members of the Akan community using AdaSL as their secondary language, which is influenced by the Akan language they speak.

Nyst (2007) highlighted that in cases where the majority of sign language users are deaf (L1) users, the impact of L2 (hearing) users’ influence is minimal. However, in the case of AdaSL, since the majority of AdaSL users are L2 users who primarily

Speak Akan, it is anticipated that the source language's agentivity or imposition will occur more frequently. The frequent use of the direct strategy in all speech acts could be as result of the fact that both the deaf culture and Akan share similar cultural tendencies, which is, they are involvement-oriented.

ix. CONTEXT: PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)

(-R) Your mother promise to give you some money to buy cake on your birthday. And today is your birthday, what do you do or say?

AS4: Please my birthday time. Money gives me, you say give me money buy cake.

“Please it is time for my birthday. Give me the money you promised to give me money to buy cake”

The only difference is that while the deaf AdaSL L1 users made their request bald on-record without redress, the Akan speakers made request on-record but with redress, specifically the use of kinship terms and *please*. Some of the kinship terms used in the data are mother, father, sister (sibling). In some of these situations of probable face threatening acts, the Akan data in Obeng (1999) revealed that when making direct requests, Akans engage in some social negotiations that indicate politeness to a certain degree, not only in high-risk circumstances like subordinate and superior interactions, but also when the speaker wants to persuade the addressee to comply.

Similarly, using direct strategy in high risk of face threatening circumstance in GSL resulted in the use of some mitigation devices. Some of these mitigation devices include the use of *please*, deferential titles, kinship terms, polite address form, and

justification for request. Analysis of the GSL data revealed similar context; the GSL users significantly make direct requests while engaging in some modifications such as the use of *please* as a polite marker, polite address, reason/justification for request, the promise of recompense, apology for imposition, and appreciation in anticipation of compliance with their request. This implies that although the head act (the actual request) may be expressed as a mood derived from an imperative, or a statement of desire, the person making the request also employs other strategies to maintain positive politeness. A frequently employed strategy for mitigating a situation is the utilization of the word *please*. During the data collection, the researcher noticed that some participants used polite markers, especially *please*, even for their subordinate in the DCT, which seemed odd because studies reveal that speakers do not usually engage in much social negotiations in such social dynamics. When they were asked why they did so, they indicated that in order for what they requested to be offered, they have to show respect to persuade the recipient to comply. With respect to making the request less imposing and convincing the 'requestee' to comply, GSL users may give reasons which will provide context and give grounds to why the request was made.

Also, by promising to return what has been requested, they make the requestee see that it is not a total loss, and thus less imposing since what they are giving will be given back, probably bigger or better than what they gave. According to Obeng (1999), Akan speakers' usage of kinship terms may suggest that the person making the request intends to minimize or eliminate the challenges in communication by employing expressions that highlight the personal connection between the requester and the recipient of the request. It could also suggest that it is merely being utilized as call names. These redressive actions are evidence of how Deaf cultures in this work

mitigate threat to face with their cultural expectations predominantly oriented towards involvement.

4.2.2 Indication of indirect and independence tendencies

In certain language communities, speech acts are viewed as embodying grave threat to face because speakers do not want to impede addressees' wants, actions, and values while addressees want to be free from such imposition (Hoza, 2007). Thus, speakers are accustomed to producing speech acts with certain considerations in order not to impose on others, which is equated to disruption of harmony between interlocutors or members of that community. In Hoza (2007), it was proposed that indirect strategies are deemed to be a more polite way of speaking in an independence-oriented community, where situations are usually judged as high threat to face. This is because they increase the degree of optionality, and because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be. One of such languages mentioned is the American English. Instances of indirectness, with politeness as the social meaning in the data, include the use of conventional indirectness in making request. Blum-Kulka (1987) argues that a polite speech act, in an independence-oriented culture, is not necessarily by virtue of being just an indirect illocution, but by being conventionally indirect. This implies that the strategy judged highest on the scale of indirectness (Hints) is not perceived as the more polite. For example, the highest level of politeness in both Hebrew and English is achieved by the use of conventional indirectness.

Again, Hoza (2007) explains that conventional indirectness is a way to balance two conflicting desires: (a) the need to provide the speaker with an option to be indirect, and (b) the desire to go on-record as having the need to clearly attribute the speech act to the speaker. An indication that although it might give room to more than

one interpretation, the illocutionary force is conventionalized, or standardized, to the point that the meaning that is being conveyed is readily understood. Due to its conventional nature, the recipient instantly interprets the purpose as the illocution intends (request) and the social significance as polite.

Hoza (2007) proved that sign languages, especially ASL, have similar distinctions of conventional directness and nonconventional directness, although they may be realized differently. Conventional indirectness is realized in ASL through claiming, suggesting, questioning the willingness, or ability or desire of the addressee or the addresser, something similar to the query preparatory proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). The GSL data presented evidence of a similar strategy that is being used to make a request indirectly and can be interpreted as being used conventionally. The strategy acting in such capacity is the *expression of want* strategy. The *want statement* is one way of expressing the desire of the speaker, which is unambiguously interpreted to be a request because of its conventional meaning. An example in the GSL data is:

x. **CONTEXT: STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO AN AUTHORITY
FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)**

(- R) You can't find your pen and you see your teacher holding two pens you want him/her to give you one. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS7: Please *pen want me*.

“Please *I want pen*”

Additionally, the *question* strategy can also be interpreted as a conventional means of making a request. Although every occurrence of a question strategy was associated with a mood derivable strategy that conveys a request, it is clear that when used independently in a similar context, it will undoubtedly be interpreted as a request.

However, the absence of certain prosodic markers on the expression in the question strategy makes it present more like a rhetorical question used mainly to augment the illocutionary force of the mood derivable/performative strategy they are realized with. Evidence of independence tendencies in GSL could be explained by the fact that the participants, through their studies of English as L2, have been exposed to the native English speakers' cultural expectations. Hadjah (2024) also reported how influential English has been on the development of communication skills for the educated deaf users of GSL due to its prestigious status and educational focus. Also, there are aspects of the Akan expectations that make it independence-oriented. These are the aspects that dictate that in situations of higher risk of threat to face, as a result unequal power balance like subordinate to superior, you engage in social negotiations. Obeng (1999) discovered that situations where the speaker addresses someone of higher social status are met with more mitigation strategies like the use of indirectness. Other situations where there are possibilities of such tendencies in speech acts, especially in request making, is when the item asked for has a high value attached to it, which means asking for it carries great weight of imposition.

These seem to be similar dynamics experienced by the GSL users; about 64% of the want statements are found in $S < A$ contexts and the remaining 36% under the $S = A$ context; none under the $S > A$ context. This could be attributed to the fact that even though requests are not generally perceived as an imposition (because of the strong sense of camaraderie), certain considerations have to take place when it comes to communicating with people who are older or of higher status. This is done in order to be judged as exhibiting the right behaviour. One of such considerations is using less direct forms. Therefore, direct requests are not seen as imposing or face threatening (Obeng, 1999), but an apparent or clear declaration of non-imposition made through

indirectness is seen as even more appropriate under certain conditions. Additionally, to maintain face and obtain an interactional advantage when faced with communication challenges, Akan interactants turn to indirectness, both conventional and non-conventional.

