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Repeated assemblages in the interactions of deaf youth in Peru

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I address the question of how interactions with deaf youth and their hearing interlocutors are able to unfold in economical and fluid ways despite the existence of sensory and communicative asymmetries. Bringing together ethnographic insights from two years of fieldwork in Iquitos, Peru with the microanalysis of moments of situated interaction, I highlight the role that repetitions of similar assemblages of people, objects, and places play in the process of meaning-making between deaf youth and their hearing interlocutors. I argue that the repetition of similar assemblages facilitates the process of meaning-making by narrowing down the trajectory of the interactions that emerge in a particular moment and by providing the occasion for building shared semiotic resources specific to the reoccurring activity.

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Introduction

Around the world, there are large numbers of deaf individuals who are born into hearing families (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004), occasioning a likelihood that they will face barriers in accessing the language(s) used in their homes (Humphries et al., 2016). If barriers to language access persist, deaf individuals may live with reduced access to the linguistic resources of named languages into childhood, adolescence, and even adulthood (Goico, 2019a). This paper is concerned with how deaf youth living under such conditions in Iquitos, Peru make meaning in moments of interaction.

Through interactional extracts between deaf youth and their hearing family members and neighbours, I explore the way in which assemblages 'of people, semiotic resources and objects [that] meet at particular moments and places' (Pennycook, 2017, p. 280) come together in repeated yet novel ways. I highlight the role that repetitions of similar assemblages play in the process of meaning making during interactions between deaf youth and their hearing interlocutors. In interactions, these deaf youth experience sensory and communicative asymmetries (Adami & Swanwick, 2019; Kusters, 2017), yet their physical co-presence and shared history (Haviland, 2013, p. 312) make available an abundance of resources within the particular momentary assemblage that can be recruited for the meaning-making process (Moriarty Harrelson, 2019).

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Combining ethnographic insights from two years of fieldwork with deaf youth in Iquitos, Peru and a microanalysis of two segments of situated interaction, I address the question: how are interactions with these deaf youth able to unfold in economical and fluid ways despite the existence of sensory and communicative asymmetries (Goico, 2017, 2019b)? In the first extract, I consider how a game of bingo and the people with whom it is played can form a relatively stable assemblage, allowing the participants to riff on it. In the second extract, I examine a mealtime negotiation (Paugh & Izquierdo, 2009) that has a much less overt structure than bingo playing. In the extract, a hearing mother does not take into consideration the sensory asymmetries that exist between her and her daughter. Nevertheless, their mealtime conversation proceeds without running into interactional difficulties. Through these interactional extracts, I argue that the repetition of similar assemblages facilitates the process of meaning making by narrowing down the trajectory of the interactions that emerge in a particular moment and by providing the occasion for building shared semiotic resources specific to the reoccurring activity. This discussion sheds light on practices of meaning-making for deaf youth, as well as providing an important interactional perspective for researchers interested in the emergence of sign repertoires in contexts where deaf individuals face barriers in acquiring named signed and spoken languages.

The social lives of deaf youth project: methods and analysis

Data for this paper comes from a two-year ethnographic study on the social and educational lives of deaf youth in Iquitos, Peru. Iquitos is a city with approximately 500,000 inhabitants located in the Peruvian Amazon. Deaf children in Iquitos are typically born into hearing families and do not have their deafness detected until over one year of age. Even after detection, there are limited options to diagnose the child's hearing level or gain access to language services (Goico, 2019a). In the past, deaf children in Iquitos met other deaf individuals and gained access to the linguistic resources of Peruvian Sign Language (*Lengua de Señas Peruana* – LSP) in special education schools. In contrast, under the Peruvian policy of inclusive education (*educación inclusiva*), deaf children are mainstreamed into general education classrooms, where they are typically the only deaf child in the school and receive no support services (Goico, 2019a). Though they attended school, the students with whom I worked were functionally illiterate; most could not independently write their full names.

I utilise the theoretical and methodological framework of linguistic ethnography (Hou & Kusters, 2020), which brings together the detailed analysis of situated interaction with ethnographic insights on the social and institutional contexts in which communication emerges (Goico, 2020). Data collection consisted of participant observation, fieldnotes, video recordings of everyday interactions, and semi-structured interviews in the homes, neighbourhoods, and schools of ten deaf youth from 2013–2015. I am a hearing and white Latina researcher from the United States, and I conducted my research in the local languages used in Iquitos. This was facilitated by my fluency in Spanish and American Sign Language prior to beginning my fieldwork. Members of the Iquitos community were integral in helping me to adapt to the colloquialisms of Iquitos Spanish and learn LSP, as well as the local signing practices of the ten deaf youth. I spent six months in Iquitos prior to beginning research activities in order to allow time for families to become familiar with the research objectives, the researcher, and the research equipment.[1]

The interactions discussed in this paper are taken from recordings conducted in the homes of the deaf youth in 2015. I conducted 10–12 video recording sessions in each student's home over the course of six months. Each session used two camcorders and lasted between four to six hours, resulting in a corpus of between 50–60 h of recordings per family. During these visits, I recorded the family's everyday activities, such as completing chores, working on homework, and eating meals.

