With Language Brings Light: Narratives by Deaf Ethiopians and their Right to Sign Language

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University of San Francisco

With Language Brings Light: Narratives by Deaf Ethiopians and their Right to Sign Language

A Thesis Project Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts in Human Rights in Education

by
Jackie M. Eugster
May 2017
With Language Brings Light: Narratives by Deaf Ethiopians and their Right to Sign Language

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

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in

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

by
Jackie M. Eugster
May 2017

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Instructor/Chairperson

Monisha Bajaj

April 26, 2017

Date
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lm/l/
ABSTRACT

The goal of this case study is to share the narratives of Deaf individuals in Ethiopia and how the Deaf community uses Deaf Community Cultural Wealth in order to explore and flourish in audist and colonized spaces. This study engaged photovoice, in a participatory action research technique that can empower and enhance the community’s sense of identity (Wang & Burris, 1997). This study considers the influence of American missionaries and how colonization of African nations has also influenced the trajectory of Deaf education in Ethiopia. Moving away from deficient thinking, DCCW attempts to reframe the Deaf experience as one that has value and cultural knowledge that, if given a voice, can benefit society as a unified whole. This study considers the Deaf community as a cultural and linguistic minority that has the right to accessible language, sign language, from birth and Deaf role models that foster DCCW in the younger generation of Deaf youth.

Keywords: Deaf Studies, American Sign Language, Ethiopian Sign Language, Community Cultural Wealth, photovoice, deaf, deaf culture, language rights
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“I think it’s time for a new perspective, one that only a deaf person can offer.”
—Dr. Harvey J. Corson

Statement of the Problem

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are 360 million people worldwide who have hearing loss that is considered ‘disabling.’\(^1\) Thirty-two million of these are children, the majority of whom come from middle- to low-income countries. By and large, d/Deaf\(^2\) people around the world are unemployed or underemployed and deaf children are less likely to attend school, resulting in reduced opportunity as adults (World Report on Disability, 2011). The World Federation of the Deaf estimates that 80 percent of deaf children do not have access to education and that deaf individuals are “denied basic citizenship rights, such as voting rights during public elections” (Murray, 2015, p. 380). Society’s rejection of d/Deaf people further pushes them to the margins of society, creating barriers to education, success, and quality of life.

In both high- and low-income nations, d/Deaf activists (within organizations by d/Deaf people) have focused on two main strategic goals. The first is “economic development, employment, and capacity-building objectives” and the second is “advocacy for [the] implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and goals related to sign language rights and/or sign language planning activities” (Murray, 2015, p. 380). Liisa Kauppinen and Markku Jokinen (2014) explain that this shift in focus to the centrality of

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1 ‘Disabling’ hearing loss is considered to be 40 decibels (dB) in adults and 30 dB in children. While in this context

2 Traditionally, when a capitalize ‘d’ is used in ‘Deaf,’ it refers to the Deaf community that identifies with Deaf culture and being a part of a linguistic minority. Lowercase ‘d’ is used to refer to someone’s audiological ability to hear. d/D is an inclusive way to represent multiple identities within the Deaf community (Paul & Moores, 2012).
sign language, specifically with drafting the CRPD, was an effort to “[recognize] deaf people’s linguistic rights” which includes, “explicit recognition for sign language(s)[,] to ensure its use in communication and in access to information and education throughout life” as well as, “acceptance of Deaf people’s linguistic identity, Deaf culture” and access to sign language interpreters (as cited in Murray, 2015, p. 383).

Still, d/Deaf individuals are stigmatized in society because of traditional beliefs and social constructs that force many into isolation without access to language or social interaction. d/Deaf people are judged as being physically defective, and thus mentally deficient. They are ‘othered’ as social deviants that exist in a separate world that is undesirable, and while the d/Deaf community strives to be perceived as a cultural and linguistic minority, society continues to stigmatize them as culturally inferior (Lane, 1999).

Background and Need for the Study

Similar to many areas around the world, most Ethiopians perceive disability as “a threat to the survival of the family” (Mekonnen et al., 2015, p. 160). Especially in rural areas, “[d]eafness often is understood as demonic possession or as a punishment from God for the parent’s sins” (Mekonnen et al., 2015, p. 160) and deaf people are therefore hidden away from the public and rest of society. Deaf children and adults are often thought of as burdens because they cannot be educated and will be dependent on their families for the rest of their lives. Words that describe having a hearing impairment in Amharic such as ‘denkoro’ and ‘duda’ carry a negative meaning that imply that they are ‘idiots’ with the inability to learn or comprehend the world around them (Mekonnen et al., 2015).

Stigmatization does not evade Deaf people in Ethiopia and have contributed to the late progress of d/Deaf education. Little is documented about the history of Ethiopian Sign Language
prior to the introduction of American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf education. American missionaries established the first formal education settings for deaf people in Ethiopia. Many missionaries taught through ASL, which marked the ‘forced’ evolution of EthSL; this was an evolution that disregarded many indigenous and cultural signs (Tamene, 2016). Even with the establishment of d/Deaf education, access to it remained concentrated within the larger cities such as Addis Ababa and Hosaena, where the earliest boarding school for Deaf students was founded (Tamene, 2016). d/Deaf people in more rural areas “were virtually forgotten and no one cared or knew whether they [could] be educated at all” (Wakuma, 2015, p. 11).

There are approximately 1-2.5 million d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in Ethiopia who are not provided language accessibility, public service opportunities, formal education, social inclusion/participation or mobility (“Empowering Deaf Youth,” n.d.). Much of the oppression that exists against d/Deaf people in Ethiopia stems from traditional and societal norms that children with disabilities exist in families because of sin, bringing shame and disgrace to the family. This leads to hiding and depriving them of social contact from the rest of the community (Djoyou Kamga, 2013). These individuals are left unnoticed, suffering from not only poverty, but also isolation from the rest of their community and the world around them. Without access to language, d/Deaf Ethiopians are denied access to information, making many unaware of the rights they have in society. This greatly impacts their chances of personal development and quality of life.

In Ethiopia, d/Deaf education is still suffering; there are only a dozen deaf schools established within the entire country, and they serve only a few thousand children combined. There are no more than 40 interpreters in the country, furthering accessibility barriers within education. Even where deaf schools are established, children do not always come because the
children are ‘homeless’ and ‘helpless’ (Wakuma, 2015) and lack the financial and familial resources to attend school. Teachers are also lacking in the skills, materials and resources to educate d/Deaf children; specifically, teachers lack fluency in EthSL. These barriers result in fewer d/Deaf children having access to communication, language and society, resulting in a lack of independence and sustainability as well as behavioral and socio-emotional issues (Mekonnen, Hannu, Elina, & Matti, 2015).

The Nyala Center strives to address, educate, and dismantle the negative cultural stigma around people who are deaf. They empower Deaf people by providing services and resources such as education, EthSL instruction, medical care, job training, and awareness-raising projects about Deaf culture in hearing communities related to Deaf individuals. These efforts aim to address the marginalization of d/Deaf people in Ethiopia while also providing resources and empowerment to the community itself. The goal is to transform the lives of Deaf Ethiopians in Siskin and provide avenues in which d/Deaf people can acquire their natural language as well as improve their overall quality of life.

Purpose Statement

The goal of this project is to give voice to those who have been silenced and pushed towards the margins of Ethiopian society, focusing on the d/Deaf community at the Nyala Center in Siskin, Ethiopia as a case study. Through collecting multiple stories from individuals with diverse backgrounds, this project represents systemic community issues and perspectives rather than an individualistic point of view. This project also combats the stigma and oppression that d/Deaf people experience in Ethiopia on a daily basis by providing evidence that d/Deaf people are capable of contributing to the larger society and provide cultural knowledge that, if valued, could inform and teach the larger hearing society.
This research addresses the impact of colonization on African educational systems and citizens through the lens of the Ethiopian d/Deaf experience. It looks at the Euro-centric colonization of EthSL as well as educational methods for the country as a whole and how that impacts the education of d/Deaf children. Lastly, it reveals the powerful resistance and wealth of knowledge that the d/Deaf community possesses in systems and spaces created with audist bias – whereby hearing is treated as the default mode of interacting with the world and d/Deaf people are consciously or unconsciously discriminated against. Audism, as my frame of reference, has been defined as

A diachronic and dynamic societal construct that oppresses Deaf people based on the ideological stance that humanized specific perceived characteristics (e.g. hearing, speaking) while simultaneously dehumanizing the opposite perceived characteristics (e.g. don’t hear, don’t speak) that manifest itself in a complex weave of micro, meso, and macro- aggressions that create both real and perceived barriers which leads to a system of overprivilege for hearing people and underprivileged for Deaf people. (Garrow, Pak, & Ettlin, 2016)

The final goal of this study is to give back to the community that shared their personal lives and hospitality with me through educational videos created by the community and edited by myself that will be uploaded to YouTube (see Appendix).

Research Questions

Three questions are addressed in this study: (1) What are the narratives of d/Deaf experiences in Siskin, Ethiopia? (2) How has the colonization of Africa impacted the way Deaf Ethiopians are taught within formal educational systems? (3) How do Deaf Ethiopians use Deaf Community Cultural Wealth to resist colonized systems that are created using audist attitudes?
Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is derived from both Critical Legal Studies (CLS) and radical feminism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CLS first made its appearance after the Civil Rights Movement near the end of the 1970s. CLS scholars recognized that the traditional legal system legitimized oppressive social structures (Yosso, 2005). However, Crenshaw argued that CLS could not offer strategies towards social change and transformation because it “separated critical theory from conversations about race” (as cited in Yosso, 2005, p.71). Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman also argue that CLS “failed to incorporate race and racism into the analysis” and did not consider the “lived experiences and histories of those oppressed by institutionalized racism” (as cited in Yosso, 2005, p. 71).

CRT “draws from and extends a broad literature base of critical theory in law, sociology, history ethnic studies and women’s studies” (Yosso, 2005, p. 71). Solorzano and Bernal (2001) paraphrased Brian Fay and William Tierney’s definition of critical theory as “an attempt to understand the oppressive aspects of society in order to generate societal and individual transformation” (p. 311). Mari Matsuda’s (1991) perspective on critical race theory is as follows:

The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination. (p. 1331)

It is a movement led by scholars and activists who intend to study and transform the “relationship among race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3). Although these dialogues began in legal scenarios, theorists began using the same ideas and applied it to the
education system to understand issues of “school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, affirmative action, high stakes testing, controversies over curriculum and history, and alternative and charter schools” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 6).

There are five basic tenets of CRT that scholars subscribe to in their work. The first is that “racism is ordinary, not aberrational—‘normal science,’ the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 7). Additionally, this tenet addresses the issue that racism is difficult to resolve because it is not acknowledged in conversation. Instead words contrived by white people are used such as ‘color-blind’ and ‘diversity’ to insinuate a place of equal opportunity and treatment across the board.

The second tenet refers to ‘interest convergence’ or material determinism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 8). This is when social progress for people of color simultaneously advances white elites (materially) and working-class whites (physically). Bell (1980) proposed that Brown v. Board of Education is an example of interest convergence as it may have resulted more “from the self-interest of elite whites than from a desire to help blacks” (as cited in Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 8). In other words, social progress occurs when white elites benefit from it as well.

The third tenet claims that race and races are socially constructed through thought and relations and are not based on biological or genetic traits. Instead “races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 8).

The fourth tenet draws attention to “the ways the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 9). An example of this would be people of Middle Eastern origin being perceived as exotic, wearing veils and being summoned by genie lamps during one period of time and then
demonized and represented as extreme religious terrorists in another. This tenet is closely related to intersectionality in that each human and their history is ever-evolving and that no person “has a single, easily stated, unitary identity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 10).

Lastly, CRT takes into consideration the value of voices of color. Minority communities are not shown honestly in the dominant narrative and CRT argues that “because of their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino/a writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counterparts matters that the whites are unlikely to know” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 10).

In the field of education, Daniel Solorzano and Dolores Delgado Bernal (2001) identified five themes that represent the perspective, research methods, and pedagogy that inform CRT in education. These themes stem from and expand upon the five tenets of CRT and should “inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum and policy” (Yosso, 2005, p. 1). The centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination—which agrees that racism is endemic and permanent as well as considering the intersections of belonging to multiple dehumanized communities; 2) the challenge to dominant ideology—claims that education is not a system of objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness and equal opportunity; 3) the commitment to social justice—where its goal is to eliminate racism, sexism, and poverty while simultaneously empowering minority communities; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, which gives values to the experiences and stories told by students of color and is critical to the understanding analyzing and teaching racial subordination within education; and 5) the interdisciplinary perspective, which challenges ahistoricism and unidisciplinarity by analyzing race and racism in education in both historical and contemporary contexts (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

**Intersectionality**
While considering the lived experience of a certain group of people, it should be understood that within seemingly homogenous groups there are additional identifying factors that may determine someone’s perspective. “The examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays on various settings” is known as intersectionality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 57). Not only is intersectionality valuable in understanding multiple consciousness—“that most of us experience the world in different ways on different occasions, because of who we are” (p. 62)—but it is also an important lens through which scholars should analyze concepts such as community cultural wealth and transformational resistance (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Kimberlé Crenshaw first coined ‘intersectionality’ in 1989 as an analytical tool rooted in Black feminism and critical race theory. This tool soon became an interdisciplinary movement where scholars have expanded upon a “range of issues, social identities, power dynamics, legal and political systems, and discursive structures” (Carbado et al., 2013, p. 304).

Solorzono and Delgado Bernal (2001) describe the importance of understanding not only the intersections of race, class, and gender, but expanding it further to see how those layers impact one another and therefore change the person’s lived experience. No longer do people fit in single identities or consciousnesses, but rather have complex and dynamic experiences different from any other individual.

Deaf people experience intersectionality through their race and sexuality, among other factors, because their position in raced or sexuality-centric communities are informed by their being d/Deaf. Although not identified as ‘intersectionality,’ Bienvenu (2008) describes the struggles of interacting with both Deaf straight community members and hearing LGBT folk. People who exist within these two intersecting identities are largely silenced in the dialogue
about issues going on in either community. Dunn (2008) also discusses the experiences of both racism and audism and how these identities developed both independently and collectively to determine her lived experience. Foster and Kinuthia (2003) conducted a study on identity development with Deaf people who also belonged to a racial minority group (Asian American, Hispanic American, and African American). Many in their study experienced conflict between understanding and identifying with their family’s minority community and their identity of being culturally Deaf. This is largely due to families not being able to communicate with their child as well as not being able to identify with their racial identity within the Deaf community (p. 286).

More recently scholars such as Stapleton (2014) and García-Fernández (2014) have analyzed the impact of belonging to both the d/Deaf community and another marginalized community. Stapleton discusses the struggle and hardships d/Deaf Black community members experience in America while trying to succeed within higher education and how those intersecting identities have provided them with a different perspective than a white Deaf individual or a Black hearing one. García-Fernández (2014) explores the lived experiences of five Deaf-Latina/o high school students and proposes a new theoretical framework (Deaf-Lat) to challenge issues related to racism and linguiscism in educational research.

**DeafCrit**

DeafCrit is a movement similar to other devalued communities; Women, Latinx, LGBT, and even White communities have worked closely with CRT and find it to parallel with experiences for people of intersecting identities. Below is a figure where Solórzano and Yosso demonstrate the genealogy of CRT that “links the themes and patterns of legal scholarship with the social science literature” (as cited in Yosso, 2005). DeafCrit would extend under the CRT
umbrella next to other intersectional critical race theories (i.e. AsianCrit, FemCrit, LatCrit, TribalCrit, and WhiteCrit).

Figure 1. An intellectual genealogy of critical race theory. Reprinted from "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth," by T. Yosso, 2005, Race Ethnicity and Education, Vo. 8, No. 1, p. 71.

Before the identification of their own culture, deaf people tended to organized within other groups (minority or majority) to which they belonged. During the 1970s, Deaf people began to articulate a variety of characteristics within the Deaf community, which codified how Deaf people had their own separate culture, norms of behavior, and language.

Following the bilingual/bicultural movement, the Deaf community shifted their perspective of themselves to identify as a unique linguistic and cultural group rather than a group of disabled people (Gertz, 2003).\(^3\) Even so, d/Deaf rights activists largely associate themselves

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\(^3\) Genie Gertz was the first Deaf scholar to propose the idea of dysconscious audism in relation to dysconscious racism. Based off Joyce King’s work, dysconscious audism is defined as “a form of audism that tacitly accepts dominant hearing norms and privileges” and that “Deaf people can be characterized as not having fully developed Deaf consciousness” (p. 219). However, King, describes her white students as practicing dysconscious racism
with contributing to the Disability movement that led to the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), which undoubtedly continues to reinforce the idea that deaf equals disability. It is imperative to understand the complexity of Deaf people advocating for themselves as a cultural minority while simultaneously expressing their need for rights that fall under the umbrella of disability rights.

Gertz (2003) was the first to propose ‘DeafCrit’ as a theoretical framework that analyzes the oppression of d/Deaf people within a framework that understood the imperativeness challenging the dominant narrative and advocated for social change and consciousness raising. She developed five tenants similar to those of CRT.

1. **The Centrality and Intersectionality of Deaf People and Audism.** DeafCrit recognizes that audism is a center of oppression for Deaf people. This acknowledges the intersections of multiple identities including race, gender and class, but emphasizes experiences with audism as a major influence on the lives of d/Deaf individuals.

2. **The Challenge of the Dominant Hearing Ideology.** DeafCrit challenges the audist power structures that establish interventions, solutions, and plans for d/Deaf people with input only from hearing people. These claims often undermine deaf people and validate the power and control that the hearing majority have over d/Deaf people.

Deaf Studies reveals the operation of audism by showing d/Deaf people in a different through accepting dominant white norms and privileges while not thinking critically about their advantages in society. This would be the equivalent to when hearing people accept dominant norms and privileges in society based on their ability to hear (i.e. access to direct communication, access to intercom updates on public transportation, access to language, etc.). What Gertz describes more closely relates to the internalization of audism within oneself when that person is deaf themselves. Bivens (1995) describes internalized racism as “the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power” (p. 2).