The variation in the social status also accounts for the reason why there are no indirect forms in the data when it comes to using want statements in making request under the $S > A$, but more of it under the $S < A + R$ context. There were also some inconsistencies realized in the use of indirect strategies in the $S = A$ context. In situation of $(+R)$ with higher risk of threat to face, one would predict that participants will use more indirect approach but the analysis revealed that indirect strategies were used more under the $-R$ situations. This could be explained that because of the equality in status, less attention or no careful thought is given to the choice of strategy to use as threat to face is judged as minimal.

One differing factor between the ASL situation described by Hoza (2007) and the GSL participants is that it was clear on which situations the participants exhibited tendencies of involvement or independence orientations in communications. In Hoza (2007), orientation towards independence, among the ASL participants, were found only under situations of the addressee in higher status than the addresser ($S < A$) and precisely under situations where the weight of imposition is perceived to be higher $(+R)$. The assumption is that this study will be similar, and that in the scenarios of higher imposition $(+R)$, there will be no realization of direct strategies because of the high potential of face threat. However, even though there were indirect strategies used in $S < A$ context, direct strategies were used under $S < A$ contexts as well. There is the need for further studies to determine “whether GSL users culturally expect an involvement strategy or independence strategy”.

4.2.3 Intensifying the perlocutionary effects of the various speech acts

Cummings (2015) notes that perlocutionary acts as proposed by Austin (1975) are defined as what we aim or intend to achieve or actually achieve by saying something. In the simplest of terms, a perlocutionary act could be defined as “the effect the illocutionary act has on the hearer...” (Malmkjær, 2010, p. 500). The speech acts discussed in this study have different perlocutionary effects. Some of these features have the perlocutionary effect of strengthening bounds or creating convivial atmospheres between interlocutors. In most studies, the perlocutionary effects of some speech acts are sometimes achieved as intended when they are intensified under certain conditions. For example, according to Ismagilova et al. (2020), apologies are acts that are based on both the individual and the social level. To a certain extent, they appease the listener on an individual level while they repair bounds and bring harmony to the various parties involved on the social level.

When it comes to making apologies, the choice of strategy determines its impact or its potency in redressing the offence. In some cultures, the repetition of apology formulas gives the expression of apology greater effects (Ismagilova et al., 2021). However, in other cultures, such as the culture of some speakers of Akan (Twi), Obeng (1999) argues that it is preferred to use strategies that had combinations of categories for the expression of apology rather than single categories. This can take the form of either complex apology, which combines explicitness and implicitness, or compound reparation, which involves multiple implicit apology acts (Obeng, 1999). Essentially, social collectiveness and connectedness that mark Akan culture means that any statement or action that is perceived as offensive, whether it is direct or indirect, not only has the capacity to damage one’s reputation but also that of one’s social circle, especially immediate family members. Thus recognition of one’s social responsibilities

towards other members of the community to which one owes allegiance means that one may engage in *intense* or complex strategies to ensure harmony is maintained. Apart from the IFIDs; the core apology, there is the need for other acts to function as a reinforcement or politeness strategy, downtoning the offense, whiles increasing perlocutionary effect on the addressee. Obeng (1999) suggests using deferential titles and expressions of gratitude as additional forms of politeness markers.

This study revealed that the close contact of the Akan and Deaf culture has led to the Deaf resorting to such elaborate form of speech acts to increase the perlocutionary effect. Keenan (1993) also proposes that the assessment of the deaf in the English culture leads to a similar case of intensification. The selection of either a complex or a compound strategy for intensification is determined by the speakers' assessment of the gravity of the situation, as well as the power balance between the speaker and the listener, which influences the extent to which speakers enhance their apologies. The intensification can be internally managed within the IFID or externally managed by adding concern for the hearer or employing additional strategies, all of which result in a lengthier apology (Keenan, 1993). The offer of repair is the most likely strategy of intensifying the effect of an apology to be used in GSL, depending on the nature of the offense committed. If it is based on the loss of an item, as is the case in the scenarios described under the S=A context, the offer of repair strategy is the one utilized the most as an apology strategy or as an intensification device. Its frequency in the data may suggest that under such situations it is the most acceptable or appropriate strategy to use.

The GSL data also revealed that the strategy of taking on responsibility was the most prevalent strategy used, particularly observed in the S<A scenario. The prevalence of this strategy in situations S<A, where the signer and the character in the

DCT are on different levels of the social status, can be attributed to the significant risk of threat to face. Thus, perhaps when interacting with someone of higher social status, holding yourself responsible for the offence, especially expressing a common human flaw (self-deficiency) as what caused the offence to happen in the first place, and also expressing a lack of intent, is of much more mitigating or face-saving capabilities. Therefore, by acknowledging a personal shortcoming such as *forgetting*, as frequently used in the data, which is a common aspect of human nature, the person in a position of authority may be more inclined to demonstrate empathy or forgiveness. This fact could further be supported by the fact that the refusal to acknowledge guilt including denial of responsibility and the blaming of the hearer were used under S=A context, a situation where the risk of losing face is not high, especially since both equal social statuses, and used for situations of low impositions (-R). The few realizations of the *concern for hearer* and *promise of forbearance strategy* and how they were all used together with IFIDs and some strategies may indicate that their major function is to *disarm* the addressee of any intense emotions like anger and minimize tension and rather reignite a feeling of cordiality.

This study, similar to Keenan's (1993) study, demonstrates a correlation between participants' evaluations of the apology scenario and their selection of strategies. The contrasts seem to lie in the fact that Keenan's (1993) study shows that fewer strategies are used by respondents when interacting with peers than with adults, which is not the case for the GSL data. In this study, even though some strategies are specific to interactions between peers and, subordinates and superiors (S=A, S>A), the data did not reveal that the number of strategies used between peers were lesser than those used for superiors. The usual combination of IFIDs and other strategy were used under all situations of interaction with no significant differences observed. As difficult

as it is to apologize, Obeng (1999) proposes that these combinations of strategies for apologizing help the speakers to by-pass as well as remove the difficulty in the apology event. An extract from the data is presented as follows:

xi. **CONTEXT: STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)**

(+R) You picked your classmate's sandals without his/her permission and it got torn. And he/she confronts you. What do you do/say to him/her?

GS9: Sorry tear your sandals. I buy new for you

"I'm sorry I tore your sandals. I will buy a new one for you"

Aijmer (1996) observes that the act of reinforcing the convivial effects of an appreciation is achieved by a combination of strategies and/or repetition. They are internally modified by using adverbs such as very much or very much indeed (lexical devices) and by prosodic cues highlighting the emotions which can be associated with thanking. Moreover, another important strategy for reinforcing politeness consists of the use of combinations of strategy and repetition. All these intensification processes are important because it is suggested in Aijmer (1996) that the act of thanking somebody, that is, the use of *thank you* can be ritualistic and may not signal real gratitude or may be used to signal that the favour is undervalued. This means that expressing gratitude necessitates that the individual receiving a gift, favour, or service demonstrates appropriate deference and demeanour in situations where they feel particularly vulnerable. By expressing the right deference and demeanour, the perlocutionary effect intended will be achieved and intensified. The challenge lies in selecting appropriate words and displaying a behaviour that are mutually satisfactory. In addition, "the difficulty of the task is further compounded by the fact that both

demeanour and deference in expressing gratitude are culturally bound and, hence, difficult to translate from one sociolinguistic context to another” (Aijmer, 1996, p. 67).