The interactions discussed in this paper come from the homes of two of the deaf youth, Luis (14 years old) and Melanie (11 years old).[2] Luis has a moderate hearing loss and is able to lipread and pronounce a small number of Spanish words. Melanie is profoundly deaf; she also has total blindness in one eye and profound low vision in the other eye.[3] At the time, neither had sustained access to users of LSP, although they had learned a small number of signs (e.g. numbers, ABCs) in school and through limited interactions with the Jehovah's Witness. Five days of home filming per deaf youth were selected at random for analysis for the Social Lives of Deaf Youth Project. Video recordings were first prepared in the programme ELAN by identifying moments in which the deaf individuals were engaged in interaction, and then labelling the ongoing activity, the individuals involved, and the nature of the interactional project (ELAN, 2018). This coding was then used to build collections and explore ethnographic themes across the data. The interactional extracts presented here were selected as representative for the current discussion.

The interactional extracts are presented in the form of transcripts that rely heavily on screenshots (referred to as figures) to make visible the broad range of semiotic resources that are employed in the interactions. Transcripts are meant to be read in a comic strip fashion. Time stamps are displayed above each figure. A textual transcript is aligned below the figures with sign glosses in capital letters, descriptions of additional bodily information in parentheses, italicised Spanish utterances, and a figure reference. A forward slash (/) represents when articulators are used simultaneously within an utterance. Interpretive translations are provided in bold. Whenever possible, I selected a still image from the start of the sign or gesture stroke (Kita et al., 1998). I have calculated timing between turns according to the stroke-to-stroke timing method described in Casillas et al. (2015).

Repetition in meaning making

In this paper, I examine the importance that the repetition of similar assemblages of people, objects, and semiotic resources plays in the lives of deaf youth who experience sensory and communicative asymmetries in their interactions. Deborah Tannen (2007, p. 101) observes that repetition 'is the central linguistic meaning-making strategy, a limitless resource for individual creativity and interpersonal involvement.' Repetition has been found to be pervasive in human language (e.g. Bakhtin, [1975] 1981; Du Bois, 2014; Goodwin, 2018; Tannen, 2007). It can occur in a number of different forms, including self-redundancy and dialogic repetition across turns (Bazzanella, 2011). Repetition can also be used for a variety of different functions, such as to facilitate language production (Tannen, 2007) or to form counter moves (Goodwin, 1990).

Charles Goodwin (2018) moved beyond repetition at strictly the linguistic level to put forth the framework of co-operative action, or reuse with transformation, as the basis for human social and cognitive life, cultural reproduction, and human evolution. Goodwin (2018) provides in depth illustrations of reuse with transformation at a variety of scales

and time depths: from building single actions through taking up and combining a variety of semiotic resources (for discussions of the diversity of semiotic resources taken up in meaning making see also Bagga-Gupta, 2000; Kusters et al., 2017; Mondada, 2014; Tapio, 2019); to the dialogic reuse of resources and actions distributed across speakers and utterances (see also Du Bois, 2014); to the accumulation of material culture, such as tools, through reuse with transformation over generations.

In examining the interactions of deaf individuals who have encountered barriers in acquiring a named spoken or signed language, repetition and reuse with transformation can be found to be pervasive. As Moriarty Harrelson (2019) notes, although deaf individuals in such a situation are typically described as having 'no language', in reality, the semiotic resources with which they build actions are quite diverse and rapidly expanding. Reuse with transformation is seen in the emergence of signs through borrowing from social practices (Green, 2014; Haviland, 2013) and gestures (Mesh & Hou, 2018; Nyst et al., 2012) already available within the community. Repetition and reformulation can be utilised to ensure understanding between interlocutors (Adami & Swanwick, 2019), including through the linkage of distinct codes and semiotic resources in a practice known as 'chaining' (Safar, 2019). Repeated activities, such as games (Goico, 2020) and speech genres (Horton, 2020) can also provide a structuring force for unfolding interactions.

In this paper, I draw attention to a form of repetition in the lives of deaf youth that has received less attention in the literature – repetition at the level of the assemblage. Pennycook (2017, p. 280) conceptualises assemblages in terms of 'how different trajectories of people, semiotic resources and objects meet at particular moments and places'. When considering the trajectories of assemblages in the lives of deaf youth, I observe that the assemblages that emerge within the routines of everyday life form novel iterations of previous assemblages. In this regard, Marjorie H. Goodwin and Asta Cekaite (2018) draw on Goffman's (1953) notion of the 'daily round' to discuss the time/space configurations that organise the routines of family life, leading to reoccurring activities at particular times of the day, with particular individuals, and in particular spaces. I find that the emergent structure of such daily routine, resulting from the continual iteration of similar assemblages, plays a crucial role in meaning-making between deaf youth and their hearing interlocutors in Iquitos. In particular, I draw attention to the way in which reoccurring assemblages: 1) narrow the trajectory of emerging interactions and 2) provide the occasion for building shared semiotic resources.