Internalized racism should not be seen as ‘blaming the victim’ but rather a process in which people of color must work on within ourselves in our communities in order to acknowledge white privilege and racism. This process of internalization occurs within d/Deaf communities and individuals as well. Moving forward I will be referring to audist behavior being practiced by d/Deaf people as ‘internalized audism.’
light through understanding their own history, language, education, community/culture, and identity.

3. *The Commitment of Social Justice for Deaf people.* DeafCrit is committed to the disruption of audism and development of transformative responses that halt the oppression of d/Deaf people. One major goal is for Deaf people to view themselves as full human beings and not incomplete people defined by the medical model that has been systematically engraved in the minds of d/Deaf people. The fight for legitimacy of ASL and Deaf culture shows d/Deaf people’s commitment to social justice.

4. *The Centrality of Deaf Experiential Knowledge.* Experiential knowledge of d/Deaf people is legitimate and appropriate. DeafCrit critically analyzes, understands, and teaches about the oppression of Deaf people and their relationship with audistic subordination.

5. *The Interdisciplinary Perspective to Broaden Understanding of Deaf People.*

DeafCrit challenges ahistoricism and unidisciplinariness focus and instead places Deaf people and audism in a historical and contemporary context using interdisciplinary methods. Much knowledge is based off of ethnic studies, women’s studies, history, sociology, linguistics, law, and other fields to better understand the “isms” (Gertz, 2003).

As the movement continues to grow, scholars have expanded upon the notion that the Deaf community is a marginalized community that has undergone historical oppression and continues to resist that oppression. Deaf Community Cultural Wealth studies (Garrow et al., 2014) have furthered our understanding of DeafCrit and the invaluable narrative Deaf people bring to the human experience.
Over recent years, DeafCrit continues to challenge the master narrative and misconceptions about Deaf and other undervalued communities by creating ‘zones of resistance’ (Garrow et al., 2016). This is done through decolonization and highlighting the necessity for the existence of Deaf people and “valuing all of their unique intersectionalities.” This is known as ‘inspiritize,’ a term inspired by the term ‘indigenize’ defined as:

The act and process of centralizing demoralized, degraded, and devalued communities’ unique experiential knowledge and the counter-narrative that comes along with that, resulting in the valuing of the individual and their community cultural wealth. (Garrow, et al., 2016, para. 4)

**Community Cultural Wealth**

It is argued that the most common form of racism stems from ‘deficient thinking,’ which faults minority students and their parents for low academic performance, claiming that there is a lack of value for education within their culture (Yosso, 2005, p. 75). This pattern of thinking – perpetuated systemically throughout history – reproduces inequities for students from minority sociocultural and linguistic communities (Yosso, 2005). Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) argues against this notion by claiming that there is value within non-dominant cultural narratives and that educators should not assume that our education system is ‘effective,’ ‘equitable,’ or ‘one size fits all.’ Distorted views of minority cultures can be challenged within CRT and CCW to expose the value and wealth within a devalued culture. In this research project, culture “refers to behaviors and values that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people” and is neither “fixed nor static” (Yosso, 2005, p. 75). Expanding on this definition of culture, in her video post,

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‘Inspiritize’ is used in place of ‘indigenize’ in an attempt to avoid appropriating language used by indigenous/First Nations people.
What is Deaf Culture? Fleischer defines culture as “tools that are organically human that allows a community to survive and flourish within our society” (Flavia Fleischer, 2015).

Yosso (2005) defines CCW as “an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression” (p. 77). CRT and CCW shifts the center of focus from perceiving White, middle—class culture and knowledge as the standard and refocusing on understanding Communities of Color and the values they bring to individual humans and society as a whole. CCW manifests itself within six forms of capital: aspirational, linguistic, social, familial, navigational, and resistant. These capitals are not mutually exclusive or static, but rather “are dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth” (p. 77). Yosso (2005) defines each of the capitals as follows:

1. Aspirational capital refers to the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers (p. 77).

2. Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style (p. 78).

3. Familial capital refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition (p. 79).

4. Social capital can be understood as networks of people and community resources (p. 79).

5. Navigational capital refers to skills of maneuvering through social institutions (p. 80).

6. Resistant capital refers to knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality (p. 80).
Reframing communities of color and cultures as valuable instead of deficient, scholars can begin to identify and learn from multiple forms of cultural wealth. Yosso adds, “community cultural wealth involved a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice” (p. 82). CCW then becomes a tool to unpack cultural teachings that allows communities of color to navigate uncomfortable and sometimes hostile situations. It also allows academics to consider its validity and how that wealth contributes to the larger society. When reframing the Deaf community as a cultural and linguistic minority, CCW can be articulated within different practices and knowledges that are passed down from Deaf adults to Deaf youth.

**Deaf Community Cultural Wealth**

Deaf community cultural wealth (DCCW) expands upon the idea that Deaf individuals have skills and cultural intuition, including that passed down from previous generations and the innate ability to successfully navigate a world systemically structured through audism. Yosso’s community cultural wealth highlights the skills and abilities of devalued communities that allow them to resist daily micro and macro oppressions. For centuries, the Deaf community has naturally developed and practiced DCCW in order to navigate, network, flourish, and be productive, contributing members of society within hearing-centric spaces (Fleischer et al., 2015).

Unlike in most devalued communities, it is rare that DCCW is passed down through family teachings. This is because 96% of d/Deaf children have hearing parents (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004) and are not born into families “who do not immediately have the socially based experience, knowledge, and tools to raise Deaf children who are spatially oriented” (Fleischer et al, 2015, p. 290). Deaf children born to hearing parents cannot acquire tools within DCCW that
allow d/Deaf people to successfully navigate a hearing-centric world. Instead of making DCCW for d/Deaf children attainable through interaction with the Deaf community in sign language, society attempts to ‘normalize’ and ‘assimilate’ deaf children through requiring early intervention and rehabilitation as well as mainstream or ‘inclusive’ programs where sign language and other spatially-centered methods are not practiced and communication is ultimately inaccessible (Fleischer et al., 2015; Lane 1999; Komesaroff, 2008; Ladd 2003). In these spaces, d/Deaf children are rarely in classes with other children their age who are also deaf and lack language models from their teachers. This further inhibits their social, emotional, psychological, and linguistic development; d/Deaf communities are framed with a deficit perspective that results in ‘solutions’ that appeal to hearing norms instead of capitalizing on their strength as spatial and visual learners (Fleischer et. al, 2015).

Fleischer, Garrow, and Narr (2015) identify the same six capitals as Yosso (2005) but further relate them to the lived experiences of Deaf people. Each capital represents accumulated assets that allows for Deaf students to continue to grow academically, behaviorally, emotionally and socially. The following section will show why it is difficult for Deaf children to gain DCCW when not in Deaf spaces with sign language and other Deaf people.

1. *Linguistic Capital.* Deaf students more commonly experience an impoverished linguistic capital when they are not provided with access to sign language (or tactile language for DeafBlind folks) as a primary mode of communication. Linguistic capital develops “complex cognitive skills, socialization for positive self-development, and self-awareness” (Fleischer, 2015, p. 293). Even with hearing aids or cochlear implants, spoken language will not be fully accessible for deaf children. Sign language and tactile
sign language from birth with other native signers is the only guaranteed way to provide linguistic capital to d/Deaf people.

2. **Social Capital.** Being able to communicate and interact with peers is invaluable for social development all the way into adulthood. Unfortunately, Deaf children are met with language barriers that can result in language and cognitive delays that make it difficult for Deaf students to comprehend social experiences.

3. **Familial Capital.** This capital recognizes kinship as a key component to successful navigation in spaces that were not created for d/Deaf individuals. “Kinship comes from a network [of] support systems that provides the ability and opportunity to discuss one’s feelings, thoughts, and ideas in depth, and to receive supporting feedback in return” (Fleischer et al., 2015, p. 293). Sharing feelings and thoughts is a practice that even well-adjusted adults struggle with daily. Without access to language in one’s family, kinship is usually found in spaces where communication is accessible and with people that are relatable. In a study by Garrow, Pak, and Ettlin (2016), one d/Deaf student expressed, “For Deaf communities, I feel more connected because sometimes my family doesn’t understand and provide full access. I feel like the University (with larger Deaf population) is my second home” (p. 8).

4. **Aspirational Capital.** This capital provides a child with perseverance to attain their goals and dreams while combatting perceived and real barriers (Yosso, 2005). Children gain the tools to resist negativity and to “go beyond their immediate circumstances… and attain better opportunities” (Fleischer et al., 2015, p. 293). Society’s stigmatization of d/Deaf people has resulted in inherently lower expectations for the Deaf.
5. *Navigational Capital.* This capital allows you to successfully navigate institutions that were not designed for minority communities. Deaf students consistently struggle with navigating tasks such as applying to university, hearing the bell that sounds the end of a period, and even understanding what a teacher is expecting of them. This is largely due to the lack of accessibility these spaces have provided for Deaf people.

6. *Resistant Capital.* Resistant capital “provides the emotional and psychological ability to resist and challenge negative slights toward [Deaf people] and their communities” (Fleischer et al., 2015, p. 294) as well as creating spaces that can transform the views that Deaf people might have of themselves. Some students do not develop the skills to appropriately handle adverse situations in a way that does not negatively impact themselves (e.g., getting in a fight after being teased for speaking ‘funny,’ resulting in their own suspension).

This project reveals that Deaf Community Cultural Wealth exists within Siskin, Ethiopia’s Deaf community. Through access to sign language and other Deaf pupils, the community develops DCCW to navigate through hearing spaces as well as resist audist behaviors within those spaces.

**Significance of the Study**

Through this project we can better understand the experiences of Deaf individuals in Siskin, Ethiopia and dismantle the dominant narrative echoed throughout Ethiopia about d/Deaf people and their ‘lack of ability.’ This case study can be evidence used to advocate for language rights for rural Ethiopian d/Deaf children.

Many d/Deaf Ethiopians battle a negative stigma resulting in a lack of language acquisition, social services, education, and social inclusion. Over time, this isolation and
marginalization has silenced the community. The Nyala Center in Siskin is engaged in providing services, language, support, education and love to attempt to eliminate these adversities. Through photovoice methodology, this study provides a tool for deaf individuals to find their voice and share their stories. It engages both youth and adults to seek ways to speak up about the issues in their community and to participate in social change for the betterment of their own lives.

The results of this study contribute to the literature of Critical Race Theory, specifically within the DeafCrit subdivision. This research could be used as an example for educators of Deaf children to promote the use of sign language and access to sign language rights from birth. Future research could apply these methods to Deaf youth in America as well as other countries to further identify the skills and tools that d/Deaf individuals use to resist audism and flourish within their communities. Through working with the d/Deaf community and understanding the complexity of the d/Deaf experience, more effective solutions are developed in Deaf education, resulting in a more productive community with more to contribute to the larger society.

Definition of Terms

**ASL:** Abbreviation for American Sign Language, a full and complete language that includes grammar, syntax, and other required linguistic properties. This is the natural language used mainly by d/Deaf Americans; however, ASL has had a significant influence on many signed languages throughout the world.

**Audism:** Coined by Tom Humphries in 1977, audism is “the notion that one is superior based on one’s ability to hear or behave in a manner of one who hears” (p. 12). Audism manifests itself through discrimination of d/Deaf people in political, educational, social, and economic systems as well as micro-aggressions on an individual level.
**Audist:** A hearing person who practices either consciously or unconsciously in behaviors and systems that oppress Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing individuals.

**DDBDDHH:** Abbreviation for Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing used to show inclusivity of the intersecting identities of being deaf with other disabilities that impact societal interactions. While I use this term on a daily basis, this project focuses on d/Deaf individuals from a community who do not identify with having other disabilities.

**Colonization:** The practice of asserting the power and dominance of Euro-centric ideals, morals, systems and culture onto communities and nations of color. This practice can expand to include the taking over of culture, language and minds of a range of marginalized communities, including race, gender, sexuality, ability, and class usually manifesting itself in the mind of the oppressed.

**d/Deaf:** Traditionally ‘Deaf’ with a capital ‘D’ refers to an individual who identifies with the Deaf community and culture and cultural practices including the use of sign language, regardless of clinical thresholds of hearing ability (Woodcock, Rohan, & Campbell, 2007). A lower case ‘d’ in ‘deaf’ refers to the person’s illustrating the medical diagnosis of an audiological condition where an individual cannot hear. d/D is an inclusive term which addresses the intersecting identities of d/Deaf individuals worldwide (Paul & Moores, 2010).

**Disability/disabled:** Disability is a self-identifying category informed by the social construct of (ab)normality. It can also be a label used by non-disabled persons to identify individuals who are not considered to have ‘normal’ characteristics in regards to social, emotional, psychological, physical or intellectual abilities.
EthSL: Abbreviation of Ethiopian Sign Language, a full and complete language that includes grammar, syntax, and other required linguistic properties. This is the natural language of d/Deaf Ethiopians.

Hard of Hearing (HH or HoH): Often understood as a person with enough residual hearing to participate in the hearing community. However, the term is defined differently from two cultural perspectives (Deaf versus hearing culture). For people in the Deaf community, someone who is extremely hard-of-hearing is someone who participates in the hearing community and can almost ‘pass’ as being hearing. On the contrary, hearing people tend to view someone who is extremely hard-of-hearing as someone who experiences the world closer to how a profoundly deaf person would (Padden & Humphries, 1988). This cultural discrepancy is seen throughout the U.S.’s hearing and Deaf communities, but not enough documentation has been done with Ethiopia’s Deaf and hearing communities to know if they define the two differently, the same, or not at all.

Manualism: The campaign to use sign language in the classroom when teaching d/Deaf pupils. Residential schools, or Schools for the Deaf, used the manual method from the inception of American education and have been advocated for in the teaching of d/Deaf Ethiopians as well. However, after the Milan Congress in 1880, manualism has been pushed out by oralist whose main goal was to eradicate all forms of sign language in the classroom after the Civil War in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Baynton, 1996).

Mainstreaming: The integration of d/Deaf children in a hearing classroom usually manifesting itself as one or two deaf students with an interpreter. Sometimes public schools have a d/Deaf classroom where d/Deaf students, varying in age, are combined into one classroom within the public school. Teaching methods usually involve using a combination of sign systems, speech-reading, listening skills, and ASL. Originally known as day schools and a form of forced
assimilation of d/Deaf students in hopes that students would learn and rely more on English instead of sign language in addition to not marrying d/Deaf spouses (Lane, 1999).

**Normality/Normancy**: “Normality is a set of practices that surround a material characteristic with the common attributes of the dominant society” (Jankowski, 1997, p. 39). Anything that deviates from the norm is then considered abnormal, a construct that the majority of people are uncomfortable with because it reflects the idea of something being unknown. Rhetoric that makes a binary distinction between normality and abnormality allows people who belong to the majority to stigmatize and dominate those who are ‘abnormal.’ Being deaf is not the issue, but rather the social construct of normality and the negative impact it has on deaf people and the community is an issue.

**Oralism**: A movement to eliminate sign language use in the classroom and exclusively replace it with lip-reading and speech. Although attempted multiple times in the U.S., this method’s success did not begin until the latter half of the 19th century. A major advocate of this method was Alexander Graham Bell, most famously known as the man who invented the telephone. This movement took hold in the U.S. and by World War I, nearly 80% of d/Deaf children were taught with no sign language in the classroom. This remained orthodox until the 1970s (Baynton, 1996). “Most recent research has concluded that the oralist approach was devastating for generations of deaf people” (Baynton, 1996, p. 5).

**School for the Deaf (residential schools)**: An institution specifically designed for d/Deaf students that usually consist of dorms or cottages for students who live further away. Typically, students stay for the entire school week and go home on the weekends, similar to some boarding schools. Often, d/Deaf children learn how to communicate with other children through sign
language at residential schools. This is usually the first time d/Deaf children have complete access to language as most have hearing parents who speak (Lane, 1999).

**Sign systems:** Developed by hearing educators, sign systems are a combination of English word order and signs that assist with comprehension of what is being spoken. Sign systems include Manually Coded English (MCE), Signed Essential English (SEE-I), Signed Exact English (SEE-II), and Signed English (SE). These are not complete languages, but rather a method for teaching d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. These systems are also used in other countries. In Ethiopia there is a signing system for each native language, including Signed Amharic and Signed Oromo.
CHAPTER II
INTRODUCTION

“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.”
—Ludwig Wittgenstein

Deaf people have existed on this earth just as long as hearing people, yet limited resources, archives, or literature exists related to the experiences of Deaf individuals. The Deaf perspective is nearly invisible in the dominant narrative. The medical profession, mass media, and other sources of social knowledge have painted the ‘life without sound’ as an unfortunate, empty, and isolating experience, which should be remedied by any means necessary. This erasure allows for a majority hearing culture to exercise power and control over d/Deaf5 people in an attempt to create a more homogenous society where that which is ‘abnormal’ does not exist. However, reframing deafness as not an illness or impairment, but a linguistic and cultural minority characteristic shifts our thinking so we can begin to understand the wealth and knowledge this community can provide. What can this community teach us about the human experience and consciousness?

Similar to other marginalized communities, d/Deaf people experience a variety of systemic oppressions that range from daily interactions with hearing people, to oppressive and insufficient laws established within our education, legal, political, and social systems. Even so, the Deaf community has developed their own tools to successfully navigate and flourish in a world built without them in mind.

