DEAFying Silence:

**Analyzing Inclusive Non-Verbal Communication Strategies Between Students with
Deafness and Their Non-PWD Peers**

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*Non-verbal communication forms a
social language that is in many ways richer
and more fundamental than our words.*

LEONARD MLODINOW

DEDICATION

How It Happened

This thesis is wholeheartedly dedicated to my only sister and eldest sibling, Ate Paula, who was born with profound deafness. She was a consistent honor student and now an alumna of UP College of Education. I am confident that she can compete with Non-PWDs, even outperform me if society would only support her. What breaks my heart is that she can never be called ‘empowered’ if she cannot at least communicate her story, her sufferings, and her dreams to Non-PWDs. I became Ate Paula’s [unlicensed] interpreter for two semesters because hiring an interpreter is expensive. Besides booking my lunch breaks to be present in her classes, what I really despised was society’s attitude that if it weren’t for me, Ate Paula wouldn’t have survived the class. I did not earn her 1.66 general weighted average, she did. I was not the person who stayed up until seven in the morning to review a stack of lecture notes, she did. I was not the person who produced her paintings and visual presentations, she did. Society was giving me the credit for products and impressive grades that I never claimed were mine. I refused to be desensitized by these attitudes because my sister deserves better.

One day, I left the classroom to pick up some documents from the College Secretary. I immediately returned, then I secretly checked from the classroom backdoor. I saw Ate Paula’s classmates who were around my age (around twenty to twenty-three years old) trying to communicate with her. They were writing, using a sign language alphabet guide to communicate with her, and even acting their messages out to boost Ate Paula’s self-esteem to recite in class [without my assistance]. It was my first time to witness a genuine intent to integrate her in a mainstream classroom, and my sister was enjoying the instance that she could interact with her

Non-PWD classmates. I suddenly thought that there would be a lot more difference if only UP was equipped with the proper facilities, and if the educators and Non-PWD classmates were trained to communicate in sign language. I realized that there is communication in the unwritten and the unspoken, and anything that communicates is enabled by empowerment. For almost five years, I pondered on the prevalence of attitudinal and communication barriers which prevents persons with deafness to communicate with others. Eventually, I figured that I should first unravel the general non-verbal needs and language of persons with deafness to see how they can connect with Non-PWDs.

There was never a single day that I did not think of my sister as I advocate for disability rights and social inclusivity. I would also like to dedicate this thesis to all the PWDs whose grievances have not been heard by society, the general UP population, and the local authorities. You all deserve to have a life where you are unafraid of threats to stand up against social injustice. It is about time that you stop adjusting for society and let society make amends for their shortcomings. As I wrote this thesis, I thought to myself that the only legacy that I can leave is my dream that colleges and universities like UP would someday be more diverse and inclusive. I envision a future where minoritized groups are not in charity projects but in various institutions, fulfilling their dreams to become an engineer, a researcher, a lawyer, an artist, a doctor, an educator, an athlete, a scholar, and a professional from the various disciplines in society. I would dare to say that speech is not always spoken or written. It is the message in our actions and the truth behind the way we live up to honor and excellence. With this thesis, I argue that systemic change has nothing to do with being “them” or being “us.” It is a matter of how “we” can find and restore humanity in our use of communication.

ABSTRACT

People would often attribute persons with deafness as ‘mute’ individuals due to their frequent use of non-verbal communication strategies. In the Philippines’ transition to an inclusive education system, the question is how Non-PWDs can accommodate the communication style and needs of students with deafness. The researcher answers the question: How do students with deafness and Non-PWD peers promote inclusion through non-verbal communication strategies? A qualitative research design was utilized as the framework, while the research procedure consisted of a digital semi-structured interview for the participant with deafness and a focus group discussion for the Non-PWD participants. A thematic data analysis was carried out to examine the findings and extract themes.

The emerging themes revealed that students with deafness are provided with poor assistive services, and that there are issues involving the lack of social inclusivity in mainstream schools. Non-PWDs have shown initiative to shatter communication barriers by obliterating the stigma of communicating with students with deafness. Conversely, the status quo is that persons with deafness should apply spoken language instead of encouraging Non-PWDs to learn sign language. It has been concluded that persons with deafness are visual communicators. They use space to distinguish their relationship with another communicator, and they also apply kinesic behavior like sign language to deliver their messages, facial expressions to convey their emotions, and body language to further demonstrate their messages. Lastly, Non-PWDs should be enhancing their usage of time, silence, and developing their application of space to practice haptics.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background of the Study

Amidst massive demonstrations and crowds of loud protesters, the most vulnerable and unheard voices linger among persons with disabilities (PWDs) who have long internalized discrimination. Since the 16th century, PWDs received questionable medical treatment in poorly maintained asylums (Blatt, n.d.). Some were even sent to circus shows which subjected their physical and mental conditions to non-verbal mockery. PWDs have been feared by society (Kammerer, 2015), labelled with stereotypes (Okobokeyeime, 2013), and suppressed of their fundamental freedoms like self-representation (Media Smarts, 2014) and political participation (Mangahas, 2013). This alienation eventually resulted in self-doubt and avoidance of communicative opportunities. Researchers eventually developed interpretations of ‘connectedness’ and have proven that stereotyping and misrepresentation of culture are linked to the perpetuation of communication and attitudinal barriers (Momene, 2015).

These are the biggest hurdles to social inclusivity since it obstructs channels for socialization, including dialogue and activism (Chapman, 2019). Normalizing a Non-PWD’s initiative to communicate with a PWD is one of the most effective strategies to diminish prejudice against having a “disability” (Momene, 2015). Disability rights advocates in the Philippines have made immense movements to positively transform society. They urged congress to pass legislation in the form of Republic Act 9442 or the magna carta for persons with disabilities, Republic Act 7277 which provides the rehabilitation and self-development of PWDs when integrating them in mainstream society, and Republic Act 10754 that was intended to

expand the privileges and benefits of PWDs. Disability laws in the Philippines were created to protect PWDs from discrimination, and lobby for their right to education, employment, and accommodation. Other than laws, researchers introduce the “Person First Language” to differentiate a ‘disabled person’ from a ‘person with disabilities.’ These researchers raised a concern for social and linguistic etiquette, saying that a disability is what a person has than what a person is (Foley & Graff, 2018). Even if laws were institutionalized in local government offices, the attitudinal and communication barriers against PWDs still prevents these policies from becoming effective. Jokes about the appearance of sign language communicators is a common example of counter-inclusive behaviors in the Philippines.

More than two years ago, the public resented the viral video of Mocha Uson and Drew Olivar’s mockery towards persons with deafness. In their DWIZ noontime radio show, Uson dared Olivar to demonstrate his interpretation of sign language to which he parodied with patternless gestures, even ridiculing the sound of persons with deafness. Uson laughs aloud as she relates Olivar’s performance of sign language to the behavior of monkeys (Matriano, 2018). Numerous organizations and even members of the Deaf Community, themselves, showed their indignation for this blatant act of discrimination. Unfortunately, there are still Filipinos who excuse these public figures from the consequences of their violation. It is not hard to imagine the number of citizens who were persuaded that it is normal to taunt PWDs if Uson and Olivar’s actions were justified. Though it is important to finance the constructions of universal facilities and assistive technologies (ATs) like ramps, elevators, and wheelchairs (Martin, 2019), elevating the scholastic competence, economic independence, and active socialization of PWDs should be just as prioritized.

Settling for the mere acknowledgment that PWDs exist and organizing charity projects in behalf of PWDs are not indicators of PWD empowerment. PWDs should be treated as human beings and productive members of society, rather than being depicted as a helpless individual, a curse in the family, or a social burden. For the past decade, more than four hundred PWDs have been murdered by family members and caregivers (Jones, 2019). Non-PWDs were condoning this heinous crime, vindicating that the public does not know what the perpetrators have been through to kill their PWD relatives. If the world simply gave PWDs a chance to communicate their narratives, how long would it take for Non-PWDs to realize that the real victims are PWDs? Not their families, not the education system, and not the economy. The enrollment rate for PWDs is relatively low, and it is continually dropping resulting from building and learning material inaccessibility, prejudice against PWDs, exclusion from mainstream learning systems, and the plummeting quality of special education programs (Ravassard, 2018).

The earliest stage for PWD exposure can transpire through appreciation classes like seasonal Filipino Sign Language (FSL) lessons (Cayacap, 2020). In the tertiary education level, however, Non-PWD students only encounter PWDs in workshops, outreach programs, and symposiums. This is a disturbing realization for Filipinos that PWDs are not prioritized but treated as an exotic and occasional appearance within the education system. Since students with special needs were struggling to interact with Non-PWDs and absorb information in the traditional general education setting, it should be expected that they will struggle more in remote learning amidst COVID-19 (Magsambol, 2020). The country is only beginning in its transition to inclusive education which can be proven by the recent announcement of the Department of Education (Sunstar Philippines, 2017). They promised to make schools inclusive towards

learners with special needs, however, their 2015-2016 project focused solely on strengthening teachers in handling students with special needs, when it should have included how to integrate students with disabilities in a mainstream school as well. The news article specifically mentions that “learners with exceptionalities” in San Fernando City are to receive quality education from three hundred and forty-five (345) trained teachers and forty-five (45) trained school administrators and supervisors (Sunstar Philippines, 2017). It is rather contentious since the point of inclusive education is to educate all types of learners regardless if they are exceptional or not. Inclusive education is the standard quality of education that all learners deserve because it aims to accommodate their learning style and needs.

Discrimination against PWDs extends to their chances of employment success. Corporations reject applicants who are identified with a disability because of the assumption that they are underqualified, unproductive, and expensive to maintain (i.e. higher insurance and labor pay). These companies fear the legal cost of hiring PWD employees, how PWD employees will behave around Non-PWD co-workers, and what Non-PWD clients and customers would think of PWD employees (Hall, 2019). According to Morris (2019), there are over a thousand applications for persons with deafness in America but none of these corporations are offering permanent [regular/non-contractual] employment. They were able to interview Amanda Koller, a person with deafness who has earned a bachelor’s degree and two master's degrees but was never hired for a full-time position in the thousands of companies that she applied for. Based on the American Community Survey 2016 analysis of Yang-Tan Institute and Cornell University, less than forty percent (40%) of employees are working full-time. Despite the implementation of inclusive education, technological advancements, and communication accommodation, it is a

common complaint of job hunters with deafness that Non-PWD employers do not believe in their capability to compete and cooperate with Non-PWD co-workers (Morris, 2019). Another issue related to the absence of inclusive education [which teaches the social integration of PWDs] can be observed in Cortes' (2013) Philippine Daily Inquirer article on the attitudes of Filipino employers regarding persons with disabilities. The statistics reveal that only small business enterprises in the Philippines like salons, spas, restaurants, and hotels are willing to hire physically fit, non-degree male PWDs; implying that a woman with an identified disability [but may have completed a college degree program] is undesirable to the Philippine economy. Cortes (2013) discloses that companies in the Philippines are after the “Added Business Value” and are not exactly convinced that PWDs are skilled employees. The added business value refers to the positive image and prestige which hiring PWDs brings to the company. It was mentioned earlier that America is not yet economically inclusive towards persons with deafness, however, they have succeeded in making inclusive education successful such that people like Amanda Koller attained a second master’s degree. In the Philippines, the concept of inclusivity has not yet been enforced so PWD inclusivity in the workplace is quite unlikely.

The World Health Organization (2020) estimates that there are four hundred and sixty-six (466) million people with deafness around the world, thirty-four (34) million of which are children. These cases could result from prevalent risks such as noise from recreational activities and other preventable causes. Deafness is identified as a type of hearing loss obtained from genetics, birth complications, ear infections, drug intake effects, aging, excessive exposure to noise, and other infectious diseases that damages the ear anatomy (World Health Organization, 2020). Health care units advise that upon early identification of hearing loss, person with

deafness should be provided with educational and support services or facilities like assistive devices, captioning, sign language lessons, cochlear implants, or hearing aids depending on the individual's (with deafness) needs (World Health Organization, 2020). With this information, it is consequential to dissociate 'deafness' to society's characterization of persons with deafness as 'mute' (Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, n.d.). Society ostracizes persons with deafness because their communication style [that has been affected by their hearing loss] deviates from spoken Non-PWD conventions. Professionals clarify that just because they never communicate orally, does not mean their vocal cords were injured (Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, n.d.). Even if persons with deafness cannot talk, they would still need to interact with Non-PWDs and expand their network of friends. Persons with deafness should be expanding their social network because they cannot fight for social inclusion alone. Most importantly, they cannot communicate their narratives and campaign for inclusivity if they are unable to accept themselves first (M. Smith, 2019).

It is necessary to evaluate the manner by which Filipinos should approach persons with disabilities, moreover, ask oneself who Filipinos can be for PWDs to liberate themselves from the shackles of conservatism. The inspiration behind this study is rooted in the researcher's observation of her sister's (who has deafness) relationships or interactions with Non-PWDs, and experiences in a mainstream college or university. Understanding the non-verbal behavior of persons with deafness began when the researcher witnessed classmates trying to interact with the researcher's sister. Having said that, the researcher's positionality is anchored on the experiences of persons with deafness. This includes the thesis participant with deafness, and the researcher's previous interactions with students who have deafness on or between 2010-2020. The researcher

is biased towards persons with deafness because the researcher shares the same circle of friends [who have deafness] with her sister. Knowing these people for more than a decade has enlightened the researcher of how friendly and intelligent persons with deafness are if society would just support them. The rare opportunity to develop friendships with people who have deafness illuminates their unspoken struggles. This is why the researcher encourages Non-PWDs to try learning sign language so that they can communicate with the general Deaf population. Acceptance (or respect at the very least) and communication involvement are fundamental for the inclusion of persons with deafness because at the end of it all, everyone is both normal and ‘disabled’ for as long as the search for assistance and systemic improvement persists (Almog, 2018).

Research Problem

This study aims to answer the question: How do students with deafness and Non-PWD peers promote inclusion through non-verbal communication strategies?

Research Objectives

1. To describe the communication between students with deafness and Non-PWD peers within mainstream colleges or universities
2. To describe the non-verbal code systems employed by both students with deafness and Non-PWD peers during communication
3. To analyze how students with deafness and Non-PWD peers employ non-verbal accommodation strategies
4. To determine how non-verbal communication can impact inclusivity between persons with deafness and Non-PWD peers

Significance of the Study

Communication barriers include language differences and also a person's inability to accommodate another person's communication behavior. Building an inclusive communication network is an integral aspect in speech communication since the point of communicating is to recognize people and resolve issues of society. Through acts of listening and observation of non-verbal cues, inclusive communication can empower communities whose voices are marginalized. Various social groups coming together and engaging in discourse towards bettering the world is a milestone of inclusive and effective communication. Social inclusion evidently benefits everyone. In the pedagogical sense, educators provide extended deadlines and research breaks so that students may function at their own pace. Discussing inclusivity is also relevant when one attempts to understand the historical roots of discrimination. Before student rights were recognized, schools would only replicate a factory system, training children to be fixed and uniformed (Watters, 2015). Persons with deafness are in that position as well. They want to express their feelings, narratives, and social reality but society prevents them from doing so. With that, this study shall examine how inclusivity can manifest in interpersonal contexts, and how accommodating the non-verbal behavior of persons with deafness can cultivate social inclusion. Moreover, one will comprehend the reason behind the frequent non-verbal discrimination against persons with deafness. Studying non-verbal communication is a rigorous yet fulfilling study that will tackle the consciousness of one's own behavioral pattern, the area which is usually disregarded by many communicators. As Professor Mehrabian puts it, messages comprise seven percent (7%) verbal and ninety-three (93%) non-verbal properties (Yaffe, 2011). This breakdown therefore invites readers to reassess their use of non-verbal elements: How they

deliver a message, when did they deliver the message, and what actions do they display before, during, or after the message is delivered. All of the above are paramount in the facets of trust, passion, and sincerity (Parzuchowski, 2017).

Scope and Limitations

This study will have a student with deafness and at least two Non-PWD peers as respondents. They should be undergraduate or graduate students from a mainstream (schools that accept and teach PWDs and Non-PWDs in the same classroom) college or university in Quezon City and are of legal age. There should be at least one student with deafness, and at least two Non-PWD classmates. Also, both the student with deafness and the Non-PWD classmates should have worked together in the present or past.

The researcher finds it preferable that persons with deafness are the focus in this study because their communication nature is either in sign language or spoken language, both of which are representative of non-verbal convergence or non-verbal divergence. This study will transpire in mainstream academic institutions, and concentrate on the communication accommodation between persons with deafness and their Non-PWD peers. The analysis of non-verbal elements will depend on the generated themes. To clarify, the person with deafness' identified non-verbal behavior is not a representative of the entire Deaf Community's non-verbal behavior. The researcher also plans to encourage (not convince) Non-PWDs to learn sign language instead of relying on persons with deafness to communicate in spoken language. Lastly, a digital semi-structured interview with the student who has deafness and an online focus group discussion (FGD) with the Non-PWD peers (of the PWD participant) shall be conducted for the safety of the researcher and participants brought by the hazards of COVID-19.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

People have been accustomed to the thinking that communication is purely verbal when it is mostly non-verbal (Indeed, 2019). The Deaf sector of the PWD Community is among those who suffer with poor social skills because of the preexisting communication and attitudinal barriers against them. Experts say that grasping the non-verbal semantics of persons with deafness like sign language, a complex but well-structured language without a spoken element, intertwines with being introduced to the Deaf Culture (Gallaudet University, 2015). The end-goal is not to imitate the non-verbal behavior of persons with deafness but to figure out an approach that accommodates their needs and communication style.

Persons with Deafness

The World Health Organization has experienced difficulties when conducting research on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The PWD population has increased to 10-15% all over the world. Experts in Malaysia have found that understanding PWD culture requires community effort through legislative measures and immersion programs. In their study, these experts highlight the plights which PWDs encounter on three levels: The Individual, The Organization, and The Environment. According to the 2008 Persons with Disabilities Act in Malaysia, PWDs are described as “people with long-term disabilities who are unable to interact and participate in society because of various social barriers.” The Department of Social Welfare shares a statistical report on disability types and have found that hearing disabilities (garnering 62,153 cases) belong to the third largest PWD sub-group. The next being learning disabilities (garnering 188,911 cases) followed by physical disabilities (garnering 174,795 cases). Considering these

numbers, society should focus on studies regarding PWD needs, communication, and empowerment (Aswan & Noor, 2016).

Students with deafness and other hearing disabilities experience various schooling difficulties as observed by teachers in King George VI Memorial School, an academia established in Bulawayo that claims to be an inclusive institution. The main challenges of students with hearing impairment, as observed by their teachers is that they become uninterested and excessively challenged by the class requirements. Teachers of this school admit that they are not trained to simultaneously communicate verbally (spoken) and non-verbally (sign language) so they needed to speak with an exaggerated lip movement accompanied by a few visual aids. This makes modifying teaching materials and understanding the food preparation for students with hearing impairment even more exacting. Since there are multiple degrees of deafness to be considered, the school should expand how they handle students with hearing impairment by implementing facilities that suit the needs of persons with hearing impairment. Some students with partial hearing loss may only require a workplace with reduced background noise in the form of secluded classrooms, some may need to study in sound-proof classrooms with educators who speak in a higher pitch, and others may need hearing aids only. The study also advises that the school must hire interpreters or teachers who are already experts in sign language, and require current teachers who do not have a background of sign language to take staff development on sign language. Part of this conclusion is for the teachers to develop empathy with the situation of students with hearing impairment by designing doable activities, and providing the interpreter or student with lecture notes, handouts, and course outlines in advance

so that students with hearing disabilities can get help from other learning sources and to be on track with the pacing of the class (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2013).

Finding a solution to promote inclusivity and to accommodate PWDs would be to accept them and gain a level of disability awareness. In reality, 15% or one billion people of the world's population have some kind of disability which is why it is important to educate and practice disability awareness (Shigri, 2018). Through this knowledge, Non-PWDs may find it better to know the communication pattern of persons with deafness instead of perpetuating a stereotype threat against their non-verbal appearances. A text on the non-verbal communication skills of a counsellor suggests that to keep a person opening up more freely, one must act as an “encourager” which shall require intentional listening that is achieved by completely allowing the sender (PWD) to express their innermost thoughts and feelings (AIPC, 2009). The non-verbal responses that are expected from the receiver (or Non-PWD in this study) includes nodding, positive facial expressions like smiling, and some utterances (or signing to the student with deafness) that motivates the sender (PWD) to share more (AIPC, 2009). This strategy would prosper when Non-PWDs communicate with a student with deafness for the first time until they are acquainted.

In 2018, a report was published about persons with deafness who practice lip reading. The study uncovers that persons with deafness can analyze only 30% of lip movement (Hearing Link, 2018). The more appropriate term according to Hearing Link (2018) is to call it “face reading” because persons with deafness analyze the entire face and not just the lips which would be illogical since speaking communities can only relate to phonetics. Face reading is therefore an ineffective method to apply when communicating with persons who have deafness. It is also as

inhumane as sending persons with deafness in oral schools to learn how to speak using contentious teaching strategies (If My Hands Could Speak, 2013). Non-verbal communication is perceived by Berke (2005) to be necessary when communicating with people who have deafness since it provides them more information than analyzing spoken language. There is no reason to be afraid of communicating with persons with deafness because it is not a prerequisite to communicate in sign language, says Berke (2005). Hand movements, facial expressions, and haptics or touch are the most commonly used non-verbal communication techniques when interacting with people who have deafness. There are more non-verbal skills to explore but what matters foremost is to be on friendly terms with people who have deafness. (Berke, 2005).