Repetitions of similar assemblages in moments of interaction with deaf youth

Riffing on the structure of a bingo game

In this section, I examine a joke between Luis and his hearing neighbour during a bingo game. I highlight how previous iterations of assemblages in moments of bingo playing allowed the participants to riff on the structure and shared practices for playing the game, thus enabling the success of the joke. The joke was filmed on April 9, 2015 in the front room of Luis's house. Bingo playing was organised into rounds of bingo, which consisted of the following phases: At the start of each bingo round, the players placed a small monetary buy-in of ten cents into the pot. Then, one person was in charge of drawing the

bingo chips out of a bag and calling out the numbers to the players. As the person called the numbers, the players would place markers on their bingo cards until someone filled five squares in a row on their card and called '*bingo*'. This was followed by the winner retrieving the money from the pot, and the next round of bingo would begin.

As will be seen, the joke was built around knowledge of this game structure and a shared etiquette for playing the game. The joking moment began when Pamela, Luis's neighbour, overtly leaned over to look at Luis's bingo card, which he was covering with his arm. Pamela then expanded on this violation of etiquette to pretend that the next chip that she called was the one Luis needed to win the round. Luis played along with the joke, calling '*bingo*' and reaching into the pot to grab the money. His actions caused both to break out in laughter.

The joke spanned from the calling of the fourth to the sixth bingo chips in the first of many rounds of bingo during the afternoon and will be presented in four transcript segments. Extract 1.1 depicts the moments leading up to the joke, beginning with Pamela reading the fourth chip to the table. Figure 1 portrays the entire table of participants as Pamela reaches into the bag for a chip. The participants included Luis, two neighbours Pamela and Marta, Marta's son Tony, and Luis's sister Julia. In the remainder of the figures, I zoom in on Luis and Pamela.

Extract 1.1 Bingo Joke

Pamela had the drawstring bag with the chips in her lap under the table. She reached inside the bag and shook her hand around (the sound can be heard on the recording) (Fig 1), then looked at the chip (Fig. 2) and called the number to the group (Fig. 3). Luis looked over at Pamela's hand to see the number (Fig. 3), then, placed markers on the

corresponding squares on his cards (Fig. 4). The ease with which these actions unfolded indicated that both players were familiar with the structure of the bingo game described above, as well as the set of objects required to carry out the game.

As C. Goodwin (2000, 2018) points out in his analysis of a game of hopscotch, objects such as a hopscotch grid, provide an enduring structure on which an individual instance of the game is built due to their 'extended temporal dimension' (Goodwin, 2018, p. 171) in comparison with fleeting linguistic resources. The short sequence of actions in Extract 1.1 relied on a number of objects, similar to the hopscotch grid, that structured the game and therefore were critical elements of this momentary assemblage, as well as any assemblage that emerges around the activity of bingo playing in Iquitos. These objects, which can be seen on the tabletop, included the chips – red plastic circles with embossed letters and numbers, the multiple cards in front of each player, and the markers that individuals were using to cover the squares on their cards.

These objects had a history of usage within the household. Prior to beginning the game, Marta counted the chips in the drawstring bag. Having the correct number of chips was essential, as I found out later in one of my visits. After frequently playing bingo at Luis's house, a number of visits went by in which the game was not suggested as an afternoon activity. When I asked Julia why we had not played bingo recently, she replied that they had lost some of the chips and so could not play. Along with highlighting the importance of having the complete set of chips for the game, her response revealed that the chips were regularly used in the household – and probably not just for bingo – which was how some were lost. In preparing for the start of the bingo playing, Marta also collected and smoothed out the cards, which were wrinkled, indicating their previous usage. The markers were the objects with the shortest time depth. Individuals in Iquitos usually make markers out of items on hand; I have seen people use bits of paper or pieces of corn. Pamela created her own markers moments before playing by breaking off bits of black seed that came from a fruit the family had been enjoying earlier that afternoon. It was not just the objects, however, that provided an indication that the trajectories through which they came to this particular assemblage had converged at other moments.

There were multiple lines of evidence of the players having played bingo together at Luis's house on previous occasions. In the case of Pamela, I had multiple days of recording at Luis's house for which she was present, including a later day of bingo playing with Luis, Julia, Pamela, and a fourth neighbour. In addition, on the recordings from earlier in the afternoon, before bingo began, the players also displayed a familiarity with playing together in that particular space. Julia, Marta, and Pamela had made plans to play bingo at the house that day. Pamela was the last to arrive, and as she appeared in the front doorway, Marta announced, '*ya vamos a jugar bingo*' (now we will play bingo) and then began collecting the necessary objects. Without asking where to find the objects, Marta walked to the glass case pictured in Figure 1 and collected the cards. When the chips were not there, Marta walked past the camera into the hallway that led to the inner rooms of the house and returned with the drawstring bag of chips a few moments later, pointing to her familiarity with the family (that she could walk into the inner rooms of their house without asking permission) and the house (she knew where in the back of the house the chips were located).