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5 Traditionally ‘Deaf’ with a capital ‘D’ refers to an individual who identifies with the Deaf community, culture and cultural practices including the use of sign language, regardless of clinical thresholds of hearing ability (Woodcock, Rohan, & Campbell, 2007). A lower case ‘d’ in ‘deaf’ refers to the persons illustrates the medical diagnosis of an audiological condition where an individual cannot hear. d/D is an inclusive term which addresses the intersecting identities of d/Deaf individuals worldwide (Paul & Moores, 2010). Depending on the context I will be using a variance of all three of these terms.
This literature review will examine audism as a theoretical framework that has systemically oppressed d/Deaf people. It explores the historical context of Deaf education and suggests that oralist methods are based on audist beliefs that degrade sign language and Deaf culture. This section further considers the westernization and audism embedded in d/Deaf education in Africa and how it is on a trajectory similar to that in the U.S., directly impacting the way d/Deaf Ethiopians are educated today. Next, this literature review will discuss the importance of language acquisition for deaf children, highlighting the value of early childhood exposure to sign language. Then it will look at language cultural rights as human rights and explore reasons why d/Deaf people should be considered a cultural and linguistic minority that should be protected as such on both international and state levels. Further information will be discussed in regard to what modern d/Deaf rights look like in both the U.S. and Africa. Lastly, it will examine normality as a social construct that impacts the lives of d/Deaf people and how the dominant narrative continues to minimize and disregard the d/Deaf experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Audism

Deafness through a medical lens is referred to as something that is ‘abnormal,’ ‘deficient,’ or ‘needing to be fixed.’ The notion that being d/Deaf is not normal has determined the way in which deafness in children is approached. Medicalized deafness is considered an impairment needing to be fixed whereby d/Deaf children should focus on integrating ‘as best they can’ through learning how to speak and read lips. These beliefs allow society to deny d/Deaf children their right to their natural language: sign language.

In 1977, Tom Humphries coined the term ‘audism’ as “the notion that one is superior based on one’s ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears” (p. 12). At last, the
Deaf community had a term to articulate and validate their experiences of oppression in a majority hearing society. Since then, this definition has been expanded upon to further express the deep-rooted and systemic audist attitudes that d/Deaf people experience. Garrow, Pak, and Ettlin (2016) further developed the definition using a DeafCrit framework (see p. 5).

Audism contains the same assumptions as other –isms in regards to individual, systemic, and institutional practices. Society has unconsciously (and sometimes consciously) absorbed these practices as normal and acceptable in everyday life. These practices range from saying, “you speak so well,” to shooting d/Deaf civilians who cannot hear police orders, to colonizing an entire culture and detrimentally leaving d/Deaf children with major cognitive delays. Woven within the fabric of our society, audism manifests itself through a variety of micro- and macro-aggressions that occur against d/Deaf people to further marginalize and identify them as ‘less human.’ Audism as a theoretical construct provides a framework to name and identify Deaf people’s lived experiences of oppression and will be the foundation in comprehending data in this project.

The Rise of Oralism in the U.S.

There are two overarching methods that have been used to formally educate d/Deaf children since the early nineteenth century: manualism and oralism. Manualism practices sign language and fingerspelling as the main method of instruction while oralism uses speech, lip reading, and the comprehension of sound. Both have influenced d/Deaf education and influence current Deaf education policies in Ethiopia.

Before the 19th century, efforts to educate deaf individuals in a formal setting were nearly nonexistent. In the U.S., there is evidence that Martha’s Vineyard had a high rate of congenital deafness, so many of its members, hearing and d/Deaf, used sign language to
communicate; however, sign language was never used to teach d/Deaf people. If Americans wished their d/Deaf children to receive an education, the child was sent overseas to Europe. The majority of d/Deaf children in Europe were educated under one of two methods. The Paris Institution for the Deaf was “noted for their nearly exclusive dependence on sign language and fingerspelling in their instruction for deaf students,” which became known as the French or manual method (Van Cleve, 1989, p. 107). On the contrary, the oral method encouraged deaf students to use speech, read lips, and comprehend sounds. Samuel Heinicke established many German deaf schools in this oralist tradition. Similarly, the Braidwoods were oralists in England who preferred to keep their methods secret as they wanted to profit off of Deaf education. For this reason, Gallaudet studied under the French method and brought his teaching back to the U.S. The American School for the Deaf, established in 1817, was the first school to use the manual method in the United States.

In 1880, the Milan Congress was held to determine the ‘ideal’ method for teaching deaf students. The Congress consisted of European and Northern American educators who used oralist teaching methods to teach d/Deaf students. Six participants came from the United States. Only one of the 164 participants, James Denison, was Deaf. The adoption of the oral method passed (158-6) and resulted in ‘international approval’ for d/Deaf children to be taught without sign language. The lack of engagement with the Deaf community resulted in the ‘agreed upon’ solution that oralism would be the new method for teaching d/Deaf pupils.

Concurrently to the Milan Congress, Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922)—born to a deaf mother, married to a deaf woman, and most well-known for his invention of the telephone—desired the elimination of sign language as the primary mode of education for the d/Deaf. Along with hearing parents of d/Deaf children and misinformed politicians, he believed
sign language should be banned in all residential schools because sign language made deaf children different from their hearing peers, encouraged the growth of Deaf culture and produced negative genetic traits. Moreover, hearing parents of deaf children believed sign language prevented their children from being ‘normal’ and politicians thought instruction through sign language was ‘needlessly expensive’ (Van Cleve, 1989). Bell won the hearts of the American people by stating, “It is important for the preservation of our national existence that the people of this country should speak one tongue” (Jankowski, 1997, p. 24). He believed that sign language kept deaf people in a lower class than the hearing majority.

Bell’s rhetoric strategically attacked residential schools. By 1919, nearly “80 percent of deaf students received their instruction and communicated with their teachers without any manual language” (Van Cleve, 1989, p. 122). Day schools were established at public schools, resulting in deaf children staying with hearing parents who did not sign. This also separated deaf children from other deaf peers, further inhibiting social development. The lack of deaf students learning sign language meant children were considered ‘failures,’ according to oralist standards, making it difficult for deaf individuals to reach powerful decision-making

6 Because deaf children were geographically spread out, residential or overnight schools were established. Deaf children would usually stay at the school during the week and go home to their parents on the weekends. This is still practiced today, although enrollment continues to dwindle. In California there are two residential schools: California School for the Deaf, Fremont and California School for the Deaf, Riverside.

7 Through the medicalization of Deaf culture, Bell, promoted the use of eugenics to eradicate deaf people. It was clear that, in some cases, when deafness was passed down within families (although not common, does exist to a relative extent), audists could argue that deaf couples should be discouraged from reproducing (Lane, 1999). Bell was aware, however, the difficulty in determining congenital deafness and therefore, promoted ‘preventative’ efforts by changing the social environment of deaf people. He recommended that residential schools should be closed, sign language and deaf teachers banned from deaf education, and the full integration with hearing peers to learn oral language only. He presented a Memoir upon the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race at the National Academy of Sciences and wrote, “It is to be feared that the intermarriage of such [deaf] persons would be attended by calamitous results to their offspring” (Lane, 1999, p. 214). The Breeders’ Association reflects his influence in the 1912 report where he deems blind and deaf people as “socially unfit” whose supply should, if possible, “be elimination from the human stock” (p. 215). This propelled the initiation of the eugenic law “for the sterilization of feebleminded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed and dependent people (including orphans, ne’er-do-wells, the homeless, tramps, and paupers)” (p. 215).

8 Today this practice is known as mainstreaming.
positions within education. As oralism spread, d/Deaf teachers were dwindling and more and more were being pushed to the margins of their own community. Sign language and even sign systems\textsuperscript{9} were only used when students were considered ‘oral failures,’ further establishing an inferior mental capacity rhetoric for ‘some’ deaf children.

The contemporary impact of oralism stems from the initiatives of the Milan Congress and Alexander Graham Bell by encouraging the negative idea that deafness is a physical disability that needs to be corrected. This reinforces the justification of eugenics and normalization through the development of medical technological tools such as cochlear implants and genetic engineering.

While both systems are still used today, sign language is still perceived as ‘unintelligent,’ ‘gestural,’ and ‘too informal’ for properly educating d/Deaf children. Sign language is used only as a last resort, when a student has ‘failed’ at oral techniques. When Deaf families resist societal pressures to accommodate to hearing standards, many are met with appalled hearing educators who perceive involvement in the Deaf community as isolating themselves from the rest of society instead of a social and cultural haven.

It should also be noted that most of what is documented as Deaf history reflects the history of d/Deaf people who belonged to intersecting communities of privilege. Documentation is based on d/Deaf experiences, where the majority of deaf pupils were white, male, and of middle or upper class. Although the literature does not always recognize it, this study will make an effort to consider the intersections of belonging to both advantaged and disadvantaged communities as well as being Deaf creating a more complete understanding of the d/Deaf experience in Ethiopia.

\textsuperscript{9} Hearing educators created Signed Exact English or SEE to help Deaf children learn English. It uses a variety of signs to represent sounds and syllables.
The Colonization of Education in Ethiopia

The influence of Western colonial powers is undeniable in Sub-Saharan Africa and is present in Ethiopia’s education system. While little is specifically documented about d/Deaf education in Ethiopia, the legacy of colonization is visibly at odds with d/Deaf education and language rights. Ethiopia is one of the only nations in Sub-Saharan Africa considered to never have been under colonial rule; however, European influence spread throughout the country and the Ethiopian government so it established an education system similar to other African states that had been colonized for a longer period of time (Negash, 2006). When African colonies gained their independence, they were still expected to build on and expand existing infrastructure, specifically in regards to education (Negash, 2006). This influence, in tandem with the influx of Western missionaries—who founded a variety of schools for the d/Deaf in Ethiopia—significantly impacted the education systems used in d/Deaf education today.

According to Negash (2006), Ethiopia has experienced three different political systems, each with their own educational policies: the first (1941-1974) was known as the imperial system, the second (1974-1991) was the military/socialist system, and the third (1994- present day) is known as the federal system. Each system was influenced and altered through the implementation of European ideas without carefully considering the progressive erasure of Ethiopian traditions of social and political organization (Wakuma, 2015).

One “fundamental cause for the crisis of education is the use of English as the medium instruction” (Negash, 2006, p. 37). The intention of westernization during the Imperial era was to “build and strengthen the autocratic position of Emperor Haile Selassie” (p. 38). Selassie implemented an education system that highlighted Western knowledge with English as the
language of instruction. Without a plan to transition educational instruction to use Amharic\footnote{The official language of Ethiopia.} and other languages used within different regions of the nation that express both cultural traditions and beliefs, Emperor Haile Selassie unintentionally pushed colonial ideas into the minds of educated Ethiopians—through the books and curriculum that students were learning from—without the necessary financial and economic resources for continued westernization. The extensive use of English in fact undermined the imperial system itself. Ultimately, the students felt that the governing that took place contradicted what they learned in their English textbooks and European models, resulting in the Ministry of Education (led by the students) to reject the Emperor’s policies. Negash (2006) emphasizes that this indirect push towards westernization was not modernization, warning that “[m]odernisation through Westernization is a project doomed for failure” and that “Westernization understood as the complete replacement of tradition imported from the West could only create a loss of identity” (Negash, 2006, p. 38). The damage to Ethiopia’s traditional ethos is still seen in their educational system today.

Negash (2006) also claims western expansion is not only done through the colonization in the conventional sense, where European and Euro-centric countries conquer, control and plunder natural resources and land while destroying indigenous cultures, but is also done through development aid, including that from individual donors and the World Bank, which “runs the risk of sapping initiative, creativity, and enterprise of citizens of the aid receiving countries” (p. 8).

After the Cold War, Sub-Saharan Africa was subjected to Structural Adjustment Programmes in the 1980s with conditions that sought to dismantle social spending and that did not, by and large, support the growth of African economies. Negash (2006) explains that most internal markets in Africa are now too small to export and what can be produced for European
countries is blocked from export by high tariffs, while the European agriculture sector survives through a large subsidy. According to Graham Hancock, “developmental aid has created a moral tone for international affairs that denies the hard task of wealth creation and that substitutes easy handouts for the rigours of self-help” (as cited in Negash, 2006, p. 8). Negash powerfully explains the dynamics of development aid and its impact on African people:

African voices which shout, “Do not give us aid; remove your subsidies” are drowned out by the combined interests of governments and international humanitarian organisations. And the irony of it is that many European states are actively engaged in the destruction of African agricultural [sic] through the imposition of food aid on needy and famished countries. Ethiopia is one of the dumping grounds for solicited and unsolicited food aid. (p. 9)

Food aid destroys African economies and is unsustainable; the amount of resources received is too small and is bound by political conditions, like recipient countries being mandated to follow Western democratic philosophies that make the countries beholden to Western law (Negash, 2006). European countries and North America bind Africa in all sectors of its existence: food, economy, and education. These ties do not provide relief for African countries but instead enslave them to European countries.

**Deaf Education in Ethiopia**

Not only was d/Deaf education in Ethiopia impacted by governmental infrastructure, but it was also heavily influenced by American missionaries. Like many Sub-Saharan African countries, education for deaf children was left to “private missionary, charitable, or other nongovernmental organizations” that worked without government support, oversight, or regulation (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003, p. 21). Despite the formal education of d/Deaf children in Ethiopia dating back to
the 1970s, the opportunity for d/Deaf children to receive an education is rare with only “a dozen of deaf schools [that] operate throughout the country” (Wakuma, 2015, p. 12) serving a few thousand students.

Similar to English dominance in the education system of Ethiopia, ASL was introduced as the formal language of instruction for d/Deaf students, disregarding the “indigenous cultural, social and linguistic characteristics” of EthSL (Wakuma, 2015, p. 12). Hence, Ethiopian Sign Language (EthSL) is known to have its origins in American Sign Language (ASL) (Wakuma, 2015). This pattern of colonization undermines the use of EthSL for d/Deaf Ethiopians and imposes Westernized attitudes about language, including the idea that ASL is superior to EthSL, that further debilitate Ethiopian efforts toward authentic development.

The setting in which d/Deaf children are educated is also transforming, echoing the same practices the U.S. and other European countries put in place. Deaf education has been disadvantaged by people in power lacking exposure to, or knowledge about, d/Deaf education. The Finnish embassy, for example, “allocated more than half a million euros every year for [special] education projects,” but has “failed to successfully implement inclusive education” (Tamene, 2016, p. 323). However, it is this mindset—to establish ‘inclusive’ education—that has historically damaged the success of d/Deaf individuals worldwide. Inclusive education has an ultimate goal to close special schools for Deaf children and include both d/Deaf and hearing students in the same classroom “to be taught by a teacher who may be completely unaware of Deaf issues and sign language” (Tamene, 2016, p. 324). Ethiopia has already begun these practices, which polarize d/Deaf and hearing students by forcing them to learn in the same classroom with only oral instruction (Tamene, 2016, p. 324). It is apparent then that d/Deaf education in Ethiopia is entwined with colonization and westernization.
Education for d/Deaf Ethiopians is far from satisfactory and more research is needed from within the community and with d/Deaf Ethiopians so that solutions can be identified to better identify d/Deaf children, provide schooling for d/Deaf orphans and those who are homeless, and provide training to teachers of d/Deaf children. d/Deaf children must be identified at an early age, and sign language interventions must be provided so their language development is not interrupted. For children aware of educational opportunities in large, urban cities such as Addis Ababa, who do not attend school because they are homeless and living in poverty, aid must be set up. Since teachers lack the materials needed to educate d/Deaf children and are incompetent in sign language, they need more training. There are currently only forty known interpreters in Ethiopia, a number that cannot serve the countless more d/Deaf children and adults (Wakuma, 2015).

Cultural attitudes towards disabled and d/Deaf people also impact their opportunity for growth and personal development. Some believe deafness to be a curse and burden on the family, causing shame that results in the isolation from the rest of society. In Ethiopia “a common identifier is denkoro, which means ‘those who cannot be enlightened’” (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003, p. 22). Others believe that deaf people “are possessed by the devil and must be cured by witchcraft or purifying waters” (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003, p. 22). These social constructs further isolate and marginalize deaf people from society, resulting in socio-emotional behavior issues and a lack of self-sufficiency or independence.

It should also be considered that deaf women in Ethiopia face double the discrimination because of their disability as well as their gender, which often leads to physical and sexual abuse (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003; Djoyou Kamga 2013). “Gender discrimination [is] a critical issue in the education of African girls in general because of patriarchal, male-dominated societies, most
of which still define women solely as wives and mothers and relegate them to inferior status” (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003 p. 22). This has a direct result in the widening of the educational gap between boys and girls, especially those who are deaf.

Language Acquisition Within the Deaf Community

For any child to have proper language development, they must be exposed to an accessible language regularly and often before the age of five (Humphries et al., 2013). This time frame is known as the critical period in which brain plasticity allows for fluent language development. For Deaf children, exposure to spoken language does not allow for complete language development because spoken language is not 100% accessible to them (Humphries, 2013). Henner et al. (2016) cites Mitchell and Karchmer in concluding that this is the primary barrier to acquiring sign language as a deaf child’s first language: “ninety-five percent of Deaf children are born to hearing, non-signing parents, who most frequently use only spoken language” (p. 3). As a result, parents trust and align their choices for their deaf child with people who view deafness as something that needs to be fixed.

Medical professionals—whose overarching opinion is that being deaf is a deficit—are the primary guides to hearing parents of deaf children. This almost always leads to a path of hearing aids, cochlear implants and speech therapy. The evidence relating to the success of cochlear implants is also misconstrued. While most medical professionals would convince hearing parents that a cochlear implant is the ‘miracle’ solution to deafness, the success rate

11 in severe to profound deaf children is only 4.4% (Johnson, 2006). Additionally, most audiologists discourage the use of sign language for deaf children believing it would impede the progress of their speech skills.

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11 The child is functioning normally without the use of additional assistive devices (i.e., interpreters or transcription). “Note that this sample does not separate children by etiology of deafness, age of implantation, audiological scores, or previous experience with spoken language” (Johnson, 2006, p. 39).
Even with medical interventions such as hearing aids, cochlear implants and speech therapy, the vast majority of Deaf children experience language deprivation leading to insufficient communication abilities. This can detrimentally impact a deaf individual’s social emotional capabilities and overall brain development, further leading to social isolation. While deaf children who do not learn sign language face such difficulties, deaf children who do learn sign language have significant advantages, as evidenced by Calderon and Greenberg:

d/Deaf children who learn to sign at a young age tend to be better adjusted emotionally, have higher academic achievement during the early school years and have better social relationships with parents and peers relative to deaf children raised in speech-only environments. (as cited in Marschark, 2007, p.16)

One study also showed that “native signers ha[ve] an advantage in ASL syntactic skills and vocabulary-based analogical reasoning that held irrespective of age-of-entry to an academic signing environment” (Henner et al., 2016, p.12). This concludes that early access to sign language offers children the ability to develop a complete natural language in order to succeed in other aspects of their future lives.