Taking into consideration the fact that *thank you* was the most prominent strategy utilized in the data, regardless of the circumstances, it is possible to draw the conclusion that users of GSL consider it to be sufficient enough on its own for the expression of gratitude in virtually every situation. However, “depending on the occasion, the size of the favour, etc., gratitude can be expressed more or less profusely....” (Aijmer, 1996, p. 73), indicating that it is the speaker’s perception of the extralinguistic situation that determines the amount of gratitude that is required. It is important, therefore, to express gratitude in a manner that is more or less profound in order to fulfill the requirements of the conversation that are imposed by the circumstances. That is why in some circumstances the participants sought to the use of other combined strategies in order to have profound effects on the addressee.

In the quest to intensify the perlocutionary effects of gratitude, the participants used *God bless you* and the repetition of thanks. Aijmer (1996) remarks that speakers are more likely to repeat thanks if the participants in the conversation are not equal on the power scale. This study shows that more of the repetition occurred when the signer was addressing someone of higher social status. With respect to the difference in social status, a sum of all the occurrences of the supportive acts for intensification shows that majority of these supportive acts occurred under the S<A +R context, that is, when the signer was addressing someone of higher status and during a situation where the offering of the favour imposes more on the giver.

The GSL participants in this study also employed adverbs such as *very much*, *more*, and *so much* to effectively intensify the desired effect. Another linguistic element that indicates a similar function is the overt expression of affection towards the

giver through the use of the phrase *I love you*. And, by stating the services offered as a reason for showing gratitude, the addressers in this study gave a more appreciative tone to their expressions. With the AdaSL deaf users, there were no evidences of any form of intensification in the data. However, the AdaSL Akan (speakers) users utilized the act of *stating reason for showing appreciation* to intensify appreciation shown. This could be explained by the fact that even though there are certain expectations concerning the influence of the imposition of Akan culture, this influence may not manifest in all the structures of the language.

xii. CONTEXT: PARTICIPANT SHOWS APPRECIATION TO A CHARACTER WITH WHOM HE/SHE HAS EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS (S=A)

(-R) Your friend gives money for lunch after you have lost yours, what do you do or say?

AS2: Thank you, money give. Thank you

“Thank you for the money you gave me. Thank you”

The overall impression given by the data is that AdaSL deaf users use fewer words as much as possible as compared to the AdaSL Akan (speakers) users. As long as the illocutionary and perlocutionary force they want to communicate across is encoded in the expression used, it is enough and rarely do situations demand an elaborate form of social negotiations. Brevity of expression is appreciated in any social context.

4.2.4 Encoding emotional and affective functions

Analysis of the data led to the realization that most of the facial expressions that accompanied the expressions produced encode affective functions. The notion that facial and manual expressions in sign languages are similar to intonation in spoken language has been a topic of discussion for a considerable period and remains a subject

of interest among researchers. Similar to the modulation of spoken language, which encompasses both emotional (paralinguistic) and grammatical (linguistic) purposes, facial and manual expressions in sign language also embody these functions. The distinctions between emotional or paralinguistic intonation and linguistic intonation in spoken language may not be readily apparent, but they can be discerned.

Sandler (2010) notes that there are discernible differences in the distribution of facial expressions and the physical characteristics of those expressions across the various systems of function. The onset and offset of linguistic facial expressions, for instance, are more distinct than those of paralinguistic expressions. They are aligned with prosodic constituents, in contrast to paralinguistic expressions; linguistic expressions typically involve a smaller number of facial articulators. Sandler and Lillo-Martin (2006) further explain that paralinguistic intonation expresses emotions and is unique to individuals, whereas linguistic intonational patterns serve specific pragmatic purposes and are conventionalized. Furthermore, paralinguistic intonation exhibits a continuous range of variation. For example, the degree of pitch excursion allows for the expression of varying levels of excitement, sadness, and other emotions. Linguistic intonation, on the other hand, is characterized by distinct and definite categories, an indication that the understanding of a tune in response to a yes/no question is not influenced by the emotional state of the person asking the question. Additionally, slight variations in the contour of a linguistic intonation do not correspond to change in meaning or the illocutionary force behind the intended speech act.

Analyzing the prosodic cues by these parameters indicates that with the exception of the raised brow, they may all be non-linguistic intonation conveying affective information. They appear to be dependent on the mood of the addresser. They also appear to be in different degrees depending on the individual's judgement of the

situation and could thus be idiosyncratic. The act of signing faster or increasing the signing speed in GSL was clearly used as a paralinguistic intonation expressing the emotion of anger or irritability. In the findings by Reilly et al. (1999), the duration of the sign in the angry condition was shorter than in neutral, where no emotions are showed, one probable reason being that in moments of anger, signers are prone to signing faster.

The possibility of the increased speed indicating a strong emotion such as anger is supported by the observation that fast signings were realized, in the data of GSL, in contexts or situations that justify such intense emotions. For example, out of the 23 instances of increased speed in signing, 15 of them (which constitute about 68% of the total frequencies) occurred under the speech act of complaints, a condition of censuring where there is bound to be irritability. Also, four of these prosodic cues occurred with making request having imperative illocutionary force not necessarily encoding annoyances but fervor, showing such *heated* emotion encodes to the addressee that something that needs to be done has not been done. It could then be decoded as a command that must be complied with immediately as refusal to do so will not be tolerated. Additionally, this emotion was exhibited during instances of making request under the condition where the participant was higher on the social scale than the character in the DCT. The occurrence of apology that exhibited this prosodic cue was the situation of irregularity in which the participant declined to apologize and instead held the character responsible for the incident that initially necessitated the apology.

The observation of a particular facial expression that frequently occurred simultaneously with this cue is yet another significant fact that can provide support for these claims in GSL, and that facial expression was *frown-like* in nature. Reilly et al. (1999) conclude that “.... although subjects can glean a substantial amount of affective

information from the manual channel, they still depend on the information provided by the face to make consistently accurate judgments of the signer's intended emotional state" (p. 121). The evidence of this frown-like feature during most situations of fast signing in the GSL data corroborate the fact that increased signing speed are usually indicative of *heated* emotions.

**xiii. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY
COMPLAINS TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)**

(+R) Some students have been refusing to do the work you instructed them to do without any reason. You confront them. What do you do/say to him/her?