Although the particular momentary assemblage that came together in the extract is unique, the previous convergence of these individuals, engaged in a similar activity,

with the same set of objects, in this house is crucial to the success of the joke between Luis and Pamela. In particular, the joke was built around a shared practice for ensuring that Luis had visual access to the numbers on the chips which could have only emerged from playing bingo *together*. While the hearing players oftentimes listened for the calling of the numbers while looking down at their cards, Luis always looked at each chip after it was pulled from the bag. During the numerous rounds of bingo recorded, Julia and Marta made the chips visually available to Luis by placing them above their cards after calling the number. In contrast, Pamela, who was seated next to Luis, would pull the chips out of the bag using the hand closest to Luis (as seen in Fig. 2). She would *not* check to ensure that Luis saw the chip while she was holding it, but she would hold it with the number facing up while she called the number and then either place the chip on her card or in the space between her and Luis. This shared practice for playing bingo with Luis will become relevant for the joke.

Continuing with the segment of interaction, in the interim between the calling of chip four and chip five, Pamela looked toward Luis, who was covering his bingo cards with his arm (Fig. 5), causing her to initiate the first joking act.

Extract 1.2. Bingo Joke

Fig5. 06:17.060 Fig6. 06:18.070 Fig7. 06:19.160



4 Lui (gaze chip)<5>
5 Pam ⌊(gaze Lui cards)(lean Lui/eyebrow raise)/*ahhhhhh*<6>
6 Lui ⌊(cover board)(gaze Pam)
7 Pam ⌊(pull chip)*woaw*<7>
Wow

Fig8. 06:20.300. Fig9. 06:21.952 Fig10. 06:24.032



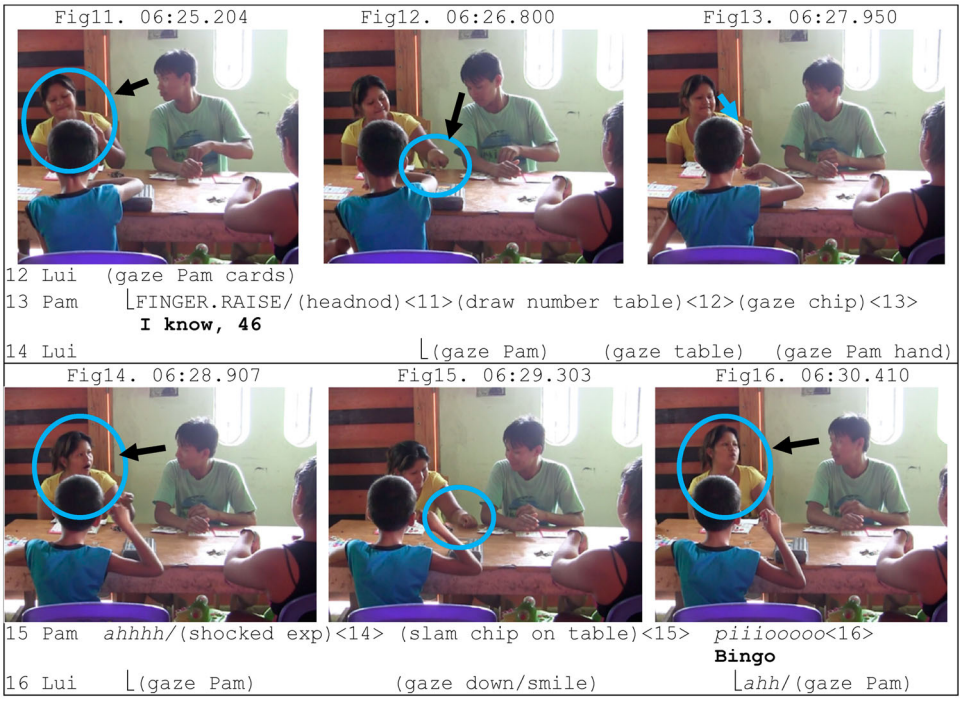
8 Pam *venti*<8>*uno Don Washo veinti*<9>*uno*
twenty-one, Don Washo twenty-one
9 Lui ⌊(gaze chip, put marker on cards)
10 Pam (gaze Lui cards/remove chip)
11 Lui ⌊(move arm to cover cards)<10>