Language Rights on National and International Scales

Human beings are social creatures who have developed a variety of ways to communicate with one another in order to engage in thought, experience, understanding, and emotions. Language has become a clear and intelligible evolutionary skill that has connected humans throughout history. Language and communication are central to the human experience and without it, one risks isolation and exclusion from society and the world around them. Furthermore, denying an accessible language to an individual negatively impacts cognitive development and the individual’s ability to be a productive member of society. Language is
multi-modal and is accessible through both visual and auditory methods, but power dynamics within language and language policy have impacted the ways in which d/Deaf individuals are perceived and educated. Natural signed languages have been considered gestural and incomplete (Baynton, 1996) and therefore, lacking the sophistication to be used as an instructional language in schools and other educational settings.

**The United Nations and Linguistic Rights**

Legislation related to Deaf education has varied throughout the world; however, most institutions create approaches under the medical model that d/Deaf children are deficient and ‘need to become more hearing.’ These solutions have resulted in generations of d/Deaf children with language and cognitive delays that make it difficult to flourish and succeed in today’s society. The United Nations (UN) has attempted to push against these notions to set precedents that Deaf individuals are part of a linguistic and cultural minority and deserve the right to access the world through their natural language.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) mentions the right to language in Article 2, stating that “Everyone has the rights and freedoms without the distinction…of language.” This statement is echoed in Article 2 in both the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1976) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1976), and is expanded upon in Article 4 of the ICCPR to specify, even “in time of public emergency.” While these rights are documented, the lived experiences of d/Deaf people show that these rights are not being upheld. Fyson and Cromby (2012) argue that the definition of ‘human beings’ in the declaration complicates human rights for people with intellectual disabilities (ID). The Universal Declaration pronounces that:
All human beings are born free and equal with dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood.

(United Nations, 1948, emphasis added)

So, while intended to grant meaningful rights to all human beings, permitting the argument over someone’s ability to reason and have a conscience, this actually allows for the larger society to judge a person’s capacity to make meaningful decisions about their own lives (Fyson & Cromby, 2012). Although the Deaf community does not view themselves as disabled, the larger population still holds the opinion that d/Deaf people are ‘lacking,’ ‘deficient,’ or ‘less human,’ making it justifiable to disregard their human rights.

In relation to educational access issues, rights for d/Deaf children are specifically mentioned in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2008) under Article 24:

State Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education as members of the community. [This includes] facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community.

It then mentions d/Deaf culture as a specific culture and linguistic identity that should be recognized and supported on an equal basis with others. This recognition allows the Deaf community to refer back to their human rights when being denied access to language and communication within education. While these rights specify the language rights of d/Deaf people, other United Nations documents have promoted connected language rights that could be used in favor of sign language rights for Deaf people.12

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12 Further recognition of linguistic and culture rights are mentioned in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), the Convention on the Rights of a
Language Rights and Deaf Education in the United States

Historically, access to language for d/Deaf children in classroom settings has been restricted by educational systems and policies that do not take into consideration the variety of factors that are needed to not only learn in a classroom, but also to obtain language for overall psychological, emotional, and social well-being. Decisions made at the Milan Congress still impact d/Deaf education today. Colonization and Euro-centric ideologies, laws, and practices influence education policies in Ethiopia and greater Sub-Saharan Africa, making it important to understand the existing treatment of Deaf people and approaches to Deaf education in the U.S. and through the export of models of Deaf education abroad.

In the U.S., there have been legal cases surrounding the issue of d/Deaf education, access to information, and language use. Although the following legal cases are not international law, it reveals a common social consciousness shared among hearing people—individually, as well as in larger institutions—about the abilities and expectations of d/Deaf people and what rights should be granted to them.

One such case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that Amy Rowley did not have the right to an interpreter because she was ‘doing well’ academically and therefore, did not need an interpreter in the classroom (Siegel, 2008). Rowley was born to Deaf parents and was exposed to sign language at an early age. This gave Rowley access to develop language and communication skills that allowed her to receive information that many deaf six-year-olds could not obtain (Siegel, 2008, p. 4). At her hearing, the school district argued that Rowley could obtain 60% of the information received in the classroom. Sixty percent access to information was determined as ‘enough,’ while her hearing peers received 100%. Additionally, she was tested in

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Child (1989), and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2002). While many of these are non-binding, it allows for acknowledgement of an international responsibility to allow access to natural language—sign language is the only natural and accessible language to d/Deaf children—in order to grow and flourish in today’s world.
a quiet room, one-on-one with an evaluator, without the distractions of a noisy classroom. The fact that everyday classroom settings were not applied to her evaluation, determining that it is acceptable to have an individual access only 60% of classroom information, exposes the real issue of accepting spaces that clearly put one child at a disadvantage over another (40% to be exact).

Amy Rowley’s court decision came under the federal education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which has three main standards that public schools are required to provide for students with disabilities: “(1) the provision of an individualized program, (2) with support services, (3) in the least restrictive environment (LRE)” (Siegel, 2008, p. 4). Siegel (2008) argues that this court decision and IDEA failed to uphold Rowley’s “right to (and a recognition of the need for) language and communication access and development” [because it] is “not mandated” and “the placement requirement under IDEA thwarts programmatic decisions that would encourage language and communication access and development” (Siegel, 2008, p. 4). He justifies this argument using the First Amendment and his broader definition of freedom of speech to mean “the right to express and receive information and ideas” which considers “the underlying notion that once knowledge, thought, and ideas are available to a group of students, they must be available to all, even deaf children” (Siegel, 2008, p. 48).

A variety of court cases have reached the Supreme Court in regards to individuals’ First Amendment rights, which expand upon notions of freedom of speech and association. In school settings, cases such as Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969) won the right for students to wear armbands that symbolized their disapproval of the Vietnam War, reaffirming that “freedom of speech is the freedom to communicate in many forms, including symbolic ones” (Siegel, 2008, p. 53). The Court asserted “the vigilant protection of constitutional
freedoms is nowhere more vital than in the community of American schools […] the ‘marketplace of ideas’ and that teachers nor students should ‘shed their constitutional rights to freedom of expression at the schoolhouse gate’” (Siegel, 2008, p. 53). This, however, was not considered in Rowley’s case, even though it was stated that Rowley could not access 40% of communications made in her classroom. Sign language was considered less valuable than the right to wear an armband in protest. Sign language interpretation was also considered more of a ‘hassle’ and more expensive for the school, district, and teachers, and therefore, was considered ‘additional’ for ‘better’ success. So while students won their right to express themselves on school grounds, Rowley never had that same opportunity because costs were ‘too high.’

In *Martin v. City of Struthers* (1943) the Court ruled that the first amendment calls for the “right to distribute, the right to receive, the right to read” (Seigel, 2008, p. 52). Even so, d/Deaf children are consistently cut off from receiving information shared within the classroom and in Rowley’s case, denied access to information that could be provided through a sign language interpreter.

Again with *Board of Education v. Pico* (1982), the school district determined that Richard Wright’s “Black Boy,” Langston Hughes’s poetry, and work by Kurt Vonnegut should be excluded from the school library. The Supreme Court ruled that this denied the students’ First Amendment right to “receive ideas,” which in turn is a “necessary predicate in the…meaningful exercise of…rights of speech, press, and political freedom” (Seigel, 2008, p. 54).

Each of these court cases stood for the right to receive information and exchange knowledge, especially within education and school settings. However, in Rowley’s case, receiving only 60% of the information was considered ‘enough’ and her experience was
undoubtedly impacted by the laws and regulations within IDEA—a law that gets to determine what it means to have ‘enough success’ in an academic setting.

Deaf children in public schools are denied direct communication with peers and teachers who are not proficient in an accessible language (sign language). Interpreters, like in Amy’s case, are not required to hold any particular qualifications, sometimes resulting in insufficient interpreting skills. Routine activities such as announcements, assemblies, debates and other communication exchanges are potentially unavailable for the student to access (Siegel, 2008, p. 49). These experiences are in direct response to IDEA and its purpose to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The LRE for d/Deaf students are spaces where communication between classmates and teachers is accessible. Many times what the law determines as least restrictive is the most restrictive for d/Deaf students.

Patterns in policy for deaf education are replicated and followed by many countries that receive deaf education through North American missionaries or volunteers, including Ethiopia. Considering U.S. influence on an international level, these legal cases lay the groundwork to investigate how language rights are addressed, changed, and codified at the United Nations.

**Deaf Rights in Africa**

Information regarding language rights for d/Deaf individuals in Ethiopia is limited, as there is a dearth of research on the topic. Today, in larger society, d/Deaf people are still considered people with disabilities (PWD). With that consideration, this section will take a more expansive look on the rights for people with disabilities in Africa as a whole. “Poverty in PWDs communities is linked to insufficient access to education, employment, health care and other social services that characterise the life of PWDs” (Kamga, 2013, p. 221). These characteristics
parallel to the experiences of d/Deaf people in Ethiopia as well and therefore, their protection in legislation under ‘disability’ is imperative. This section will provide a general understanding of human rights for PWD in Africa to provide a framework for the lived experiences of PWD and d/Deaf people in Africa.

Disability rights in Africa are proposed in a variety of human rights treaties where disability tends to intersect with another group characteristic (e.g., age or gender). The African Charter recognizes the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Rights and Welfare of a Child, which both include “special measures of protection for handicapped children” (Oyaro, 2015, p. 355). However, the UN did not incorporate some of Africa’s concerns in regards to “albinism, HIV/AIDS and the effects on harmful traditional practices and beliefs” (Kamga, 2013, p. 228) into these treaties. In indigenous African human rights system, disability law is incorporated in treaties such as:

- The African Charter;
- The African Children’s Charter;
- The African Women’s Protocol;
- The African Youth Charter;
- The African Charter on Democracy;
- The Internally Displaced Persons in Africa Convention. (Kamga, 2013, p. 236)

While protecting people with disabilities with these intersecting identities (being a child, a woman, a youth, or an internally displaced person) is possible, an African protocol specific to disability ought to be developed and implemented (Kamga, 2013; Oyaro, 2015).
Prior to the CRPD, the African Union (AU) Ministerial Conference on Human Rights in Africa discussed developing a treaty specific to disability rights (Kamga, 2013). This manifested itself as the Accra draft, developed in Accra, Ghana, which was put on hold in 2011 to allow further engagement. Kamga (2013) argues that similar to the CRPD, the Accra draft was flawed in many ways; it lacked any mention of albinism or disability, links between HIV/AIDs and disability, and ubuntu. It is also “silent on the effects of harmful traditional practices and does not underline the double discriminations suffered by WWDs [women with disabilities]” and disregards disabled peoples’ voices, expert opinion, and puts “less emphasis on equality between PWDs and others” (Kamga, 2013, p. 224). While the larger society continues to only ascribe disability to impairment and disregards social and environmental factors, living standards will remain dire for the majority of disabled people, resulting in their being at higher risk for exploitation, violation, and harassment.

The AU has still attempted to make strides for the rights of disabled people. Oyaro (2015) explains that the AU has participated in the following recommendations for the advancements of disabled people:

[The] recommendation of the proclamation of the first and second Africa decade for persons with disabilities; the First Ordinary AU Executive Council’s adoption of the Continental Plan of Action for persons with disabilities; the AU Ministerial Conference recommendation for the development of an African Disability protocol; and the establishment of the Secretariat of the African Decade for the Persons with Disabilities. (Oyaro, 2015, p. 356)

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13 Ubuntu is “the classical African humanist philosophy of kinship which unites mankind in a common purpose” (Djoyou Kamga, 2013, p. 224). It is also recognized by the saying, “I am because we are.”
Unfortunately, the ineffectiveness of these treaties is due largely to “lack of institutional coordination, proliferation, limited financing, and human resource incapacities” (Oyaro, 2015, p. 359). Oyaro (2015) recommends that the African Union should then prioritize the CRPD, stating, “Persons with disabilities stand to benefit much more from prioritizing the CRPD rather than hurriedly rushing to develop a regional disability protocol” (p. 375-376). However, Oyaro is critical about the CRPD not addressing African states’ concerns related to some Africa-specific issues, so he recommends that an African regional treaty should still be developed to address those specific issues. While both Oyaro (2015) and Kamga (2013) agree that a specific protocol needs to be adopted by the African Charter on the rights for disabled persons specific to an African context, they also understand the lack of resources, and grimly report the unsuccessful attempts in the past.

Normality: A Social Construct and its Impact

Conceptions of deafness being a disability are rooted in the social construction of normality. Normalcy is how the world defines itself and is socially and systemically tied to abnormality (disability) or what is not normal. Anything that deviates from the norm is then considered abnormal, a construct that people are uncomfortable with because it reflects the idea of something being unknown. Rhetoric that makes a binary distinction between normality and abnormality allows people who belong to the majority to stigmatize and dominate those who are ‘abnormal.’ Through this pattern of thinking, individuals who are perceived as normal determine that they are in the best position to ‘help’ normalize others and justify their ability to control, limit, and obstruct the ways in which people who deviate from the norm participate in society. This occurs on all levels of society – individually, locally, and nationally. Being deaf is not the issue, but rather the social construct of normality allows for the detrimental and pernicious
treatment of people who are deaf while simultaneously devaluing the community to which they belong.

Until the 1980s, many d/Deaf people were stigmatized as ‘defective’ and ‘becoming hearing’ was posited as the solution to deafness. Educators, doctors, and policymakers would adhere to the medical model, “interpreting disability exclusively or primarily as pathology” and viewing disability as a “defect or sickness that requires medical intervention in order to cure the problem” (Burch & Sutherland, 2006, p. 128). This paradigm frames the disability as a problem within the individual, creating broad implications that “disabled people are seen as dependent on the authority of the medical profession” (Burch & Sutherland, 2006, p. 128).

For d/Deaf people, this has manifested itself through oral teaching methods: speech-reading, speech therapy, verbal skills, and listening skills (through auditory means), and technology such as hearing aids and cochlear implants. These tools have been developed in order to force d/Deaf people to become ‘more hearing’ and to learn to behave and interact ‘like hearing people do.’ This desired achievement is rarely successful for deaf children who are implanted even at an early age. If normalization is attempted for a deaf child and the child ‘fails’ at ‘becoming hearing,’ it is likely that they will lack spoken or signed communication skills, which can lead to problems relating to identity, social interactions and overall language development within the brain (Lane, 1999, p. 5).

This social construct misrepresents an entire community as ‘defective’ instead of as a cultural minority. Other representations of d/Deaf people, for example in the media, show people

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14 Cochlear implantation is a surgical procedure requiring two to four days of hospitalization afterwards. An incision is made behind the ear and a piece of the temporalis muscle is removed. A depression is drilled into the skull and reamed so the internal electrical coil can station. Further drilling exposes the membrane of inner ear where a wire is then pushed through the opening. The wire makes its path into the cochlea while ripping apart the microstructure of the inner ear leaving any residual hearing destroyed. The implant stimulates the auditory nerve directly. The coil is sutured into place and the skin is sewn back over the coil (Lane, 1999).
of lower skill and ability who are incapable of problem solving or comprehending the world around them. John Schuchman examined d/Deaf characters in Hollywood films from the early 1900s until 1986 and found that most were perceived as being expert lip-readers and fluent speakers while disassociating them from any communal identity culture. Lennard Davis (1995) shows how etymology was used to change the meaning of disability to further social science, industrialization and eugenics agendas. For the d/Deaf community, the continued use of the word ‘dumb’—long after its meaning no longer meant ‘mute,’ but also ‘stupid’ and ‘unintelligent’—by educators, policy makers and scientists allowed society to frame deaf citizens as having a medical condition and were continued to be viewed as “defective” and “deviant” people. By emphasizing their deafness as impairment or inability, society could continue to consider d/Deaf people as Others (Davis as cited in Burch & Sutherland, 2006).

Living in a hegemonic, hearing world, those Deaf people who resist these labels and challenge the social conception of deafness are criticized. For example, by not giving a deaf child a hearing aid or cochlear implant, deaf people are considered to be forcibly isolating their children from the hearing world and not giving their child every opportunity to ‘fit in,’ which is believed to result in a ‘lower quality of life’ for their child. Similar to other minority groups, not only do some in the Deaf community push back against hegemonic social constructs, but they also resist the hearing world’s belief that they are refusing to integrate with the rest of the world.

These social constructs are not isolated to the U.S. Through the colonization of black bodies and minds in Sub-Saharan Africa, Euro-centric ideology has spread amongst non-European countries. Although Ethiopia was not under colonial rule for a long period of time (they were shortly invaded by Italy prior to World War II but have since been self-governed), Fay notes that their education system for d/Deaf students is heavily colonized as many teachings
for the Deaf began with missionaries from the United States and Scandinavia (as cited in Kiyaga & Moores, 2003). EthSL is heavily influenced by American Sign Language (ASL) because of this missionary work. While the U.S.’s influence on Ethiopia provided some access to formal education in sign language, Ethiopia continues to follow the U.S. towards a more inclusive education setting. This can result in history repeating itself, where d/Deaf children are placed in local schools where they cannot access d/Deaf friends or role models, making it difficult to develop cognitively and socio-emotionally.