Aligning interaction opportunities to Tajfel's concept of social identity, an evidence laboratory experiment in rural Uganda entitled *Disability, Social Identity, and Entrepreneurship: Evidence From A Laboratory Experiment in Rural Uganda* was carried out. Its agenda was to check if stereotype threats and other social norms pose dangers on the performance of PWDs in the entrepreneurial framework. Bergen (2012) views entrepreneurship as an instrument to alleviate poverty rates among PWDs in developing countries. The conclusion is that there are no significant disability-specific norms observed and that the sense of inferiority is internalized among PWDs. It is also indicated in the study that Non-PWDs do not show prejudice against PWDs in the workplace, but Bergen (2005) suspects that it is due to the insufficient results that could be improved by examining if the lab behavior of PWDs correspond to the real-life situation of PWDs (Bergen, 2012). On the other hand, a study was conducted in Australia to prove that supportive communication partners can help eradicate the prevalent communication barriers. The study suggests that the first obstacle is to remove attitudinal barriers and intake the

mindset that everyone has the right to communicate and be seen in public. Brunner (2018) expounds that calling someone out for looking pathetic and assuming the worst of their language are both attitudinal barriers. Surpassing communication barriers is a tough job but the article envisions its success through effective communication. The first step is to ask the PWD or closest relative of the PWD how they communicate their needs, while the next one is to minimize background distraction and focus one's attention to the PWD. The third step is to use non-verbal languages like facial expressions or body language to resolve speech difficulties, time to let the PWD absorb the information and come up with a response, and silence for the pauses and listening period (Brunner, 2018). Should the PWD be equipped with communication technologies, one can study the equipment by observing the manner by which PWDs use it. Brunner (2018) would like to underline that phones and other devices should be set aside so as not to trigger the anxiety or frustration of PWDs when communicating. Building a conversation with a member of a culturally unique community heightens the improvement in one's cognitive-communication skills. PWDs should not be seen as the sole benefactor of cross-cultural interactions because it takes at least two effective communicators to create a value-adding conversation (Brunner, 2018).

Friendship is essential for human beings because it teaches emotional learning and gives two or more people a diverse perspective in times of prosperity and crisis. Lutfiyya believes that PWDs and Non-PWDs are capable of enriching each other's lives so together with the Center on Human Policy, they conducted an investigation on the social skills of PWDs and Non-PWDs. They gained an understanding that it takes more effort than placing a PWD and a Non-PWD in one classroom to develop into friends. There have been cases when parents complained that their

children with disabilities make too little friends. The research team identifies three causes on why it is difficult for PWDs to develop friendly relationships with Non-PWDs: The opportunity for PWDs to meet Non-PWDs due to curfews, transportation restrictions, and other restrictions, the support from authority and peers in the form of facilitators, communication technologies, and suitable activities or place of meeting, and the interpersonal continuity of the PWD and Non-PWD to sustain their friendship and regularly interact or stay in touch (Lutfiyya, 1997). The author, Lutfiyya (1990) subscribes to the belief that genuine PWD and Non-PWD friendships exist, explaining that they are binded by mutuality, rights, responsibilities and obligations, companionship, and freedom.

Non-Verbal Communication

Mandal (2014) classifies non-verbal behavior as a mode of communication that functions by sending information signals to a receiver even when one is not consciously aware of it. Information signals are perceived based on the human senses of sight, touch, sound, and smell (not so much on taste). These information signals can be analyzed based on the knowledge (awareness and proficiency) and empathy (observation and listening skills) of a person. The signals are not simply represented as messages but casted as a performance based on one's non-verbal behavior. Mandal (2014) defines non-verbal behavior as everything displayed or emitted in human communication except written and spoken language. Examples of non-verbal elements include physical appearance, gaze, posture, body contact, timing, accent, paralinguistic variables of tone, proxemics, kinesic behavior, olfaction, use of objects or artifacts, touch, and even the environment itself. The journal article names nonverbal-vocal and nonverbal-nonvocal as the two prominent types of non-verbal behavior. Non-verbal communication is also

responsible for the structure of interpersonal relationships and movement of interpersonal interactions. Without non-verbal communication, there would be no such a thing as a gesture for politeness, emphasis, repetition, contradiction, regulation, and expression of one's feelings. People must also learn how to use this as it complements human interaction, communication hierarchy, and feedback priorities. Mandal (2014) further explains that non-verbal behaviors can conditions and constrains communicators and the system (e.g. use of time and space to determine length of meeting and gathering in school limits the behavior of attendees). If non-verbal communication adheres to a set of norms, then it can be remodeled under the influence of revolutions and rising political ideologies. Proxemics or space, is one of the oldest political non-verbal reforms. Segregation of individuals based on skin color and gender identity, for instance, are bygone practices in the 21st century. Revamping the utility and foundations of non-verbal communication to accommodate thousands of human cultures is what shall distinguish human communication (Mandal, 2014).

Non-verbal communication is used across religions, races, ethnicities, and even age groups. Infants, for instance, non-verbally communicate everyday in similar patterns that could eventually be distinguished (i.e. crying because of hunger, crying because of irritation, crying because of sleepiness). Operationalizing non-verbal messages compel one to follow how they imagine themselves enacting it (Hans, 2015) and since verbal and non-verbal communication are always harnessed together in face-to-face interplay, sometimes the imagination does not come to life. When communicating at such an unfamiliar site or digesting an unfamiliar language, hand gestures unfold as the most reliable non-verbal gesture. People may point at a tangible item, being, or scenery to closely describe what something is or means. Hans (2015) resolves the

confusion that non-verbal communication does not prolong the conversation, but it can aid illiterate people and PWDs, most especially persons with deafness whose primary means to communicate (sign language) is a type of non-verbal communication. It is important to take note that the more non-verbal cues equates to less formality, and that flaunting non-verbals in public is unsafe because it could lead to misinterpretation (Hans, 2015).

An observation has been conducted on the use of non-verbal communication, specifically gestures, in the dyadic context among undergraduate students. The researchers came across three common strategies of non-verbal communication: Enacting Non-Verbals, Outlining Non-Verbals, and Pointing Non-Verbals. Given the previous denotion, the journal article implies that non-verbal communication is a language that bridges cultures (Ismail, 2014). The results of the study conclude that non-verbal communication strategies are not used by English learners in Malaysia. Ismail (2014) adds to the discussion that English learners utilize non-verbal communication strategies to address lexical problems. The gathered data show that pointing strategies were used the most because it does not demand a lot of effort, while outlining strategies were used the least since it needed both hands to form a shape of an item. It can be seen from the findings that language game gestures can enhance the vocabulary of the communicators. The study advises that exploring non-verbal communication strategies with other backgrounds can enrich one's knowledge of second language acquisition (Ismail, 2014).

Being mindful of one's non-verbal behavior proliferates a culture of inclusion. Sign language is not an aesthetic, and mimicking it is rude. Husna (2015) researched on the non-verbal interaction of students and teachers by designing a descriptive qualitative research among college students alongside other researchers, Rudi Hartono and Ahmad Sofwan. They

were first assigned to identify the non-verbals which the teacher shows to the student. Then Husna drew interpretations out of the examined patterns in the student-teacher classroom interactions using Flanders Interaction Analysis Category System (FIACS). Lastly, Husna (2015) stresses Zoric's and Smid's Taxonomy to identify the non-verbal communication strategies of the teacher and student. The results reveal that the predominant use of oculesics and kinesics between the teacher and student interaction. Facial expressions, body signals, gestures, head positions, and eye movement were employed to support their messages. Eye contact was the only constant element seen throughout the interactions, and this meant formality (Husna, 2015).

Friendly relationships between PWDs and Non-PWDs have been discussed as a possibility, and another study was conducted among participants who were assigned to narrate what non-verbal qualities led them to their current pool of friends. The reports show that gaze, facial expressions, touch, and space dealt promising effects on their developed relationships. Disclosed from the findings of the study, silence was raised to signify "lending one's ears," while presence means more time together, and attire selection interpreted as "presentability" also made a positive transforming difference to their present-day friendships. These non-verbals were sorted into these approaches: Relational Approach, Perceptual Approach, and Affective Approach. The perceptual non-verbal behavior refers to the cerebral usage of gestures while the affective non-verbal behavior exhibits the emotional appeal of the person's gestures. Cited in the study, the relational approach pertains to the relational turning point. The relational turning point is the critical situation when a non-verbal behavior rethinks what the relationship means to them. (Morgan, 2013). This could rationalize why people save their current relationships or become invested in a relationship to develop it.

Non-Verbal Communication and The PWD Community

Studying non-verbal communication will greatly benefit persons with deafness whose differences show in the way they interact and display themselves. According to Luft (2000), persons with deafness have higher unemployment rates than their Non-PWD counterparts, while their lifetime salary ranges between \$356,000 and \$609,000. Social scientists believe that poverty rates and social injustice among persons with deafness are caused by the rejection to hire and interact with them. This, in return, affects the cultural landscape and economy of society. Furthermore, the root cause of plummeting enrollees and unemployment statistics of persons with deafness are caused by the lack of integrative communication.

It has been proven that communication barriers exist because persons with deafness rely on American Sign Language (ASL) and are not fluent in English as most regular employees. The communication barriers also exist because of the employment site and the services or personnel provided to the employee with deafness. The existence of these communication barriers is a reflection that many do not know the communication needs and culture of the Deaf Community (Luft, 2000). Following the text, it is implied that persons with deafness feel respected when many could communicate in ASL. Persons with deafness are capable of coexisting and producing high calibre output if the Non-PWD environment chooses to adopt sign language. By adopting the communication style and interpersonal needs of the person with deafness, companies reconsider the long-term benefits of maintaining PWDs in school and at work (Luft, 2000).

The largest hindrance to learning non-verbal communication, most especially sign language for persons with deafness, is giving up altogether because of its difficulty. The most

immediate remedy to communicate with a person who has deafness is by hiring public service interpreters to render these communication channels. Urpi (2013) presented his data which states that non-verbal communication in an intercultural interaction can be a course of misunderstanding. To prevent this, one must hire an interpreter who can affirm his/her competence by possessing an expertise in intercultural concepts, theories, and practices (Urpi, 2013). Interpreters in cross-cultural conferences and meetings admit that it is not an easy-going responsibility to accurately and articulately translate messages from one person to another. Since it is common for the primary sender and receiver to encounter difficulty in responding. The translation and filtration of messages may be affected by the mediator or interpreter's background. Since cases such as this (and perhaps distrusting the interpreter) occur, persons with deafness may prefer directly communicating in sign language with another communicator.

The Atlantic has documented a rally consisting of protesters with deafness that opposed the "Listening and Spoken Language Symposium" which featured workshops and products to train people with deafness how to speak. Ringo (2013) spoke with the Director of Communications and Marketing of AGB, Susan Boswell, who reasoned that: "AGB supports the development of spoken language through evidence-based practices focusing on the use of audition and appropriate technologies." Ringo (2013) approached Ruthie Jordan, an activist with deafness, a leader of "Audism Free America" and the person who organized the mass demonstration against AGB. Jordan averred that AGB is commercializing the disability of persons with deafness by miseducating parents to purchase cochlear implants or send their children to an oral school which had a history of maltreating persons with deafness. Oral schools

advocate for oralism, pioneered by ¹Alexander Graham Bell who upholds the stance that ‘it is inherently better to hear and speak’ than to communicate in sign language. On a pro-choice approach, Jordan wants society to see that persons with deafness could live a functional and fulfilling life without learning how to speak or analyze lip-reading (face-reading). Jordan’s fight is to allow persons with deafness to explore their options: From ²Manualism, hiring an interpreter, to other communication methods that do not involve hearing technologies and implants. She (Jordan) cries that AGB and its affiliates are making money by misinforming consumers into exploiting their bodies. Ringo (2013) documents that Non-PWDs have the assumption that persons with deafness would take any method to their advantage to hear and speak when that is not the case.

Unlike Non-PWDs, persons with deafness do not look at sign language as something less than spoken language. Persons with deafness do not want to forget sign language, the “cultural cornerstone” of the Deaf Community. Most importantly, persons with deafness do not wish to please society by fixing themselves (Ringo, 2013). Rahmat et. al (2019) claims in their quantitative study that learned accommodation is the result of positive or negative interactions, and that accommodation only happens during interactions. Connecting this to the context of non-verbal communication between PWDs and Non-PWDs, everyone benefits in the interaction. Lenart (2018) insists that socialization is pivotal in the development of PWDs during language acquisition, employment and promotions, and generally engaging in a conversation with someone to be educated of one’s and others’ culture and community.

¹ Bell’s objective was to eliminate “hereditary deafness” that he thinks is caused by marrying someone with deafness, and to stop normalization of communicating in sign language.

² Manualism is the primary use of sign language during communication.

Deaf Non-Verbal Needs and Communication Pattern

A study by Alasim (2018) focused on the social communication skills of students with deafness in elementary schools by observing their classroom participation and interaction with Non-PWD classmates. It has been revealed that the population of students with deafness increased in general education classrooms from 46% to 91% in 2002-2003. Alasim (2018) expects that more students with deafness will enroll in ³mainstream classrooms because of factors such as financial pressure, technological advancements, parental expectations, and legislation of inclusive education (Alasim, 2018). The target of inclusive education as the Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted in America is to strengthen the communication prowess and interactions of students who have deafness with Non-PWDs. Unluckily, there were reports on students with deafness who are struggling to participate and interact with general education teachers and Non-PWD peers.

Experts have pointed out that students with deafness have shifted to self-isolation, and saw the lack of preparation for inclusive education to negatively impact the communication skills and academic achievements of students with deafness (Alasim, 2018). Ideally, students with deafness should be provided with a total communication method to interact and participate more with their Non-PWD peers. This process instigates hiring full-time interpreters, general education teachers, support programs, and digital services like work conducive offices, speech therapy, audiology, counseling, and a facilitator for the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The purpose of an IEP is to determine if the student with deafness can be promoted to an inclusive-mainstream classroom with hearing students or remain in a self-contained classroom

³ A mainstream school consists of mixed students from various social groups.

with a few other students with deafness (Alasim, 2018). In conclusion, the study proposes that schools should concentrate on the collaboration of special education and general education faculty to produce the best learning strategies for students with deafness. Additionally, Non-PWD classmates and peers need to be oriented on the culture, communication, and characteristics of persons with deafness. It is the responsibility of schools, teachers, and Non-PWD peers to cooperate and support the needs and development of students with deafness (Alasim, 2018).

As recommended by a communication support group, Non-PWDs should be the ones who are vigilant of how and where they communicate with a person who has a deafness (Sadler, n.d.). It has been observed that persons with deafness communicate at least a meter away to analyze the non-verbal behavior of the people they interact with. The job of the other [Non-PWD] communicator is to directly face the person with deafness, check the environment noise levels, communicate slowly, take turns communicating, and assist persons with deafness who do not grasp what they (Non-PWDs) are saying (Sadler, n.d.). Assisting persons with deafness may demand writing on a piece of paper and non-verbally converging to the communication style of persons with deafness. The most convenient solution for other Non-PWDs is to avoid interacting with people who have deafness altogether since communicating with them requires patience and flexible communication skills (e.g. sign language background, operating a captioning technology, etc.). Due to the non-cooperation of Non-PWDs, persons with deafness are pressured to afford hearing aids, absorb lip-reading (face-reading), and spend for communication technologies and other assistive technologies

(Chupina, 2011). Persons with deafness would certainly do what they can to shatter their silence, and by any chance, reestablish a connection with the world they have been deprived to explore.

Even though the progress of inclusive education is slow, Filipinos can practice values of social inclusion by determining how they can communicate with people who have deafness. One approach is by cultivating a supportive and respectful communication environment which can be achieved by enabling the communication style of persons with deafness. This comprises effective employment of kinesic behavior and presentation of visual materials (e.g. photographs, objects, etc.) that will support the communication style and needs of persons with deafness (Essex Learning Disability Partnership, 2020). Experts stress that the only way to know how persons with deafness want to communicate is to explicitly ask for their communication preference (Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre, 2019). Some may be comfortable communicating through an interpreter, some may be experienced in face-reading (lip-reading), some could be equipped with communication technologies (e.g. real-time captioning), and some may prefer communicating with fellow sign language communicators. Most of the time, persons with deafness explain what they are signing (if they are well-trained in sign language) by writing the word equivalent of each gesture on a piece of paper (Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre, 2019). Regardless of the communication style, Non-PWDs who are willing to communicate with a person who has deafness will find ways, and that alone is a practice of social inclusivity.

Persons with deafness traditionally communicate in two ways: Sign language or spoken language. Melbourne Polytechnic (2015) defines each sign language gesture as a system of signs which represents the visual aspect of each gesture as a concept of its own, and not an English word. Spoken language, in the context of deafness, is defined as the ability to analyze

face-reading (lip-reading) and produce a sound orally to communicate with Non-PWDs. Oral communication may also mean that persons with deafness utilize hearing aids or cochlear implants to aid their face-reading analysis (Melbourne Polytechnic, 2015). The five indicators of an effective communication outcome, based on Essex Learning Disability Partnership (2020) are: One, both or either the PWD and Non-PWD has/have a detailed description of their preferred communication style; Two, there are projects and services which demonstrate how persons with deafness can be supported in communication; Three, Non-PWDs are incentivized to use the most appropriate communication approach for each person with deafness whom they encounter; Four, persons with deafness or Non-PWD peers are equipped with services and facilities that motivate one or both of them to communicate, explore opportunities, and build relationships; Fifth, persons with deafness are sufficiently receiving support that they are able to comprehend and express their needs and well-being.

The speech communication discipline is in the progress of discovering new trends in non-verbal communication, while special education is incorporating its research groundwork which evaluates the needs and abilities of persons with deafness. Comprehending facial expressions, body language, and gestures are crucial when studying the non-verbal behavior of persons with deafness, ultimately, how to communicate with people who have deafness (Giang, 2018). Laurie Achin, an American Sign Language (ASL) faculty member with deafness from Northeastern University, mentions that Non-PWDs tend to ignore their non-verbal behavior. This, in turn, affects the interpretation of persons with deafness concerning the messages of Non-PWDs. Achin further explains that understanding the kinesic behavior of Non-PWDs helps persons with deafness gauge what Non-PWDs feel and think (Giang, 2018). Other than sign

language, persons with deafness are visual communicators, hence their frequent use of non-verbal qualities like eye contact, body language, facial expressions, and touch (Siple et al., 2003). Eye contact is their indicator of attention span (they use their eyes to listen), body language articulates their [sign language] messages, facial expressions convey their reactions, and touch outlines the relational ties of persons with deafness (e.g. a polite handshake reserved for a company boss, a long hug for a romantic partner, etc.). Siple et al (2003) simplifies the cycle of communicating with a person who has deafness, saying that it starts in an awkward situation where one or another is confused. When the Non-PWD and person with deafness are comfortable around each other, the person with deafness and Non-PWD may incorporate writing and other present techniques to explore their communication styles. With grit and patience, Non-PWDs will eventually figure out their common [non-verbal] communication style with a person who has deafness, and decide upon how and when to utilize it (Siple et al., 2003).

Communicating with Non-PWDs is a luxury for persons with deafness since they must set a budget for it. PWDs who are frequent internet users state that chat rooms made them feel safe and pampered because of the convenient features of telecommunication. Communication over technology may grant screen-to-screen interaction but it falls short when understanding kinesic behavior, a factor in developing trust (Jack, 2017). This piece of information can be connected to the assumption that people who are glued to their monitors narrowly express empathetic, spontaneous, and emotionally responsive tones in their messages during interpersonal interactions (Jeviliashy, 2019). Given these circumstances, it is reasonable to conclude that mediated communication is the best and most often used platform for professional, urgent, or briefing transmissions.

Communication difficulties are ubiquitous in face-to-face interactions especially for persons with deafness when they interact with Non-PWDs. Gugenheimer et al (2017) and a team of other researchers innovated assistive technologies to showcase real-time translations of sign language. They were able to investigate the communication quality between persons with deafness and Non-PWDs by conducting a focus group method in which all the participants can only communicate through assistive technologies. Gugenheimer et al (2017) declares that the quality of communication between persons with deafness and Non-PWDs have degraded. It transpired in spite of the assistive technology's capacity to facilitate communication. The presentation of findings indicate that assistive technologies place persons with deafness into the subordinate group by underlining a deficiency in learning sign language. Gugenheimer et al (2017) is made aware that their approach needs to be changed. Instead of implying that persons with deafness need to "hear," they must teach Non-PWDs their need or capability to communicate in sign language. It is notable to also mention that assistive technologies need to be seen past being a "tool for persons with deafness." Society should grasp it as a collaborative technology between persons with deafness and their Non-PWD peers (Gugenheimer et al., 2017).

Supporting the aforementioned initiative, Sourbati (2012) outlines a framework on how disabilities are caused by deprivation of information and communication technologies (ICTs). She assesses and relates the service quality of ICT-based inclusion policies to the multidimensional facets of having a disability. Sourbati (2012) checks on how environmental and personal attributes interact with e-inclusion. She determined that ICTs temporarily serve as an inclusive program for its built-in extension to physical libraries, artificial intelligence, and

transportation assistance. The European public government pondered switching into an all-digital communications center using electronic-inclusion (e-inclusion) where PWDs could use ‘resource-based models’ as a supplement in their education. Laws have been amended and were strictly enforced for the benefit of PWDs (Sourbati, 2012). It was explicitly stated in the conclusion that persons with deafness do not have access to broadband internet, lack media literacy, and education in their own homes that there should be policies for universal services reform. Sourbati (2012) furthermore explains that technology-based solutions just aggravates the social inequality of PWDs because many are considerably “digital underclasses.” A digital underclass are people especially in the 21st century who still do not have access to the latest digital information and media technologies. Promoting ICTs worsens the exclusion of PWDs who are twice disabled due to socio and economic conditions. Sourbati (2012) believes that service provision should improve the quality of life among PWDs by abolishing the structural constraints. The issue of disablement as a result of enhanced ICTs is important to discuss in this digital age where minoritized groups do not reach the mainstream media coverage.