FS Fr

GS4: Go work. If you not act, add more work

"Go and do the work I instructed you to do. If you refuse to work, I will add more work"

A similar frown was noticed in the AdaSL data, under the context of complain making. Even without the increased signing pace, it could also encode similar affective function. The prosodic cue of extending the lower lip occurred with three instances of apology and one instance of request. This could be decoded as accentuating or making more profound emotion of remorse. In the case of the apology, it encodes remorse for causing the offence. This cue exhibited during a request signals the remorse for imposing on the addressee, thus, extorting a more positive or favourable response. In showing similar emotions in AdaSL, the lips are drawn downward while forming wrinkles on both sides of the cheek. When the signer wants to intensify or exaggerate the emotions that they intend to exhibit, they will manipulate the displacement of their hand in order to make the signs larger or smaller. This is done for the purpose of

intensification. In this particular example below, the articulators (hands) were brought closer together as a means of conveying the emotion of joy during a situation of expressing gratitude in the GSL data.

xiv. CONTEXT: STUDENT MAKES A REMARK APPRECIATION TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(-R) You classmate noticed that your gari has finished and gives you some of theirs, enough to last for a while. What do you do/say to him/her?

Dpl

GS7: Thank you. Love you. Thank you

“Thank you. I love you. Thank you.

4.2.5 Expressing grammatical information

The brow raise was also used to indicate yes/no questions in the GSL data. It has been established that the pattern of prosody are dictated by its meaning or pragmatic considerations, and not necessarily the syntax (Sandler, 2010, pp. 318-319). This explains why not all *yes/no* questions in the GSL data had the prosodic cue of raise or lowered brow. Sandler and Lillo-Martin (2006) propose that the raised brow is an indication of prediction, predicting that the first part of the utterance is going to be followed by some relevant information or consequence. Thus, their absence is an indication of the statement needing no follow up and could thus be interpreted as a rhetorical question. This leads to the conclusion that most of the expressions that were judged to be *yes/no* questions but were without the brow raised cue in the data functioned as rhetorical questions and needed no response or follow-up questions. Another possible conclusion is that they have been conventionalized to function as directives or expressives instead of being interrogatives.

xv. CONTEXT: STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY MAKES A REQUEST TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R) As a school prefect, you see students passing by litters, on the school compound, without picking. What do you do/say to them?

br

GS2: You see (**pointing to the ground**) not? Pick pick.

“Did you not see **the papers**? Pick them”

4.2.6 Indicating appropriate deference and demeanour that is mutually accepted

In using certain pragmatic features, elements of deference in the respective cultures of the deaf were portrayed. Some of these features are imbedded in how address systems are structured in both the GSL and AdaSL data. In the literature, social deixis captures some aspects of address systems, especially with how they convey social meanings. Archer et al. (2013) argue that social deixis is responsible for encoding the identities of speakers and/or the relationships between speakers and other individuals. Consequently, there are two types of social deixis: the absolute and the relational social deixis. Expressions that are consistent across contexts, such as Miss/Ms. /Mrs. are examples of what are referred to as the absolute social deixis. On the other hand, the use of expressions of relational social deixis, such as honorifics and kinship terms, is contingent upon the relation between the participants in the speech event and/or the level of formality of the content. This demonstrates that language plays a role in facilitating social interactions. Consequently, the study of indexicalities necessitates the investigation of the social processes that are responsible for their creation and regulation (Pizziconi & Christie, 2017).

According to Pizziconi and Christie (2017), indexicals of deference-and-demeanour (social deixis), which are used for specific addressees or referents,

commonly generate an additional layer of meaning as they also come to be seen as emblematic of speaker features, for instance, properness, sophistication, education. However, sign languages may not have signs that encode such meanings but have sign names that may equally signify or promote a sense of solidarity and reverence. Mindess (1960) discovered that in American Sign Language (ASL), arbitrary or initialized sign names, particularly the initials of the surname, are sign names used for teachers, bosses, and administrators, and that these sign names encode some form of respect that is attached to them. Studies show that sign languages do not usually use honorifics or deferential address system. The significance of the honorifics, to show reverence, is incorporated in sign names. Thus, in some deaf cultures, respect is shown by using the initials of surnames rather than the first names. A similar structure was recognized in the GSL data. In AdaSL, it was the kinship terms, precisely the use of *mother*, *father*, and *sister* that encoded a more deferential and cordial interpretation. These are illustrated as follows:

**xvi. CONTEXT: STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO AN AUTHORITY
FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)**

**(+R) As a student you want to go home therefore you want an exeat
from your house master/mistress. What do you do/say when you go to
meet him/her?**

GS9: (use sign name of teacher) I need permission go home

“Semenhyia, I need permission to go home”.

**xvii. CONTEXT: PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A
CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<
A)**

(+ R) You want to go out to a friend's party and have to ask permission from your father, what do you do/say?

AS5: **Father**, please my friend go meet
“Dad, please I want to go and meet my friends”.

Also, Paales (2011) notes that signers do not use sign names in order to attract the attention of other signers when they are having conversations. As a consequence of this, personal sign names are not used as a call sign; rather, they are utilized primarily in reference to a third party. Hence, what was mostly used as call signs were *handwaves*. Hoza (2007) discovered that *handwaves*, while drawing the attention of the interlocutors, may also perform the function of exhibiting courtesy. The *handwave*, accompanied by certain non-manual politeness makers at the beginning of an utterance, serves to warn the addressee that there is a moderate or grave threat to face forthcoming. Since such non-manual politeness does not exist in GSL or AdaSL, it is not easy to tell if the *handwaves* realized in the data were just drawing attention of the second person(s) in the communicative event or encoding (im)politeness.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis of the data to answer the research questions. The study focused on analyzing the pragmatic features of Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) and Adamorobe Sign Language (AdaSL). The pragmatic features discovered were speech acts, prosody, deixis, address systems, and politeness markers. Overall, the findings suggest that the predominant strategies employed in conveying the illocution of the speech acts in GSL and AdaSL are direct strategies, indicating an involvement-oriented expectation of the two Deaf communities. However, they are not employed without implementing some kind of mitigation. Some strategies were also characterized by indirectness, exhibiting their independence tendencies. These dual orientations also signify that sometimes either the intended perlocutionary effects are

simply achieved by explicit expression of the illocutionary force or situations demand that they are intensified by a combination of other implicit strategies. The analysis also showed that facial expressions in sign languages serve some similar functions as intonation does in spoken languages, as they encode grammatical and paralinguistic information. Furthermore, indexicals of deference are shown by sign names of surnames and kinship terms in GSL and AdaSL respectively.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The summary of the research findings, implications of the study, suggestions for future studies, and conclusion are presented in this chapter. The research set out to explore the pragmatic features of the deaf in GSL and AdaSL and examine how these pragmatic features function. The approach for the study was a qualitative whilst the design is ethnography. The study successfully achieved its objectives by analyzing data that were obtained through administering DCT to twenty-six (26) participants who were selected through a purposive sampling technique while activities and event in the entire population were observed. The responses elicited through the DCT were transcribed for a thematic analysis. Through user-member checking, validity of the data was established. While Section 5.1.1 provides an overview of the pragmatic features identified, Section 5.1.2 summarizes how these pragmatic features function. Sections 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 present the implications for communication, suggestions for future studies, and the conclusion.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study explored the pragmatic features of the deaf in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language, focusing on speech acts, prosody, deixis, address systems, and politeness markers. Data collected through DCT and observation under the speech acts were specifically for the analysis of some sub-themes: request, apology, complaint, and gratitude/appreciation. These speech acts were also analyzed in terms of how potential threats are mitigated to show politeness. Analysis in the study also included examination of the functions of these features.