Stemming from traditional beliefs, “children with disabilities are considered a ‘disgrace’ to their families who hide them or deprive them of any contact with the rest of the community as they symbolise the punishment of gods on the family;” children with disabilities represent “a bad omen that may tarnish the family pedigree” (Kamga, 2013, p. 222). This results in the hiding and isolation of d/Deaf children who spend their entire lives without language or access to communication. When these social constructs are compounded with being female, d/Deaf women are at a higher risk of abuse, poverty, social exclusion, and HIV. This is because of the misconception that sex with PWDs will cure AIDS—“grounded on the common misconception that people with disabilities are not sexually active” (Kamga, 2013, p. 222) and are therefore, a perfect solution for the ‘virgin cure’ rooted in the misguided belief that having sex with a virgin will cure AIDS.

The colonization of Deaf education compounded with traditional African beliefs puts d/Deaf people and PWDs at high risk for cognitive delays, isolation, and physical and emotional abuse. Unfortunately, this is the reality for many d/Deaf and disabled persons in Ethiopia. To address these issues and further comprehend the situation, the stories learned must be framed through the eyes of the d/Deaf individual.
Note on Disability as a Social Construct. It should also be understood that the term ‘disabled’ should not have a negative stigma attached to it and instead be reconstructed as a quality that creates a more diversified world to learn and gain knowledge from. People with disabilities worldwide have provided invaluable contributions to our society; it would be impossible to continue to develop and flourish as a human race without them.

While many members of the Deaf community attempt to separate themselves from the term ‘disabled,’ it is no doubt that the community experiences many oppressions related to society viewing them as disabled. “What is means to be Disabled in our society is understood through the lens of the social category, and through the social construction, which is not less powerful and has no less impact on Disabled people than if the parameters of the construct were true” (Burch & Sutherland, 2006, p. 129). Deafness alone does not make someone disabled, but limited understandings of disability and deafness affect the lived experience of both people with disabilities and Deaf people. While it is important to consider Deaf people a linguistic and cultural minority group, it is also imperative to understand how their lived experiences are informed by being perceived as disabled.

SUMMARY

Linguistics rights for minority groups inform this conversation by advocating the use of sign language to develop a cultural and linguistic identity for d/Deaf children. Although these are positive steps forward, audism and normality are social constructs that continue to build barriers against the success of d/Deaf individuals. Deaf education in Ethiopia has been colonized and Westernized by U.S. missionaries and therefore reflects and imitates trends the U.S. follows, including the use of ASL and a disregard of indigenous and cultural signs.
Although international measures have been in place to protect d/Deaf people as a linguistic minority, the reality of the lived experiences of d/Deaf people reflect that there is still work to be done. By struggling against oppression, marginalized communities have developed tools to resist audist behaviors. These tools were successfully utilized and expressed through EthSL, Deaf role models, and other support systems created by the Deaf community in Siskin, Ethiopia. The photovoice project as well as personal observations have revealed an undeniable sense of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) within this community and will be analyzed in the upcoming chapters.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experience of d/Deaf Ethiopians and the tools used by the community that allow them to resist audist behaviors and spaces. Through a photovoice project, interviews, day-to-day observations and field notes, I have worked in collaboration with Deaf Ethiopians, in order to encourage empowerment within themselves by engaging in critical dialogue as well and sharing their voices and experiences living in Ethiopia as a deaf person.

While I designed this photovoice workshop as part of my data collection, my intention was to also allow for the experiences of Deaf Ethiopians and community members to dictate my purpose for being there and determine the direction of this project. As I consider them co-researchers\(^\text{15}\) to this project, they have also become my friends who I feel contributed to this paper more so than I have—they are the storytellers and vessels of knowledge. This case study was made possible by non-profit, Nyala Center located in Siskin, Ethiopia and U.S. non-profit Turaco International. The city, center, non-profit, and all individuals who collaborated with me for this project have been given pseudonyms for protection and confidentiality purposes.

Participatory Action Research

The study was designed to engage d/Deaf youth and adults in issues surrounding their lived experiences and how to combat the systemic adversities faced by the community. This process is contradictory to what Freire’s (1970) terms as the traditional ‘banking method,’ where the researcher/outsider comes into a community they do not belong to and endow their knowledge on the community. Instead this participatory action research (PAR) allowed for the participants to “engage people in the learning process that provides knowledge about the social

\(^{15}\) “Co-researcher” is used here rather than “participant” to reflect the participatory nature of this photovoice project (Woodgate et al., 2017).
injustices negatively influencing their life circumstances” (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 5). Community members have the opportunity to collectively discuss societal oppressions occurring within their own community, understand different methods used for change, and then actively engage in organizing to remedy that those injustices (Cammarota & Fine, 2008).

**Photovoice**

For this qualitative study, a group of Deaf Ethiopians from Siskin participated in a photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997), a participatory action research (PAR) “process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique” (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369). The goal of photovoice is threefold: “1) To enable people to record and reflect their community’s strengths and concerns, 2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and 3) to reach policymakers” (p. 370).

The development of photovoice is based upon three theoretical pillars—documentary photography, feminist theory, and Paulo Freire’s “critical consciousness” (Wang & Burris, 1997). The first, documentary photography allows for “an immense array of visual styles, genres, and commitments” (p. 371) and is characterized as the “social conscience presented in visual imagery.” Spence (1995) states that art in general and photography specifically is a access point in which community members can “open up for discussion [about] the social, political, institutional and subjective spaces which we occupy daily” (as cited in Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 221). Co-researchers were taught how to use digital cameras—that were donated to the Nyala Center after the project—and then asked to take pictures depending on the specific topics discussed in class. Topics for photos were open-ended allowing co-researchers to guide and share deeper meanings about their photos. Through group discussion and documentary
photography, photovoice has the ability of gaining a variety of perspectives and context, which allows for both the co-researchers and facilitator to be critical and open to new information when analyzing daily experiences within the community.

The second theory, feminist theory, is an underlying theory that guides photovoice research and warns against the male bias within previously developed participatory action research and the notion that the research may “unwittingly contradict itself by making women invisible” (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 370). This common occurrence of dominant ideology overshadowing marginalized stories in academia creates assumptions and solutions based on a story that is incomplete. Photovoice allows for not only women, but also for “workers, children, peasants, people who do not read or write in the dominant language, and people with socially stigmatized health condition or status” to share their expertise on their own communities (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 370). Application of this theory manifests itself through the co-researchers chosen for my research. While it was a requirement for all co-researchers to be d/Deaf to participate in this study, I did not exclude Deaf males. This is because finding women in an already marginalized community would have limited my access to multiple Deaf narratives in Ethiopia. However, to give voice to some of the rural deaf women I met, there will be a dedicated section to d/Deaf rural women in Siskin, Ethiopia later in this chapter.

The last pillar of photovoice comes from Paulo Freire’s (1970) teachings of “critical consciousness.” Critical consciousness allows for students and facilitators to be both learners and teachers that are allowed to look at issues that are central to their own lives, allowing them to connect through dialogue and common experiences. Wang and Burris (1997) state that when conducting a photovoice project the facilitator must not enter as “persons who have answers but as learners” (p. 376) allowing one to “think critically about their community” (p. 370) instead of
being told the ‘right way’ to think. When critical consciousness is at the forefront of the practice, this process “enables co-researchers to bring the explanations, ideas, or stories of other community members into the assessment process” and can “affirm the ingenuity and perspective of society’s most vulnerable populations” (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 372).

Each theoretical framework lent itself to the process of this photovoice project. Co-researchers engaged in dialogue that allowed them to think critically about themselves and the way they experience societal norms as a d/Deaf person. Photographs that were taken documented each individual’s life in a unique way and a community largely perceived as deficient or lacking, shared their knowledge and stories and a cultural and linguistic minority. I used photovoice in a similar structure as international education scholar Payal Shah (2013) to enable Deaf community members to “articulate their present, lived, and collective experiences” (p. 55). Shah was also heavily involved with the community and even stayed at the school where her participants were attending. Similarly, I was able to stay at the director’s home where most of the Deaf community members would come for a meal or coffee ceremony\(^{16}\), rather than staying at a hotel. While focusing on their educational experiences, specifically their access to sign language and how that plays a role in understanding their marginalization, I also wanted to learn about how they perceive themselves as members of Ethiopian society. Photovoice has been used successfully as a tool to “enable the co-researcher to have a conversation with themselves by thinking through how they want to represent their own perspectives and experiences around a given topic” (Woodgate et al., 2017, p. 3).

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\(^{16}\) Coffee (“buna” in Amharic) ceremonies occur three times a day—morning, afternoon, and evening, usually after meals. The beans are roasted and then coffee is made while burning incense for added aroma. It is also traditionally coupled with popcorn or other cooked snacks like peanuts and barley. Coffee is served in three rounds, and the ceremony is an integral part of Ethiopia’s social and cultural life.
The intention of “damage-centered research” is to “document pain or loss in an individual, community or tribe” (Tuck, 2009, p. 413). This way of research implies that oppressed communities are invited to share but only “from that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation, a wound, an unfulfilled longing. Only speak your pain” (hooks, 1990, p. 152). Instead my intention was to allow co-researchers to document their experiences that are both painful and joyous. Tuck (2009) describes this as a desire-centered research framework that centers around, “understanding complexity, contradiction, and the self-determination of lived lives” (p. 426). Considering this framework, I wanted to learn how d/Deaf people in Ethiopia perceive themselves and where the community can progress as well as the hardships and social barriers they have had to face and overcome.

**Photovoice in Sign Language: Background and Design**

**Through the Researcher’s Eyes**

I began working with the Nyala Center, located in Siskin, in July 2016. I was connected with the center through a non-profit, Turaco International, based in California, whose founder was a former student of my advisor at the University of San Francisco. It was organized that I would stay in the director, Adina’s, home. Adina is a hearing Ethiopian woman who is fluent in EthSL and began working with Turaco International after she volunteered at the first service trip in Siskin. Prior to her work with Turaco, Adina was heavily involved in the d/Deaf community teaching d/Deaf students and receiving her bachelors in a related field. She is an intelligent, strong, and passionate woman who welcomes everyone into her home (at all hours of the day and night) and is one of the strongest allies in the Deaf community in Siskin. While Nyala and Yekatit School 23 were central gathering places for events, work, and teaching, Adina’s home was the next congregating location for social events, more work, coffee ceremony, dinner and
more. Deaf staff from Nyala spent many hours at Adina’s home outside of the normal workday. As a result, I was able to quickly immerse myself in the community and languages (EthSL and Amharic), meeting new people and creating new relationships.

Because Turaco has been involved in multiple service trips, meeting a new volunteer was not unusual for the community. However, what was unique in my situation was that I was staying for a longer period of time, was on my own, and had full capacity of communicating in sign language. Less than a handful of volunteers have been able to communicate in sign language and many who have had minimal experience with the language. I could only assume that this limits their ability to fully immerse themselves in the culture and communication that occurs, as they typically need an interpreter. Even an informal interpreter changes the dynamic when developing relationships.

I have been learning American Sign Language for twelve years and have traveled to places like Thailand, England, France, and New Zealand meeting Deaf people in each place. This has given me the opportunity to learn new sign languages and practice communicating in new environments within cultural practices that are not innate. Even though I did not know EthSL, ASL gave me the ability to adapt and learn EthSL easier than it would with someone who has minimal experience with sign language. In this case, ASL’s strong influence in Ethiopia allowed for a smoother transition compared to other places I have stayed. Rarely did someone translate something in a spoken language and instead I was able to communicate in sign language when I did not understand something.

Being able to communicate in a language that is accessible to the community also helped with power dynamics that exist between d/Deaf and hearing people. There was not a moment where I was making decisions about the photovoice project process in a language that was not
understood by the community. While there are always power dynamics in play, especially when a Westerner enters an African community or a hearing person entering a Deaf community, I found myself developing more intimate relationships with community members that would be near impossible had I not known sign language. I made the best effort to be respectful, understanding, and willingly to learn whenever the opportunity arose while staying conscientious of my role as a visitor, researcher, and guest. This allowed me to develop relationships that began to dismantle the hierarchy relationship between researcher and participant, hearing and d/Deaf, and colonizer and colonized.

**Timeline**

I began the photovoice project after I stayed for a week and a half. This gave me some time to get to know the community as a visitor and friend, not a researcher. When I began the process, the students and staff of Nyala already knew me and of my involvement in the U.S. Deaf community. The process took about two weeks with a total of four focus groups and four sessions of individual interviews. After the photovoice project was finished, Adina and the rest of the Nyala staff asked if I would be willing to teach an introduction to American Sign Language and Deaf Culture. While I voiced my concerns about not ever fully understanding what it means to be d/Deaf in the U.S. and the challenges faced by the community, they insisted that learning ASL will open up opportunities to better communicate with Deaf American visitors. In respect of the community’s desires, I taught an introductory workshop on American Sign Language and Deaf culture. This lasted two hours every workday for a week and a half.

During my stay, the Ethiopia’s political stability was slowly buckling under the pressures of the Oromos and Amharas people who feel the Tigrayan government is disregarding the people’s desires, favoring only Tigrayan communities and people. The week after I finished the
ASL workshop, some youth and young adults engaged in a variety of civil disobedience acts. Protests broke out in Siskin, shops closed, and people refused to drive their bajajes\textsuperscript{17} as an act of resistance towards the government. This lasted for about a week, obliging me to stay in the compound for the duration of that time. During this time, although I did not have time to venture and learn more about Ethiopian culture, I was able to share an intimate conversation with one of the co-researchers, providing me with more knowledge and understanding about his Deaf experience.

The end of my trip coincided with Turaco’s service-learning trip, which brings U.S. volunteers to run workshops and audiology testing, lasting the last week of my two-month stay. During this week I collaborated with, Walter, an Irish CODA (Children of Deaf Adults), who works as an interpreter, and developed a small two-day workshop dealing with the Linguistics of signed languages while also debunking myths about sign languages around the world, including EthSL. While this trip was productive and full of learning, I do wish that I could go back to continue to learn more and work in solidarity with the community. They have become like family.

**Selecting Co-researchers**

In Ethiopia, and specifically in Siskin, everyone in the d/Deaf community knows one another and they all visit Adina regularly. Similar to what I have seen in other Deaf communities, the members carry a strong sense of kinship where they develop a strong network to support one another. This center has been the catalyst to the growth of the d/Deaf community in Siskin. Because I was staying in Adina’s home for the two months, I received an immense amount of exposure, at all hours of the day, to the Ethiopian d/Deaf community. I was able find

\textsuperscript{17} A “bajai” (also known as tuk-tuks and auto rickshaws in other countries) is a small three-wheeled vehicle used in Ethiopia and other countries around the world as a smaller taxi service.
wonderful co-researchers and create relationships with each individual, forming bonds that I continue to develop while here in the U.S. While learning new languages is always a challenge, constant immersion allowed me to create more personal bonds without an interpreter.

Co-researchers were selected based on availability at the time of the study. Location of where the student or person lived was also taken into consideration as the Nyala Center director wanted to be sure that the people selected would be reliable in attendance. The photovoice portion of the study included three male staff members (over the age of 18) from the Nyala, two male students (under the age of 18) from Menilik Primary School in Siskin, Ethiopia, and one female student (under the age of 18) from Menilik Primary School in Siskin, Ethiopia. Additionally, one female staff member participated in taking photos but was unable to attend the focus groups. She is married to one of the male staff members so I was able to get her photos through him. I had one on one conversations about what her photos meant to her when both of us were available to chat. Each of these students participated in taking photos for the photovoice project, interviews, and focus groups. Additionally, other Deaf students that belonged to Menilik Primary School participated in focus groups relating to issues around deafness as well as analyzing the photographs brought in by the selected co-researchers. Requirements for this study were two-fold: 1) co-researchers must consider themselves Ethiopian who were raised in Ethiopia and 2) co-researcher was born deaf or became deaf at an early age and identified as being Deaf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age-Became Deaf</th>
<th>Age-Learned Sign Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getachew</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Born Deaf</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamal</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Born Deaf</td>
<td>6 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakim</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Infant: Approx. 8 months old</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age Group 1</td>
<td>Age Group 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bekele</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3 years old</td>
<td>8 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abebe</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2 years old</td>
<td>10 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tigist</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3 years old</td>
<td>15 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alemayehu</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 years old</td>
<td>7 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alemnesh</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Born Deaf</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. List of co-researchers involved in project

Materials

Prior to me arriving to Ethiopia, I created a letter requesting old digital cameras as donations to Nyala. I distributed and used these cameras first for my project and then donated them for the Nyala Center to use after I left. I sent the letter through University of San Francisco IME department, Centerville Junior High School, family, and friends. I received a total of six cameras and an extra twenty-dollar donation. Much of what was received needed to be supplemented with extra SD memory cards and charging devices. Those costs were out of pocket. Without these contributions, this project would not have been possible.

Data Collection

Interviews

Interviewing is a way in which information can be conveyed from both co-researchers and facilitator to engage in more communal learning. As a society we rely on interviews in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Fontana & Frey, 2005). It is a process that can be rooted in hierarchical data collecting where the interviewee feels subordinate to the interviewer. This power dichotomy diminished as relationships were built through direct communication in sign language. While power dynamics are always in action, the duration of my stay as well as the relationships built through being able to directly communicate in sign language allowed for a more horizontal dialogue in which co-researchers were able to engage genuinely. While interviewing, I consistently attended to the power dynamics between myself as facilitator, and
the co-researchers (Fontana & Frey, 2005). By remaining conscientious of that role, the hope was to receive responses that were honest and genuine.

Interviews were done individually with each person who participated in taking photos. This usually meant sitting together in the back of one of the classrooms at Menilik Primary School where we engaged in one-on-one discussion about what each photo meant to them. Questions were open ended, allowing the individual to think about their photos and share what it meant to them, for example: What does this photo mean to you? What are you doing in this photo? Why is this photo important to you? These one-on-one interactions allowed the co-researcher and the facilitator to get to know one another on a more personal level rather than feeling like a specimen that was being dissected and analyzed. The photos were a focal point in the conversation and a tool that assisted in guiding the conversation.

Overall, these conversations went rather smoothly, with me being able to comprehend what was being said, however, on occasion I would need help from another Deaf person with a stronger background in ASL, who could help me better understand the pieces I was missing in someone’s answer. I had individual conversations with each co-researcher about their photographs three times throughout the project.