In this initial joking moment, Pamela leaned in toward Luis, staring intently at his cards with her eyebrows raised while taking an in-breath (Fig. 6). In response, Luis moved his hand to further cover his cards (Fig. 6) and then looked at Pamela with a small grin (Fig. 7) that would remain on his face until Figure 9. Pamela did not remain in this position

for long, quickly righting herself and pulling out the next bingo chip. Pamela looked at the chip, calling '*Waow veintiuno Don Washo veintiuno*' (Wow twenty-one Mr. Washo twenty-one) (lines 7–8, Figs. 7–9). In Iquitos, it is common to give names to specific bingo numbers. For instance, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, players refer to the number 19 chip with the name '*Covid*'. The name '*Don Washo*' is not widely used in Iquitos to refer to the number 21 chip but is specific to this group of friends. By the time Pamela started saying '*veintiuno*' the second time, Luis had already looked at the chip (Fig. 8) and then turned back toward his own cards to place his markers (Fig. 9).

This initial joke was accomplished by distributing its meaning across the momentary assemblage. Pamela capitalised on their shared knowledge of the game etiquette – the significance of the cards and Luis's arm position covering them, coupled with the lamination of a variety of bodily semiotic resources including a change in body posture, facial expression, and in-breath. In Figure 10, Pamela looked at Luis's cards again as she reached for the next chip. Following this second glance, in Extract 1.3, Pamela will expand on her joke.

Extract 1.3. Bingo Joke



In the continuation of the extract, Pamela built the expansion of the joke around not just the objects in the assemblage and her bodily resources, but significantly, she riffed on Luis and her mutually shared knowledge of playing *together* (Clark, 1992). This expansion was, once again, built upon the structure of the game, taking place during the calling of the sixth chip. Having pulled out a chip in line 10, Pamela paused in calling the number and made a comment (line 13) by nodding her head with an upraised finger (Fig. 11) and drawing the number 46 on the table (Fig. 12). Here, the table which has been left out of my discussion thus far, became an important background surface on which to draw the

number (Goodwin, 2000). These actions intimated that Pamela had seen Luis's card and knew the number he needed.

Then, in the part I want to highlight, Pamela looked at the chip but altered the typical orientation of her hand to ensure that Luis *could not* see the number on the chip (Fig. 13). In hiding the number from Luis at this particular moment, Pamela capitalised on the properties of the chip, as well as the shared practice they had developed for allowing Luis visual access to it. The existence of a regular manner in which Pamela and Luis handled the calling of the chips, became available for Pamela to then alter, providing the occasion to construct her joke and set up the punch line – the dramatic reveal. Pamela's face took on an exaggerated look of shock (Fig. 14) and she slammed the chip down (Fig. 15). Then, Pamela looked up at Luis and said '*pio*' (line 15, Fig. 16). '*Pio*' is not a Spanish word, but an imitation of how Luis pronounces '*bingo*'.

Pamela's familiarity with the term indexes her close relationship with Luis's family and their previous history playing bingo together. Julia told me that when Luis was younger, she had explained to him that he was pronouncing '*bingo*' incorrectly and had tried to work with him on the pronunciation. Nevertheless, Luis continued to pronounce the word '*pio*'. This pronunciation had turned into a joke among the family and close friends who played bingo with Luis. When asked about this family practice, Luis told me that he knew when individuals used the term because of the way in which they over-enunciated the word (Goico, 2019b, pp. 79–80, 121). He also told me that he laughed along when they used the term and did not find it offensive. In addition, Luis noted how common it was for Pamela to make jokes and that she could never be taken seriously.

Extract 1.4 depicts Luis's response to the joke. Luis extended Pamela's joke, providing a clear indication of his own understanding of the structure of the bingo game and how Pamela's joke capitalised on that structure.

Extract 1.4. Bingo Joke

Luis looked up at Pamela and responded back to her, saying '*bingo*' (pronounced as '*pio*') (line 17, Fig. 17). Then, Luis reached his hand into the centre of the table where the pot of money for betting was sitting and looked back at Pamela as he placed his hand on top of the money (Fig. 18). This action points to Luis's familiarity with the structure of the bingo phases; the person who wins and calls '*bingo*', collects the pot of money for the round. The joke came to an end with Luis retracting his hand without taking the money, and the two breaking out in laughter (Fig. 19). The game then continued with Pamela moving on to the seventh chip (not depicted in the transcript).

Through the analysis of this moment of joking in a bingo game, I have directed attention to how the joke relied on the previous coming together of the elements of the assemblage. The joke could only be successfully carried out because both Pamela and Luis had knowledge of the rules and structure of the bingo game and how to use the associated objects, stemming from their previous experiences playing bingo. Moreover, built into the construction of the joke were lines of evidence that these individuals had not only played bingo before but that they had played bingo *together*. The joke capitalised on practices and semiotic resources that had emerged within previous moments in which assemblages of these individuals and these objects had come together on earlier occasions.