5.1.1 Pragmatic features in GSL and AdaSL

Request strategies in Ghanaian Sign Language were classified based on Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka (1987), and Hoza (2007). The study revealed that mood derivable (imperative) can be used in both high and low imposition situations, but the distribution differs in both contexts. In high imposition context, mood derivable (imperatives) requests are used less, contrary to low imposition context. In the Adamorobe Sign Language, mood derivable (imperatives) requests are used under high and lower impositions and the frequency of occurrence are within close intervals, showing contrast to the research by Hoza (2007). The explicit performative request strategy involved the speaker explicitly uttering that the illocutionary act be performed, with the majority of instances occurring under the +R, S=A context.

Indirect requests, which were in the form of *want statements*, were also used, with the indirect strategy being more common in the GSL context than AdaSL. The indirect requests were not the most used strategy as compared to the direct requests, with more instances of using indirectness in the S<A context for both +R and -R situations. Some conventional indirect requests were used together with direct requests. The study explored the use of face-threatening act (FTA) mitigation strategies in GSL and AdaSL in the form of *please*, giving or asking reasons, offer/promise, and appreciation. In situations where the signer perceived the direct requests as having high degree of imposition, the signer resorted to these strategies to mitigate the degree of imposition.

The study further examined how GSL users choose apology categories, which include conventionalized or formulaic expressions of regret (IFIDs) and linguistic elements that made reference to or redress the violation. Illocutionary force indicating

devices were used more in the GSL data, mostly in the S>A context. The IFIDs used were *sorry* and *forgive*, sometimes with the strategy of “*taking on responsibility* which equally include the *refusal to acknowledge guilt*, specifically in *denial and blaming the hearer*. The analysis led to the realization that the act of *explicitly blaming oneself* for the offence occurred more during higher threat to face like in S<A context, with few in S=A and S>A contexts. Majority of the apology strategies in the AdaSL data were IFIDs with less supportive moves.

The data revealed that GSL users made complaints with reference to only one constitutive component either mentioned the complainable, their disapproval or negative judgement, or their desire to fix the offence. However, in situation like that the data revealed that most participants referred to the complainable, covering about 71% of the number times only one constitutive component was referred to. There was also a frequent utilization of two constitutive components for the making of complaining. In cases where there was the use of three constitutive components, the data revealed that such complaints in GSL more often than not include the expression of the complainable, assuming the complaine as the agent, and wishing for the offence to be remedied. Some participants used accusations and warnings to express censure most especially in situation where the participant is of higher social status than the character they are interacting with, in the DCT. The data revealed that combining accusation and warnings with other constitutive components was also realized. Most of such combinations include issuing accusation and warnings; and referencing the complainable and assuming the complaine as the agent. Sometimes participants further indicate the desire for the offence to be remedied. The data from the AdaSL participants revealed similar trends. However, one recognizable difference was the

realization of more expressions that indicated disapproval or negative evaluation of complainable, one of the constitutive components, than in the GSL data.

The study revealed that one hundred and nineteen (119) expressions of gratitude from GSL participants explicitly mention the *thanking somebody* strategy, with some IFIDs combined with other expressions to intensify its meaning. In the GSL data, there was one instance a supportive move served as an indirect way of showing gratitude, without any IFID attached. In AdaSL, all expressions used were the *thanking* strategies. The only supportive move was *giving a reason* for expressing the gratitude. Also, in the study, modifiers or intensifiers were more often used for characters of higher social status. The study explored how GSL prosodic features indicate intonation, revealing that GSL has evidence of prosodic features like speed modification, enhanced manual sign characteristics, eye widening, and pouting and extension of the lower lips. Facial expressions like a frown and lip-drawing, that created wrinkles on both sides of the cheeks, were notable cues used in confrontations or apology in the AdaSL data. The study found that the sign languages express direct and indirect deixis, by pointing to refer to the addresser or the addressee and to reveal location and indicate temporal concepts in relation to the deictic center (the signer). Person deixis is also encoded with personal pronouns, with cliticized pronouns losing some phonological structures. Lastly, AdaSL signers use generic directionals (*from and towards*) for spatial-temporal references, identifying the addressee's and spatial concepts.

5.1.2 Functions of the pragmatic features

The research explored the role of pragmatic features in promoting community solidarity and harmony. It led to the realization that the pragmatic features show a direct and involvement-oriented discourse style of their respective communities. The

GSL and AdaSL communities, being involvement-oriented, mean they rarely view speech acts as impeding on the addressee's action and values. However, direct strategies in these communities are easily realized under power balance situations, when superiors communicate with subordinates ($S > A$). Additionally, GSL participants, exposed to native English speakers' and Akan speakers' cultural expectations, exhibit independent orientation due to their use of indirect strategies which is viewed as more face-saving due to increased optionality and reduced illocutionary force. In situations of high-risks, indirect strategies are used, such as using *want statements* and indirect speech forms. In a similar manner, the AdaSL participants showed an orientation toward independence tendencies. The study also identified pragmatic features that intensify perlocutionary effects, with the addresser's assessment of the situation and power balance determining the need for these strategies. This was usually achieved in the data by a complex or compound strategy.

Facial expressions in GSL and AdaSL indicate emotional function, with increasing signing speed often indicating intense emotions like anger or irritability. The frown-like feature, extending the lower lip and manipulation of displacement hands, also conveyed remorse and joy respectively. There was another cue that encoded grammatical function: the raised brow in GSL data indicates yes/no questions, while its absence suggests rhetorical questions. These findings highlight the fact that prosody patterns are dictated by meaning rather than syntax, emphasizing the importance of emotional and grammatical cues in language. In effect, sign languages like GSL and AdaSL use pragmatic features to convey social meanings, using social deixis. Social deixis for specific addressees and initialized sign names mark deference when communicating with authority figures. Lastly, AdaSL interprets kinship terms as appropriate for higher status individuals, indicating deference and demeanor.

5.2 Implications for Communication in the Deaf Community

This section discusses some of the implications of this research for communications, especially in cross-cultural communication between the deaf and hearing. Sometimes in cross-cultural communications between the deaf and hearing, especially in circumstances where both languages have differing cultural underpinnings, the deaf are judged as having limited or lacking in the social skills to appropriately engage in interactions. Young et al. (2020) note that many of the effects of deafness may cause the development of good pragmatic skills and abilities to be more challenging. This was said in view of how others judged the deaf in terms of their pragmatic skills in spoken languages. Most of the social skills that are deemed appropriate and acceptable, the cultural norms regulating social interacting, as well as valuable clues gained to decode how others think and feel, are learnt through exposure to and engagement with a variety of individuals across numerous contexts. And, because they cannot hear or speak, the linguistic access to this incidental learning is particularly difficult.

Moreover, numerous studies have indicated that the deaf, in the process of learning sign language, learn how to communicate in ways that are meaningful and acceptable in their various deaf communities. They thus develop cultural schemas that may be different from other language communities. It therefore seems unfair to judge the deaf negatively on the basis of competence in any language skills other than language they are fluent and competent in, that is, sign language. This study enlightens the world on the nuances of communicating in Ghanaian sign language and the Adamorobe sign language, like the importance of facial expressions, so that the deaf and the hearing can better understand and accommodate each other when communicating.