**Focus Groups**

Focus Groups or workshops also took place in the Deaf classroom located at Menilik Primary, where the Deaf students attended summer sessions to maintain their education. The summer sessions, provided through Nyala Center, were an opportunity for students to learn from Deaf teachers and continue to further their education. After summer sessions were over, students stayed through their lunchtime for two weeks to participate in a group discussion with other co-researchers. Students of varying ages stayed in and either engaged in discussion or listened
intently. This space was more exploratory with unstructured and open-ended questions (Fontana & Frey, 2005) allowing participants to guide the trajectory of the discussion and engage in inquiry as well.

The first workshop was an introduction to the project. At this point of the trip I had already been around for a couple a weeks and already had multiple interactions with each person involved in this research. Even so, we began with a warm up game so that we could learn each other’s name. This activity was an exercise more for me as they all know each other, but it was also an opportunity for them to learn a new game that could be introduced at d/Deaf gatherings and in classroom settings. Each focus group had a theme that tied into the next set of photos the co-researchers would be taking. Prompts included

- photos that show how you grew up,
- photos that remind you of Deaf culture, and
- photos that show your dreams for the future.

I would plan a small activity prior to starting the focus group and then it would segue into pair shares, small group, and large group discussions. During the last focus group, everyone participated in a ‘gallery walk’ where most the Deaf students in the summer program viewed the different photos that were taken by the co-researchers.

Below is a basic schedule that was followed for the photovoice project. Time was taken in between sessions to allow for co-researchers to go out and take photos and also to give me time to develop the pictures in the city center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Arrived to</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Photovoice Project Schedule, Siskin, Ethiopia

**Observations and Field Notes**

I stayed at the Nyala Center’s director’s home. This resulted in first hand observations and experiences with the community and how Ethiopians conducted their everyday lives. Observations in ‘natural’ settings, mostly in regards to the ‘Third World’ are criticized because their research is a product created within colonial relationships that are inherently unnatural (Angrosino, 2005). However, this research takes a more collaborative approach; this means that there is equal participation between researcher and participants, allowing them to choose if they want to omit information given (Angrosino, 2005).

Field notes and observations took place throughout the two-month stay in Ethiopia. Some of the field notes include experiences meeting d/Deaf women who are a part of Nyala Center’s livelihood development program, an interview with a recent Deaf graduate from Addis Ababa University, and day-to-day interactions and developments during the stay. These experiences will be included in analysis and overall understanding of the Deaf experience in Ethiopia.

**Limitations of the Study**

**Language Barrier**
The most significant limitation to this study was the language barrier. Regardless of my efforts to learn Ethiopian Sign Language and Amharic, it would be foolish to assume that I reached fluency—in either language—in a short period of time. While some individuals spoke English and some Deaf individuals new basic American Sign Language, communication always took an extra effort than it would with native signers and/or native speakers. My efforts to learn the languages was highly recognized and greatly appreciated, but still did not present the levels of comfort that an Ethiopian researcher and/or a Deaf researcher who signs could establish.

There were moments where friends and family would visit, speaking Amharic, and I would sit with everyone, understanding very minimal (perhaps recognizing a word here and there), but a positive attitude and effort to learn seemed to make people more comfortable around me.

**Rural Deaf Women**

Another limitation to this study is that the photovoice co-researchers were pulled from Nyala’s d/Deaf population that attends regularly; these were either students in the program or staff members. What is significantly underrepresented is the deaf population in rural parts of Ethiopia and Siskin; this includes individuals of lower socio-economic status and a larger population of deaf females who are hidden away from society and expected to maintain household duties for their entire lives. Most never gain access to language or education. Women and girls are significantly impacted by society’s beliefs that women should stay at home to conduct household duties. Compounding this already wide gender gap with being deaf and living in a rural area means there stories are highly unlikely to be heard even within their own country. I find that their voices are just as imperative to fully understand the lived experiences of d/Deaf Ethiopians.
While these deaf women, who lived outside Siskin’s city center, were not able to participate in my study, I feel that even a slice of their story will give their voice life. During my stay I visited nine of the twenty deaf women who were receiving receive 7,000 Birr (approximately $320 USD) through Turaco International’s livelihood development program. The goal of this program provides vocational training for deaf women that will then allow them to start a business that is sustainable. Even with these efforts, sometimes beneficiaries are still taken advantage of by their families. Below are personal field notes taken after visiting each of the beneficiaries. While these stories are told from my perspective, leaving them out entirely would do these women an injustice.

Story No. 1:

Then we saw a daughter of a family who bought chickens and began raising them so she could sell their eggs. I noticed the extreme difference in how the deaf daughter was treated by the parents compared to the hearing daughter. The deaf daughter's clothing was dirty, torn, and old while the hearing daughter was well cared for with nice, well-kept clothing. A portion of her face does not move, paralysis perhaps, but I do not know from what. Adina explained to me that the deaf daughter's fate is to cook and clean and tend to the house while the hearing daughter was treated with respect and expected to attend university. Adina asked the hearing daughter to teach her deaf sister just three words a day, but the daughter did not seem interested in such a task. The parents felt they already gave the deaf daughter enough as they gave her the home for the chickens (a shelter that they rented for 400 Birr (approximately $18 USD) per month prior to the livelihood program). Meanwhile, the deaf daughter stands there, watching everyone talk about her not being able to access what is being said. She does not know sign language or Amharic.
She is being shuffled around, told where to sign her name, which she does by using her finger and inkpad because she cannot write. She does not have access to any communication except when Adina interacts with her in gesture. Still she takes pride in the work she has achieved. She is a fighter. (field notes, July 9, 2016)

Story No. 2:

The next girl we met was traveling with her brother. She brought us to her house before we went to her mother’s shop. She is strikingly thin, her shoulders hunched over her flattened chest. She has some sign language knowledge and seemed to have developed some variance of home signs with her brothers who appear much larger and older. I found out later that her brothers (who are hearing) are actually younger than she but are fed well and looked after by her cooking, cleaning, and managing the upkeep of their home. Her mother had not yet allowed her to start her own business to make a decent wage but instead had kept the beneficiary money herself. Adina told me that she is abused at home, working and taking care of her younger siblings, family chores, and everything else that comes with household duties. Her eyes sink deep into her sockets, mostly staring blankly, unless actively engaged in some sort of communication through the hands of Adina or her brothers. Her mother only spoke and never directly with her child. And yet, she maintains her composure, smiles at us as we leave, and somehow, she continues to persist. (field notes, July 9, 2016)

Story no. 3:

Lastly, we visited a woman who was given a small amount of government land and the 5,000 Birr (approximately $218 USD) from Turaco International to start her own farm. She is a good farmer with a variety of crops including corn, garlic, and teff. Again, this
woman had minimal language skills and only communicated through a variety of gestures. Even so, she carried herself with pride and enthusiasm, proudly displaying the growth of her new crops she planted. Adina was joyous at the success of her work and the woman’s smile beamed beyond the fields that she tended. (field notes, July 9, 2016)

These stories reveal a pattern on what it looks like to be a deaf woman in rural Ethiopia. Many do not have access to either language or education and are treated poorly—from being denied access to socialize with other people, to being physically, mentally and emotionally abused. Some women have been abused so badly, their faces are left with thick scars or without the ability to move, paralyzed from the trauma. Even when deaf women try to obtain better livelihoods, barriers are still faced with lack of communication and understanding from family members, society and even health physicians. An ear, nose and throat specialist, Dr. Habte, states, “If our deaf patients mastered sign language, and it was interpreted for us, we would be able to ask them all about how they feel” (Round Room Image, 2017). Dr. Fikreab continues, “But in the rural areas, there are problems with understanding. What you explain might not be clear to them. Even if they can understand you, they may not follow your advice due to financial or transportation problems. Addis Ababa\(^{18}\) and rural areas are like two separate worlds. You can see it” (Round Room Image, 2017). Without communication and access to language, deaf people and specifically deaf women are at greater risk of being pushed out to society’s margins, literally kept in isolation and hidden away from the rest of society.

**Time**

Lastly, one major limitation for this study was time. I was only capable of spending two months in Siskin, and while that is a substantial amount of time, more time allows for more involvement and opportunity to get to know the community as well as the languages and cultural

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\(^{18}\) Capital and major city of Ethiopia.
norms. Showing respect for one’s culture makes trusting an outsider easier to do after the outsider has proven their intentions and actions acceptable for the betterment of the community.

The following chapter will articulate the findings during the photovoice project as well as an analysis of selected photos through a DeafCrit framework, focusing specifically on the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).
Chapter IV
INTRODUCTION

The following chapter will show some examples of what the co-researchers photographed and the critical discussions that came out of both the interviews and the focus groups. Findings are organized chronologically in order to show the photovoice process and the specific themes that arose during each session. The goal to each session was to learn something new about how that particular individual perceived the world and how the community perceived itself as a whole. While many of the stories that were shared had intersecting links of oppression and resistance, I organized the findings from each session under a specific theme that I saw was prevalent not only during the photovoice process but also what I witnessed throughout my stay. First, language access is one of the main barriers co-researchers articulated as something that inhibited their success, livelihood, and independence. Second, empowerment transpired when knowledge from others in the community was being shared not only to younger generations, but also within social networks and associations. Lastly, giving back to the Deaf community was an act of resistance, which allowed d/Deaf people to support one another and further the success of younger generations.

Findings

**Limited Language Access is a Barrier**

July 11th was the first day I started the project. The focus group was casual and informal; while everyone who was officially participating and receiving a camera was there, other d/Deaf students that attended the summer tutorial sessions wanted to participate in the discussion. Summer sessions lasted three hours in the morning in three different subjects: Amharic, English, and EthSL. Co-researchers would then stay an additional hour to participate in the project. This is why many students were already in attendance.
Before each session I always facilitated a game. Games are great for breaking the ice and getting to know one another on an equal level. This session began with a simple name game that practiced signing our name in ASL and EthSL allowed me to learn all their names and for them to practice thinking of English words that started with the same letter as their name did in English (ex. Corie loves cooking). This allowed us to get comfortable with one another and learn with each other. After the game I asked the students to rearrange the classroom so the seats and desks created a ‘U’ shape instead of rows. This allows for everyone to have clear sightlines across the room creating accessibility to the conversation that is happening. Rows do not allow access for people in the back to see what is being said in the front. After this classroom set up was introduced, the students kept it that way for the remainder of their summer tutoring sessions.

This session was simply an introductory session. I explained how many times we planned on meeting. My intention was five, but it actually ended up being four sessions because of time constraints. I passed out the donated cameras, explaining technical features such as: flash options, deleting photos, previewing photos, etc. Then we had a small discussion about why photographs are important.

“Why are photos important?” I signed.

One student, Bekele, a charismatic and intelligent twelve year-old responded, “To remember things from the past.” I jot down ‘memories’ on the chalkboard.

Another student signs, “Photos help with identification and evidence.” After going back and forth about the importance of photographs. Bekele signed, “These photos will be important because they will tell our stories.”

I explained that I was not looking for something specific from them and that I wanted them to think about their lives as an important story to tell to the world. I asked them to take
photos of anything they wanted to share with me about their life prior to learning sign language or having access to education. Getachew, one of the staff members and Deaf teachers, made sure to communicate everything in EthSL (instead of my broken Ethiopian/American sign language). At first, there was hesitation. Maybe it was the creative freedom, or the fact that they were being entrusted with digital cameras, and maybe even unsure of what they wanted to share, but after the first round of photos were finished, it was apparent that everyone willingly and actively participated.

One-on-one interviews were held at Menilik Primary during their summer sessions. One at a time students were willing to pull out of their studies for a few moments to tell me about the photos they took. I was sure to stay in the classroom where class was taken place. This reason was two-fold: 1) sitting in the back of the classroom allowed for the least amount of distraction from the rest of the classroom instruction and 2) students who were with me still had access to what was happening in class through maintaining visual access towards the teacher. Each co-researcher chose their top five photographs that truly represented the story they wanted to share.

Below were some of the photos and responses received after the first focus group. They were instructed that they were allowed to take photos of anything that told me about their life before being involved in the Deaf community in Siskin.
This is the shop window from our old home made of mud. My family has worked hard to live in our new home made of cement. When I was five years old I would go out and milk the cow so we could sell it in this shop. I also harvested in the field picking teff, lentils, beans, peas, and other vegetables. My mother then sold much of this in the shop. I remember long days sitting in the shop watching her. At that time I could not communicate with anyone, except for using gestures. I did not know sign language then.

(Bekele, personal communication, July 2016)

Similar to many d/Deaf people, Bekele’s life prior to learning sign language was entrenched in family survival; working in the fields and being with mom at the shop meant not receiving language access for some years. For people in Ethiopia, especially in rural areas, being d/Deaf typically means a life of being kept inside the home, secluded from interacting with the community and working. Luckily for Bekele, his parents wanted more for him than a life without
language. His family sought out different educational opportunities for d/Deaf students and ultimately found Nyala and Menilik Primary.

Though he may not have had a strong connection to the Deaf community at this time in his life in order to develop a strong sense of DCCW, his family wanted to provide the best opportunities possible, which meant finding a place where he could learn sign language and meet other d/Deaf people. His parents strongly supported his success and expressed it through hard work in order to achieve a better life for their son. Though not specific to the Deaf community, without the familial capital he was being raised with, he may not have had the educational opportunities he has today. It was also noted that his linguistic capital was significantly impoverished from the lack of accessible language surrounding him.

*Figure 4. Round 1 Photograph, Taken by Abebe*

This is my old school. I went to this school from seven to nine years old. I was in a hearing class and could not understand what the teacher was saying. When I would ask
for help from my classmates my teacher would scold me and tell me to behave. So many days I would sit quietly not understanding. The same was when I went to play outside with hearing friends. Most times I struggled to communicate so I just stayed inside by myself. It was frustrating. I finally told my father what was happening and how I was feeling. Many times I cried to my father. After that, I was moved to Menilik Primary. That is when I started understanding what was happening in class. (Abebe, personal communication, July 2016)

This experience also precedes Abebe’s Deaf identity and social development. His story shares a common theme told by deaf children in the U.S.; Students are scolded for disrupting the class and communication is the number one barrier when interacting with both teachers and friends at school. What this story does show is that Abebe had the ability to seek out guidance and help from his father (familial capital) in order to find an educational solution that better fit his needs (navigational capital). Again, this story expresses a lack of linguistic capital, but also shows how that capital is gained when he moves to a school that instructs its classes in sign language with Deaf teachers and pupils. What you do not see in this photo is how much Abebe has developed socially, emotionally, and linguistically. He is active in the Deaf community and participates in different activities with the rest of his classmates. He is easily able to express himself and is overall more enthusiastic about learning and interacting with his friends and teachers.
I did not have any language before the age of twelve. This photo shows me making enjera, some of the many chores I had at home. I grew up in a rural area so I have to do hard work like collecting tending the livestock and chopping gesho (a plant used for nutrition, medicine and religious purposes). My father would travel to Addis Ababa, something seeking learning opportunities for me. I did not know any sign language but communicated mostly through gestures and home signs. (Tigist, personal communication, July 2016)

This story firstly establishes the highly impoverished linguistic capital Tigist experiences. She is sent to work all day in a rural area without communication with the people around her. She does learn how to survive though (navigational capital) and ultimately, with the help of her father (familial capital), reaches Menilik Primary school to learn sign language (linguistic capital). This story also shows the lack of urgency or understanding to provide Tigist with
language and education. It can be hypothesized that this is because she is not only deaf but also a woman who was born in a rural area. The intersectionality of identities must be taken into consideration when analyzing the stories told through these photos.

Figure 6. Round 1 Photograph, Taken by Hakim

When I was twelve I wanted to buy my own clothes without the help of my parents. In our culture, many times people barter for a lower price. Shop owners do not know how to communicate with d/Deaf people so I learned how to barter for a lower price using paper and pen. This helped me become more independent. (Hakim, personal communication, July 2016)

I always saw hearing people riding their bicycles to get around town. I felt that owning my own bike would allow me to be self-sufficient. I could go shopping alone and when I wanted to. This bicycle represents my freedom and independence even though I am deaf. I do not rely on hearing people to take me around the city. I want to show that deaf people can ride too. (Hakim, personal communication, July 2016)

Both these photographs were taken by the same person in the same session and highlight the resistance and self-determination that d/Deaf people have to survive in an audist society. The first photo shows one of the many shops in Siskin’s city center. One way Hakim wanted to
achieve and prove his independence (aspirational capital), was by learning how to barter a lower price for items he needed. Without the assistance of family, he was able to find a solution, paper and pen that worked for the shop owner and his abilities (navigational capital). Similarly, obtaining the bicycle in Figure 7, gave him more freedom to be self-sufficient, and have the ability to travel through spaces not designed for d/Deaf people (navigational capital). He also had intentions of proving that d/Deaf people could ride bicycles and be independent just like hearing people do, showing his desire to change how society perceives d/Deaf people (resistant capital).

Figure 8. Round 1 Photograph, Taken by Kamal

This is a bed that I made when I found a job doing woodwork. I was twenty-two at the time and this was the only work I could get a decent wage with at the time even though I graduated from architecture and design school. I searched for a job for a long time but no one would give me one because I was deaf and they thought I couldn’t handle the work.
I had no interpreter for this job and worked with all hearing people. (Kamal, personal communication, July 2016)

This story shares a similar pattern to some of the aforementioned stories. Kamal was being denied access to a job and livelihood simply because he is deaf. He describes barriers he had to overcome such as not having an interpreter, working with only hearing people, and struggling to make a decent wage (navigational capital). Kamal chose to present this picture because he never studied woodworking and yet, he made this beautiful bed. He was proud of what he could learn and what he accomplished and wanted to prove that d/Deaf people are capable of creating art and furniture just like hearing people (resistance capital).