The ease with which Luis engaged in Pamela's joke belies the sensory asymmetries present while playing the game. Luis was at a disadvantage to the hearing individuals around him, who could watch their cards and listen for the numbers or a player call, '*bingo*'. Luis was also frequently left out of their spoken conversations. To participate in the game, Luis developed a visual orientation (Bagga-Gupta, 2004) to attend to the chips, his cards, and the people around him without any noticeable delays in his playing. Moreover, he showed himself capable of fluently engaging in moments of sociality that the bingo game afforded the group, such as the joke presented here. In the next interactional extract, I engage more directly with how repetitions of similar assemblages can facilitate the process of meaning making in the face of sensory asymmetries.

Fluidity in a mother–child mealtime negotiation

In the next interactional extract, involving a mealtime negotiation between Melanie and her mother, Rose, I consider how the repetition of previous assemblages can facilitate the fluid unfolding of interaction even when Rose does not take into consideration the sensory asymmetries that exist between her and her daughter. In contrast to the structure of the bingo game, mealtimes often open up a space for interaction with limited structuring of the accompanying conversation. Nevertheless, I note how the initiation of a commonly occurring oppositional stance display and the structure provided by the sequential nature of interaction allow the mealtime negotiation to unfold in a highly economical way.

While conducting ethnographic participant observation at Melanie's home, I recorded multiple meals, including breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. Almost all of those meals were eaten at the table depicted in Extract 2; one dinnertime meal we ate in front of the TV, rather than sitting at the table. In Iquitos, lunches are typically the biggest meal of the day and dinners are often just a light meal or snack. On weekends, Melanie's entire family, including her mother, two younger siblings, two uncles, and grandfather, would typically eat together (Melanie's father travelled for work and was frequently not at home). While visiting Melanie's home over the course of two years, I never witnessed a meal in which Melanie ate alone. This ethnographic context provides evidence of the frequency with which Melanie and Rose came together to eat, resulting in the emergence of an ever-accumulating set of similar yet novel assemblages of the same objects, people, and semiotic resources.

According to Rose, Melanie was a good eater and did not typically complain about finishing her food, yet on July 13, 2015, I captured a lunchtime meal negotiation between Melanie and Rose. The interactional exchange consisted of Melanie complaining to her mother about her food and Rose attempting to make Melanie eat. The negotiation was taken up multiple times over the course of the 19-minute lunch recording. I examine instances of this negotiation in

Extract 2 (displayed in two transcript segments) and Extract 3. Melanie was already upset with her mother as the two sat down to eat lunch. As punishment for flirting with a neighbourhood boy, Rose had taken Melanie with her to drop off her younger children at their afternoon school, instead of allowing Melanie to stay home alone. In commenting on Melanie's attitude, Rose explained to her father (Melanie's grandfather), '*así se ha ido rabiando, así ha venido*' (she left [to drop off the younger children] upset like this and came back [home] like this). Extract 2.1 displays the first instance of mealtime negotiation during the lunch.

Extract 2.1 Mealtime Negotiation

Melanie initiated the mealtime negotiation by tapping on Rose's arm to call for her attention, loud enough that the slap could be heard on the recording (Fig. 20). Rose responded by turning her gaze to Melanie and displaying an upturned palm (Fig. 21). As she did so, Melanie pointed to her plate of food and shook her head (line 3, Fig. 21). Melanie's point directs attention to the particular set of objects that came together as part of this momentary assemblage. They both had plates of food in front of them with rice and chicken feet. It was typical for even small children in Iquitos to be served large portions of rice, such as seen on the two plates. There were also dirty dishes on the table. These dishes were left by Melanie's younger siblings, having eaten lunch before they left for school. On weekdays, Melanie and her uncle (who was in his last year of secondary school) attended school in the morning and the younger siblings in the afternoon. As a result, the siblings ate early, and it was usually Melanie, Rose, and her uncle who ate together a bit later. On this particular day, it was already 2 pm and Melanie's uncle had not returned home from school, a topic about which Rose and her father were complaining at the start of lunch.

Indications of the familiarity of this assemblage can be found within the recording of the particular meal. The lack of conversation about eating together pointed to how normal an activity it was (e.g. not worthy of comment). In contrast, the multiple conversations about the uncle not being present point to how out of the norm it was (or at least, behaviour worth commenting on). Another indication of the repetitive nature of the assemblage was the food sharing that occurred between Melanie and Rose. About halfway through the recording, Rose started sucking the meat off of one of the chicken feet. After a few bites, Rose handed the chicken foot to Melanie, who took it and began eating it. Towards the end of the meal, Melanie returned the bone to Rose, who began sucking it again. The ability to share the same piece of food provides an indication of the familiarity the two have with each other. While (in the context of the interactional extract) I am specifically concerned with the evident familiarity of their eating together, Rose and Melanie, as mother and daughter, share a long socio-historic relationship that cannot be fully captured even through thick ethnographic description.