Ever since the COVID-19 outbreak started, pupils with deafness or hard of hearing have felt challenged by the enormous adjustment that they have to take. Accounts state that the students felt disengaged and unproductive after conducting a Zoom application meeting. William Jon Weintraub, a graduate student from the Rice University, shares his panic when all their courses were turned into video lectures. He describes it as silently staring at the computer monitor for 6 hours just hardly absorbing any information. Additionally, he would have preferred to watch the video where it was being recorded since he believes that face-to-face learning is more effective for persons with deafness than pre-recorded videos. His plea to all the colleges

and universities that transferred to remote learning is to publish live videos with subtitles or hiring a captionist per subject offering (Britto, 2020).

A research analysis among adolescents aged 14-18 years old with deafness points out the significance between identity patterns and communication modes within schools to understand the Deaf Culture of Turkey citizens. A 'Deaf Identity Scale' was administered to 90 students with deafness for the purpose of classifying them based on their chosen identity among the following groups: Predominant Culturally Hearing Identity, Culturally Deaf Identity, or Bicultural (Dual) Identity. They arrived at the results by correlating the identity scale responses to the communication behavior reported by the students with deafness. The research implied issues related to constructing the education for schools that accommodate students with deafness. Upon recommendation, educational policy-makers, educational psychologists, and educators can translate the statistics (Sari, 2005). It is observable in the data gathering that dual identity is linked to effective communication skills as they both utilize combined modes of communication. Delving deeper, the journal article discusses some points of query concerning the communication pattern of Turkish students with deafness. First is that Turkish students with deafness perceive sign language as their only and most effective means to communicate with other people, hence the importance of supporting linguists who construct a sign language version of the country's national language.

Eripek (2004) recommends that students with deafness should be permitted to choose their supplementary learning materials and assistive technologies like hearing aids and audio-to-text translators to socialize with hearing communities who are untrained to communicate in sign language. Another consideration to bridge the gap in communication is to

designate a series of programs like sign language classes for educators and parents. Hyde and Power (2004) also states that a school should hire a body of professionals such as speech therapists, educational psychologists, hearing technicians, and interpreters of Turkish Sign Language who are already knowledgeable of deafness in the special or inclusive settings. Communication flexibility or the shifting of communication modes (verbal and non-verbal) must be an option for people who are untrained to communicate in Turkish Sign Language. This method occurs when one combines some Turkish Sign Language gestures, basic finger spelling, oral-auditory approaches of language, and other bodily movements. Bat-Chava (2000) would call communication flexibility a form of 'reciprocity.' A significant foundation for identity construction is communication among adolescents with deafness, this is why researchers try to determine the means by which deafness can be promoted but at the same time empowered. Then again, the largest issue behind this is if the academic and partner institutions have any financial planning to build these communication systems for adolescents with deafness (Sari, 2005).

Integration of Persons with Deafness

When it is possible, parents enroll their children in mainstream schools since it is the new convention. Wauters & Knoors (2007) call this educational trend a kind of social integration by examining the co-enrollment setup of an inclusive education program. They studied aspects such as peer acceptance, social competence, and friendly relations to better understand if students with deafness are properly handled and immersed with Non-PWDs. Wauters & Knoors (2007) define social integration based on the ability of students with deafness to establish friendships with Non-PWD peers, interact with Non-PWDs, and be accepted by Non-PWD peers. It is rather unfortunate to disclose that persons with deafness avoid interacting with Non-PWDs, have very

few friends, and are spurned by Non-PWD peers. Self-isolation and depression ensue when these are the circumstances. The classroom setup of an inclusive education system is a co-enrollment program, meaning, students with deafness are in a mixed classroom with two teachers, a general education and special education teacher. The setup was theorized to make the interactions between students with deafness and Non-PWDs intensive. Wauters & Knoors (2007) evaluates the success of social integration of students with deafness in mainstream classrooms and found that the Netherlands is the leading country in its implementation. Social integration is determined by peer acceptance, social competence, and friendship relations. Peer acceptance is about the degree that students with deafness are liked by Non-PWD peers. As for social competence, the student with deafness could either exhibit Prosocial Behavior, Antisocial Behavior, and Socially Withdrawn Behavior. All of three behaviors can be seen in the function of students with deafness during their early stages of studying in a mainstream school. Last but not the least, friendship relations pertain to the number of friends that students with deafness make. There is a claim that having at least one friend reduces the tendency to be rejected by most peers in school (Wauters & Knoors, 2007). Additional research on the social integration of students with deafness that presents the same findings can only prove the universal validity and soundness of Wauters and Knoors' (2007) assessment. Their recommendation is to take the social integration data of other countries that have different education policies into consideration before jumping into conclusions (Wauters & Knoors, 2007).

It is evident that belonging in a predominantly Non-PWD classroom remains to be a problem for persons with deafness. Each school has its own interpretation of acceptance and inclusivity. Students of Mary Hare School, for example, share their success story regarding

inclusive education. Using concepts of oralism, they claim that their graduates exceed the national average of students with deafness who enroll in PWD-exclusive schools. Their strategy requires regulating small but several classes with a specialist staff except BSL interpreters (Mary Hare School, n.d.). Observing the monetary allocation for facilities and services, it is observable that Mary Hare School focuses its attention on giving PWDs and Non-PWDs a similar learning outcome, having a background of spoken english. Preparing PWDs for the so-called “real world” is the objective of inclusive education. The objective of inclusive education will never be met unless society necessitates inclusive education on the evidence of cognitively and linguistically delayed development of persons with deafness (Schick et al., 2002).

Synthesis

Persons with disabilities are often barred from living a ‘normal life’ due to communication barriers that largely affect their behavior in school, their opportunity to work in the future, and their ability to socialize with people outside their social group. Persons with deafness are just as vulnerable to these obstacles but they are able to find voice in their use of sign language, one of the main non-verbal communication strategies that they uphold in their culture. Non-verbal communication is an innate and natural behavior performed by people since birth and studies have proven that even as early as infancy, human beings involuntarily communicate non-verbally. When these non-verbal messages complicate it is due to cultural identity and variance in personality. Self-focused patterns and combinations are what studies call ‘non-verbal communication strategies’ and though these strategies set people and their respective memberships apart, non-verbal communication possesses the capacity to authenticate, repeat, consolidate, and even replace verbal messages. Undeterred by the fact that e-inclusion (electronic

inclusion) and school interpreters are currently options offered by authorities, persons with deafness prefer engaging with students who are mindful of their non-verbal language as it speaks levels of respect to their community. The intention of learning sign language corroborates an attempt to embrace Deaf Culture. Non-verbal communication is furthermore important in earning the trust of persons with deafness during an interaction since they have gone through a prolonged history of physical and behavioral mockery. The communication pattern of students with deafness largely focuses on sign language while the other non-verbal skills are used to substitute or emphasize messages (signs). Integrating persons with deafness in a classroom consisting of Non-PWDs encourages external support for inclusive education, added specialized personnel such as educational psychologists or hearing technicians, and advanced technological facilities like audio-to-text readers. An inclusive classroom, however, only works with the cooperation of schoolmates who are willing to utilize sign language, a non-verbal communication strategy that is at the convenience of persons with deafness.

Theoretical Framework

Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1971)

Evolving from the psychological dynamics of speech, the pioneer Howard Giles renamed the Speech Adjustment Theory (SAT) theory to Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) as he included the observation of non-verbal communication and the social psychology behind it (Businesstopia, 2018). Communication Accommodation Theory inspects why an interactant either tries to match or differentiate themselves from another community. These two options are respectively called convergence and divergence. Convergence refers to the natural and voluntary adaptation of communication to decrease social and non-verbal differences, while divergence is the purposive non-conformity of another person or community's behavior to accentuate one's social and non-verbal differences. According to Giles, communication accommodation is a discussion of group and individual culture and human attitude which may elucidate questions about communication barriers. On the contrary to most communication theories, CAT is compliant on the role of the listener or receiver to consciously adopt or dismiss the communication style of the sender (Gallois, 2005). For the intergroup context, the goal of convergence is to foster mutual understanding either by means of resembling someone else's communicative behavior or gaining the approval of a recipient to mimic yours. Divergence, also called 'maintenance,' transpires when the interactants fail to embody or reject acquiring a variation of communication that fits the social context of another person's communicative behavior (Abergs, 2019). Predicting the probability of convergence or divergence as a feedback could be done by evaluating a communicator's cognitive organization (cognitive function) and identity maintenance (affective function). The cognitive function of convergence can be

visualized as a linear diagram in which the sender rationalizes communication style as a tactic to eventually persuade the receiver to reconsider the sender's standpoint. Meanwhile, the cognitive function of divergence results in two other possibilities: the sender could assert non-shared attributes to the receiver and terminate the discussion or the sender could contemplate their common communication pattern with the receiver. In this spectrum, the affective function of convergence displays how much the sender desires to appear likable and alike to the receiver, while the affective function of divergence is done for the senders to reinforce their own identity. Since convergence and divergence are rooted in the sender's judgment of the receiver's speech and not the message itself, researchers deduce that communication accommodation is therefore affiliated to the way humankind psychologically and linguistically conceive other humans (Gallois, 1988).

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1979)

Tajfel's contribution in the academe is his pioneering the concept of 'self-belonging' within memberships, and pride versus self-esteem by underlining the distinction between "us" or the social group, and "them" or the others (Crane & Hannibal, n.d.). His hypothesis of being an in-group is somebody who exhibits acceptable qualities or multiple similarities to a certain community, while out-groups tend to be shunned by normative social groups. The reason behind the political imbalance is explained by Social Identity Theory's two elements. First, he names 'Categorization' or the benchmarking of social groups in accordance with the social environment that encompasses them (David, 2015). The Deaf Community, for example, is its own social group and they identify sign language as their preeminent medium of communication; the Non-Deaf dominated social environment, however, could predispose that communicating in sign

language and hearing loss are the same as inability to produce vocal sound and total muteness. Categorization is still a natural process when individuals explore their horizons and make major decisions. It only becomes problematic when people are forcefully segregated or changed emotionally, mentally, and non-verbally. The second element which Tajfel enumerates is 'Social Identification' or the conscious decision to proclaim one's belonging to a group and his/her conformity to the rules and values of the group. This is where most of the emotional and psychological factors in one's social identity begin to materialize. Attachment, pride, and organizational unity can manifest in the most prominent or notorious pole depending on the social group's practices and belief systems (McLeod, 2019). Tajfel ascertains that as self-esteem accumulates, the tension and distance between the in-group and out-group increases, sending the out-group to a higher risk of being stigmatized. To this day, PWDs are deemed as out-groups on the report of social psychologists due to their unique self-concept (Dunn, 2015). It is worthy of attention to stress that the objective has never been about belonging in one and in the same in-group as everyone but being an effective communicator by respecting the richness in diversity of all social groups.

Conceptual Framework

The concepts in this framework are enclosed by a rectangle with solid lines to represent inclusive communication as a system. This rectangle also shows that non-verbal accommodation is a prerequisite to the inclusive communication between a student with deafness and a Non-PWD peer. There are two overlapping circles that each contain the Non-PWD text and student with deafness text to distinguish their non-verbal differences. The overlap is a symbolism of their common non-verbal communication strategies. There are dotted lines because non-verbal integration may or may not happen, while the depth of intersection is arbitrary on the two parties. Non-verbal accommodation only happens when both parties reciprocate each other's non-verbal behavior, thus having common and applicable non-verbal communication strategies.

Definition of Terms

1. Communication Accommodation

- a. Conceptual Definition: A theoretical attempt to uncover why human beings transition to a different style of communication or refuse to change their communication behavior at all (Strokes, 2016).
- b. Operational Definition: The manner by which a Non-PWD student non-verbally behaves in response to the non-verbal behavior of a student with deafness or vice versa.

2. College Student

- a. Conceptual Definition: An individual who entered college and underwent a collaborative and independent learning as part of their transition to adulthood and professional living (Scholarships.com, n.d.).
- b. Operational Definition: An individual without a physical or sensory disability and has worked with a student who has deafness in the same Philippine academic institution.

3. Non-Verbal Communication

- a. Conceptual Definition: A field of study related to the types, effects, and expressions of unspoken and unwritten communication (Cherry, 2020).
- b. Operational Definition: The strategy formulated by students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers that will include each other during their interactions in or out of school.

4. Persons with Disabilities

- a. Conceptual Definition: Individuals who are defined by 19th century political philosophy as a primary source of disadvantage that needs medical correction (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).
- b. Operational Definition: A Filipino student with deafness who experiences communication difficulties especially when interacting with a Non-PWD peer.

5. Social Identity

- a. Conceptual Definition: The understanding of the self in relation to the qualities that they do and do not resemble with other people (McLeod, 2019).
- b. Operational Definition: The sharing of non-verbal communication strategies between persons with deafness and Non-PWD Filipino students in their social interactions to establish a common identity as communicators.

6. Social Inclusion

- a. Conceptual Definition: The economical, legal, and political integration of minoritized groups by eradicating destructive attitudes against them (Das, 2019).
- b. Operational Definition: The acceptance of persons with deafness and their fundamental right to participate and be included in a communication setting with Non-PWDs.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative research design shall serve as the methodological backbone. The research design shall address the following objectives: First, to describe the communication between persons with deafness and Non-PWD Filipino students; Second, to describe the non-verbal codes employed by both persons with deafness and Non-PWD Filipino students; Third, to analyze how persons with deafness and Non-PWD Filipino students employ non-verbal accommodation strategies; and Fourth, to determine how non-verbal communication impacts inclusivity between persons with deafness and Non-PWD Filipino students.

Research Method

A one-on-one online semi-structured interview will be conducted for the participant with deafness, while a focus group discussion (FGD) shall be conducted for the Non-PWD participants. The manner by which it will be handled shall be conversational with the agenda to uncover their non-verbal behavior, their relationship with the counterpart PWD/Non-PWD, and their adjustment occurrences within their interactions. Prior to that, the researcher will build rapport amidst the COVID-19 pandemic through a group chat on Messenger where the participants and researcher will discuss their situations at home. The purpose of the semi-structured interview is to comprehend the participants' perspectives and their classroom or outside school experiences. They will also be asked about their demographics, their school environment, their relationships, their activities, their opinions about adjustment, and their non-verbal characteristics (i.e. non-verbal behavior, intentions, encounters and situations). In the

absence of field observation, the researcher will have to ask secondary or tertiary follow-up questions should the initial response lack depth in description.

Research Instruments

The researcher would be needing a video recorder for documentation, a digital copy of the two questionnaires (see appendix for attached copy), and a consent slip to be signed by the participants before proceeding with the interview or FGD.

Participants

At least one student with deafness shall be required in this study and he/she must be enrolled for the current semester in a mainstream (general education) college class to qualify as an interviewee. The student with deafness could be an undergraduate or graduate student in the Philippines, and must also have at least two Non-PWD classmates who are willing to participate in a focus group discussion. In addition, the Non-PWD participants should have a history of working with the selected student who has deafness.

Research Procedure

It is imperative that the participants develop a sense of trust towards the researcher and an understanding of what they are getting into. This can be fulfilled by building rapport online in which the researcher could start by inquiring for the participants' situation amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and not hastily getting into the specifics of the thesis. The rapport is a gradual and learning-centered process with three phases to it. The first stage is where the researcher learns and behaves accordingly to the community's social rules and language. This can be executed online via Skype, Telegram, Messenger, or any online application that has a video call feature to ensure that all the participants are included. After the researcher and participants are able to

introduce themselves, the participants may suggest trivial matters to talk about or even learn some basic sign language gestures so that the researcher can observe their character. The second stage is called the “acquaintance stage” and it is where the researcher becomes less of an intruder to the community. Another online group meet-up may be booked, but this time, the participants may talk about more politically or socially relevant topics like their situation at home, their judgment regarding the government, and even their experiences in their current college or university. Following the progress of the first stage, the researcher should respect the boundaries that the participants set for themselves, and the researcher is also expected to use a language that is familiar and amiable to all of the participants. Finally, the third step, called the “intimate stage,” is that period when the researcher has instilled a comfortable cultural relationship with the participants. The researcher may invite participants to join in an organization online conference or event to observe their online behavior or the researcher may privately ask personal questions (e.g. childhood experiences, their self-concept or dreams) which the researcher is sure would not offend any of the participants.

The researcher could ask for more personal questions and the researcher could finally share a few parts of the thesis topic. All these stages, again, are in relation to the rapport established by informal online chat rooms with Non-PWD students and a student with deafness (Kawulich, 2005). Once the participants are familiar with the researcher, all parties ought to share their online availability and decide what online application or platform is most accessible or preferred by the participants. The researcher will set a day for the one-on-one online semi-structured interview for the student with deafness and a different day for the online FGD with the Non-PWD students. Each participant shall sign a consent form, accepting that the

researcher will keep their identities anonymous and their answers to be used for academic purposes only. On the day of the interview or FGD, the researcher must go over the interview protocol, and the participants should first agree to comply with the rules before proceeding with the questions.

The interview guide is divided into the following sections: Interviewee Demographics, Status of Students with Deafness in School, Struggles of Students with Deafness, Non-Verbal Accommodation, and Social Inclusion in School. It is constructed this way to align with the research objectives which are: To describe the communication between persons with deafness and Non-PWD students (sections 2 and 3), to describe the non-verbal code systems employed by both persons with deafness and Non-PWD students, to analyze how persons with deafness and Non-PWD students employ non-verbal accommodation strategies (section 4), and to determine how non-verbal communication impacts inclusivity between persons with deafness and Non-PWDs (section 5). The intention of the interview guide is to examine the non-verbal behavior of persons with deafness and the Non-PWDs while they describe their recent memories or experiences in school.

Alongside the content of their responses, the researcher should be able to track non-verbal behavior, and compare or match the information shared by the PWD and Non-PWDs. The researcher will also be accompanied by a sign language interpreter who will mediate in cases of miscommunication and to translate some signs that are not understandable to the researcher. The researcher will take note of what Non-PWD students choose to disclose as it becomes to determine how people complement, reciprocate (two types of convergence), condition, or dismiss (two types of divergence) persons with deafness vice versa. The researcher

will take note of the participant's cultural context. Towards the latter portion of the interview and FGD, the student with deafness and Non-PWD students may opt to hear the researcher's summary of their responses. The participants are free to correct, fill, or substantiate points that were generated from the interview or FGD, and anything unclear should be raised for clarification.

Research Duration

The rapport-building and preparations will consume two days since it includes checking the participants' internet accessibility and deciding which online platform is most and mutually convenient. The one-on-one online semi-structured interview itself may last for forty-five minutes to an hour, and extra fifteen to thirty minutes shall be given for clarifications. Since there are two sessions, one for the student with deafness and another focus group discussion for the Non-PWD students, the whole data gathering is expected to occupy a maximum of two hours and thirty minutes (Reed, 2020).

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis shall be conducted to explore the elements in the one-on-one online semi-structured interview with the student with deafness, and an FGD with the Non-PWD classmates. To make sense of the gathered data, the researcher needs to be familiar with the accounts by transcribing the video recordings. The researcher may consult the present interpreter when writing the verbatim transcript of the student with deafness. In the writing process, the researcher may list down, classify, or arrange the pieces of data to better understand them until a preliminary code can be decided upon. In order to generate these codes, the researcher will check the PWD and/or Non-PWD's responses to write a word or phrase that briefly summarizes what

the interviewees said. After all the codes are generated, the researcher should find the patterns related to non-verbal communication, social inclusion, and non-verbal accommodation by sorting, merging, or mapping the codes until they are extracted into themes. These themes will be defined in a descriptive manner then connected to the research question. If the description of the themes seem to capture what the research question is looking for, then the researcher can already produce a report. The report shall contain the verbatim quotes from the transcript to support or contradict and compare or contrast the review of related literature, the researcher's positionality, and other external but relevant references (Mortensen, 2020).

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Analysis

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The researcher conducted an online semi-structured interview and focus group discussion (FGD) via Google Meet as per request of the participants. The participants consist of one student with deafness and two Non-PWD classmates from two different subjects (EdFD 116 and EdTEG 201). All the participants are enrolled in the University of the Philippines College of Education, completing their degree program in Certification in Professional Education (CPE). The student with deafness is given the alias “Krista” while the Non-PWD classmates from the EdFD and EdTEG classes are respectively given “Mimi” and “Divina.”

Krista is 33 years old, Mimi is 30 years old, while Divina is also 33 years old. The participants in this study belong to an older age group because there are more students with deafness who apply for [and pass] graduate programs in mainstream schools than undergraduate mainstream schools. Age or generation gap may not be a problem in this study since the participants are enrolled in a 200-level-course code, which means they are mostly classmates with master’s degree students (who are usually in their late twenties to their thirties). Should slots be limited, the participants may apply for undergraduate-level courses in College of Education but the chances of having at least one classmate who is registered under the CPE program is high.

All of the participants were formerly enrolled in a private high school and identify as female. Four global themes were identified by the researcher, namely, 1) the quality of services to students with deafness, 2) communication progression and attributes of students with deafness,

3) non-verbal accommodation, and 4) issues about social inclusivity and coexistence. The presentation of responses shall be discussed in this order: first is Krista's responses, then Mimi's responses, and lastly Divina's responses.

After five days of preparation and discussion, the researcher transcribed the video recordings into text within the next three days. Krista is a patient mother who is willing to share her knowledge about Filipino Sign Language (FSL) to anyone at any time. She has an expressive and artistic non-verbal behavior and she often answers in single words or short sentences. Mimi, is a graduate of UP Cebu. She has a quiet, aloof, and calm personality which differentiates her from the religious Divina who was consistently outspoken about inequality, loves to hear community rumors, and has a humorous ambience to explain her habit of cracking a joke from time to time. Mimi and Divina have never met before but they are Krista's classmates for the second semester, academic year 2019-2020. The interview and FGD combined roughly took four hours to finish.