Each co-researcher told a story that expressed struggle around access to information in hearing centric spaces. Teachers, co-workers, and shop owners are all institutions where a d/Deaf person had to find another way to navigate through a space dominated by hearing norms. Many also expressed some form of discrimination in those situations. They were denied work because of language barriers and the cultural belief that d/Deaf people are incapable of doing the same work as hearing people. Lack of language access for Deaf individuals is not something specific to Ethiopia but a common barrier that Deaf people face around the world. These photographs reveal that struggle with accessing language further prove that this barrier is related to being d/Deaf and that it is one of the main obstacles when it comes to educating d/Deaf youth.

Empowerment Through Sharing

The second focus group incorporated the aforementioned photos as well as the rest of the photos shot by each co-researcher. Again this session began with another warm up game and then a reflection on how the first round of the photographing process went. Co-researchers were then paired off and discussed the photos they took and why they took them. Prompt questions
were recommended if people were not sure what to share: How are those photos important to your life? Which one is your favorite photo and why? Tell your partner something they may not know about you. They were then able to share out to the larger group, if they desired, what they said to their partners. One by one each researcher shared a picture and the story behind the picture.

Each person shared something they struggled with in their life, but also showed how they resisted that struggle and persisted in order to better their own lives. It was also apparent that after my explanations and the clarifications of other community members the directions were clearly comprehended and that our language skills were adaptable to one another.

We ended this session with a web activity where the words Deaf Culture/Experience were placed in the center of the board. Co-researchers were then told to contribute to the web by anything that was connected to the topic in the center. I started the web by adding the word ‘community.’ One Nyala staff member added ‘sign language’ and then everyone rushed to participate in the activity. We created this diagram on the board.
We began circling around the concept of work for d/Deaf people. The group began
discussing different types of jobs, which lead to a conversation relating to d/Deaf people being
legally allowed to drive in the U.S. When I told them it was true that d/Deaf people could drive
in the U.S. an uproar of hands began signing simultaneously explaining that it is illegal for
d/Deaf people to drive in Ethiopia. We began unpacking this issue asking questions: Why do you
think that law is in place? Who created those laws? What abilities are needed to drive a car?
After some discussion one researcher came to the conclusion that eyesight was more important
for driving than hearing and that hearing people do not realize d/Deaf people can see what is
happening when driving. An interpreter who works for Nyala, explained that many d/Deaf
Ethiopians would travel to America for better opportunities and when they came back they
would tell other Deaf people that some laws in Ethiopia oppress d/Deaf people. One of those
laws addressed what in regards to d/Deaf people driving. Exposure to certain issues and the
sharing of information were vital in this moment and allowed for each person to reflect some of
the barriers they face on a daily basis.

With the next group of photographs, co-researchers shared what Deaf culture, experience
and community look like in Ethiopia.

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 10. Round 2 Photograph, Taken by Kamal*

Do you see everything on these classroom walls? I drew them. Each picture has a related
word in Amharic and English. I love to draw. These pictures help other deaf students
learn new words and signs. This brings me joy, to teach deaf children sign language
through art. (Kamal, personal communication, July 2016)

Above is a photograph one of the staff members took in our second round of
photographs. He immediately expresses to me how much he enjoys drawing and using his artistic
ability to teach other d/Deaf students language (resistance capital). When looking closely at each
of the drawings Kamal has written both Amharic and English words to match each drawing
(linguistic capital). These provide visual tools that d/Deaf children can use to learn EthSL as well as exposing students to writing. Extremely talented, Kamal’s work is covering the walls of both the Menilik Primary Deaf classroom as well as the Nyala Center’s walls where pre-school children are taught and looked after.

Prior to working with the center, I struggled finding a job. Even though I received a vocational certificate for building furniture, I found that employers couldn’t seem to believe I was capable of doing the work because I am deaf. Now, I enjoy working at the center because I am surrounded by other deaf people and people who use sign language. In this place, communication is accessible to me. I even met my husband here. Here I keep the center clean as well as teach the smaller children sign language. (Alemnesh, personal communication, July 2016)
Alemnesh was limited in her participation as her work schedule conflicted with the workshops, however, she is married to one of the staff members who was able to attend and had access to the digital cameras we used. She shared this photo taken of herself, happy and enjoying her time at Nyala. Before she began working with Nyala, she was denied countless jobs and struggled to find independence and stability. However, through Nyala this individual is capable of interacting with her co-workers, many of whom are d/Deaf (social capital), while also completing her required job tasks. Nyala also provides a place where she could share and express her feelings as well as feel confident in being supported; She also met her husband through the center (familial capital). Most importantly, everything that happens at Nyala is accessible to her through EthSL (linguistic capital) and she is able to teach what she is learning to the d/Deaf children that attend the center’s workshops and tutorial sessions (resistance and navigational capital).

Figure 12. Round 2 Photograph, Taken by Alemnesh & Kamal
The Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf (ENAD) is a place where d/Deaf people can gather every Sunday for a variety of reasons. We are taught about HIV and AIDS, how to do certain types of work and other important resources for deaf people. (Kamal, personal communication, July 2016)

This association was actually mentioned by Kamal and Getachew during this project. Like many associations of the Deaf, ENAD, provides services that inform, teach, and share information and knowledge (navigational capital) to the d/Deaf community, which allows them to navigate institutions that may or may not prevent d/Deaf people from accessing services. It is also a place to socialize with other d/Deaf people (social capital) and share information through a language accessible to them (linguistic capital). This association shows that the Deaf community does not sit idly by but instead fights for agency and self-determination even in the face of injustices and great barriers (resistance capital).

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Figure 13. Round 2 Photograph, Taken by Getachew
“I love to give back to my community through teaching. In this picture I am teaching deaf students sign language, but as you can see, they also teach each other. We are always collaborating and learning with one another” (Getachew, personal communication, July 2016).

This photo clearly shows that multiple community cultural wealth capitals are present. First, students are learning and teaching one another through sign language (linguistic capital). Getachew expresses the joy and desire to improve his community through education (social capital), which ultimately, improves their ability to contribute effectively to society. What you do not see in this photo is the love and admiration these students and Deaf teachers have for one another. They are constantly encouraging, teaching, and supporting one another (familial capital). The students are also developing a stronger navigational capital through learning Amharic, Math, and other subjects necessary to breakdown barriers and create an independent way of living.

Figure 14. Round 2 Photograph, Taken by Getachew
Both deaf and hearing kids can communicate in sign language. I teach many hearing students at Menilik Primary sign language so they can communicate with the deaf students. Before I started teaching the hearing students, deaf and hearing children could not communicate with one another. But now our school is a stronger community. Deaf and hearing students respect and help one another and work together. It feels like deaf and hearing are equal at this school. Now even some of the hearing parents with deaf children have started learning sign language so communication at home is easier.

(Getachew, personal communication, July 2016)

Getachew is also a teacher at Menilik Primary. He is an easy-going and bright individual, who is looked up to as a ‘big brother’ for all the young deaf and hearing children and the school. His story shows his desire to improve the experience for d/Deaf children at school (aspirational capital). He does this through teaching both d/Deaf and hearing students sign language (linguistic capital), so that they have the ability to communicate with each other. Like a small sanctuary, he describes the school as a place where d/Deaf and hearing people can feel equal and the desire to continue to achieve an environment where d/Deaf students do not feel inferior to their hearing classmates (resistance capital).
Nyala Center provided training for Deaf people so we can become independent. My friend and I work at a deaf shop where we make and sell things to both deaf and hearing people. People know we are Deaf and I can communicate with hearing customers by reading their lips. You see that orange fabric piece we use to cover food? I made that. It makes me happy to know that I am capable of working and being successful. (Tigist, personal communication, July 2016).

Tigist expresses the joy and fulfillment she feels when working and achieving independence. The desire to be self-sustaining and find work that allows her to make a decent living is a common dream for d/Deaf people in Siskin. This shop shows that she achieved at least one of her dreams (aspirational capital). She also enjoys the camaraderie of working with another Deaf person (social capital) and describes having to read the lips of those customers who do not use sign language (navigational capital). After not having language for over twelve years of her
life, Tigist pushed through social barriers. She recognizes that her success was accomplished with the help and support of other d/Deaf community members as well as the Nyala Center. She now has the ability to communicate, maintain her independence and enjoy a higher quality of life.

Figure 16. Round 2 Photograph-Taken by Bekele

This photo is important because Getachew taught me how to juggle; first with two balls then three and then four. He taught me how to add tricks like behind the back and under the legs. I’m very thankful for Getachew teaching me and the other students different tricks to perform for our Deaf circus. Hopefully we can get good enough to show the world. (Bekele, personal communication, July 2016)

Deaf circus is a performance led by Getachew and incorporates performing acts such as juggling, yo-yo, dance and acrobatic tricks. Bekele describes his gratitude and appreciation for having someone like Getachew to learn from. While this could be considered social capital, I
would argue that the relationships developed between Getachew and his students is more intimate and relates closely to a kinship than simply a network or community resource. While Getachew provides social resources, he has developed stronger relationships with his students and understand the experiences they go through as d/Deaf people making him a vital part of their familial capital.

During the focus group, we conversed about the legality of Deaf people driving in Ethiopia and compared that to the U.S. This conversation led to discussion about d/Deaf peoples’ abilities and what jobs they are capable of doing. Many of the aforementioned photos reveal the wealth of knowledge and capabilities of the Deaf community and how the community network provides support and empowerment for one another. This occurs on an individual basis as well as on a larger scale such as the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf. The power of knowledge and sharing that knowledge with one another is key to the empowerment of this community in Siskin. They provide support towards one another while also providing resources and information with each other about job opportunities, educational opportunities and raising awareness about issues the Deaf community faces.

**To Give Back is to Resist**

The main activity for this session was a gallery walk. Again from all the photos they took, they chose their favorite five that I then developed and brought to this session. I arranged the classroom so that the co-researchers’ photos were displayed close to one another and around the classroom. Like how a gallery would look, I typed and printed each of their names next to the word ‘Photographer.’ Everyone then had the opportunity to jot down ideas, comments, or opinions about the photos. Suggested prompts were: How does this photograph make you feel? Can you relate to this photo? What does this photo say about that person?
This process revealed just how much support the community has for its members. As I walked around the room, much of what was written were words of affirmation. One said, “Thank you for teaching deaf students, you are a great teacher.” Another wrote, “You are very talented with your tricks for deaf circus.” The energy in the room was filled with camaraderie and support. Everyone then got to read the comments shared about their own photographs. After, there was a share out in our large discussion group to give the opportunity to reflect on the process we just went through. Many expressed feelings of understanding; they understood the barriers experienced by their Deaf teachers, students and friends. However, I noticed that no one really dwelled on the barriers but instead focused on supporting one another as well as being happy and thankful for the community, friends, and opportunities they have through Menilik Primary and Nyala. Communication access through sign language and sharing new information was an underlying theme that brought individuals joy when interacting with people in the community.

The last topic for photographs was to see how Deaf people in Siskin saw their futures. What dreams did they have for themselves? I found was that the dreams they shared were not only for themselves, but for their community.
Before I was eighteen I didn’t know how to write in Amharic. I decided to teach myself by looking at different posters and signs around the city. I also had a book that I copied the letters of the alphabet. I eventually learned how to write in both Amharic and English. Now I use that knowledge and teach other deaf students. This sign says that deaf people learn with their eyes through observation and that deaf people are capable of working and can be self-sustaining. This is great for hearing people to know about us. We can do work, we can learn. (Kamal, personal communication, July 2016)

This photo shows the desire to learn more than what was expected of him (aspirational capital). Kamal wanted to learn how to write in Amharic as well as English (linguistic capital). His ability to navigate the city and learn from resources like posters, signs, and books shows that he has developed a strong sense of navigational capital within hearing and audist spaces. The sign captures a phrase that reflects the ideas that many Deaf people believe and continuously
fight for everyday: the recognition of being able to learn and work (resistance capital). Kamal embodied this ideal every day of his life encouraging other students to work hard and focus on their studies.

![Figure 20. Round 3 Photograph, Taken by Abebe](image)

I learned how to drive a bajaj when I was ten years old. I took a couple of courses in Siskin but had to stop because it is illegal for deaf people to drive in Ethiopia. It’s frustrating because I would like to drive when I’m older. I hope hearing people can learn that Deaf people can drive. For now I want to become a mechanic and work on the bajaj. Right now I apprentice and watch and learn. Learning mechanics for bajaj is the same as learning your alphabet; you have to know your letters before you write. You have to know the different parts and how they work before you can fix it. I work with one deaf mechanic. I hope to make a good living from this job. (Abebe, personal communication, July 2016)
Again we see the desire to take care of oneself and be self-sustaining through work (aspirational capital). Unfortunately, in this story, the Abebe is unable to achieve the dream he wants because of laws in place against Deaf people in regards to driving. This does not phase his too much as he is also excited to become a mechanic and learn how to fix the bajajes, especially because his apprenticeship is under someone who is also Deaf (social capital). Again this is because he can access the information without the help of interpreters or not have access to important information in a hearing only environment (linguistic capital). While we see he is frustrated about the law against deaf people driving, he finds other ways to continue to work with bajajes (navigational capital).

Figure 21. Round 3 Photograph, Taken by Bekele

Since September, I’ve been working at a Deaf wood and metal shop as an apprentice. I would like to be able to fix and build homes when I get older. My favorite part about apprenticing here is that I am able to communicate with the workers and learning is
accessible through sign language. I am eager to work and understand the process and hope to continue to work with other deaf people in the future. (Bekele, personal communication, July 2016)

Bekele describes his desire to learn and work in the metal and woodworking trade (aspirational capital). Similar to the previous story, he would apprentice under other Deaf people (social capital) who use sign language as their primary mode of communication (linguistic capital). Seeing other successful Deaf workers gives the younger generation hope and desire to want to achieve similar dreams and become independent from their families. Deaf role models instill a sense of capability and success for the younger generation who do not require their hearing in order to succeed.

I want to continue to teach hearing people how to sign. I want them to improve their signing skills so it is easier for hearing people to communicate with deaf people. I dream that one day we would not have use for interpreters and instead both deaf and hearing can all sign with each other and understand one another. I also want to continue to teach deaf students and help them grow and be self-sufficient. I want deaf people to be able to find
work and make a living for themselves. This is what I will dedicate my life to—helping other deaf individuals. (Getachew, personal communication, July 2016)

Getachew shows the desire to continue to teach people how to sign (linguistic and aspirational capital). He not only has dreams for himself, but also dreams for the Deaf children that come after him and their ability to grow and be self-sufficient. He challenges the social norm everyday by teaching d/Deaf children sign language and Deaf culture while simultaneously exposing hearing children to Deaf people and their language, disrupting cultural norms (resistance capital). He hopes for a better Ethiopia for Deaf people and dedicates his life for the betterment of his community.

Much of what is seen in these photos reflect the closeness and desire to better their own community. Deaf students worked closely with Deaf staff member and mentors, passing down language, knowledge, and the skills to navigate audist spaces. The staff members who participated expressed the desire to continue to teach Deaf youth both language and behaviors of independence in order to lead full and happy lives. The act of giving back is an act of resistance because its intention is to lift the community out of the oppression they experience everyday. Parent workshops, and community awareness events are programs that are a part of the Nyala Center and the Deaf staff members work to demystify what it means to have a Deaf child in a hearing world.

The last focus group was simply held to reflect on the process they had just experienced and to finally give each person their own developed photographs. Co-researchers again chose their top five photographs out of the ones they had asked me to develop. Even though reaching policy makers was not a main focus for this particular project, each co-researcher resist audist
systems and behaviors every day of their lives. They were very appreciative of having the photos in print as a souvenir from the project.

Summary

The photographs reveal that Siskin’s Deaf community holds an array of valuable knowledge that is taught mostly through older generations of Deaf people to younger generations. Because people are mostly born to hearing families, much of DCCW can be impoverished if not given access to sign language, Deaf teachers, and education. As expressed, the themes that occurred during the photovoice project surround the ideas of sign language being key to Deaf individuals’ success, as well as community engagement and understanding that leads to empowerment and resistance.
CHAPTER V

When hearing people change their attitude about Deaf people and our capabilities, our destinies will be altered. Hearing people don’t believe that we can do all the things we can. Our relationship with people in hospitals, schools, churches, and other public places struggle because they do not understand us. We are faced with many barriers in Ethiopia. We lack skilled and adequate interpreters, we lack the money to pay for those interpreters and teachers for the d/Deaf. Most interpreters learn Signed Amharic, like Signed English, instead of Ethiopian Sign Language. Deaf schools are closing and d/Deaf children are being mainstreamed in hearing schools with teachers who cannot communicate with them. They are staying in their local areas and not meeting other d/Deaf people. They are not learning sign language from a young age and so their independence is potentially compromised. These issues do not even confront the barriers that deaf people in rural areas are facing. I am concerned for our youth and their lack of exposure to the Deaf community. Even so, I am hopeful. Most Ethiopians belong to the Orthodox Church and if they could come together with the Deaf community and Deaf education then we could really break barriers—through shifting peoples’ attitudes. In Siskin, we are lucky to have two skilled interpreters in EthSL and continue to establish community events like sports teams and Deaf clubs. What do I hope for our Ethiopian Deaf community? I hope that Ethiopian Sign Language would be considered a natural and official language of Ethiopia and equal to that of spoken language. I hope that we can work together to share information about Deaf culture in order for the community to continue to grow. We must all work together to make that change.

–Alemayehu, August 8, 2016
INTRODUCTION

Alemayehu shares his concerns about the fate of the Deaf community in Ethiopia. Deaf education echoes the patterns that were seen in the U.S.; the shutting down of Deaf schools in favor of ‘inclusive’ mainstream practices shows the impact of colonization and hearing-centric philosophies in Deaf education in Ethiopia. Signed Amharic use is being encouraged instead of EthSL, resulting in negative impacts similar to how Signed English became the standard for educating Deaf children in the U.S. instead of ASL. Audist attitudes and lack of understanding Deaf culture and the importance of a completely accessible language is at the core of these harmful trends. Even so, Alemayehu speaks of hope for the community through the acceptance of sign language as a social norm. These acts of resistance were found throughout not only the photovoice project, but also daily interactions with the Deaf community in Siskin.