Returning to the mealtime negotiation, the start of the extract draws attention to a theme that will remain relevant over the course of this analysis: the thoroughly unproblematic unfolding of the interaction, despite the seeming lack of transparency in Melanie and Rose's responses to one another. Similar to the bingo example, Melanie's turn in line 3 was built around the distribution of semiotic resources across elements that have come together previously: her point gained meaning from its engagement with the environment (Goodwin, 2007) – directed at the plate – and the accompanying headshake. Nevertheless, even when meaning was distributed across the environment, Melanie's gesture was not transparent. Indexicals are typically combined with accompanying speech or signs that provide a description of what is being pointed to (Clark, 2003). In this case, Melanie did not provide her mom with a description of what she was pointing to (e.g. the rice, the chicken, the food as a whole).

Nevertheless, the lack of transparency in Melanie's utterance did not appear to present a problem for Rose, who responded without hesitation or uncertainty. Rose looked down at Melanie's plate (Fig. 22), which was still filled with food, and then looked up at Melanie with a glare (Fig. 23). When I asked Rose how she knew what her daughter was referring to, Rose stated that she could see it on her daughter's face. Rose's metalinguistic comment provides a crucial piece of evidence in understanding the unfolding interaction: that even more than the point to the plate, Rose was responding to Melanie's affective embodied stance (Goodwin et al., 2012). Although food negotiations were not particularly frequent, Rose had witnessed her daughter take up oppositional stances numerous times in the past. In telling a story about her daughter one day in 2015, Rose finished her story by saying, '*pero es buena, mi hijita es buena, solamente que es una niñita este-cómo te puedo decirte (0.4) medio cargosita, rabiosita, rabiosa es*' ('but she's good, my daughter is good, just she's a girl that—how do I say it (0.4) a little difficult, a little bit of a temper, she's got a temper').

Not only did Melanie frequently take up oppositional stances, but she had a set of embodied practices that she relied on to do so. In just this 19-minute lunch, Melanie provided oppositional stances on multiple occasions apart from the instances of mealtime negotiation, including when her mom tried to take drinks of her soda and asked her to sweep upstairs. In all these cases, we can find a repeated set of embodied resources: headshakes, vocalizations of discontent, brusque arm movements, putting her head in her hands, and although difficult with the particular camera angle, a facial expression which appeared to be marked by furrowed brows.

Moreover, it was not only Rose who illustrated familiarity with Melanie's embodied stance displays; Melanie also displayed familiarity with Rose's response. In line 4, Rose responded to Melanie with a glare (Fig. 23). In turn, Melanie's continued embodied stance display (shaking her head and slapping her head in her hand, Fig. 24), illustrated her familiarity with what glares-from-mom mean. Kidwell (2005) finds that children as young as one year old differentiate between a mere look and *the* look. The sustained quality (in this case, almost 2 s) and lack of overlapping activities (Rose stopped eating) are important to creating *the* look. As seen in Extract 2.2 and Extract 3, Rose frequently responded to Melanie's oppositional stances by levelling a glare at her.

In Extract 2.2, Melanie continued to pursue her claim that there was a problem with the food.

Extract 2.2. Mealtime Negotiation

Following the 0.9 s gap in line 6, Melanie produced a vocalisation at the same time as she lifted her plate (Fig. 25). Rose responded by looking at the plate and then asked, '*muy harto?*' (too much?) (line 10, Fig. 26). Rose asked this question looking directly at Melanie, but with no accompanying gestures or facial expressions to address the sensory asymmetries between her and her daughter. As mentioned above, Melanie is profoundly deaf, has total blindness in one eye, and profound low vision in the other eye. Considering the importance of 'recipient design' (Drew, 2013) in the construction of utterances, Rose's turn noticeably lacks transparency when contextualised as a question directed to Melanie. Nevertheless, Melanie nodded her head, beginning six hundredths of a second (timed in ELAN) after her mom stopped speaking.

Similar instances of Melanie responding appropriately to Rose's primarily spoken turns can be found as the mealtime negotiation continued. Three such examples are presented in Extract 3, which took place less than a minute after Extract 2.

Extract 3. Mealtime Negotiation Part 2

Fig30. 03:26.235 Fig31. 03:26.793 Fig32. 03.28.179



1 Mel (push plate against Rose)<30>
2 Ros (gaze plate)<31> (glare Mel)<32>

Fig33. 03:30.526 Fig34. 03:32.184 Fig35. 03:36.825



3 Ros (gaze plate)/*qué*<33> *vas a comer ya has comido la presa ya*
What are you going to eat now, you've already eaten the chicken.
4 Mel (headshake)<34>
5 (2.4)
6 Ros DRINK/*de sed*<35>
Thirsty
7 (1.9)

Fig36. 03:39.685 Fig37. 03:41.086 Fig38. 03:42.043



8 Mel (pick up rice<36> and eat it)
9 Ros (glare Melanie)<37>(head tilt)/*ya*<38> *vamos a comer ya*
Now come on and eat already