Global Theme 1: Quality of Services to Students with Deafness

Parents nowadays integrate their children with special needs in mainstream classrooms instead of segregated special education schools. Though the academe is expanding its reach to all kinds of learners, educators report that they are not trained to handle several disability types in one classroom (Mader, 2017). In this global theme, the researcher intends to prove that the absence of school-provided facilities, technologies and services are contributing to the communication barriers between students with deafness and their Non-PWD classmates. Moreover, the researcher wants to inject her positionality with regard to the scarcity of

communication technologies and inclusive programs as a factor to the student with deafness' dependence on old school materials and translators.

Subtheme: Absence of School-Provided Facilities, Technologies, and Services

An average Filipino spends at least 10 hours a day on social media (Varona, 2018), 8.64 hours a day at work (Lasin, 2019), and an hour or longer stuck in traffic (Dancel, 2017) making the Filipino workforce the most burned out student around the globe. This piece of data can speak for itself that the Philippine society values human productivity over the physical and mental prosperity of Filipinos. For a country that is transitioning to an inclusive school in the 21st century, students with deafness will still experience communication difficulties with Non-PWDs as they learn the basics even with contemporary social media and technology. The question now is if the school and its system permits the interaction to happen. During the first few minutes of the interview, Krista was at a loss when asked about the facilities of the school. Instead of responding with a simple 'yes' or 'no' regarding the presence of school-provided facilities, communication technologies, and inclusive services she signs something else.

"... They have some good opportunities for the Deaf" (Krista, Line 32)

But when asked to enumerate these opportunities and how they have helped her communicate with her Non-PWD peers, she slightly but noticeably shrugs her shoulders.

"Yes we can communicate through ... I'm not sure." (Krista, Line 42)

The same aura continued when the topic centered on available professionals in school such as speech therapists, hearing aid technicians, and special education faculties. Krista scratches her head as she looks up the ceiling for an answer. Finally, Krista said that she met a guidance counsellor but she has never attended a formal session with one yet. She also verifies

that none of the present professionals have helped her communicate with Non-PWD peers. Giving the school-provided “facilities” of UP College of Education the benefit of the doubt, communication technologies and inclusive services were also taken into consideration. Krista seemed to be spacing out as she heard the terms ‘inclusive programs’ and ‘communication technologies offered by College of Education.’ She regained her composure before signing:

“One, they let me have an interpreter in UP, and two, UP has volunteers for the Deaf. For example, I enrolled but I thought “How can I enroll? The people here are all hearing? I do not have an interpreter now.” What I did, I wrote on a paper and showed it so that I can communicate with the hearing volunteers.” (Krista, Lines 56-60)

It did not answer the question but to the researcher, what Krista said implied that she could afford hiring an interpreter, and that the student volunteers are present during registration periods only. Krista’s statement also meant that she had temporal constraints with her personal interpreter, that she had to ‘improvise’ a way to communicate with Non-PWDs during her enrollment. Following this response pattern, special education facilities, communication technologies, and inclusive services are not distributed despite the institution’s awareness of Krista’s medical condition. Krista was desensitized by the claim that she had for her own reality in school.

“ I adjust because the school is built for hearing communities.” (Krista, Line 222)

The researcher feels as if other universities in the Philippines are accustomed to violating the magna carta on the rights and privileges of persons with deafness. While it is apparent that

the University of the Philippines is lacking on the part of communication technologies and services, Krista looks at her situation as a glass that is half full.

“... There is potential among the students and faculty who are willing to help me.”

(Krista, Lines 266-268)

Compared to Krista, Mimi and Divina are not taking the topic of school-provided facilities, inclusive services, and communication technologies for students with deafness lightly. Mimi expresses her bewilderment as she scrambles for ideas about their college facilities and programs.

“Since January lang ako nag-start na mag-aral sa Diliman, so I don’t know if they do have programs or something to address that.” (Mimi, Lines 64-66)

Whereas Divina speaks with unwavering conviction that the UP College of Education is unprepared by tying this argument to her early college years.

“For me, the facilities might be enough but not enough to cater the deafness needs. The College of Education does not have the capacity to cater to that kind of situation ... Pero ayun, walang means for me to speak with her community. I know with my experience in another university, we have the means to cater to diverse students.” (Divina, Line 58)

Finally, the question resonated to Mimi when she and Krista encountered a technical problem during their group report. Mimi cited a non-verbatim quotation of her Professor’s helplessness and guilt.

“She would want to know kung ito talaga ang sinasabi ni Krista kunwari kung wala siyang interpreter ganun. We assume that there are no professionals right now.” (Mimi, Lines 75-77)

From the looks of the FGD transcript, Mimi and Divina blame the UP College of Education for putting students with deafness or PWDs in a situation that is inconvenient for them to communicate with regular hearing students. Divina reaffirms her belief that the school should accept then introduce learners with special needs to their Non-PWD peers until the PWD is immersed with the community. She adds to her complaint that they did not receive a word from any officials of a possibility to be in a mixed classroom that may demand much of their patience.

“During the orientation, wala namang nagsabi how to deal with deafness ... It’s the responsibility of this division to address how we could get the presence of PWDs sa mga consciousness ng tao, like yung sa orientation, dapat sinabi sa amin na if you need or if you happen to be in a class na diverse in nature, you can ask for help in this, this, this, this, this.” (Divina, Lines 80-88)

With regard to communication technologies, Mimi and Divina only spoke of typical flat-screen televisions used for class presentations. Mimi says that Divina’s class with Krista is still quite lucky because the visual aid is able to represent concepts that cannot be described in words for students with deafness. She then proceeds to describe her experience with Krista under the teacher that uses a categorically “bygone” way of teaching.

“ ... May topic na ipopost ni teacher na ididiscuss namin for the day, she’s going to post it the night before or early morning ng araw na yun, and then pagdating sa class dun namin icheck. She discusses it then and there. Nagbibigay naman

siya ng handouts pero most of the time, she does this powerpoint presentations in PDF file that she uploads.” (Mimi, Lines 115-20)

Mimi recalls hearing through the interpreter that Krista had an easy-going interaction with her Non-PWD classmates in De La Salle College of Saint Benilde (CSB). Divina said that it might have been an easy-going experience for Krista with the help of the admissions and special education department which provides a 50% scholarship for students who are clinically diagnosed of hearing impairment. The researcher agrees that students with deafness deserve the quality of services that CSB provides to students with deafness, but the researcher would like to remind those who condemn the services provided by UP College of Education that CSB gets most of its universal facilities funding from the tuition fees of its enrollees. The tuition fee alone in CSB is priced at 180,000-240,000 pesos or 60,000+ pesos per term (Edukasyon.PH, n.d.). If granted with a 50% scholarship, the amount is still above UP's. So to speak, one should first be financially stable to have access to universal quality services and facilities when, ideally, it should be free. As Divina shares Krista's struggles in UP, she challenges the system to exhaust all means to make universal facilities and interpreters accessible for students with deafness.

“ I learned through Ms. Krista na she had to go through the hiring process which can be costly. I was thinking na the whole UP system, with the help of the SpEd division should cater to the needs of all PWDs ... Kasi UP is a state university, if they know that a student in the campus has a disability then they should be providing adequate sources ... Doon ako nabigla, akala ko na yung interpreter ni Ms. Krista ay hired by the SpEd department tapos si Krista lang pala ... yes, look and hire.” (Divina, Lines 374-376, 390-391, 395)

Divina is firm on her stance that Krista should be allowed to make an arrangement with the management office of the College of Education or the UP system as a result of limited special education facilities, communication technologies, and inclusive programs. She reiterates that searching and personally negotiating with the interpreter should not be Krista's problem. Apart from the limited resources, Divina exclaims that the system seems to shun the responsibility of integrating Krista to the community.

“Yung dating kasi ng UP regarding this case is “Bahala kayo!” (Divina, Lines 468-469)

Compensating for the school's shortcomings, Mimi and Divina devised their own plans to address the communication barrier that prevails in the UP Community. Mimi practiced a little sign language, while Divina tried to be a source of motivation for Krista to complete her degree program at the very least. Divina hopes that the system promptly supports the special education department in providing free and quality services, facilities, and communication technologies such that in the future, there would be more PWDs like Krista in UP. It is apparent in the study of Alasim (2018) that students with deafness are socially and communicatively challenged. For as long as society cannot distribute and fund universal facilities, the number of unsupported students with deafness would complicate as they keep increasing. Alasim (2018) enumerates technological advancements, financial pressure, parental expectations, and legislation of inclusive education to explain the growing population of students with deafness in general education classrooms.

The researcher believes that this does not apply in the Philippine setting. Many special education schools have closed, coercing students with deafness to find general education schools

that will accommodate them. As a result, schools like the University of the Philippines need to make ends meet for students with deafness despite their inadequate preparation in transitioning to an inclusive school. The situation becomes even more of a nuisance for persons with deafness since many schools have varying interpretations of what “inclusivity” means to their community. For Mary Hare School, their interpretation of an inclusive school means regulating small classrooms and teaching spoken communication to students with deafness. If schools in the Philippines do not believe in the use of sign language, then just like Mary Hare School, only a specialist staff and some hearing technologies will be provided to students with deafness. In the University of the Philippines, there are no orientations and visible facilities or programs for students with deafness because the institution lacks preparation for the possibility of having students with deafness. They have made it the convention that students with deafness must devise their own facilities to subsist in the university.

The researcher could see this attitude stemming from the lack of support even towards regular Non-PWD students. After countless years, UP was only successful recently in fighting for mental health, how much longer would it possibly take for social inclusion and the rights of students with disabilities? The researcher could point to a solution by connecting UP's pride in school diversity to the main objective of inclusive education: To prepare students from various backgrounds how to interact with each other and how to work together. The lack of school-provided facilities is not the fault of students with deafness, it is the liability of the education system. Non-PWD peers should be fighting alongside students with deafness for inclusive education because everyone has some kind of disability to be affected for such a thing as “anti-student policies” (Shigri, 2018).

For UP to be called an inclusive school for students with deafness, Alasim (2018) enumerates a procedure and set of facilities that the institution must have. Full-time interpreters, special education teachers, general education teachers, support programs like counselling and help desks, digital text-to-speech services and other portable applications, conducive libraries and study spaces, speech therapy or audiology, and a facilitator for the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) are some universal facilities that should be present in a school that promotes itself as ‘inclusive’ (Alasim, 2018)

Wauters and Knoors (2007) identifies an inclusive education system if it has a co-enrollment program, otherwise it is just a regular education program. They theorize a co-enrollment program as a classroom setup where the interaction and communication of Non-PWDs and students with deafness become intensive. The condition is that they must be guided by the cooperative work of general education and special education teachers (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2013). As ideal as it sounds to address the communication gap between students with deafness and Non-PWD peers, teachers admit that they are deficient at simultaneously communicating verbally and non-verbally. These teachers also said that a few visual aids and exaggerating their lip movement would be unnecessary if they are geared with the proper teaching materials. Moreover, there are different cases and degrees of deafness which is why schools have to expand the installation and provision of universal facilities and services (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2013). The school should make sure that even the environment itself is inclusive by constructing soundproof classrooms, implementing policies on reduction of background noise, building slightly secluded classrooms, and hiring teachers with effective communication skills for students with deafness (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2013).

The researcher agrees that the admissions system of school offices should get to know the kind of students that they accept, and promptly give quality services, facilities, adjustments, and even scholarships just like what DLS-CSB did to its passers. The researcher can see some relevance in adopting some of the teaching strategies and facilities of DLS-CSB. More importantly, the researcher believes that the UP system should support the Special Education Department of College of Education. They are the underappreciated and underestimated when they were the first to lobby for the rights and needs of each learner. It is the duty of academic institutions and local authorities, or the UP administration and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), to ensure that schools are following the policies on the privileges and rights of students with disabilities. The European union is far ahead in terms of cultivating social inclusivity. Sourbati (2012) explains that the European government is equipping PWD students with an all-digital communications center. Each student shall be supplemented with free and quality electronic services and facilities as they embark on another type of social inclusion, electronic inclusion (e-inclusion).

Now that the COVID-19 outbreak has come to pass, several parts of the European union are ready for remote learning through their e-inclusion preparations. Still, several students with deafness across different countries with or without e-inclusion feel like they are not accommodated by digital learning. Britto (2020) insists that inclusive softwares and specialized experts in captioning-real time videos should be the top priority on the education of students with deafness in electronic learning (e-learning). Professors and educators should also be in a fit state to adjust their requirements and lecture styles to accommodate students with deafness. The school administration and financing unit, on the other hand, should guarantee standby and

visiting experts like speech therapists, educational psychologists, hearing aid technicians, and other special education faculty or consultants. The lecture live stream video should contain a panel for interpreters and the lecture file should be downloadable for offline viewing. The researcher sees that if students with deafness already encounter learning problems during traditional face-to-face classroom meetings, then it is a much bigger problem for Filipinos to expect that students with deafness are learning online. Taking Britto's (2020) advice into consideration, schools should definitely be more watchful of the type of information students with deafness are absorbing in online lectures. A lot still has to be done and corrected but none of it would matter until the UP system and CHED coordinates with the UP special education department.

Subtheme: Students with Deafness' Communication Dependence on Interpreter

School facilities are supposed to supplement the communication skills of students with deafness. Since the previous paragraphs explain that there are no facilities for PWDs, and that sign language has to be learned for a long period of time, students like Krista resort to hiring an interpreter. A sign language interpreter is characterized as someone with excellent listening and communication skills in English (or another language depending on the country) and Sign Language. The interpreter must be seasoned in memorization and accurate information translation; from one language to another (e.g. Filipino to English), and from vocal language to sign language (Sokanu, 2017). The interpreter is still prone to lapses that may compel them to check different reference materials like dictionaries and encyclopaedias. At the same time, there is a possibility for interpreters to unconsciously overdo their job.

Krista confessed that she would not have endured life at school as well as drawing close to her classmates if it weren't for her translator. The researcher found something amiss in Krista's train of thought that the researcher sifted through the interview transcript. The first hint of communication dependence was when Krista apprised that she would never seize the chance to lead any group tasks. She contended that a leader is somebody who is an expert in analyzing and interpreting instructions. Conversely, her reply to coming across any disputes with Mimi was that her interpreter can settle it on her behalf.

"No, because I have an interpreter who tells me what Mimi is saying ... my interpreter does most of the work." (Krista, Lines 138-142)

Krista's viewpoint was rather iffy, but she saved a few remarks to avoid sounding dependent on her personal interpreter. She builds on to what she asks for and what she can do.

"I ask for help from my interpreter to inform me about what is going on or we discuss online." (Krista, Line 222)

A remark which the researcher perceives as a red flag was when Krista said that she would prefer to stay at home than come to class if her interpreter says that he/she will not be arriving. Krista justifies this logic by begging the question and coming up with a painless resolution.

"What am I supposed to do? ... Guess what is happening? So I just go home. I ask my classmates for announcements anyway." (Krista, Lines 207-209)

As unacceptable as it may seem, the researcher believes that Krista cannot be condemned for the institution's lack of facilities, inclusive programs, and communication technologies which all could have enabled her to communicate autonomously to begin with. In fact, there was no

plan initiated by the UP College of Education to prevent this case of communication dependence.

When Krista pondered whether she did belong in the class or not:

“It’s hard to say for sure without an interpreter because with one, I am sure that I am part of the class.” (Krista, Lines 252-253)

She was not mistaken. But when she said:

“My problem is not if I could make a decision but how could I share my decisions without an interpreter?” (Krista, Lines 273-275)

This underlines another point to scrutinize: that the College of Education needs to provide adequate service and assistance directly to the student identified with a disability by the university clinic. At least one of the essential services should be made readily available. The researcher has observed that Krista’s response sequence shows that she clings to the skills of her interpreter to communicate with Non-PWD classmates. Mimi and Divina, however, have a slightly dissimilar take about it. They revisited their first meeting with Krista and both their experiences happened in class. As Mimi and Divina narrated the gist, they initially wore astonished faces since they did not expect that Krista had deafness.

“I was surprised because I had to rely on Krista’s interpreter to be able to speak with her, although later in the class, we managed to find another way to communicate with each other.” (Divina, Lines 58-60)

“Basically, to communicate with Krista, I rely sa interpreter niya.” (Mimi, Lines 68-69)

Since that day, they realized that their only course of action is to communicate through the interpreter who sits in between them and Krista. The statements transcribed from the FGD

explicitly declare that any message delivered to Krista must first reach the interpreter's awareness. Divina, however, attempts to go around and about this circumstance by checking for substitutions to the current communication option. She made sure to collaborate with Krista as soon as they became more relaxed around each other. Mimi finds it mesmerizing that the interpreter can simultaneously discern the Professor's lesson while translating it all in sign language. She attests to the truth that Krista's learning and communication outcomes are shaped by the interpreter as she looks back on the interpreter's imperfections.

"Yung struggle talaga ni Krista ay yung learning through the interpreter..."

(Mimi, Line 409)

Mimi adds that there is too much pressure and responsibility on the personal interpreter that if Krista were to fall behind the discussion, the interpreter is held liable.

"... Hirap na hirap yung interpreter at nagcacatch-up din siya kasi diba ang hirap for the interpreter to look at the teacher and then back to sign at Krista?"

(Mimi, Lines 193-194)

Part of the interpreter's duty is to bridge the communication gap between the class and Krista's initiative to participate through recitations. Mimi touched upon the clear-cut difference between learning on account of the interpreter and personally approaching the class instructor or classmates for queries about the lecture. The researcher evaluates that Krista is learning more when she consults with the Professor and discusses among her classmates. Completely relying on the interpreter for comprehending class lectures suggests that Krista is isolating herself from the realms of criticism. Krista's communication dependence on the hired interpreter is only one out

of many other reasons why communicating with Non-PWDs fetch an arduous image more than it should appear liberating.

Urpi (2013) had already projected the possibility of communication dependence among students with deafness, stating that interpreters are hired to prevent a misunderstanding in an intercultural interaction. To become an interpreter means qualifying the prerequisite of possessing broad knowledge in intercultural theories, concepts, and practices (Urpi, 2013). Since this might be the case, students with deafness may have the tendency to request that the interpreter communicates on their behalf. The pattern may seem normal but it inflicts harmful effects on both the student with deafness and interpreter. Accurately translating languages of two different communities during a formal meeting is already taxing on its own. Interpreters can still commit errors in their choice of words or filtration of ideas due to their background and experiences. Mediating can be overexerted or underperformed, depending on what is demanded of them.

The researcher believes that it is not the interpreter's business to monitor the student with deafness' personal relationships or any sort of interaction that involves communicating with Non-PWDs. Students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers cannot rely on the interpreter for twenty-four-seven. One way or another, the student with deafness and the Non-PWD peer must develop a common interpersonal communication process. The researcher finds it valuable to add in the discussion that a licensed sign language translator is also not the same as an expert in the special education discipline vice versa. On simple terms, a special education professional is aware of the needs, way of life, and history of PWDs, whereas a sign language interpreter is

expected to understand and communicate in sign language only. Gallaudet University is an exemption because the institution offers advocacy training to sign language interpreters.

There are many cases in which students with deafness were offended by the presence or performances of interpreters. Max (not his real name), a fine arts student with deafness from a college in Manila, complained to the researcher four years ago about an interpreter he hired at the price of five hundred and fifty pesos per hour. He specifically instructed the interpreter to arrive during regular lectures only, but the interpreter arrived during exams, and extra-curricular school events (field trips, retreats, and organization events). The worst part was when Max said that the interpreter insisted on answering his exam after many times that he said 'no.' Max felt as if he had too little freedom and that he does not trust the interpreter. This scenario resonates with Ringo's (2013) article where students with deafness protested against AGB's marketing in the ideals of oralism. Ruthie Jordan, an activist with deafness who organized the strike against AGB said that persons with deafness should be given the freedom to choose how to communicate. The researcher's opinion coincides with Jordan's because society should stop ruminating on the thought that students with deafness want to or need to be fixed. Students with deafness should be exploring their communication styles instead of being mocked by society.

Krista, Mimi, and Divina's relationship as classmates consolidates the researcher's belief that it is better to learn the non-verbal communication style of needs of persons with deafness than to entrust interpreters, at least on the exemption of regular classroom meetings. Another issue that has to be dealt with is how to overcome the communication barriers between students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers. The Philippine society could still eradicate the stigma

attached to communicating with people who have deafness. Accommodating students with deafness is one of the multitudinous techniques to exercise principles of social inclusivity.

Global Theme 2: Initiative to Shatter Communication Barriers

It was mentioned earlier that there were existing communication barriers in the UP Community. Mimi and Divina were not quick to accept that the world is unfair and that nothing can be done to communicate without Krista's interpreter. Under this global theme, the researcher uncovers three aspects to the initiative of obliterating communication barriers: The Communication Difficulties of and with Students with Deaf, Peer Encouragement, and Improvement in Communicative Behavior of Students with Deafness and Non-PWD Classmates.

Subtheme: Communication Difficulties of and with Students with Deafness

Krista was reluctant to lead group tasks, and as she politely declined in the interview, she simultaneously looked stern and ambivalent. The explanation for it was obscure in the beginning until she told the researcher a piece of her grievance.

"I am okay about being a leader but I cannot be one when I hardly communicate and fix my own problems." (Krista, Lines 119-120)

The researcher thinks that Krista is unprepared for the culpability of her actions or that she pondered about the presence of other students who are in a better position to be group leader. She sees her inability to communicate due to her deafness as a "problem" that she must spend extra years solving first. Krista tilts her head downwards and shrugs her shoulders as she reduces becoming group leader with her 'I don't feel like it' comment. The researcher disagrees with Krista's notion of having deafness because the real problem is never the person born with a disability but the system which keeps her powerless and afraid. Sooner or later, Krista must stand

up for the rights and privileges of PWDs because discrimination and inequality are still rampant in the Philippines.

Activism calls for Krista to confront the adversities which PWDs like her face on a frequent basis. If suffering is still a trivial affair to her then she will never be freed of her own doubts to empower and lead her community. Krista is already in UP, a step closer to the face of the government for her to discard massive and real-life issues in the country. She has to know that many unseen faces are counting on her and only her because nobody but fellow PWDs can restore the dignity of PWDs. Looking for the roots of Krista's disinterest to lead tasks, the question has been angled towards her struggles as a student with deafness. Krista took a book to act with it as she signed what she meant to say.