Furthermore, the deaf, having knowledge in the pragmatics of sign language will help them understand how to use signs appropriately in various contexts. Pragmatic knowledge enables sign language users to better navigate social situations such as greetings, taking turns, and maintaining conversations. Additionally, this study helps to expose to the deaf, what is expected of them in conversation with *outsiders* or those who do not share same physiological challenges. Deda (2013) proposes that when learners are made familiar with the range of pragmatic devices and practices in the target language, it helps them to first of all maintain their own cultural identities and then participate more fully in target language communication with more control over both the intended force and outcome of their contributions. This means that once they are able to distinguish clearly between what is expected of them under different circumstances, they are able to adapt to the demands of the language appropriately to avoid unintentional offence.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

This research has revealed a number of potentially interesting areas, and considerations for further research. More research is required on the pragmatics of different sign language users. These researches should encompass signers of GSL of various dialects who differ in ethnicity, gender, regional backgrounds, and religious beliefs. This research also revealed the need for some cross-linguistic comparative studies into the difference in some of these pragmatic features in Sign languages across Africa. Equal attention could be given to the differences in the variety of sign languages like the home signs, indigenous sign language, and the foreign-based sign language. Again, it is important to explore similar themes in this study in settings outside of the school setting. Investigating various contexts like casual conversations, medical appointments, and religious settings can demonstrate how speech acts are

influenced by factors such as the speech event, sociolinguistic variables like power, social distance, and ranking.

Additionally, the identification and function of the pragmatic features in this study and additional features could be followed up by studies to explore if, and how, similar features might be used within the signing-hearing population, who are second language users of GSL. This approach would potentially bring about distinction between features that are solely as a result of the physiological challenge and having no access to other language; and those that are as results of influence of other languages one uses. It would also be useful to examine naturally-occurring interactions to see if they support the findings presented here, and which allow for a detailed analysis of how the various influences of the social variables on choices of strategies are reflected in spontaneous language use.

5.4 Conclusion

Researchers are gradually establishing the legitimacy of the claim that sign language is a full-fledged language through constant investigation into the linguistics of sign language, although some aspects of the language are more explored and well defined than others. For example, in the case of GSL, there are a considerable number of researches on the phonology and the language structure but close to none on the aspects that concern language use and communication. This study aimed at making valuable contribution to the understanding of sign language, used by some Deaf communities in Ghana by providing valuable insights into some pragmatic features of the deaf in Ghanaian Sign Language and Adamorobe Sign Language, highlighting on how they function in language use. Crystal's (2010) explanation of pragmatics implies that our daily interactions are regulated by making choices; choosing what to say, how

to say it and when to say it. And, pragmatic studies investigate the factors that govern our choice in social interaction and the effects the choices have on others.

The research, being ethnographic in nature, employed qualitative approach to guide the process. The participants were selected through purposive sampling technique. Data were gathered through observation and DCT. The data elicited indicated that with speech acts, prosody, deixis, and address system, context plays a significant role in the choice of strategy to use to convey the intended meaning or illocutionary force within an interaction. Because the scenarios were situated in settings and contexts that they were familiar with, the participants did not struggle in the production of culturally accepted and appropriate expressions. This attested to the relevance of the Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological model of human development (which propagates how an individual's interaction with his/her environment contributes to their development) to language development. This simply leads to the conclusion that it is through the unit of cultural knowledge accumulated from the patterns we derive from our perception of the world that guides the way we interact. This study highlights the importance examining the pragmatics of sign language to understand the way the Deaf achieve their communicative goals.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Discourse completion task for deaf students

DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASK (DCT)

This DCT was developed by considering the contextual variables proposed by Brown and Levinson ([1978 as cited in Ogiermann, 2018) in the study of pragmatics; which are social distance (D), social power (P) and the degree of imposition (R). Thus, this discourse completion task is in three parts depending on the power relation that can exist between interlocutors and in this case between the Signer (the participant) and the Addressee (the character) i.e., the Signer in position of lower authority than the Addresser ($S < A$), the Signer and Addressee having equal authority ($S = A$), and the Signer in position of higher authority than the Addresser ($S > A$). And each speech act has two contexts that has the probability of inciting two different levels of imposition; higher risk (+R) and lower risk (-R) of imposition.

PART I

THE SIGNER IN POSITION OF LOWER AUTHORITY THAN THE ADDRESSEE ($S < A$)

REQUEST

STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL ($S < A$)

(+R)

As a student you want to go home therefore you want an exeat from your house master/mistress to go. What do you do/say when you go to meet him/her?

.....

(- R)

You can't find your pen and you see your teacher holding two pens you want him/her to give you one.

What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

APOLOGY

STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)

(+R)

Your headteacher was addressing you but you didn't acknowledge him and you passed him/her by. She/he finds you and makes you aware of what happened.

What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(-R)

As a student your teacher requested your presence in his/her office you didn't go. She/he meets you, what do you do/say to him/her?

.....

COMPLAINT

STUDENT COMPLAINS TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)

(+R)

As a student, your working mate has refused to do their duties and the house prefect has not taken actions. Then you go to your house master/mistress.

What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(-R)

Your classmate takes your book without your permission. You go to you class teacher, what do you do/say to him/her?

.....

APPRECIATION

STUDENT MAKES A REMARK OF APPRECIATION TO AN AUTHORITY FIGURE IN SCHOOL (S<A)

(+R)

As a student you lost your money and your teacher gives you some amount of money. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(-R)

As a student your teacher lends you one of his/her pens. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

PART II

THE SIGNER IN POSITION OF EQUAL AUTHORITY AS THE ADDRESSEE (S= A)

REQUEST

STUDENT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL(S=A)

(+R)

As a student you lost your money and you want your classmate to lend you some. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(- R)

You are in need of a particular book that only your friend has and you go to his/her desk.

What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

APOLOGY

STUDENT OFFERS APOLOGY TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(+R)

You picked your classmate's sandals without his/her permission and it got torn. And he/she confronts you. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(-R)

You misplace your friend's plate which that he/she lent to you. She/ he is back asking for it.

What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

COMPLAINT

STUDENT COMPLAINS TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL (S=A)

(+R)

Your classmate refuses to return the money he/she borrowed from you. So, you tell your friend

.....

(-R)

Your classmates are making noise during prep hours and you are afraid you will be punished because of the noise. And you want to draw their attention to what they are doing. What do you do/say to them?

.....

APPRECIATION

STUDENT MAKES A REMARK APPRECIATION TO A CLASSMATE IN SCHOOL(S=A)

(+R)

Your classmate did your house work for you because you were not feeling well. You meet him/her on your way to class. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(-R)

Your classmate noticed that your gari has finished and gives you some of theirs, enough to last for a while. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

PART III

SIGNER IN POSITION OF HIGHER AUTHORITY THAN THE ADDRESSEE (S>A)

REQUEST

STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY MAKES A REQUEST TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R)

As a school prefect, you see students passing by litters, on the school compound, without picking. What do you do/say to them?

.....