Fig39. 03:42.850 Fig40. 03:45.500 Fig41. 03:47.124



10 Mel (headshake)<39>
11 (1.1 – Rose gaze plate/swallow food)
12 Ros *te paleo*<40>
I'll spank you.
13 (0.6)
14 Mel (rolls head in hand)<41>

As seen in Extract 3, each of Rose's turns in lines 3, 9, and 12 were produced primarily in spoken Spanish. In lines 2–3, Rose provided visual information in the form of her glare at Melanie, her gaze direction at the plate of food, and her lips moving as she spoke. However, she spoke the comment rapidly, '*qué vas a comer ya has comido la presa ya*' (what are you going to eat now, you've already eaten the chicken) without any accompanying gestures. Similarly, in lines 9 and 12, Rose did not include any gestures or signs to explicate the referential content of her utterance. In line 9, she included visual information in the form of a glare at Melanie and a head tilt, but in line 12, Rose was not looking at Melanie as she spoke. Nevertheless, Melanie's headshakes were timed directly after Rose's utterances. Even in the case of Melanie's response in line 14, which occurs after a 0.6 s gap, this delay does not appear problematic in the context of the number of silences (Extract 2.1 – line 6; Extract 2.2 – lines 9 and 12; Extract 3 – lines 5, 7, 11, and 13) that have marked the dispreferred nature of their responses to one another (Clayman, 2002).

Even more so than Rose's ability to respond to Melanie, instances of Melanie responding appropriately to Rose raise the question of how such fluid interaction is possible. Melanie does have visual access to Rose's bodily resources, including gaze, head movements, and facial expressions. However, another important resource within the assemblage that narrows the trajectory of the interaction is its sequential organisation. Within conversation, social actions are 'positioned either to initiate a possible sequence of action or to respond to an already initiated action as part of a sequence' (Stivers, 2013, p. 191). In this way, initial actions limit the set of possible relevant responses. Importantly, achieving full understanding of an interlocutor's previous action may not be necessary to producing a relevant response if participants know 'how to go on' (Adami & Swanwick, 2019, p. 19). For instance, in Extract 2.1, Melanie initiated a mealtime negotiation with her point to the plate and her oppositional stance (line 3, Fig. 21). In Extract 2.2, Melanie pursued this mealtime negotiation with the plate lift in line 7 (Fig. 25). Thus, Melanie's actions helped narrow the possible responses from her mother, how Melanie would interpret those responses, and, subsequently, how Melanie would respond. Nevertheless, it is the repetition of numerous previous negotiations of mealtimes and oppositional stances that make these actions interpretable. If Melanie and Rose had never shared a meal together, nor engaged in the negotiation of such oppositional stances together, they would not have had the common ground to fluidly respond to each other's embodied semiotic resources and engagement with the material surround.

Through the analysis of the mealtime negotiation, I have illustrated that fluid communication could unfold even when Rose did not design her turns to address the sensory asymmetries between her and her daughter. I highlighted how repetitions of similar assemblages have led to the emergence of recognisable forms of oppositional stances and provided a framework to make interpretable the proceeding sequential responses to the initiation of a mealtime negotiation.

Conclusion

In this paper, I addressed the question of how fluid interaction is possible in the face of sensory and communicative asymmetries between deaf youth and their hearing

interlocutors. How can we account for these seemingly contradictory phenomena occurring in the same moments of interaction? I have argued that assemblages play a powerful role in accounting for the presence of such a duality in the interactions of deaf youth. Interactions emerge in particular configurations of people, objects, and spaces that make available certain semiotic resources in that given moment. I have drawn attention to the way in which the trajectories of the elements within an assemblage can intersect, resulting in similar iterations of people, objects, and semiotic resources that facilitate meaning-making by narrowing the trajectory of the interaction and providing an occasion for the development of new semiotic resources specific to the reoccurring activity.

The discussion in this paper not only sheds light on practices of meaning-making for deaf youth who have experienced barriers to acquiring named languages, but also has important implications for researchers interested in the 'emerging sign languages' of these deaf individuals. Research with deaf children in such situations has been framed around the 'de novo' emergence of their signing systems (Horton 2020, p. 651). Yet, attention to emergent interactions situated within particular momentary assemblages demonstrates the problematic nature of such assumptions. Deaf youths' daily lives in Iquitos unfold in routines of activities that are built up of familiar relationships and material surrounds. These novel iterations of reoccurring assemblages provide structure and occasions for accumulating shared semiotic resources within interactions. Thus, this study points to the need for researchers interested in the emergence of linguistic resources to broaden their analytical lens to the situated interactions from which semiotic repertoires emerge.

Notes

1. Ethical approval for the study was provided by the University of California, San Diego Institutional Review Board (#131300S).
2. Ages are calculated from the time of the recording of the interactional extracts presented in the paper.
3. Melanie's blindness was diagnosed after I observed her in the classroom and worked with the family to set up an eye exam.

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