Below I will discuss the findings from Chapter 4 and how they connect to Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth framework. I will examine the six different capitals and how those capitals overlap in different scenarios. It is important to recognize that Yosso developed this “multifaceted portfolio of cultural assets and resources that facilitates the survival and resistance of Communities of Color” (Yosso & Garcia, 2007, p. 155) in an attempt to dismantle deficit attitudes toward oppressed cultural minorities. This chapter will expand on that notion by claiming that the Deaf community is also a cultural minority that has CCW. This identity also intersects with a variety of racial identities. DCCW is not only the skills that are innate to Deaf people, but are better developed when d/Deaf people can interact, engage, and learn from one another.

DISCUSSION
Undeniably, the findings show that d/Deaf people and the Deaf community hold CCW and this ‘wealth’ continues to flourish and expand as d/Deaf people are able to interact, communicate, and learn from one another. The photovoice project provided tools to uncover and discuss the different aspects of their DCCW without damaging or further marginalizing the community. While actively engaging the community in a form of documentary photography, they obtained new photography skills such as composition, light and shadow, and technique while also engaging in critical dialogue about the value in their community. These discussions, both one-on-one and in groups, allowed me to better understand a d/Deaf and Ethiopian perspective in order to portray the real experience, consciousness, and beauty this community has to offer the world.

Below is a graph that displays the number of times each capital in DCCW was expressed either through the co-researchers’ photographs or the stories they told me. This graph does not show the moments DCCW was expressed outside of the photovoice project during informal conversations or other workshops and events that happened during my stay. Examples for my analysis below will be pulled from photovoice stories, my personal interactions with the community, and Alemayehu’s story.
Aspirational Capital

Aspirational Capital was expressed 30 times during the photovoice sessions. This high rate may have been impacted by the topic of the last session, which asked students to show their dreams for the future. However, even without this prompt, aspirational capital was expressed intermittently throughout the entire project.

The d/Deaf people I met during my time in Ethiopia had the perseverance to better themselves regardless of the barriers they faced every day. Many expressed goals of teaching younger generations of Deaf youth sign language and other important subjects so they have a higher chance of success in the future. All expressed the desire to be self-sufficient and eager to have employment opportunities with other d/Deaf individuals. Two Deaf students, Bekele and Abebe, expressed that working with other Deaf people allows them to have access to information that many others miss if they work with only hearing people. Both were apprenticing under Deaf workers as well. Many of the students in Siskin showed the desire to ‘give back’ to their
community after they built Deaf knowledge and skills from community relationships, either through teaching Deaf youth or participating in the community in another way.

**Linguistic Capital**

Linguistic capital was the next most prevalent with 26 occurrences I identified during the project. This capital being so widespread seems reasonable as many of the experiences expressed were related to sign language and having access to information and communication. This capital allows for the rest of the capitals to flourish; when d/Deaf people have the opportunity to obtain sign language, they usually are interacting with other Deaf people who then support them in developing the other capitals within Deaf culture.

Linguistic capital being the second highest occurring capital in the photovoice project represents the need and desire for d/Deaf Ethiopians to both communicate and connect with other human beings. Because sign language is not accessible to most d/Deaf Ethiopians from birth, many also know a limited amount of their native spoken languages; however, once sign language is introduced, the desire to communicate freely and connect intimately becomes more available to them. This ability allows for d/Deaf people to further advance themselves and the relationships around them, giving a sense of purpose for their lives. Indeed, their lives have more purpose than they are taught to believe. Alemayehu again highlights the importance of linguistic capital through his advocacy of Ethiopian sign language becoming a nationally recognized language. He recognizes its importance for the success and independence of d/Deaf youth and acknowledges the struggle that most d/Deaf children experience trying to access education.

Furthermore, the community requested language videos to be developed in order to share Ethiopian Sign Language on a larger scale via social media. This promotion of sign language proves that it is essential to their way of being, survival and overall happiness in life. Without
language, d/Deaf people are destined for social isolation. Sign language provides an avenue through which d/Deaf people can communicate and connect with other human beings. This desire to connect with others is seen in students’ efforts to develop instructional EthSL videos. The videos created are based on introductory signs on five different topics: signs that are family related, signs for colors, signs for domestic animals, signs for nature and signs for numbers. While they do not provide grammatical context, simple exposure to different words provides a new educational tool for parents of d/Deaf children to use as well as d/Deaf students who are just beginning their journey with EthSL (see Appendix).

**Navigational Capital**

Navigational capital was recorded 25 times during this project. This high rate also exists because d/Deaf people are constantly finding new ways to navigate through audist spaces and audist behaviors. Many of the examples came from rejection of employment, which results in looking for other solutions to provide for themselves. An important example was given in figure 5.3, the Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf, where d/Deaf people in Siskin are assisted in looking for work and provided other important resources that help them navigate through audist systems. This resource significantly contributes to the Deaf community’s navigational capital, where people can not only find resources, but also meet other d/Deaf people and potentially learn sign language, inadvertently providing linguistic capital as well.

Deaf community cultural wealth flourishes within individuals when they are able to interact and share information with other d/Deaf people. Navigational capital is one that is especially influenced when d/Deaf people have access to one another. While Samuel was able to figure out a way to barter and interact with hearing people at the market on his own, he was able to access information about work and become more self-sufficient with the help of Ethiopia’s
National Association of the Deaf. Access to information through d/Deaf people within the association provided him a way to make a living and survive on his own. Experiences like these also intersect with both social and familial capitals. As these networks develop, d/Deaf people realize they are not alone in this world and tend to make closer bonds with one another. This was apparent especially with how the younger generation of Deaf students looked up to the Deaf staff members as role models and teachers, especially when navigating audist spaces. Once while walking from the center with Getachew, a Deaf staff member, and Bekele, a Deaf student, Getachew told Bekele to grab snacks from a food cart and then assisted us in getting a bajaj back to the house. Getachew was confident in his teachings and Bekele trusted what he learned from Getachew on how to interact with the hearing people in both encounters. While the teaching was not explicit to me, it was obvious that Bekele looked to Getachew for guidance in the past while interacting with hearing people. These learned behaviors could not be done in the same way with a hearing person ‘guiding’ a deaf person.

**Social Capital**

Instances of social capital occurred 23 times in the photovoice project, but was also observed during my everyday experiences with the community during my two-month stay. Social capital is identified as a place of support outside the family where the Deaf community could find a space where they feel like they belong. Social capital provides guidance and a network of resources from individuals who are more knowledgeable about issues surrounding the d/Deaf people.

Although Nyala is no more than two years old, it is one of the central networks for d/Deaf people in Siskin to access sign language lessons for both parents and children, Deaf education, knowledge about deafness, hearing testing, and other major resources that benefit the Deaf
community. It is the largest existing network for social capital for the Deaf community and having older Deaf role models as teachers, audiologist technicians and other valued occupations, making a sustainable living provide hope for parents who feel overwhelmed by the prospects they have been told about having a deaf child. During Turaco International’s two-week service trip, one member, a CODA (Children of Deaf Adults), happens to belong to a Deaf family where there is a genetic disposition to being deaf and currently has twelve Deaf members in his family. During a parent session where we had an open dialogue with the parents of Deaf children, he shared this fact with them. Our perspective on deafness was a positive one; we were excited to learn who was Deaf in their families and sharing our own positive experiences with Deaf people in our home countries. One parent shared, “There are six deaf children in our family, my sister and I have all had deaf children, but only my son goes to school because they live in a very rural place and do not treat them well.” After the open dialogue the director of Nyala shared that it was the first time she found out there was more than one deaf child in that family. Without access to this support parents tend to keep hidden what is believed to be shameful, social capital not only supports Deaf people, but also the families of those Deaf individuals.

Nyala also holds gatherings for the Deaf community to come and hang out. I was there for one of them where Getachew took some time to encourage other Deaf people to work hard in order to take care of themselves. Nyala is a place to access information about where they can find work and how they can become more successful. Holding space for Deaf people to gather also fosters a stronger sense of community and allows for people to support one another and help navigate audist behaviors from the larger hearing population. It is also a time to enjoy each other’s company and learn from one another. One by one, different people volunteered to display different talents like juggling tricks or theatrical performances they enjoy doing. Alemayehu also
expresses the continued work and development of social capital through the establishment of sports teams and clubs for the Deaf community, each of these fostering a stronger sense of social capital.

**Familial Capital**

Familial capital was expressed 20 times during the photovoice project, but again was seen outside the project as well. Familial capital and social capital have more overlap than any other of the capitals. The reason for this may be that familial capital does not require blood relation, but can also mean ‘kin’ “that carry a sense of community, history, memory, and cultural intuition” (Yosso & Garcia, 2007, p. 164). While blood related family can teach about Ethiopian culture, it is not often that they can teach about what it means to belong to the Deaf community and Deaf culture. Much of the Deaf community in Siskin consider each other not only a network of people and resources, but also a support system that works so closely with one another that they sometimes become closer than with their hearing families who cannot communicate with them. In Ethiopia, it is obvious that the families of the staff and students who participated are supportive of their education and success providing a strong familial capital in the home as well. Even so, when communication is limited at home, the Deaf community provides a space for Deaf individuals to express their feelings and thoughts to one another.

The most reoccurring example of familial capital I saw throughout both the photovoice project and the daily lived experiences was how the younger generation of Deaf children looked up and respected the Deaf staff members of Nyala. Despite their lack of relation through genetic ties, Deaf children personally shared with me how much the Deaf adults mean to them. They express that the Deaf members of Nyala are their support, inspiration, and motivation to do more and to give back to the Deaf community. They provide both moral and emotional support for the
Deaf children because they can personally relate to the same struggles they share. This support cannot be passed down from hearing parents to deaf children because the hearing parents have not had to face many of the barriers their children must face. The Deaf community expands upon what it means to have familial capital and how people outside of their blood relation could engage in familial relationships.

**Resistance Capital**

Lastly, and the least occurring capital was resistance capital with 19 occurrences. While this is the lowest number, it is still relatively high which displays that many of the co-researchers had a sense of the inequity against d/Deaf people and in their own ways work to resist those oppressions. While resistance manifests itself in a variety of ways (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) it was mostly expressed through Deaf community members desire to teach and educate younger Deaf children so that they can become more successful and obtain a job in the future. Other examples came from discussions in regards to laws against d/Deaf people from doing specific jobs, for example become a bajaj driver. While the community understands the need for policy change, their main focus has been to better themselves as a community and grow so that they can first support one another and resist together.

Resistant capital is manifested through the other five capitals as well as the d/Deaf person’s drive to be self-sustaining and independent even in the face of structural barriers. Without the support of both familial and social capital, the desire to dream big even in the face of systemic barriers (aspirational), the skills to maneuver through audist spaces (navigational), and a natural language foundation established within the community (linguistic capital), resistance would be non-existent. Although he is aware of the injustices that exist for d/Deaf people, Alemayehu expresses resistance through the desire to spread sign language and making it a
nationally recognized language. He understands that for change to be made, a mental shift must occur within the minds of hearing people. Rights such as Deaf classrooms, Deaf teachers, and education in sign language will not exist successfully without the transformation of hearing peoples’ attitudes and perspective of d/Deaf people.

Resistant capital was also seen when the students and staff discusses the legality of not being able to drive simply because they are Deaf. We discussed the differences with this example, particularly in comparison to the laws in the U.S. and as a group they were able to deconstruct the perceptions of Deaf people in Ethiopia and why people believed they should not be allowed to drive. Additionally, they all expressed desired to change policies and laws established in regards to this situation. Raising consciousness is the first step to social change and this Deaf community in Siskin is fostering the mental capacity to understand systemic oppression and developing tools on how to resist those audist systems.

CONCLUSIONS

Photovoice was an effective tool while working with the Deaf community in Siskin. Using a visual form of expression with individuals who perceive the world through visual contexts resulted in insightful and moving photographs that captured both their narrative and their ability to overcome societal barriers. Their desire to work with film also implies that visual techniques (especially those where sign language can be expressed) is a great tool for accessing information from the Deaf community.

While this project expanded upon our understanding of Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth, it also remains true to Gertz’s central tenants of DeafCrit. This photovoice project emphasized the “centrality of Deaf experiential knowledge” by conveying the stories told through the photographs taken by the community. Co-researchers shared their personal
experiences of embracing Deaf culture and the community and the process it took to get there. Many struggled as children trying to understand the interactions and conversations going on around them. When sign language was accessible a new world of understanding and acceptance was opened up and many succeed and a much higher degree than deaf individuals who were never exposed to an accessible language.

Challenging the dominant hearing ideology is a conscientious practice for the Deaf community on an everyday basis. Hearing ideology is imbedded in the way the world functions meaning d/Deaf people are constantly learning new ways to navigate hearing spaces and hearing beliefs about deafness as a negative aspect of someone’s life. For Deaf Ethiopians, dispelling the myth that deafness is a sin and the cultural practices of exclusion is a battle fought as a community through exposure to successful Deaf people and education about how deafness manifest itself on a biological level. This narrative was revealed through many of the deaf women who would visit Adina’s home as well as visiting the livelihood beneficiaries. Most were in unfortunate situations in the home where families did not protect them as they should and it resulted in abuse and physically and emotionally in addition to the language delays. As Alemayehu shared, a complete shift in attitude and consciousness much occur in order to dismantle the hearing structures and norms in place that marginalize deaf people. Without raising consciousness and awareness about these issues, hearing ideology will continue to perpetuate.

This project expresses that d/Deaf Ethiopians share some similarities to other d/Deaf populations around the world in relation to linguistic rights. One hundred percent of the Deaf people I interacted with mentioned sign language as tool that had led them to better success in life. The findings clearly show that when d/Deaf students have access to their natural language they are more confident in their skills to navigate the world and reach success that is satisfying
and sustaining for themselves and their community. When linguistic rights are fostered within school settings, deaf children are set up with more opportunities to succeed and when these skills are incorporated with Deaf role models; Deaf students can see themselves as active participants in society. Reexamining deafness through cultural and linguistic minority, rather than a medical lens could potentially shift the majority cultural attitudes that link deafness with deficient. Through a DeafCrit lens, DCCW reveals that Deaf people have much to offer the world in terms of language development, ingenuity, navigational abilities, communication and cognitive processing.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Further research could be done in more remote and rural areas of Ethiopia to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of d/Deaf people in lower socio-economic locations. While I had the privilege to work with the Deaf community and the school most students attended, it is apparent that these select few Deaf individuals are of a small group of privileged deaf people who were exposed to sign language at some point in their life. This is not the case for most deaf people living in indigenous areas of Ethiopia. While deafness and audism was the central focus of this study, critically engaging in the intersectionality of other identities with being Deaf is needed to participate in more expansive conversations about systemic oppression and injustice towards Deaf individuals.

**Areas for Growth**

Overall the experience working with Nyala Center and Turaco International was a phenomenal one. I appreciated the work they have been doing in regards to Ethiopian Sign Language access for d/Deaf children. Their continued efforts to raise awareness about Deaf
culture, community, and developing livelihood opportunities in Ethiopia is one to be commended.

I would recommend an area of consideration. During Turaco’s two-week stay, a Cued-Amharic workshop was held for two days. I was impressed when Nyala director asked to shorten this workshop because continuing with programs like cued-speech can significantly damage a community, even if unintentional. Cued speech is a signing system developed by a hearing man named Dr. R. Orin Cornett who desired that deaf children should be on the same reading levels as hearing students. Cued-Speech attempts to show sounds that cannot be seen on the lips with nine different hand shapes that are placed around the face and neck. While he may have intended to provide a solution for better reading and writing abilities of d/Deaf children, cued-speech cannot provide the same language acquisition that develops within a child’s brain equal to sign language. Its very inception was created with the belief that d/Deaf children need to be able to comprehend sound in order to read and write. Lip reading, with the visual support of cued-speech was the solution to this barrier. However, these solutions are still framed in deficient thinking; that sign language is not an adequate solution for reading and writing acquisition. On the contrary, when d/Deaf children have sign language as their first language from birth they achieve the same cognitive milestones as hearing children with spoken language (Henner et.al., 2016). If established without caution and with a hearing centric lens, Cued-Amharic will behave as another signing system that does not support language development on a cognitive level, further damaging a Deaf child’s opportunity to obtain language that will support their reading and writing abilities. We must be critical about our intentions and if they actually better the communities we look to support. While Turaco is intentional in its implementation and education in EthSL, and provide a large-scale network and resources for d/Deaf people in Siskin, continued
deconstruction of hearing ideologies must be addressed in every executive decision. I recommend working with and integrating more Deaf people from Ethiopia to participate in decisions regarding the education of Deaf children. Respect for Deaf culture and incorporating Deaf community participation will provide better and more successful outcomes in program development.

This project’s intention was to deconstruct the dominant narrative about how d/Deaf people exist in Ethiopia through the narratives of Deaf Ethiopian’s themselves. While this project was awareness raising and provided a new understanding of Deaf life in Ethiopia, it must still be recognized that the sample population used in this project was one from privileged circumstances. Many who had the ability to participate were males who were receiving or had received some sort of education. They all lived closer to the city and out of rural areas where education is inaccessible for d/Deaf students. Most had family members who disregarded the majority beliefs that deafness is a sin and shameful for the family, and instead advocated for their child to receive formal education. Having access to a larger sample of Deaf individuals from a variety of socio-economic classes as well and gender diversity can further expand the complexity of the Deaf experience in Ethiopia. While consistently challenging dominant norms as well as critiquing our own work, we can work to improve and advocate for Deaf lives and existence in this world.
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Appendix

Instructional Videos:

Introduction to Ethiopian Sign Language
Family Signs: https://youtu.be/KkztMMQZ-jg

Color Signs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QxER6VNCZE&feature=youtu.be
Nature Signs: https://youtu.be/q8gAZhyAjxY

Domestic Animal Signs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2Gx8PWNWCA&feature=youtu.be
Number Signs: https://youtu.be/poQGYSh7aLQ