"In elementary, I had a difficult time reading, and now I am experiencing difficulty when communicating with hearing people because they have a better reading comprehension than me." (Krista, Lines 176-177)

Krista broadly describes her communication experiences with Non-PWDs in a swift hand movement and with a cold facial expression.

" ... They need to write or discuss slowly. They communicate too fast." (Krista, Line 202)

The researcher thinks that something about this connotes that Non-PWDs regularly communicate rapidly due to their focus on replying instantly. This consequently overshadows self-awareness of non-verbal behavior. Based on the FGD, Mimi and Divina have observed that Krista is unable to socialize or create a "small talk" with hearing individuals outside of her

classes. Mimi supports this premise as she recounts Krista's location and physical movement within the classroom.

“She was also the type of person na hindi nakikipag-usap sa classmates at kami lang nakikipag-usap kasi kami yung magkatabi.” (Mimi, Line 281)

Mimi likewise saw that Krista's fear is connected to her dislike of others getting the wrong impression of what she is signing with her hands.

“Hesitant siya kasi takot siyang ma-misinterpret...” (Mimi, Line 225)

Despite Krista's disengagement when it comes to building relationships with other hearing students, she finds a way to communicate during group projects. Mimi said that in their recent group meeting, they were problematizing the group delivery. They were brainstorming on possible ways to report their assigned topic without excluding Krista. Eventually, she suggested a group roleplay that was pure in non-verbal elements. Mimi genuinely found the idea brilliant that they immediately rehearsed and prepared for it until the pandemic arrived a few days before their actual presentation. Another problem which Mimi was informed about is that Krista prefers to communicate online than in person and that she does not know how to communicate in Filipino since sign language is based on the English language.

“Sabi ng interpreter na mas nagchachat si Krista kaysa nakikipag-usap at saka hindi marunong mag-Tagalog si Krista kasi English pa rin ang basehan ng SL.”
(Mimi, Lines 458-460)

Mimi and Divina currently worry about Krista's teaching endeavours. They explain that the LET has a section for Filipino which might prevent Krista from passing the licensure exam. They hope that the PRC orients Krista at the very least.

“Magiging problem din ni Krista yung Tagalog part sa LET hala. Apart from the communication, hindi natin alam ano ang gagawin ng PRC sa mga Deaf.”

(Divina, Lines 462-463)

The researcher is saddened by the result since it is ironic that FSL communicators do not understand Filipino when the acronym spells out “Filipino Sign Language.” Besides Krista’s dynamics within group requirements, Divina makes mention of Krista’s performance in class recitations. Divina rationalizes Krista’s need to personally communicate with hearing people in the following tone.

“ ... I keep supporting her and reassuring her that there is no harm in trying to communicate with people.” (Divina, Lines 423-424)

Going back to Krista’s indifference about becoming group leader, Mimi subscribes to her judgment. She said that if Krista cannot overcome her the class pacing and reading comprehension difficulties, then she cannot lead at all. With scarcely any support from the academic institution, Non-PWDs are far from being accommodating to PWDs. Mimi groaned out of despair as she elaborates the experience of communicating with a student who has deafness.

“It’s challenging because we are communicating with an unfamiliar community.”

(Mimi, Line 472)

Krista’s reading comprehension level, communication pacing, and zero knowledge of the Filipino national language coincides with Schick’s et al (2002) claim in the journal article that students with deafness are cognitively and linguistically delayed. Teachers from King George VI Memorial School enumerates being disinterested and overly challenged by class requirements as two of the many schooling difficulties of students with deafness. This is connected to Alasim’s

(2018) observation that general education strategies negatively impact the social mobility, academic procurement, and communication skills of students with deafness.

Lutfiyya (1997) has also received reports from parents who complained that their children make too little friends. An explanation as to why persons with deafness hardly expand their circle of friends among is because: First, students with deafness do not have the same opportunity as Non-PWDs to explore their relationships. Students with deafness worry about traveling, curfews at home, and overthinking the risks of being exposed in public. Second, students with deafness need the support from and of authority to interact with Non-PWDs. They need communication technologies, counselling and check-ups, and other social or medical services to regularly check on their communication progress. Third, students with deafness need interpersonal continuity to sustain their relationships with Non-PWDs like monthly immersion programs and other recreational events or activities. Society needs to give students with deafness a natural reason to meet new people and also learn more about themselves through social gatherings. The researcher believes that delayed linguistic and cognitive skills are the root cause of poor communication skills among students with deafness. This was inflamed by the absence of an inclusive education system, yielding poor academic results and a disoriented social communication skills.

Krista is a victim of a dysfunctional education system and its flaws show that she could not establish friendly relationships so easily. Mpofu & Chimhenga (2013) addresses this dilemma one step at a time. Beginning from the class requirements, the school should hire interpreters or teachers who are already experts in sign language, and implement staff development courses to teach current general education teachers how to communicate and apply

sign language in their class requirements. Teachers are also required to distribute lecture notes, handouts, and other course outlines ahead of time to be sure that students with deafness are catching up with the rest of the class. The researcher believes that enforcing inclusive education requires the cooperation of everyone in the system. When educators are doing their jobs right, Non-PWD students assimilate how students with deafness should be treated. When students with deafness are accepted by their Non-PWD peers and supported by the educators and administration, students with deafness are stimulated to better themselves.

Addressing the systemic problem will make it much easier to fulfill Lutfiyya's (1990) belief that there can be genuine friendships between PWDs and Non-PWDs. In the case of Krista, Mimi, and Divina's situation, the situation is inverted. The system does not bother with Krista's schooling problems so the Non-PWDs like Mimi and Divina are doing something about Krista's situation by befriending her first. It is a logical strategy to establish their friendship because Filipinos are not exposed to persons with deafness, albeit PWDs in school; segregation was the schooling trend many decades ago. Mimi and Divina intend to comprehend the social reality of Krista by getting to know her personally.

The researcher believes that this may work when revising academic conventions. Krista, Mimi, and Divina can first target the UP culture by raising awareness, then interchangeably the political authority (the UP administration) or the social economy (the UP-affiliated organizations) to ignite a grapple for inclusive education. Luft's (2000) text discloses that the social economy can create end-results in favor of persons with deafness. A clear-cut citation example of this are businesses which hire persons with deafness to augment the production rates. It has been successful because the communication style and needs of persons with deafness are

accommodated. Luft (2000) argued that the crashing cultural and economical atmosphere is inflicted by the lack of integrative communication. This statement therefore instills that influencing either the market or culture can be a pressing matter for authorities (political spectrum) to help students with deafness.

Subtheme: Peer Encouragement

There are vigorous attempts to alleviate Krista's struggles in communicating with hearing individuals. Mimi and Divina make it a point that they are able to encourage Krista to finish her studies in the Professional Education program for the second semester, academic year 2019-2020. Krista spoke briefly about her overall experience in her subjects as 'funny, cooperative, and helpful.' She expounds this thought as she signs:

"For example, I do not understand the lesson in class, my classmates explain it to me. Really good." (Krista, Lines 64-65)

The first person who came to mind for Krista was Divina because she thinks of her as a kind and trustworthy "best friend." With gleaming eyes and a wide smile, Krista motions how Divina would comfort her and what she would frequently say to her with or without the help of an interpreter:

"She tells me "Do not give up!" I get so touched and I tell her "Thank you". I keep typing and typing even if the requirement is difficult. Divina said I can overcome it with hard work and that I should not compare myself with others."
(Krista, Lines 99-101)

Krista acted out two people, shifting from the left and right side to display their contrast. One was her weeping because of academic stress while the other one was Divina who stayed by

her side, tapping Krista on the shoulder, fanning Krista, and carefully gesturing her hands up and down to imply that Krista needs to take a breather. Krista is absorbing the encouragement that her Non-PWD peers are pampering her with. She feels assured because of it that she can contribute anything within and outside the classroom.

“ ... I can answer many things that only people in the Deaf Community could and people in class respect that.” (Krista, Lines 290-291)

Mimi and Divina have been working on their separate accommodation styles. They admit that they are not experts when it comes to handling cases such as Krista’s but they make amends for the system’s shortcomings by uplifting Krista. It is their only technique to combat the communication barrier between them and her.

“We also encourage her din within our group to recite kasi during the first few weeks...” (Mimi, Lines 224-225)

By observing the behavior of Krista, Mimi came to a conclusion that their words of encouragement positively impact the desire of Krista to communicate with hearing individuals.

“ ... Mas na-aacknowledge silang Deaf Community kapag nakikipag-usap with other people who are not part of the Deaf Community.” (Mimi, Lines 238-240)

While Mimi had multiple tries to learn sign language, what she knows and how much of what she knows is insufficient to directly communicate with Krista. There must be another way to help Krista overcome her fright in communicating with hearing students, Mimi thought. Nonetheless, Mimi realized that Krista is not asking for too much, she is a person with unpretentious joys.

“She feels acknowledged when her presence is acknowledged.” (Mimi, Lines 446-447)

Mimi does not shoulder the burden of the system’s failure to provide Krista’s needs, she influences the whole class to lend a hand in imploding the irrefutable communication barriers. By this virtue, Mimi thinks that she and their class is treating her fairly.

“ ... Because we all care about her welfare.” (Mimi, Line 558)

Mimi knows that encouraging Krista yields desirable effects. One of the many outcomes was that Krista became more “vocal” about her coping mechanisms whenever she felt worried about her academic and social plights; this is how she gauges Krista’s ability to perform for the day. Krista already anticipated the limitations of her interpreter, but Mimi did not foreshadow Krista having to decide between getting a failing mark in their group report to go home just or report without the interpreter whom she pays at an exorbitant price. Krista panicked due to the dilemma but Mimi and the other Non-PWD group members have shown their determination to proceed even without Krista’s interpreter. Mimi was proud to say in the interview that:

“We convinced her to stay in class and that we will find a way such that she can present her part of the group report.” (Mimi, Lines 620-621)

The researcher guesses that Mimi’s manner of encouraging Krista stems from the adjustment of the group or class, whereas Divina strives to make the adjustment more equitable. Divina conceptualizes encouragement as fortitude that has to originate within--- that Krista must help herself prior to asking for help from others. If the researcher were to decide between Mimi and Divina’s ideas, the researcher would not pick either choices. Mimi’s idea of adjustment

comes from the “us” (Non-PWDs) whereas Divina’s idea is directed towards the “them” (PWDs). There is no such a thing as “Social Inclusivity” if adjustment surfaces from a divisive sentiment; it should probe the joint action of all. Divina tackles her fascination with effective relationships, saying that bona fide friendships can transcend any problems.

“... We know that it is challenging since at first we made many adjustments for Krista but with the help of camaraderie naging ok na ang class requirements...”

(Divina, Lines 208-210)

Unlike Mimi, Divina’s intention for Krista is for her to be more self-governing. Reciting and asking questions in class are two out of many communication strains of Krista. Divina urges that instead of consoling Krista by telling her she is doing fine, they have to normalize feelings of confusion and skepticism.

“Inencourage ko siya, sabi ko there’s nothing wrong about asking questions--- that she can approach the teacher, walang mali sa pagtatanong.” (Divina, Lines 214-215)

For the second time around, encouragement proves to be morale-boosting to Krista’s drive to communicate with more and culturally diverse people. Divina throws a good laugh as she mutters.

“I noticed na tuwang tuwa siya every time na-eencourage siyang magparticipate at magtanong.” (Divina, Lines 218-219)

Divina elucidates that change does not happen for the duration of the night. It takes regular and daily practice to transition into a refined version of oneself. She calmly stated further

that she will never grow tired of invigorating the Krista that wants to make strides in her progress as a communicator

“I keep pushing her not to hesitate like when she has questions or a thought that she wants to share, she can directly approach people to talk about it.” (Divina, Lines 424-425)

She wore a proud grin to say that she will have Krista’s back on every occasion. She highlights that this unique advice is the only thing that she can give because of what few services the college has to offer for students with disabilities.

“I am confident that I always accommodate Krista with what few resources we have in the college.” (Divina, Lines 543-544)

Towards the latter portion of the FGD, Divina finds annoyance in dictating tasks. She wants Krista to follow what she has in mind without being pressured by anyone. Her rules in group meetings are plain and simple.

“Volunteer basis ang mga trabaho namin, kung ano ang gustong gawin ni Krista, sa kanya na yung trabaho na yun.” (Divina, Lines 693-694)

With utmost gratification, Divina affirms that their EdTEG Professor is extending her skills to aid Krista because at the end of the day, they are not just learning how to handle regular children in the early grades but all children, including those with special needs.

“Participative at expertise talaga ng mga teachers ang mga cases tulad ng kay Krista.” (Divina, Lines 670-671)

Lutfiyya (1997) would view encouragement as part of emotional learning since it contributes to the exploration and initiation of friendships. It is essential for students with

deafness to develop a network of Non-PWD friends not just to provide them company but to enrich their lives with diverse outlooks and vice versa. Together with the Center of Human Policy, there was an understanding that bringing a PWD and a Non-PWD together does not automatically guarantee that they become friends. This data mirrors the situation of Krista who may be enrolled in a mainstream university but still needs a person to give her a moral and self-esteem boost. AIPC (2009) suggests that if a person desires to keep someone opening up more freely, one must perform the role of an “encourager.” In this case, Mimi and Divina were doing the right thing by affirming Krista of her capacity to do great things and diminishing her self-doubts and anxieties to ask questions, approach people, and make a suggestion.

Besides agreeing and normalizing certain behaviors, AIPC (2009) ties being an encourager with acquiring skills in intentional listening. It is expected of Non-PWDs to let Krista express her innermost thoughts and feelings until she can engage in a discourse with Non-PWDs. The researcher disagrees to a certain extent. Intentional listening would only work if PWDs and Non-PWDs can understand each other once they have a common communication style. Unfortunately, Krista, Mimi, and Divina have not yet done that. Another pressing matter is how can students with deafness elaborate their ideas when a study showed that they are cognitively and linguistically delayed? The researcher also agrees to a certain extent. Assuming that students with deafness show interest in communicating with Non-PWDs, then they must be encouraged by their peers and endowed with their most preferred assistive facilities. In other ways, students with deafness may need more time to consult with an expert who handles cases of communication deficiencies.

If these hurdles are addressed, Non-PWDs must take initiative in encouraging students with deafness using non-verbal responses like nodding, smiling, and signing students with deafness to share more. The researcher believes that these will work on Mimi and Divina's case given that Krista feels acknowledged and jubilant when approached or communicated with. Just like what Brunner (2018) studied, supportive communication partners can help eradicate communication barriers by removing attitudinal barriers first. Up to this point, Mimi and Divina neither have terrible suppositions of Krista nor her disability, an indicator that they are doing the right thing.

Subtheme: Improvement of Communication Behavior

The absence of communication technologies, inclusive programs, and universal facilities in a school that advertises itself as "inclusive," Krista is still eager to make ends meet. She shared the first occurrence when she had to find another way to communicate her needs, during the registration week.

"What I did, I wrote on a paper and showed it so that I can communicate with the hearing volunteers." (Krista, Lines 59-60)

The researcher's positionality is that Krista is 'twice disabled' since she is a student with deafness who functions without any support from the academic institution. She is surrounded amidst other competent and physically privileged students. 'Yes but with restrictions' was Krista's response when she thought deeply about her capacity to make irreversible decisions. Her track of mind was that yes, she can make her own decisions if it is about school matters but anything afar such as protesting for institutional and implementation upgrade is reckoned 'beyond her reach.' This cyclical dilemma is disheartening to the researcher since it translates

that the extent of her fundamental freedoms are controlled by authority. She is persuaded that she is liberated through her admissions and not through the opportunities and benefits that she is receiving from the school. When she was questioned if she had an inkling of voice in the class, she still replied ‘yes’ and explained that she is granted by the school to represent her community and showcase her ability to communicate in sign language.

Last but not the least, Krista confidently replied ‘yes’ for the question ‘do you think you can contribute anything to your class’ after she pondered rationally of her membership in the Deaf Community. The researcher is seeing a convoluted pattern in Krista’s answers because she has an abstraction of empowerment (persevering in UP) but she has nothing to propose with it. It is heartbreaking to admit but “empowerment” for Krista is mere exposure when she could do better than staying within the four corners of the classroom.

Krista is “improving” because it is what Mimi, Divina, the Professor, and all the other Non-PWDs said so. It is favourable to her Non-PWD peers, not necessarily to the extent of what Krista is candidly inclined to do. To reiterate, there are no specialized professionals in UP College of Education who can precisely measure Krista’s development as a communicator for now. The “enhancements” in the FGD and interview are all speculations of the participants. Mimi and Divina have similar descriptions of Krista’s improvement when it comes to communicating with hearing individuals. If Krista used pen and paper during her first registration in UP, she used the same strategy when her interpreter was late for their group report.

“There was one time where she had a difficulty explaining kasi na-late yung interpreter niya so what we did is she wrote it down on a piece of paper--- kung ano yung gusto niya i-share ...” (Mimi, Lines 128-130)

Some weeks later, Mimi saw the improvement, this time in Krista’s social behavior. Mimi excused Krista’s initial distant behavior around crowds by saying that Krista was not comfortable yet to befriend hearing students. They needed to earn her trust first.

“Medyo shy siya at first pero nabigyan siya ng chance to communicate and interact...” (Mimi, Lines 292-293)

Though Mimi is an exemplar of being an accommodating hearing individual to Krista, Mimi cannot deny that who she is today is a result of what she learned from her continuous interactions with Krista.

“Siya nga mismo nagsabi na she wants to establish a connection with hearing people like us...” (Mimi, Lines 433-434)

Mimi and Krista had sessions where they conversed about this particular topic and cross-examined their feelings by demonstrating a few unrehearsed actions, in the same fashion that children play a game of charades. They utilized facial expressions, gestures, body language, and space. It was because of this that Mimi could discern sign language from other non-verbal behaviors, and apply one or more together. Besides the interpreter, Mimi said this is another way that they communicate. Evoking a positive aura, Mimi shares that the school becomes “inclusive” because of Krista’s hard work and dedication in UP.

A question that came in passing was if the interpreter has ever coached or decided on behalf of Krista. Without a second thought, Mimi argued that Krista’s accomplishments are

singlehandedly hard-earned by nobody but Krista, herself. Mimi saw with her very own eyes that the interpreter was astonished to gather insights from Krista who every so often described them in writing. Mimi links this with a rebuttal that Krista began making independent decisions ever since her interpreter did not come to class for their group report. If it was not pressure, it was passion that brought Krista right in front of the classroom. She presented in the reflection of her own person. Mimi saw that Krista had a voice in the very beginning but narrowly had the chance to project it.

“... The fact na alam namin yung circumstances niya sa buhay at nagrerecitate siya sa harap ng 30+ people ay malaking bagay na yun.” (Mimi, Lines 667-668)

The researcher realized that what happened in the group report incident was a substantial leap to Krista’s identity as an aspiring teacher for learners with deafness, and that their encouragement actually worked. Divina, Krista’s self-proclaimed ‘best friend’ and classmate, finds deeper semantics in the kind of scholar Krista has turned into. One of the many things which Divina noticed is that Krista can apply her personal life to the quality of output that she produces. She cites a case in point from their EdTEG class.

“She has a daughter so she finds the class relatable like pano maghandle ng bata, pano makipag-usap sa bata, of course according to how her community handles it.” (Divina, Lines 204-205)

Throughout periods of raising questions, and commencing short conversations with hearing students outside of class, Divina was pleased to share that Krista is in UP because she possesses the merit to match the demands of an “inclusive” school.

“ ... Napansin ko na magaling talaga si Ms. Krista, pero that’s the purpose of inclusive education diba? For her to adapt to the university’s standards and environment, ang galing niya ... Magaling talaga siya that’s why she’s in an inclusive school like UP. “ (Divina, Lines 246-248, 289-290)

The researcher would like to contend that an “inclusive school” is not an exclusive academy for surviving intellectuals but a system that employs numerous programs to serve and not coddle all kinds of intellectuals who are experiencing learning difficulties. The programs of social inclusion are linked from the administrative to the instructor’s use of academic freedom. A Professor at the University of Illinois defines academic freedom as the educator’s mandate to restructure lesson topics or requirements, and the student’s right to voice their opinions in class without the threat of being sanctioned (Nelson, 2010).

The researcher confirms that an inclusive school is not a computation to pinpoint which schools produce the best and worst graduates. It is an institution where diverse learners come to one place to learn together and from each other. Looking back at Krista’s progress as a communicator, Divina chuckles to herself as she recollects the struggle of making the communication happen. The perplexity is all at the start until everything advances naturally when you become friends. Divina finds this parallel to any relationship except it takes more grit and forbearance to get used to being friends with people like Krista. The longer she gets to know more about Krista, Divina admits that she (Krista) is actually an expressive person and that she does not hide her emotions from anyone whom she is communicating with.

“I saw her becoming confident at naa-articulate na niya ang mga gusto niyang sabihin, kapag may parts siyang hindi naiintindihan sabi ko, ok, go. Put it out.”

(Divina, Lines 426-428)

Just like her definition of an “inclusive school,” she was constant with regard to her definition of belongingness.