(- R)

As a school prefect you ask your junior to go a fetch a bucket of water for you. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

APOLOGY

STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY OFFERS APOLOGY TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R)

As a school prefect, you punished a student who you were not supposed to. After the whole ordeal you realize you punish the wrong person, what do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(-R)

You accidentally bumped into a student as you were in a hurry to go to class. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

COMPLAINT

STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY COMPLAINS TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R)

Some students have been refusing to do the work you instructed them to do without any reason. You go to the headteacher's office. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

(-R)

You sent a student to go and buy food for you but, he/she takes long in returning. He/she finally gets back. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

APPRECIATION

STUDENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY MAKES A REMARK OF APPRECIATION TO A STUDENT IN SCHOOL (S>A)

(+R)

As a school prefect you asked a classmate to copy notes for you because you had a meeting to attend with the teaching staff. She did as you asked. What do you do/say to her?

.....

(-R)

A student assisted you in carrying your bag to class, as she/he was walking the same direction as you. What do you do/say to him/her?

.....

APPENDIX II

Discourse completion task for Adamorobe participants

PART I

SIGNER IN POSITION OF LOWER SOCIAL STATUS THAN THE ADDRESSEE (S>A)

REQUEST

PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)

+ R

You want to go out to a friend's party and have to ask permission from your father, what do you do/say?

.....

-R

Your mother promised to give you some money to buy cake on your birthday. And today is your birthday, what do you do or say?

.....

APOLOGY

PARTICIPANT APOLOGISES TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER

(S<A)

+ R

You lied to your parents about going to classes when in deed you went to a friend's house. They found out you lied to them. What do you do or say?

.....

-R

You break your mum's plate and you didn't tell her but she finds out and is angry, what do you do or say?

.....

COMPLAINT

PARTICIPANT MAKES A COMPLAINT TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)

+R

Your mum has been scolding you a lot even for offences that your siblings commit and you are not happy about it, what do you do or say to them?

.....

-R

Your sister or brothers always leave their plates, without washing them, after eating. And it's irritating you, what do you do or say?

APPRECIATION

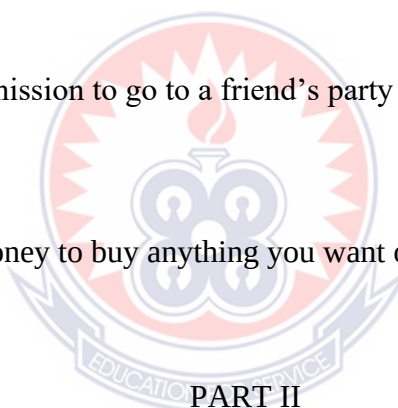
PARTICIPANT SHOW APPRECIATION TO A CHARACTER OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN HIM/HER (S<A)

+R

Your dad gives you permission to go to a friend's party which he usually doesn't, what do you do or say?

-R

Your mum gives you money to buy anything you want on your birthday, what do you do or say?



PART II

SIGNER IN POSITION OF EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS WITH THE ADDRESSEE (S=A)

REQUEST

PARTICIPANT MAKES A REQUEST TO A CHARACTER WITH WHOM HE/SHE HAS EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS (S=A)

+R

You have been admiring your friend's shoe for some time and you will like to borrow it for an event. What do you do or say?

.....

-R

It's break time and you have lost your lunch money and you will like you friend to share his lunch with you, what do you do or say?

.....

APOLOGY

PARTICIPANT MAKES APOLOGISES TO A CHARACTER WITH WHOM HE/SHE HAS EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS (S=A)

+R

You said something to your friend during playtime which you didn't intend it to be offensive but to her it was. Then later you realize that lately she has not been talking to you, after enquiries you found out it is because of what you said the other time, what do you do or say?

.....

-R

Your broke your playmates toy/ doll, what do you do or say?

.....

COMPLAINT

PARTICIPANT MAKES A COMPLAINT TO A CHARACTER WITH WHOM HE/SHE HAS EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS (S=A)

+R

For some time, you have realized that your friend has been losing his/her money and has been coming to you for lunch but it is causing a bit of inconvenience to you, what do you do or say to him/her?

.....

-R

Your friend always returns the dress she borrows from you with a tear, what do you do or say?

.....

APPRECIATION

PARTICIPANT SHOWS APPRECIATION TO A CHARACTER WITH WHOM HE/SHE HAS EQUAL SOCIAL STATUS (S=A)

+R

Your friend finally agrees to lend you his/her shoe for the event, what do you do or say?

.....

-R

Your friend gives money for lunch after you have lost yours, what do you do or say?

.....

PART III

SIGNER IN POSITION OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN THE ADDRESSEE (S>A)

REQUEST

PARTICIPANT SHOWS MAKES A REQUEST TO A CHARACTER SHE/HE IS OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN (S>A)

+R

As an older sibling you ask your junior brother/sister to do a house chore which was supposed to be done by you, what do you do or say?

.....

-R

You want to send your junior brother/sister to go and buy food for you, what do you do or say?

.....

APOLOGY

PARTICIPANT APOLOGIES TO A CHARACTER SHE/HE IS OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN (S>A)

+R

Your refuse to help your junior sister or brother with his/her homework, after realizing your mistake, what do you say to him/her?

.....

-R

After you misplaced your little sister money she asked you to keep, what do you say to him/her after she comes back to ask for it?

.....

COMPLAINT

PARTICIPANT COMPLAINS TO A CHARACTER SHE/HE IS OF HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS THAN (S>A)

+R

You recently realized that your younger sibling has been sneaking into your room to use your cologne and pomade, what do you say to him/her?

.....

-R

Your younger siblings have not been doing their part of the house chores, what do you say to him/her?

.....

APPRECIATION

PARTICIPANT SHOWS APPRECIATION TO A CHARACTER SHE/HE HAS MORE AUTHORITY THAN (S>A)

+R

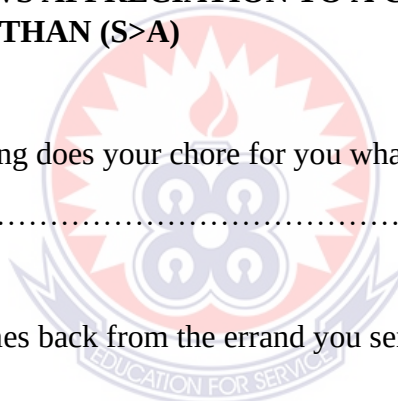
After your younger sibling does your chore for you what do you do/say to him or her?

.....

-R

Your younger sister comes back from the errand you sent her on, what do you say to him/her?

.....



APPENDIX III

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED STRATEGIES USED IN THE LITERATURE.