“... She earned her spot in the class, she qualifies, and we see her as an intellectual.” (Divina, Lines 553-554)

Divina gives credit to their EdTEG teacher who required individual recitations which she believes incentivized Krista to improve her communication skills. Class recitations are one of Krista’s training grounds to conquer her source of distress, having to communicate with Non-PWDs. Divina has faith in Krista that someday she would fearlessly diversify the discussion about the Deaf Community. Judging by the interview and FGD transcripts, Krista has been adjusting in spite of the school’s shortcomings to provide universal facilities and communication technologies for Krista to easily communicate with her Non-PWD peers. She raises an eyebrow when the researcher asks if Mimi knows how to communicate in sign language. In a puzzled expression, she replies:

“She is something like Divina but Mimi can do some fingerspelling. We talk to achieve our needs in our group work.” (Krista, Lines 227-229)

The researcher derives from Krista’s point of view that Non-PWD peers learn sign language for urgent or academic purposes at most, and that they stopped learning beyond fingerspelling. A problem that Mimi and Divina surpassed was the awkward situation of talking to someone who has an entirely different background until they are acquainted. Mimi thought of

sign language as a life skill that she needed to break the ice by learning the basics. When asked what they were, Mimi had a quick answer.

“... Alam ko yung fingerspelling at saka basic greetings like ‘thank you’ and ‘welcome.’ Basta yung mga ginagamit niya halos palagi.” (Mimi, Lines 509-510)

While Divina made a follow-up with Mimi’s.

“Ako rin. Alam ko yung ‘thank you’, ‘welcome’ at ‘CPE’.” (Divina, Line 512)

It was rather dismaying for the researcher that the improvement in communication skills were immensely focused on Krista, the student with deafness, when the expectation should be higher or equal with the Non-PWD classmates. They are physically fit to communicate and digest sign language, then again, the blunders in human behavior is an aftermath of an erroneous system. There are two prospects to unravel why the findings turned out like this. The first likelihood is that the education system and Non-PWDs Community is declining invitations to teach sign language and Deaf Communication. The second may be pertinent to Krista’s inspiration to improve as a communicator after seeing Mimi and Divina’s humble adjustments. From the looks of their development, the Non-PWD classmates tried their hardest but the status quo of schooling is to ace the competition, not to be oriented in upraising fellow students.

The adjustment of students with deafness is not a valid excuse for Non-PWD peers not to be conscious of their non-verbal behavior. Non-PWDs have to make even more adjustments than a student with deafness for the school to be inclusive to all kinds of students. They can follow three steps, as recommended by Brunner (2018) to secure that persons with deafness are non-verbally accommodated. Applying these steps with Mimi and Divina’s uncertainty when it comes to approaching Krista, they first need to ask Krista or Krista’s immediate family and

relatives how they basically communicate with Krista. Discerning to what and how Krista has been communicating with the people she grew up with will illuminate her non-verbal behavior. The next thing that Mimi and Divina could do is control the environment by choosing as to where they should interact or communicate.

Brunner (2018) suggests places that are not clamorous or crowded with distraction in order for students with deafness and Non-PWD peers to stay focused on communicating with each other. The type of environment would still depend on their purpose of meeting. If they met halfway to join a mob then they must prepare for a clamorous and crowded place. Last but not the least, Mimi and Divina should already have a perception of Krista's non-verbal behavior and if not, they need to carefully test which non-verbal cues supplement their communication strategies. Using this knowledge, Mimi and Divina should be able to apply them in their interactions with Krista across multiple circumstances. Facial expressions, body language, and silence are three of the most common non-verbal cues that worked in Brunner's (2018) study of accommodating students with deafness, but the intensity per non-verbal element is not the same for every person. Being observant of Krista's non-verbal behavior is Mimi and Divina's responsibility.

Since Krista is not equipped with the proper communication technologies to independently communicate, there is a separate advice when communicating with the interpreter around. Brunner (2018) warns that Mimi and Divina should be cautious and sensitive of Krista's feelings. Communicating with just the interpreter or looking at their phones while Krista is communicating can be a source of misunderstanding and triggering Krista's anxieties.

The researcher has a strong opinion of Non-PWDs (Mimi and Divina) being the people in charge of finding a way to directly communicate with Krista. As difficult as it may seem, if Mimi and Divina are able to communicate directly to Krista, they are building each other's cognitive-communication skills. It was stated earlier that students with deafness have low linguistic and cognitive abilities, but with this cross-cultural interaction, there is a chance to eject the communication and attitudinal barriers (Brunner, 2018).

Moreover, the researcher avows that it is better for Non-PWD peers to study and incorporate sign language instead of guessing the sign language gestures or communicating exclusively with the interpreter. Sari's (2005) study on Turkish students with deafness corresponds with the researcher's standpoint. The participants with deafness in Sari's (2005) study claimed that communicating in sign language is the most effective mode of communication with students who have deafness. Learning sign language should not just be restricted to Non-PWD peers but also parents, educators, and those who live with or frequently work with students who have deafness. By acquiring some knowledge in sign language, Mimi and Divina would acquire communication flexibility or the method that involves shifting to verbal and non-verbal communication.

Communication flexibility could be adjusted by amateur Non-PWD sign language communicators. They can combine or match fingerspelling, intermediate signing, and other non-verbal elements so that students with deafness have a better comprehension of the message being sent across. Mimi and Divina have not yet discovered what or how to communicate with Krista because they were too focused on the concept of encouragement. Communication flexibility is also useful for situations where Mimi had to brainstorm projects that do not exclude

Krista. Much more can be done if Mimi learned intermediate signing and if Divina memorized the sign language alphabet. What Krista did for herself was astounding but what the researcher chases for is the development of Mimi and Divina as communicators. They cannot be satisfied with just a few sign language alphabet gestures. There is certainly another way to approach Krista if they were guided by an expert in physical and sensory disabilities, or had they just studied more of Krista's non-verbal behavior.

Global Theme 3: Non-Verbal Accommodation

For this global theme, there are six identified sub themes: Non-Verbal Convergence, Non-Verbal Divergence, Perspectives of Sign Language, Improvised Communication, and Applied Online Communication. The Non-Verbal Convergence theme consists of four smaller components which are space, facial expressions, body language, and sign language. As for Non-Verbal Divergence, its two components are time and silence. Non-Verbal Convergence pertains to the instances when the participants are able to conform to the communication needs and style of students with deafness, while Non-Verbal Divergence refers to the denial or failure to communicate with students with deafness as a result of certain non-verbal languages.

Subtheme: Non-Verbal Convergence

Space, also known as proxemics in non-verbal communication, determines what or why people are brought together or isolated from each other. It also alludes to the gap between objects and species. Space would always equate to a normative level of power distance (for the formal setting) and intimacy (for the informal setting) of two or more people (University of Minnesota, 2015). The interesting facet of space is that it can be manipulated, imagined, and self-founded by the sender and receiver (e.g. a chair in the middle of a room to visualize a throne). Mimi sets a

clear example of this is when she cheered for Krista who dreaded the view of being watched closely.

“We tell her din na the class is a safe space so she can freely express herself.”

(Mimi, Lines 226-227)

In the statement above, Mimi was not pertaining to a present space but a reimagined concept of space reinforced with the word ‘safe.’ Attaching the words to form the term ‘Safe Space,’ Mimi uses it to relieve Krista’s anxiety whenever she sets foot in the UP College of Education.

“Inassure namin siya that UP, especially Eduk, is a safe space.” (Mimi, Lines 292-293)

The researcher, as a matter of fact, commends Mimi for activating the term ‘safe space’ in the university. A safe space can have two meanings: free speech during intellectual discussions, and respecting student diversity (Yee, 2019). Those who descend from a historically marginalized community are mostly at risk from school violence. The researcher sees mental health as a growing concern which is why it is significant for students to rally and enable safe spaces. Mimi did a splendid job when she began regularly sitting next to Krista in class, she not only made an abstraction of ‘space’ but also practiced what ‘safe’ means. From the conception of physical space between objects and people, the researcher would like to drift towards the emotional prospect of space. Mimi said if she were to rate her closeness with Krista, it would be a six out of ten because of their shared experiences. Given their level of closeness, Mimi’s tip when it comes to maintaining friendly relationships with PWDs like Krista is to accompany them during one’s spare time.

“She actually shares about why she behaves in certain ways pero malaking factor na either ako or yung 4 na ibang groupmates namin ang nakakausap lang niya about it.” (Mimi, Lines 642-643)

Uniting Mimi’s concept of ‘safe space’ and Divina’s encouragement routine, Divina discloses, in a mesmerized tone, an occasion when Krista did something out of the ordinary.

“... That was the first time na natuto siyang magpaconsult or pumunta tuwing consultation hours.” (Divina, Lines 214-215)

If Mimi and Krista interacted during class hours, Divina met halfway with Krista in the school library until going there became a force of habit. Divina even shared that if it weren’t for the pandemic, their plans to stroll outside of school would have transpired. Other than reimagining and manipulating space so that Krista would feel at ease, Divina told Krista that should she ever have the forethought of approaching someone, Divina can come along with her.

“ ...When you are comfortable, we can ask the teacher together din naman. I think the support means a lot to them.” (Divina, Lines 428-429)

The most basic non-verbal language when it comes to conveying emotions is none other than facial expressions. Most of the time, they are mistaken by their highly interpretative nature, but with a few other non-verbal combinations, an emotion (e.g. happiness - determined by facial expressions), a feeling (e.g. extremely happy and nervous - saturated non-verbals), and a mood (e.g. vibrant - no use of body language) can be differentiated (Cherry, 2019). Effective performers can utilize facial expressions to mask various inner thoughts and feelings, thus why humans live up to Goodrich’s proverb that “Few realize how loud their expressions really are. Be kind with what you wordlessly say.” When Krista first met Mimi and Divina, she prejudged

them based on their facial expressions. The first feature that she liked about Divina is that she is always smiling, and gaping at that euphoric atmosphere enticed her to befriend Divina. When Krista and Divina became friends, she only ever asked for words of encouragement; when she was devastated about a personal predicament. She said Divina came to her side and saw an unusual teary-eyed Krista.

“I keep typing and typing even if the requirement is difficult. Divina said I can overcome it with hard work and that I should not compare myself with others. She said “Who cares?” I keep saying “Thank you, Thank you, Thank you” while tears are streaming down my face because UP is hard. Now I feel like crying ... Still, I realized I have to keep fighting. In Eduk, learning became my life.” (Krista, Lines 99-104)

Weeping in front of someone is Krista’s way of emotionally recovering. The researcher saw Krista’s willingness to show vulnerabilities to someone as a matter that involves trust. For a person who does not interact with just anyone, this part of Krista has more value than what it seems. A medical news article reviewed by Dr. Timothy J. Legg reveals that women cry at an average of 3.5 times per month while men cry at an average of 1.9 times. Interestingly, tears are more than eye lubrication, they can range from basal, reflex, to emotional tears. The facial expression and act of crying produces emotional tears which are high in hormone stress levels. Releasing this tension activates the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) which creates a self-soothing and relaxing outcome of crying (Burgess, 2017).

Using this and a source on the social impact of emotional tears, the researcher spots a social significance between the crying facial expression and mental-emotional state of a person.

Shedding emotional tears elicit helplessness since experts correlate it to the increase in human perception that a person crying is asking for help (Vingerhoets, 2016). As the researcher contemplates further into the discussion, facial expressions verily emit general human interpretations. Lamentably, people malpractice this knowledge for social, economic, and political agenda. The show of facial expressions can be beneficial, such as the case of Divina who considered Krista's feelings as valid. Facial expressions have a wider purpose: human beings can dwell on their emotions or inquire into their impressions of people's facial expressions. Krista prejudged Mimi and Divina for their faces and she took some time off to differentiate what she was seeing.

"She is very serious. She is always thinking: Why? What? How? Though she is always serious, she never looks mad or expresses anger. She always has new ideas to share and she judges which ideas are good or bad. She keeps reflecting."

(Krista, Lines 132-134)

The statement is loud and clear that Krista can tell if Mimi is exasperated apart from her default-serious face. Undeniably, Krista is still intimidated by Mimi for her to say that she is showing consideration for a boundary between them. It can be suspected that facial expressions have enormous effects on emotional perception. Facial expressions converge to Krista's communication style and so far she has been confrontational to Mimi and Divina to avoid future misunderstanding. The researcher surmises that it is safe to say that facial expressions prove to be a pressing matter for people to be more vigilant of what they are deliberately and unintentionally communicating. In the FGD, Mimi bluntly said that Krista's facial expressions are easy to read as an online private message.

“ Yung facial expressions niya may hawig din sa online emojis.” (Mimi, Lines 482-483)

When it was Divinas’ turn to condense her frame of mind about how she and Krista are able to communicate their feelings. With a chortling sound, Divina answered:

“She is easy to communicate with by looking at her reactions. She is quick to also get the message with my emotions. Hindi niya pinapahirapan ang mga kinakausap niya, otherwise strictly sign language lang ang mode of communication namin. Ayun, kalma lang siya.” (Divina, Lines 489-492)

Facial expressions are complex non-verbal languages that the new research on emotional control informs online viewers that emotions alter people’s manner of reading texts (Nauert, 2019). The researcher agrees to this postulation as she met a student with deafness in the UP College of Fine Arts who claimed that her facial expressions (muscles) followed her brush strokes when sketching faces. In the future, when more studies on facial expressions are published, perhaps Non-PWDs students will understand how they can use facial expressions to know the true feelings of students with deafness.

Body language, the largest branch of non-verbal communication, encapsulates other non-verbal communication behaviors like posture, hand movements, and facial expressions (Nordquist, 2018). One way to remember this definition is that the aforementioned three are all body language but not all body language are only the aforementioned three. An example of body language can be drawn through Mimi’s statement.

“We were planning the method of our report, syempre we need to think of how to deliver the report so that time ... She asked us if we can include ourselves sa role play na gusto niyang gawin ...” (Mimi, Lines 157-159)

Acting is a mix and match mastery of performative skills, and it is altered by the script, character illustration, and overall spectacle (Gardner, 2009). Acting can omit verbal messages for long periods and still be a theatrical production. This type of production could either be a mime or ballet. The researcher presumes that Krista suggested a presentation without dialogue (not play) because she may have piloted it in her previous experiences, or she just itemized her ideas so that she would not be factored out of the group report. A chunk of evidence that body language cannot be separated but blended with other non-verbal behaviors can be withdrawn from Mimi’s declaration.

“Kapag nagrerecite siya in sign language, kasabay ng hand movements niya yung facial expressions niya.” (Mimi, Lines 481-482)

Much like Krista, Mimi and Divina reciprocate actions that resemble Krista’s to convey their feelings about matters at hand, but ever since the COVID-19 outbreak, online stickers and GIFs can never be compared to the sincerity of face-to-face gestures.

“Before nito, may actions naman, movements, at way to act out our emotions.”
(Divina, Lines 477-478)

When spoken means of communication are undesirable or unavailable, sign language, the oldest form of speech and a type of body language, can be enacted in the example of pointing and shrugging (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). A French educator in the mid-18th century saw that sign language can eradicate the language barriers between hearing and

non-hearing individuals, and in the long run, teach the essential communication skills for students with deafness. Krista recollects comprehending Mimi's behavior, saying that Mimi was memorizing signs that she observed from her interpreter, but that is the most that Mimi could do for her. It is a strange insight to hear from Krista saying that she is unshackled by social conventions for being treated with politeness in class as she communicates in sign language. She feels dispelled of her frights ever since she had an unfading experience with this particular Professor.

"...The teachers in class remind everyone about this handbook which states that we must learn to respect each other. The teacher even used fingerspelling such that I understood her." (Krista, Lines 279-281)

Krista's interpreter had sporadic episodes of absences which made it indispensable for Krista and Mimi to search for alternative means to communicate. It was not just the Non-PWD classmates but also the Professor who admitted that if they just knew how to communicate in sign language, transferring and sharing knowledge to and from Krista would not be so taxing. The contradistinctions of Mimi and Divina are pellucid. What the researcher can see in Divina is that she has a deep-seated opinion about encouragement and change within oneself, while Mimi paid attention to the change in dyadic behavior. Mimi upholds the value of intent to learn sign language when influencing Non-PWDs classmates to match the non-verbal language of students with deafness.

"I try to assist her to the best I can. I give visual cues and I try to learn some basic sign language." (Mimi, Line 341)

The researcher observes that Mimi's attitude towards Krista is an exemplar of communication convergence. She wants to be proficient in sign language to stimulate cognizance of the Deaf Community, and she also wants to eliminate the social disgrace against unspoken communication. It is grueling for Mimi to wrap her head around the mindset of steering away from trying to communicate in sign language or at all with Krista.

“What I don't get is kakausapin mo lang, simple 'hi' nga eh.” (Mimi, Line 446)

Not communicating at all, as believed by the researcher is not a language or communication barrier but an attitudinal barrier which is far worse than the previous two. A person can be a genius at sign language but would assert their dominance in a communication situation with a person who has deafness. A Non-PWD can also use sign language but for illicit practices at most like cultural misappropriation.

Mandal (2014) said that non-verbal communication is a principal element during interpersonal interactions and when building interpersonal relationships. Mimi and Divina used the non-verbal components of space, facial expressions, body language, and sign language to accommodate the communication style and needs of Krista. The researcher agrees with Mandal (2014) that non-verbal communication can be manipulated. Since it adheres to a set of social norms, it can be renovated under the influence of any political ideologies.

They disintegrated Krista's fear of setting foot in the university by eliminating the notion of a social hierarchy. Mimi and Divina displayed that the College of Education is a safe space by also acting normally around Krista. This abstraction of space continued as they were ensuring that the school looks safe and feels safe. They accompanied Krista in her consultations, sat beside her during group activities, and walked the same road with her towards their own

destinations. Mimi and Divina manipulated space that gave Krista the outlook that they are in the 21st century in the University of the Philippines where students with deafness are treated like human beings. Mandal (2014) further argues that space or proxemics is one of the oldest political ameliorations in society--- from designating bathrooms exclusively for people of color, keeping women at home, and even the historical concept of a *pueblo*, the world has made a huge leap towards equality and inclusivity.

The researcher could see that the UP system has only started accommodating persons with deafness after being accustomed to generations of “resilient students.” Only in this day and age is the concept of “safe space” equivalent to freedom (of speech) and compassion (or honor) over excellence. Morgan (2013) believed PWDs and Non-PWDs can form friendly relationships. By studying which non-verbal elements have led PWDs to their current pool of friends, Morgan (2013) reports that space and facial expressions have one of the fiercest effects on relational development. Both elements, space and facial expressions, are present in Mimi and Divina’s non-verbal behavior with Krista. This means that they are more or less on the appropriate behavioral track to befriending Krista.

If Mimi and Divina championed the safe space movement through their companionship and encouragement. They are also able to convey their sincerest emotions and analyze Krista’s feelings through facial expressions. Krista remembers that time she wept due to the pressure of her academic requirement deadlines. Her demonstration of Divina’s consolation included a “breathing-timing” face (i.e.puckering one’s lips to collect and blow air like drinking with a straw), a softened expression to empathize with Krista, and a timely grin that meant she is pleased to see Krista feeling better. AIPC (2009) would call Divina’s features as a type of

positive facial expressions which invites another communicator to vent more. Divina was performing a commendable job at being an “encourager” for Krista to have an increased self-esteem. AIPC (2009) broadens the topic of positive facial expressions, stating that it has helped people enlarge friendships. Given Mimi and Divina’s advantage of being diplomatic friends (past acquaintances), they have a better probability at furthering their friendly relationship with Krista compared to the other Non-PWDs. The researcher has observed that Mimi and Divina could predict and interpret Krista’s facial expressions. Mimi compared Krista’s facial expressions with emojis while Divina said Krista is like an open book with her facial expressions. Krista, on the other hand, may have prejudged Mimi and Divina based on their facial expressions but Krista could tell that Divina inherently has a jolly personality while Mimi has an exasperated expression for a default face. For all the participants to distinguish another’s non-verbal behavior, it means they have been constantly interacting.

It makes sense to the researcher that Krista, Mimi, and Divina are familiar with each other's facial expressions since the face is used by persons who have deafness to complement what they feel while communicating in sign language (Berke, 2005). In other respects, a person with deafness who communicates in sign language without facial expressions, matches the same weirdness of a Non-PWD who talks without moving a facial muscle. Brunner’s (2018) 3-step procedure in communicating with people who have deafness finishes on utilizing non-verbal constituents like facial expressions and body languages. The reason for employing body language is because it resolves speech difficulties like outlining objects, people, events, and other things that do not have a sign language or spoken language equivalent. Connecting Krista’s facial expressions to emojis like the eyeroll can be used to signify agitation, and in the

rapport-building procedure, the word “agitation” was unrecognizable to Krista. Husna (2015) reveals that facial expressions and body language are the most predominant non-verbal elements in student-teacher interactions and this framework would most likely be the case for students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers in schools.

Body language is the largest non-verbal communication cluster, and it was visible when Divina comforted Krista, when Mimi and Krista were planning their report delivery, and when Divina said that they would act how they felt when communicating. The researcher believes that body language is not just a creative outlet but an avenue where culture manifests through their behavior. Some interpret being happy as showing jumpy movements, while others may interpret it with intense shaky movements, or wavy timid movements. Hans (2015) supports the saying that non-verbal communication, body language included, compels the imagination to challenge the body how to enact interpretations.

Ismail (2014) ties this idea with people who are met with a lexical problem; communicators use outlining non-verbal elements that use at least two hands to bring an imagined material to life. The researcher delineates a conclusion using Ismail’s (2014) journal article that body language would work when communicating with students who have deafness because it strengthens one’s vocabulary and second language acquisition. If that is the situation, body language can relieve linguistic and cognitive delay of students with deafness, and introduce of Deaf Communication to Non-PWDs (Ismail, 2014). Body language is not only the largest non-verbal expression, Husna (2015) proclaims that it is diverse that communicators can apply them independently or blend them with other non-verbal code systems and it would still mean something.

Sign language, the primary mode of communication for students with deafness, was discussed by Mpofu & Chimhenga (2013). They explain that learning sign language to communicate with students with deafness is a gesture that shows empathy. For this portion, the researcher justifies that Non-PWD peers should not be afraid to interact with students because Berke (2005) says that it is not a prerequisite to be an expert in sign language already. The Non-PWD classmate should just show willingness to be corrected and guided by a student with deafness. The researcher regards it as true that students with deafness appreciate it when they meet Non-PWDs who can communicate in sign language; even if it is as fundamental as fingerspelling or basic signing. Krista vividly remembers how her Professor talked about equality and respecting each other. It stuck to Krista because the teacher communicated in basic sign language as she read the statement. Grasping that people prefer to non-verbally present themselves and communicate with others is an indication that one proliferates a culture of inclusion. Husna (2015) calls this proliferation as non-verbal consciousness. The researcher elaborates on this by stating that a person with deafness is offended when people mimic sign language instead of learning how to communicate with it appropriately.

Similar findings were shown in the work of Gugenheimer et al (2017) in which assistive technologies have a correlation with the debilitating effects on sign language communicators. Mimi said that she voluntarily assists Krista by executing visual cues and sign language salutations. Krista would certainly find Mimi respectful (Sari, 2005) knowing that persons with deafness depend on sign language to express themselves (Luft, 2000). Sari (2005), on the other hand, sees having a national language sign language version of one's country to be of great importance since it means students with deafness are recognized with a national identity. In the

Philippines, Filipino Sign Language has not been developed such that Krista knows how to communicate in Filipino and identify as Filipino. More of this shall be discussed on the perspectives of sign language.

Luft (2000) projects that the long-term benefit of maintaining PWDs in school is the application of social inclusivity and coexistence. Students with deafness have given up on schooling due to the academic load and socialization difficulties. When Non-PWDs show that they are uninterested in learning sign language, it is the same as giving up altogether. How can Non-PWD UP students expect the system to care when they, themselves, do not? Following Gugenheimer's et al (2017) journal article, the researcher believes that the problem with society nowadays is that students with deafness are expected to find solutions to hearing when they are medically and systemically disabled. Society can do better than pass the burden to individuals who do not have the primary means to do away with the burden. The takeaway of non-verbal convergence is that Non-PWDs should not be afraid of communicating with people who have deafness. People interact to explore, discover, and process how unique each one represents their community with the way they communicate.

Mandal (2014) would concur that in communication, people learn what acceptance and respect means when one's non-verbal qualities are acknowledged. There is no lie in the saying that persons with deafness and Non-PWDs can enrich each other's lives. If Mimi and Divina can value Krista even just as classmates, then imagine how different the world would be if persons with deafness expanded their network of friendly relationships to a vast number of Non-PWDs? Uniqueness in one's non-verbal behavior conveys the ascendancy of social inclusion, and only

when we activate communication for the betterment of humanity does communication even become human (Mandal, 2014).

Subtheme: Non-Verbal Divergence

Chronemics is the study of time in non-verbal communication. It is used to measure days and nights to quantify and interpret principles of time management, physical punctuality, and response period. Chronemics is a precious resource in the business world where productive employees are obligated to be more responsive than the entities with preeminent positions. Nevertheless, time can still be revamped by hierarchical and ideological designs (Sandhu, 2020). Mimi and Divina are Krista's friends but her timbre when the question arrives to the temporal aspect of communication says otherwise.

"We have different schedules and I go home afterwards. I don't have time to go out with friends." (Krista, Lines 151-152)

Krista's statement may imply that socializing is not part of her routine or she might be too preoccupied by other duties that she has not found the time yet to socialize with Non-PWD classmates. The researcher therefore deduces with Krista's background that her friendships are formal while her priorities have been grounded to setting a perfect example to her only child. As stated earlier, Krista prefers to stay at home than go to school without an interpreter to learn nothing as a result of the lecturer's teaching pace. Her reasoning emanates from her contempt towards wasting time.

"The teacher talks too fast and switches the slides too fast ... So I just go home."
(Krista, Lines 206-208)

The same thing applies when she attends group meetings but they are not giving her sufficient time to absorb and share ideas. She sees it as a waste of time and energy.

“We only get to discuss thoroughly in group meetings but there are times when the group talks too fast and not to me. When I checked the time, they only had 2 mins to tell me everything that they remember in the 58 minutes. I don’t think I was included in the discussion then.” (Krista, Lines 245-248)

The researcher would like to underline the phrase: “The group talks too fast and not to me” as it indicates intentional inaction for Krista’s case, barely catching up. It signifies that Non-PWDs have an apathetic reflex not to pause and check on group members who might have not understood details in the meeting. As for the two minutes which the group has spared for Krista, the researcher flags it as a ‘make-believe’ that Krista had any partaking in the meeting when they simply required her affirmation and presence. Now, this is an unequivocal example of an attitudinal barrier in communication. According to Wroblewski, an attitudinal barrier emerges from personality conflicts which can range from resistance to change, selective perception, and all the way to the lack of motivation of a communicator. A sign that people have outdone an attitudinal barrier is if they practiced active listening, can assess the needs of the other communicators, and coaxes for feedback to have a forthright grasp of each other’s messages (Wroblewski, 2018). Krista was not the only person to notice that class instructors tend to expedite the class lecture to meet the course objectives and syllabus schedule. Mimi thought of it sooner and requested that the Professor reconsiders slowing down such that Krista could follow.

“They’re considerate naman about Krista especially kapag masyadong mabilis ang discussion...” (Mimi, Lines 192-193)

In terms of hanging out with Krista, Mimi had an apologetic face and replied that she goes straight home to work, whereas Divina bonded more with Krista because they were from the same neighborhood. Regrettably, the only time they were able to know more about each other was when they were headed home. Other than that, they see each other as regular schoolmates of the same degree program. A question raised by the researcher was if they are willing to learn sign language in the future. Though they said ‘yes’ their mutual constraint to learning sign language was time.

“I am interested but I have to consider the time, because communicating in sign language is a skill, it’s a commitment that you need to exhaust a lot of your time in. A language is not rushed.” (Divina, Lines 529-531)

Divina said that for her circumstance, she has not mastered English Filipino, and Arabic so she is learning one step at a time. The researcher posits that “too busy” is just a disguise for prioritizing something else, and perhaps the depth of their friendship is still on surface level. It is understandable that Mimi and Divina are busy since they are in their thirties and they are working, but if they were really friends, it could have incentivized them to learn more sign language. The least Mimi and Divina can do is to influence other Non-PWDs whose mission involves raising society’s non-verbal consciousness towards the Deaf Community. If Mimi mentioned their class instructor’s pacing when teaching, Divina is concerned with Krista’s unsettled dissensions with her personal interpreter.

Persons with deafness are stereotyped as ‘mute’ when they are not because muteness does not equate to silence. Psychologist Kurt Smith defines silence as a “goal to get the last word.” His explanation is that silence is about active listening so that one may communicate

better or arrive at a resolution faster than expected (Smith 2018). Based on the interview and FGD transcripts, silence is a type of non-verbal divergence for the way it was used by Mimi and Divina. They are not quiet to listen to Krista, they are quiet because they have nothing to tell her, and Krista is processing it horrendously.

“We’re just groupmates. We only chat, nothing personal ... Sorry, I do not talk to people that much.” (Krista, Lines 160-164)

Krista is not the type of person who initiates conversations with people, she listens first before responding to the best of her knowledge. According to Krista, herself, there happens to be a single time when she did not feel accommodated by Mimi. She describes how horrible it felt like to ask for help one day to be hastily put aside without a chance to be informed or heard.

“ ... After class she just goes out of the classroom and tells me that she will explain her ideas or the instructions later. I understand that she has her own life but I am not fully informed because of it.” (Krista, Lines 243-245)

Mimi gave a reason for her avoidance to communicate with anyone in class by tracing the classroom layout. She said that since everyone is quiet, there is no purpose to make a sound.

“I don’t know sa ibang class pero sa amin parang walang pakialam ang mga tao. Although wala kaming common ground to talk to each other about things.”
(Mimi, Lines 190-191)

Then she expounded on the Non-PWD population in their EdFD class.

“Kami naman sakto lang, hindi gaano ka-interactive kasi most of my classmates are from CHK. Mga tahimik lang sila sa class.” (Mimi, Lines 222-223)

The researcher deduces from these findings that the Non-PWD's motivation to connect with the class or student with deafness will set the anticipated degree of non-verbal accommodation. Mimi revealed that her being older than most of her classmates could be a factor to seem as if she is unapproachable. She also said that at first she was hesitating to communicate with Krista, knowing that she never had a background for handling cases such as deafness.

“Baka hindi rin kasi siya nagkaroon masyado ng friends kaya ang tahimik niya. I also think na ang tahimik niya kasi walang nakikipag-usap sa kanya. I would admit na, ako, medyo hesitant kasi as much as I want to communicate with her or talk to her, ayoko kasi isipin niya na parang kinakausap ko siya kasi mag-isa lang ako.” (Mimi, Lines 231-234)

When Mimi and Krista were assigned into the same group, the situation entailed that Mimi had to look out for Krista. For the past two months, Mimi started grasping why Krista prefers to stay quiet notwithstanding her jubilant character; Krista is well-informed of Non-PWDs who actively bypass communicating with her so she shuts off her will to communicate with Non-PWDs.

“Nafefeel niya na hindi nakikipagsalita ang mga tao sa kanya kasi nga alam niyang mahihirapan sila makipag-usap sa kanya.” (Mimi, Lines 434-435)

The atmosphere elicits a familiar vibe for the researcher who has seen a deleted Facebook video of a girl who went to a nightclub. When she told the male party goers not to touch her in sign language, their instinct upon seeing her hand movements was to scoff and push away. The researcher views silence as a signifier of peace and calmness and also as a linguistically

inexplicable disturbance within. Silence is naturally advantageous since discourse would be chaotic if all communicators sent messages simultaneously. The researcher would also defend that Krista may not hear due to her deaf condition but she could still produce sound as it utilizes a different set of organs. When a student with deafness is silent, it means that there is no reason to make all sorts of noise (e.g. laughing, shouting, shrieking). Simply put, students with deafness guffaw when something is comedic, they snivel when they are hurt, and they are also vexed by their own pet peeves. Persons with deafness can even perform paralanguage if the situation is appropriate to their taste. Silence is not supposed to be a command by the authorities or society, it is a conscious decision of the communicator. In situations where people keep their identities private, their hurtful words to themselves, and when lending one's ears to a person, and reflecting in solace, the credit all goes to silence.

In both sessions (interview and FGD), there is no mention of haptics or physical touch. The researcher's assumption of this is that the Non-PWD classmates have not achieved a personal level of intimacy. Krista's projection of Divina being her 'best friend' could be contested since it might be her branding for the few people who saw her beyond her deafness. Haptics for this case is categorized as a form of non-verbal divergence because Mimi and Divina have not yet earned her trust, and trying to be touchy at such an early relational stage violates Krista's reserved communication style.

Mandal (2014) talked about how non-verbal behaviors can be used to repeat, underline, and clarify messages. This, of course, is possible if the communicator effectively delivers the non-verbal elements. Without precaution, non-verbal behaviors can be misunderstood, mistaken, or dismissed for something else. Most of Krista's complaints are induced by how Mimi and

Divina applied time and silence on certain occasions and in a series of events. The occasional incidents included Krista's meeting where she was left with only two minutes when they had an hour, having conflicting class schedules to meet with Non-PWD friends (it varies per semester), and Divina's excuse that she needed more time to study sign language. Constant events included Krista's deviation from hanging out with friends, and educators switching the presentation slides too fast. Mandal (2014) would say that communicators cannot exactly manipulate space or time how they please and whenever they want to, but the researcher believes that it is possible to tip these environmental conditions in one's favor with earlier preparations and planning.

Setting time with someone is not about spontaneously meeting up or predicting the meet-up because communicators who do so are bound to be forgetful or be in short of time to decide. Effective time management is becoming a life-and-death characteristic in the Philippines' fourth month with COVID-19. The country is not yet prepared for remote learning since the design for inclusive education has not yet been carried out in face-to-face classroom meetings. Gugenheimer et al (2017) discussed that students with deafness would need real-time sign language interpreters in the video recording which complements Britto's (2020) concern for publishing live videos with real-time captionists. If it was strenuous to manage time in the traditional setting then school should anticipate more strains and expenses in e-learning.

Many fail to effectively schedule when to use silence and how long should it be sustained to make students with deafness feel like they are heard. Krista shared in the interview that she felt shrugged off every now and then. Silence sounded like nothingness to the researcher's analysis which is quite strange especially knowing that all of the participants want to be friends. Mimi related silence to the thought that they have nothing to talk about then shares an

explanation as to why Krista is quiet. She said that Krista does not have many Non-PWD friends because she is fully aware that Non-PWDs would not comprehend anything she is saying. Mimi and Divina knew about Krista's situation, but they felt helpless because they could not get their message across because they do not know how to communicate with Krista.

Instead of coming up with a plan, they are withheld by their hesitation because nobody in the classroom speaks to each other anyway. Krista reduces her situation by saying that she is like everybody else, she does not like to talk to people that much. On the contrary, Mimi and Divina attested to Krista's outgoing personality by saying that she is a talkative person if one exerts effort to know her better. Silence could be improved such that they do not leave each other on dead air. Should there be any deficits in Mimi and Divina's role of being an "encourager," they must learn how to convey it as a form of "lending one's ears." Having intentional listening skills cannot transpire without effectively incorporating silence. They can start by explicitly telling Krista that she is free to share anything at any time they are both available. Mimi and Divina should set a timetable for when they will listen and return feedback, so it all boils down to the factor of planning the meeting ahead of time. Once the environment and objectives are settled, Brunner (2018) mentions that silence could help in overcoming speech difficulties. Persons with deafness need time to intake information and respond with an answer that aligns with the conversation topic.

The researcher has deliberated on the observation of Metro Manila students with deafness that most of whom the researcher interacted with ask follow-up questions (after a prior follow-up question) and several probing questions before answering with a closed question. Students with deafness look for the most simplified messages or the meaning of proverbs, idioms, and riddles,

they cannot decode sarcastic messages, and they are confused by deeper vocabularies (e.g. sadness vs melancholy). It is not advisable to let impatient Non-PWDs communicate with people who have deafness. Non-PWDs should be amenable to consistently explaining what they intentionally meant to communicate. Pauses only work when persons with deafness grasp the conversation topic and are coming up with their own responses. When students with deafness are confused, Non-PWD peers should not leave them thinking on their own.

As for haptics, interpersonal relationships need a compact foundation for space prior to becoming physically or emotionally intimate. The only explanation that the researcher can untangle in relation to the dearth of haptics is that they have not interacted outside of school. Most of their meetings were driven by required classes, and they still have not found the time to socialize in the few minutes after classes are dismissed. What Krista, Mimi, and Divina know is that they are all friends but on a diplomatic level only. The researcher proposes that a friendly interaction or a friendly relationship is different from a duly established friendship. Krista, Mimi, and Divina introduced themselves as classmates but they were behaving like friends. This means that three of them have a friendly relationship. The researcher made this interpretation based on the diplomatic and cerebral non-verbal approach of Krista, Mimi, and Divina; cerebral because their non-verbal behavior focused on the politeness usage (Morgan, 2013). They are overstretching on their intuition that they may or may not be making any sense. Mimi has more grasp on the cerebral non-verbal approach because she brainstormed the utilization of body language with Krista to come up with a project scheme. Divina, on the opposite spectrum, has a grip of the affective non-verbal approach since she was able to witness Krista's breakdown as a result of academic pressure. Mimi and Divina should balance both the perceptual and affective

approach if they are to establish their friendship with Krista (Morgan, 2013). Once they begin structuring their friendship on a substantial foundation, they should strive for the relational approach.

The objective of a relational non-verbal approach is to meet the relational turning point or the instance when either or both communicators comprehend why they should nourish, continue, or expand the relationship. A relational turning point usually happens when the relationship is declining or when the communicators are unable to maintain the relationship. Communities cannot be called “inclusive” if persons with deafness would only come and go without experiencing the privileges and rewards of being a member. Students with deafness should not be confined by the four corners of the classroom and they deserve a life outside of academics and other laborious obligations. Spending time and going to places just to communicate and interact with people who have deafness may come with much sacrifice, but if one person’s freedom is the freedom of many then there has to be someone who cares. The goal is not to force UP students to befriend all students with deafness, but to encourage Non-PWDs who have not met a student with deafness to try interacting with one. It is also part of the researcher’s target to encourage Non-PWDs who are inclined to have friends with deafness to pursue that dream. Belongingness is not just a physical manifestation of social inclusion, it is also a product of inclusive communication that has bound members of a community together.

Subtheme: Perspectives of Sign Language

The cultural identity of persons with deafness cannot be severed from sign language, their primary mode of communication. What it means and how it reflects to students, however, still remains unanswered. By looking at the generated codes, one can see that there are two sides of

the coin: the student with deafness' perspective of sign language, and the Non-PWD's perspective of it. To start with the perspective of students with deafness, Krista mentioned sign language a few times, the first being her communication experiences with Non-PWDs. Krista's first perspective of sign language is that if Non-PWDs want to avoid miscommunication then they can either learn sign language or slow down during class discussion. Her next perspective of sign language is that it is not unfathomable as other people set it out to be. She uses Mimi's mere exposure to the language as a point of reference.

"She only knows basic sign language because she saw me using certain signs again and again." (Krista, Line 226)

A spontaneous question which proceeds the topic of learning sign language is if she ever thought about teaching it. Krista had a stern expression at the idea of being coerced into tutoring her Non-PWD classmates.

"It is not my job to teach people sign language especially if they do not want to, but I can explain what my signs mean--- what my language means so they do not misunderstand me." (Krista, Lines 233-234)

Although she complained about the allegations of sign language as a conflict to learning English grammar, she gave credit to Mimi and Divina for attempting to learn sign language. Krista had suspicions about what her Non-PWD peers feel about sign language, and so did Mimi as her face fell lowly, murmuring that people in school are warded off by people who communicate in sign language. Mimi was the only one who mentioned that Krista is more comfortable communicating in sign language than in other forms of communication (i.e. written), so the researcher concluded that this is why Krista hired an interpreter in the first place.

It was not just Krista who had an opinion about sign language. Mimi and Divina, themselves, had mixed feelings about it. Starting with Mimi, she has this notion that to be fluent in a language already means fully understanding a person. The source of this assumption emerges from her narrative about this Professor who wished that she could interpret sign language such that it becomes “less troublesome” to indirectly communicate with Krista. The researcher would dare say that exposure to students with deafness in regular (but diverse) classrooms inspires more Non-PWDs to learn sign language than meeting students with deafness from segregated classrooms.

“Alam mo yun? I want to talk to her kasi first time kong magkaroon ng classmate like her. I’m also very much keen on learning sign language. With that experience, parang gusto ko matuto.” (Mimi, Lines 234-236)

Mimi and Divina were also astonished to figure that sign language is not just hand and finger movement but also a type body language developed to support the Deaf Community.

“Krista acts out what she feels. She’s not just moving her hands but every muscle in her body.” (Divina, Line 487)

While Mimi sees learning sign language as a ‘life skill’ there has not been much effort to learn exceeding basic fingerspelling and salutations. Mimi comes up with an excuse that she was not made aware of sign language. She said that it is perplexing to foreshadow a future of sign language communicators in UP unless sign language was offered as an accredited subject or program. As of 2020, nothing has reached the knowledge of the researcher and respondents that there could be other sectors of the PWD Community in the UP system. Perceptions are not always a hundred percent accurate like how reality differs from one person to another. What the

researcher could agree upon with the participants is that sign language cannot be learned overnight.

There are several misinterpretations of sign language as seen in the interview and focus group discussion. Ringo (2013) explains that Non-PWDs perceive sign language based on their imagined version of it rather than a defined version from a person with deafness. This could be why Mimi and Divina were surprised that sign language applies to other parts of the human body. Having numerous assumptions of sign language is caused by the marginalization of voices among persons with deafness. The researcher believes that this mindset insinuates that sign language is inferior compared to spoken language. Non-PWDs who poke fun at sign language communicators are rooted in this attitude.

The abundance of kinesics in the non-verbal behavior of persons with deafness is not an overreaction but an intrinsic quality of theirs. When Krista told the researcher that it is not her job to teach sign language but explain what she is communicating, it complements to the outcry of many that they do not want to be fixed (Ringo, 2013). Continual interaction and inclusive education are two key ingredients to getting the right impression and application of sign language and integrative communication (Rahmat et al., 2019). Everyone benefits when interaction becomes a process of socialization. Overcoming ignorance as regards respecting the Deaf Community begins when one is exposed and educated about them.

Subtheme: Improvised Communication

If the system is failing to adjust for its people then the people must adjust for the system. That is the recurring dilemma of minoritized groups like the Deaf Community who seek for transparency and accountability. The saying manifests as one bridges this social phenomenon to

the event where Krista had to write on a piece of paper to communicate with the registration week student volunteers; Mimi had seen the same setup when they had to carry on without an interpreter during the group report incident.

Writing was the only mode of communication that Krista could apply until Divina had enough. She disliked communicating through the interpreter or making sign language guesses, so she along with Krista devised multiple avenues to effectively communicate. The improvisation was based on their available materials and the nature of their EdTEG class. They need to ensure that it helps Krista become more participative in class, and creative for the children to be attentive in their project visits. The first strategy that they invented was by using a notebook. Krista brings out a notepad and compares what she wrote to the question raised by the Professor. In this way, clarifications would be used to correct Krista's manner of note-taking, and her opinions of the lecture would be challenged. Other than the notebooks, Krista also has her smartphone to extend the convenience of visual materials.

“Facility din siguro yung mga notebooks niya because during discussion, she always refers to her notes, sometimes she refers to her phone for the photos if she is going to describe something.” (Divina, Lines 134-135)

For the next strategy, Krista and Divina agreed to incorporate modern-day technologies like laptops and TVs for more visual output. They used video clips, pictures, diagrams, tables, charts, and other visual learning projections. The researcher agrees that this is a fair strategy since class presentations that are filled with texts are too tedious for general learners. What the researcher found most fascinating is Krista's resourcefulness as she brought a few clearbooks to class. It contained crucial pieces of information like directions, greetings, names of people or

places, and objects that allowed Krista to travel with less worry on how to communicate with Non-PWDs.