Table 2.4.1.1: Nine categories of making request and some examples

Descriptive Categories	Examples
Mood derivable (imperative)	Clean up the kitchen
Explicit performative	I'm asking you to move your car
Hedge performative	I would like to ask you to move your car
Obligation statement	You'll have to move your car
Want statement	I want you to move your car
Suggestory formulas	How about cleaning up?
Query preparatory	Would you mind moving your car?
Strong hints	You've left the kitchen in a mess
mild hints	We don't want any crowding (as a request to move the car)

(Blum-Kulka, 1987 as cited in Bowe, et al 2014)

Table 2.4.1.2: Apology Strategies and tokens indicating how they are realized

Components of apology	Tokens
Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) which includes the	
i. expression of regret	i. <i>I'm sorry</i>
ii. offer of apology	ii. <i>I apologize</i>
iii. request for apology	iii. <i>Forgive me/ pardon me</i>
Explanation of account: this mitigating the situation by giving reasons for the violation	<i>The traffic was terrible</i>

Taking on responsibility		
i.	Explicit Self-blame	<i>It is my fault</i>
ii.	Lack of intent	<i>I didn't mean it</i>
iii.	Expression of self-deficiency	<i>I was confused/ I didn't see you</i>
iv.	Expression of embarrassment	<i>I feel awful about it</i>
v.	Self-dispraise	<i>I'm such a dimwit</i>
vi.	Justify hearer	<i>You're right to be angry</i>
vii.	Refusal to acknowledge guilt: deny responsibility, Blame the hearer, pretend to be offended	<i>It wasn't my fault, it's your own fault, I'm the one to be offended</i>
Concern for the hearer		<i>I hope I didn't upset you?</i>
Offer of repair		<i>I'll pay for the damages</i>
Promise of forbearance		<i>It won't happen again</i>

Cohen & Olshtain (1981 cited in Bowe et al., 2014, p. 83)

Table 2.4.1.3: Categories of complaint strategies and some examples.

Category	Examples
Category 1: Hint or implicit complaint : there is no direct mention of the speech act which means that all four constitutive components of the complaint situation are implicated, only the context i.e. complaint situation, gives clues as to the fact that a complaint is being performed	Next time I won't leave my letters on the table any more.
Category 2: Explicit reference to the speech act of complaint. The complaint is referred from the speech act as there is an explicit mention of it (a verb or noun that explicitly names the speech act of	[Dieses Teil] ist defekt und wir möchten es reklamieren. "[This part] is broken and we want to claim it"

complaint). On-record realization of the compliant.

Category 3: One constitutive component. In this category only one constitutive element of the complaint situation is explicitly express.

My letter was opened. (The complainable is made explicit)

Category 4: two constitutive components. It comprises of communicating two of constitutive components of the complaint situation on-record.

You opened my letter. (the complainable and the agentive involvement of complaineer are explicitly communicated)

Category 5: three constitutive components: making a complaint with this type of category involves explicitly communicating three constitutive elements

You shouldn't have opened my letter. (Disapproval of the complainable, by pointing out that the course of action should not have occurred, and agentive involvement of the complaineer, and the complainable).

Category 6: four constitutive components. Finally, a complainer can communicate all four constitutive components of a complaint situation on-record

This is not okay, please don't open my letters

(Decock & Depraetere, 2018, p. 8-19).

Table 2.4.1.4: Gratitude strategies propounded by Aijmer (1996)

Thanking strategies		Examples
Explicit	A. Thanking somebody explicitly	Thank you, thanks
	B. Expressing gratitude	I am grateful
	E. Acknowledging a debt of gratitude	I owe a debt of gratitude to
Implicit	C. Expressing appreciation of the addressee	That's kind/nice of you
	D. Expressing appreciation of the act	That's lovely, its appreciated
	F. Stressing one's gratitude	I must thank you
	G. Expressing emotion	Oh, thank you
	H. Commenting on one's own role by suppressing one's own importance	I'm an ingrate I'm so careless

(Aijmer, 1996, p. 37)

Table 2.6.1: Request Strategies in ASL by Hoza (2007)

Request Strategies		Examples
i.	Questions: The question strategy in a request involves the use of a yes/no question	DON'T MIND I BORROW/tight lips #PEN/q [translation: Can I borrow your pen?).
ii.	Hegde: involves the use two signs 'well' and 'possible'	POSSIBLE I WEDNESDAY INDEX RIGHT +/t, POSSIBLE, IF CAN/cond, OFF I INDEX RIGHT WEDNESDAY. "WELL" (1-hand)/tight lips /q [translation: Is it at all possible for me to have that Wednesday off, do you think?];
iii.	Be pessimistic: it involves the use of signs like 'possible' and 'maybe' in ASL,	"HANDWAVE", I WONDER CURIOUS/tight lips, THINK POSSIBPE FIFTY DOLLARS/q [translation: [Name], I was wondering if you think it'd be

iv. Minimizing the imposition: includes downplaying the seriousness of the face-threat, usually overlaps with offer/promise strategy	possible for me to borrow 50 dollars?]. NEXT-WEEK PAY CHECK, I EXPEND YOU# BACK [translation: Understand that when I get my paycheck next week, I'll pay you (right) back]
v. Apology: involves directly or indirectly expressing regrets of impingement and reluctance to do so and also giving explanations or reasons for doing so. It also similar to give or ask reason strategy.	I, OH-I-SEE/pp, PURSE/t, LOSE PEN. I THINK MY DAUGHTER TAKE IT/th [translation: Oh, I see. Actually, I've lost my pen; it's not in my purse. I think my daughter took off with it.]
vi. Violating the relevance or quality maxim: the signer violates the relevance or quality maxim by jokingly saying something to mean another or being ironic.	I SICK-OF-IT, YOU STEAL MY#PEN. STEAL, YOU, "WELL"[smiling]. [translation: I hate that. You stole my pen; you took it!] (the signer jokingly indicates his need for a pen and the addressee will readily recognize the joke as an indirect request)
vii. Give deference: describes an acknowledgement of the addressee's superior position and a humbling of one's own	"SUPPOSE YOU (roleshift) HAVE TO/pg.cond, I WILLING/pp" [translation: If you say I have to work, I certainly will].
viii. Use of please: sign please in ASL is used to ease request	
ix. Handwave: in making request in ASL to get the addressee's attention rather than signing the person's name	"HANDWAVE", I WONDER CURIOUS/tight lips, THINK POSSIBPE FIFTY DOLLARS/q [translation: [Name], I was wondering if you think it'd be possible for me to borrow 50 dollars?].

Table 2.6.2: Non-manual features for politeness in American Sign Language.

Marker	Description	Usage
polite pucker	pursed lips	an involvement strategy used for minor face threats where cooperation is expected
tight lips	lips tightened together, with tension	used for involvement and independence strategies, the default NMM for moderate face threats
polite grimace	a tight smile, with lips either open or lightly closed	used for involvement and independence in more difficult imposition contexts
polite grimace frown	as above but with the addition of a frown	used for involvement and independence strategies involving severe face threat and a high degree of imposition
body/head teeter	a movement of the head and/or upper body from side to side	used alone or in conjunction with other features for extreme face threats and high imposition contexts

(Mapson, 2015, p.162)

Table 4.1.1.1.1 : Classification of request strategies

Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka (1987)		Hoza (2007)
Direct	Mood derivable (imperative), Explicit performative	Use an imperative from, using please signs
Indirectness	Hedge performative, Obligation statement, Want statement, Suggestory formulas	
Conventional indirectness	Query preparatory	Be conventionally indirect (suggest, claim or question willingness, ability or desire), question strategy, hedge, pessimism strategy, offer /promise,
Nonconventional indirectness		

Strong hints	Violation of
Mild hints	relevance/ quality
	maxim.

(Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka, 198; Hoza, 2007)