“Ayun, TV, laptop niya, notebook niya, phone niya, at yung nasa... Yun, clearbook. Dala niya yun for directions, then yung phone niya for objects to describe, words to spell, words to translate, mga ganun.” (Divina, Lines 138, 145-146)

Divina admits that she has not learned enough sign language to communicate in fingerspelling with Krista at least (unlike Mimi) so they had to resort to their improvised dyadic communication style which they call “phone communication.” In defiance of its peculiarity, Divina said it indisputably worked in underpinning their way to becoming fully established friends. The researcher, however, argues that improvising communication may have good intentions but it can never be compared to communicating in sign language. It is technically degrading to even out a person by telling them to communicate in a technique that cleaves them from their own culture. The better remedy would have been to let Krista perform sign language and just ask what her hand movements meant. In that way, Non-PWDs would get to know Krista for who she really is.

Putting this into a more relatable scene, what should Filipinos feel if a Chinese national insisted Filipinos to act their language out than communicate in Tagalog, Cebuano, or Kapampangan all because it is too foreign for them? Would not Filipinos be offended by this? Who would choose to communicate in an unfamiliar manner than translate what they said in the international tongue (English)? The same goes with students who have deafness; instead of forcing them to communicate in an idiosyncratic manner, just ask what they are signing in

writing until the hand movements in sign language stick to Non-PWDs. What one must remember is to change the system and never the person. According to Ringo (2013), improvising communication is entrenched in the presumption that students with deafness would do anything just to hear and speak. A Non-PWD's convenience is not the prime concern for exploring inclusive non-verbal communication strategies of students with deafness.

Shigri (2018) debates that promoting inclusive education would warrant a degree of disability awareness or the knowledge on how to effectively interact or communicate with a person of a particular disability. The researcher has the same opinion as Shigri (2018). What Mimi and Divina may deduce as a “fair-minded” non-verbal communication strategy may not construe as Krista's social reality. Before anything else, if Mimi and Divina knew exactly what Krista is up against, they would not be improvising but lobbying for the rights and freedom of persons with deafness. Communication barriers exist because society is nonchalant to discern the communication needs and style of persons with deafness (Luft, 2000). The researcher surmises that it is better to utilize the communication pattern of students with deafness (i.e. non-verbal predominance of kinesic behavior) instead of rotating on groundless ideations and guesses. When these assumptions are unregulated, they can be muddled into stereotype threats and more complex communication and attitudinal barriers. Non-PWDs are supposed to apply the communication patterns of students with deafness for no other reason but to recognize their struggles, empower them, and promote a culture of inclusivity.

Subtheme: Applied Online Communication

The telecommunications industry has made it possible for messages to be instantly delivered in countless locations around the globe with cable and wireless cyber connections

(Beers, 2015). Krista eventually discovers that she receives more help online than she does when asking her classmates in person. This somehow complements Mimi's understanding of having an easier time communicating with Krista online, at least ever since the COVID-19 transpired in the Philippines.

“Dahil sa phone, ang daming way para magcommunicate. Sabi ng interpreter na mas nagchachat si Krista kaysa nakikipag-usap...” (Mimi, Lines 458-459)

The phone communication is an improvised and applied online communication motivated by Divina's fondness of storytelling. Instead of the notebook strategy, Divina and Krista came up with this since it is the most convenient while they commute home.

“Although we want to talk while on the way home, wala talaga kasi there's no way. So ayun, may phone.” (Divina, Lines 171-172)

The steps are outright concise. All they have to do is take out one or both their smartphones to type in a mobile notepad then trade glimpses of each other's screens. To reply they must repeat the process on their own smartphones (or swap phones) to type a response beneath the original message of their notepad conversation. Since the country has not been lifted from the COVID-19 quarantine in the absence of mass testing, Divina and Krista are patiently communicating via instant messaging.

“Emoticons! Syempre ngayon lang 'to kasi nagka-Covid na ...” (Divina, Lines 477-478)

Once free and quality special education facilities, inclusive programs, and communication technologies are introduced to the local Philippine institutions, perhaps there would not be a need to improvise puzzling communication strategies with students who have

deafness. The researcher finds Divina's plan to continue her conversation with Krista on the way home as a praiseworthy initiative. It shows that Divina makes the most out of the privileges that she is provided with (i.e. being Krista's neighbor and being a smartphone user). A lot in the telecommunication system of the Philippines still needs to be refined. The researcher has met people with deafness in the past who have access to social media but are still ignored by their connected users. It is a myth to say that persons with deafness will be noticed by Non-PWDs online when it is faster to click unfollow or unfriend than to physically steer away from persons with deafness.

Krista is relatively privileged with her access to telecommunication since many PWDs do not have broadband internet at home or own modern-day devices like smartphones, laptops, and televisions (Jack, 2017). When the interpreter said that Krista is more responsive online than she is in person, Jack (2017) would equate this to one of the benefits of telecommunication. The disadvantage of telecommunication is that non-verbal communication is not learned when it is a crucial component when developing trust. Jeviliashy (2019) further states that people who are fixed to their devices hardly express their feelings during interpersonal interactions. The researcher believes that if this is the case, mediated communication is used mostly for professional or urgent purposes. It may also explain why Krista, Mimi, and Divina are unmoved when it comes to learning sign language, because there is an alternative. The presence of telecommunication may also indicate that they do not see each other as friends since they have not yet earned each other's full trust.

The researcher believes that nothing can be compared to employing sign language when communicating with people who have deafness. Gugenheimer et al (2017) conducted a study on

the communication quality of persons with deafness and Non-PWDs with the intervention of assistive technologies. They concluded that the quality of communication between persons with deafness and Non-PWDs degraded which implied that assistive technologies do not necessarily empower persons with deafness. Gugenheimer's et al (2017) framework overlaps with one of Sourbati's (2012) findings which claimed that ICTs are temporary inclusive programs.

Technology was made as a supplementary or extension of artificial intelligence, physical libraries and transportation assistance and not an instrument which persons with deafness should depend on to communicate with Non-PWDs. The European union is still working on its e-inclusion approach. Meanwhile, the Philippines has not put the principles of social inclusion into practice. Technology cannot cover up for the ineffective teaching and communication strategies of Non-PWDs in traditional face-to-face meetings.

Global Theme 4: Issues About Social Inclusivity and Coexistence

Coexistence or diversity is often mistaken for inclusivity when they are unlike to a great extent. In the workplace, diversity is the variation of the community while inclusivity refers to the integrative policies set by the authority-in-charge to the comprising community (Workable, 2020). Both elements are fundamental to the wellness of students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers in mainstream universities and colleges. This global theme shall discuss if the UP system and its community of learners are socially responsive towards the needs of students with deafness. The themes constitute the fundamental rights and freedoms of Deaf identities, and the discrimination against the Deaf Community.

Subtheme: Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of Deaf Identities

Krista is barely getting by as she strives to prove something to the system: That students with deafness like her can be as competent as Non-PWDs if only they are provided with financial, academic, and emotional support. Krista is fully aware of her rights but through the course of the interview, she says more and more about how faintly she can actuate these rights. Quite the opposite to most beliefs, Krista has an unorthodox portrayal of the Deaf Community.

“First, we are a talkative community. Second, we understand things like regular hearing people. Third, we are complete.” (Krista, Lines 196-197)

Equal opportunity for employment, access to quality education, and rehabilitation services are few of the fundamental rights for persons with deafness as explained by the RA 7277 (National Council on Disability Affairs, 1992). There has been a question about classroom treatment; if Krista had ever encountered a class instructor who was swayed by personal biases and classroom favorites. Shaking her head, Krista answered that her college instructors are reasonable and impartial.

“We are equal because even the hearing students do not get special treatment.”
(Krista, Line 257)

She later comes into a conclusion that UP students are taught through handbooks inspired by liberal movements to treat each other with equality regardless of gender, race, age, religion, abilities, etc. At the end of the day, Krista ascribes her freedom in UP to her chances of communicating in sign language. For Mimi to be ecstatic that Krista is conscious of her rights: To be seen in public and to communicate with people, being able to do so in the UP community explicates that Krista belongs to the institution. Divina calls these rights as part of Krista's freedom of expression and speech. Compared to Mimi, Divina does not also see Krista as

someone who will fit in the UP Community but as someone who will empower the Deaf Community. Divina insists that even if Krista is finished with her degree program, the College of Education should still be preparing resources for future learners with special needs.

“I really think it should be like this kasi the right to education should be socially inclusive and socially acknowledged, but if we do not have resources that will cater to diversity then ayun na nga mahihirapan ... having an accessible facility is a right for PWDs.” (Divina, Lines 389-391, 589)

Divina rolls her eyes as she talks about the UP administration’s negligence and unresponsive behavior concerning the needs of students with deafness. They made educating students with deafness the class instructor’s sole burden, while the Non-PWD classmates were held answerable for helping students with deafness build holistic relationships. Divina says that it is unfair on their part since there was no forewarning or an extension of professional assistance. She felt as though the administration passed the enforcement of inclusive education on their hands, and that they were left without a choice but to accommodate Krista to the extent of their limits. What the teacher did is to prioritize Krista in the assignment of tasks and to open the table for requirement modifications. Divina clarifies that she is not pampering Krista. In the case of group work distribution, she guarantees that all of it is on a volunteer basis. Krista exhibited fair skills in compromising and negotiating with the other group members, which is why Divina is confident that she did not force her instructions on Krista.

The researcher is infuriated not just by the UP system but the system of higher education in the Philippines. Countries abroad have successfully applied inclusive education in their primary and secondary schooling system, and now they are organizing movements on inclusive

practices for their tertiary major programs. The Philippines is clearly behind when it comes to special education facilities, policies, studies, and programs. This is why the researcher does not wonder why Filipinos still discriminate persons with disabilities-- academic institutions in the Philippines do not value special education which has lobbied for the mental, emotional, and physical welfare of school communities. Perhaps through speech, there is a way to outperform and convince society that PWDs deserve quality education as much as society should shatter the stigma associated with Non-PWDs who communicate with people who have deafness.

Krista's rendition of what it means to be part of the Deaf Community diverges from the derogatory labels of "deaf and dumb" and "the hearing impaired" which all depicted them as mindless, feeble, and muted. Sari (2005) administered a "Deaf Identity Scale" to 90 students with deafness in Turkey, and uncovered that students with deafness associate their culture and communication pattern with the bicultural or dual identity. A bicultural or dual identity is pertinent to having both the qualities of a culturally hearing identity and a culturally deaf identity. The researcher believes that Sari's (2005) findings may fathom why Krista is torn between imitating the "popular UP culture" (Non-PWD culture) or behaving like her usual self as a member of the Deaf Community. Krista wants to feel somehow connected with the Non-PWD Community so she stressed on their likeness through her description of the Deaf Community being a "talkative, regular, and complete" community.

It is probable that Krista relates to both the qualities of being a person with deafness and a regular Non-PWD UP student because the education system was originally designed for flexible Non-PWDs. Sari (2005) suggests numerous students with deafness have moved into mainstream schools which molded their bicultural identity. Since these schools are influencing

the bicultural identity of students with deafness, they should begin constructing education that gears students with deafness how to team up with both PWDs and Non-PWDs. The interconnection of bicultural identity and a more versatile communication skill set has been unravelled (Sari, 2005), which makes the researcher think that it can incentivize Non-PWDs how to accommodate the communication needs and style of students with deafness.

It is no longer a source of bewilderment that Non-PWD parents choose to enroll their children in mainstream schools to maximize the benefits of having a bicultural identity. Immersing students with deafness in a mainstream classroom is what Wauters & Knoors (2007) call social integration. The researcher extracts from the interview and FGD transcript that there have been no active attempts to socially integrate Krista in the UP community. Using the journal article of Wauters & Knoors (2007), there is no co-enrollment program in UP, and there are less than ten students with deafness in UP to acquire a cogent conclusion on the enforcement of Philippine inclusive education. In the behavioral aspect, a student with deafness is socially integrated if they are able to establish friendships, interact with the general Non-PWD population, and are accepted by their Non-PWD peers (Wauters & Knoors, 2007).

The researcher locates a resemblance in Krista's situation with Wauters & Knoors's (2007) findings wherein persons with deafness avoid interacting with their Non-PWD peers, and have very few friends. The difference is that Krista neither isolates herself nor mentioned about feeling depressed probably because her Non-PWD peers in UP accept her for who she is. What Mimi and Divina have been problematic about is not how Krista can earn their respect but how she or they can be friends when there are no tools to communicate. With this, the peer acceptance in UP is elevated but Krista's social competence and friendly relations with

Non-PWDs are both substandard. The peer acceptance is elevated because Non-PWD peers like Mimi and Divina find Krista to be a likeable person. In terms of social competence, Krista exhibits a socially withdrawn behavior because she evades interacting with Non-PWDs during her spare time even if she wants to. When the researcher asked why Krista does not have time to hangout with Non-PWD peers in the non-verbal divergence section, she could not articulate why. Krista just left it at an 'I do not feel like it' excuse which represents a red flag for socially withdrawn behavior. In connection with friendly relations, Krista was not part of any circle of friends but she met two people who knew her better than her previous Non-PWD peers. Krista and Divina are the closest ones in this study since they were constantly interacting; the fact that Krista was convinced to hangout with Divina just before the COVID-19 outbreak means that Krista values Divina's company. The researcher believes that friendships like Krista and Divina's can unlock narratives with regard to the unspoken struggles of persons with deafness (Wauters & Knoors, 2007).

The exponential growth of PWDs in the UP system is showing but the struggle for the rights of persons with deafness are still unnoticed by the general student and faculty population. In Ringo's (2013) media coverage, Jordan, an activist with deafness, has a fear of massive corporations that are commercializing the disability of persons with deafness. It was a historical exploitation of persons with deafness and she fears that it is bound to happen again without inclusive education, disability awareness, and social integration. Jordan expanded her argument with claims that Non-PWDs were miseducated of the social and medical conditions of persons with deafness. Countless parents and relatives were fooled into purchasing cochlear implants and patronizing oral schools which follow the notorious footsteps of Alexander Graham Bell. Jordan

dreams of a society where persons with deafness would no longer be pressured of communicating in their natural and sincerest mannerism.

Persons with deafness should be heartened to explore their communication needs and test their obtained communication style with a Non-PWD. The researcher agrees with Jordan that persons with deafness are more than capable of living a functional and fulfilling life regardless of their preferred communication style: manualism, hiring an interpreter, or even using non-hearing devices such as two-way audio-to-text readers. It is germane to dismantle the normalization of surgical and technological hearing installation for persons with deafness. If they are born with profound deafness or if they are feeling some kind of discomfort, then society should just let persons with deafness follow what they think suits their individual communication needs. Intentional listening, funding universal facilities, and empowering sign language communicators are three of the many ways to cultivate social inclusivity in mainstream schools. The pro-choice movement is not supposed to be disconnected from the rights and freedoms of Deaf identities. In reality, persons with deafness are not wishfully thinking of speaking or hearing one day, they just want to be treated like a normal human being.

Subtheme: Discrimination Against The Deaf Community

It has been mentioned repeatedly in this study that persons with deafness are victims of non-verbal mockery. They are insulted for the way they think, present themselves, and even for communicating in sign language. Krista can testify to its prevalence in the Philippines through her unfortunate experience in elementary.

“Students did not discriminate me but the outsiders did ... When they saw me communicating in sign language, they said “See that crazy-looking doing this?”

I felt discriminated.” (Krista, Lines 181-183)

Krista furiously demonstrated how the strangers who stood outside of her school courtyard did random finger flicking while laughing aloud. Breathing heavily with flushed cheeks, Krista grabs a coffee mug to calm down while drinking. Her narrative was juxtaposed with the feedback of Mimi and Divina when they were asked if they had witnessed any form of discrimination or violence inflicted against Krista in UP. To sum their answers up, they both said that they never encountered Krista being discriminated.

“No, parang wala naman, at least wala pang nakakarating sa amin na may discrimination against her dito sa Eduk.” (Mimi, Lines 416-417)

“I’m not sure but in our class, nobody has ever dared to discriminate her.”
(Divina, Line 419)

The researcher places it on simple terms: The UP community is proud of its attitudinally progressive scholars for honoring policies that counter discrimination and violence against minoritized groups. This might be the asset of being in a diverse community of learners. Students who come from persecuted religious groups, ethnicities, financial and other socially underprivileged backgrounds will not condone discrimination in the university because they know how wrongful it is to be casted off. Other schools filter the applicants that they accept so more or less, the student population already identifies with various characteristics since they have familiar backgrounds (e.g. Catholic, middle class, all women, star class). In schools where students are blocked based on their profiles, cases of bullying are more rampant. Those who are characteristically distinct are often singled out by the classmates. Students from culturally rich communities like UP are not necessarily safe from school violence compared to other colleges

and universities. The relief is that Krista feels safe and belongs to the UP College of Education, the locale where she will establish the headspring of her dreams.

Persons with deafness are facing a colossal plight even before they start schooling which could not be far from Jordan's grievances about companies that misinform and make a business out of hearing disabilities (Ringo, 2013). The researcher compares Ringo's (2013) news coverage with the journal article conducted in rural Uganda by Bergen (2012) who trusts that entrepreneurship can uproot poverty rates among PWDs. The effects of stereotype threats and other social norms were tested on the performance level of PWDs in the entrepreneurial framework. Just like the interview and FGD transcript results, Bergen's (2012) study concludes that there are no significant disability-specific norms or signs of prejudice from Non-PWD peers. What Bergen (2012) suspects is that the quantity of PWD employees is still insufficient to conclude that there are no cases of discrimination in the workplace. The same would be the case in mainstream schools like UP because the number of students with deafness is still unknown to the general UP community. It is sound to say that UP admits applicants with deafness but they are not necessarily accommodating the needs of students with deafness. Had the administration been designating facilities for cases of deafness then there would be a better observation on the enforcement of inclusive education. Come to think about it, if UP actually provided universal facilities, services, and equipment for PWDs, they would be vocal about accepting students with deafness; not just preach about the postulations of an inclusive education.

Many PWDs are struggling to attain their fundamental rights and access to basic commodities and necessities, which is why Krista is privileged for her material possessions. Sourbati (2012) considers PWDs as a "digital underclass" because they have a deficit in media

literacy, and they neither find coherence in digital information nor keep their own digital equipment. How can PWDs demand for universal services and facilities if they do not know how modern-day technologies function? The social inequality between persons with deafness and Non-PWDs is worsened by technology-based solutions due to this digital divide (Sourbati, 2012). Assistive technologies place the hearing and speaking abilities in the chief position over the sign language, whereas information and communication technology exclude PWDs who are economically underprivileged. The researcher believes that without proper service provisions, the quality of life amongst PWDs just complicates. Society should be obliterating present-day barriers rather than introducing more advanced solutions to a country that is already delayed in enacting inclusive education. Once the Philippines is able to supply students who have deafness with free and quality services and technologies, the country can start discussing the marginalization of voices in the digital age.

Numerous schools in the Philippines (open or permanently closed) presently call institutions inclusive, but what might seem inclusive to them may be worse than unhelpful. They could be demeaning and discriminating students who have deafness without society realizing it. There is a school in Metro Manila that is infamous for its strict adherence to oralism. Knowing that the institution is still running in this day and age would mean that there are families and guardians that accede to the practice of oralism. The researcher has a matching stance with Jordan, the leader of “Audism Free America,” that if the Philippines is deliberating on teaching inclusivity, then the country must start by accepting what people are limited to. In the case of persons with deafness, they cannot force themselves to hear or speak.

The researcher met a mother of a 6-year-old child with deafness in 2011. With a scarred

facial expression and a jittery body language, she narrated glancing at a preschool student who was forced to stick out her tongue and follow the lip movements of the teacher. She could only make a groaning sound which does not resonate like a voiceless bilabial plosive. The word was “pot” but the student could not imitate the “p” sound of the phonetic alphabet. When the mother walked in, she saw the teacher holding her child by the neck as if to restrain and stuff a ruler to the child’s mouth. The screaming of preschool and lower school children filled the corridors. It was only a matter of time did the mother realize why parents and guardians were prohibited to loiter around the school premises. They were not even oriented on what it means to send their children to an oral school. It is as if the institution took advantage of families that do not have a common communication ground, so the children have no means to report to their parents and loved ones of what had happened. The researcher believes that these parents were tricked with the facade that their children are “gifted” to make a gibberish but familiar utterance, and that the school performed a “miracle.” It is heartbreaking to say this, but parents should come to terms with the reality that their children can never talk or hear, but they can speak their own minds.

The researcher understands Jordan’s convulsion against oral schools because they have perpetrated an act of discrimination and violence against persons with deafness. Some might look the other way but the researcher finds the theoretical grounds and ethics of oralism to be outright dubious. Hearing Link (2018) corrected the “lip reading” terminology and called it “face reading” since the entire face and not just the lips are being analyzed by students with deafness. They have found that only 30% of the face is correctly translated by the student with deafness which means that in every ten words, the student with deafness only gets three words correctly. For instance, the sentence “I need to talk to you because I am sad” has ten words and a student

with deafness guesses “need,” “you,” and “I.” Interchanging these words, let alone, the three separate words would still not make any sense. The researcher is baffled by this sort of guessing strategy because even Non-PWDs would be irritated if they were to guess sign language gestures. Oralism contributes to the attitudinal barriers and communication barriers by imposing that sign language is inferior compared to spoken language. The history of oralism and how it has been maintained in private is sickening. Oral schools are not yet banned in the Philippines, and there are no local protesters who are against the practice yet so the researcher aims for society to bestow the rights that it has stripped persons with deafness off.

Berke (2005) believes that persons with deafness are emancipated from communication and attitudinal barriers when their non-verbal communication style and needs are accommodated. If non-verbal communication is capable of informing, persuading, and entertaining then why should society bar it from empowering persons with deafness? As repeatedly mentioned, there is an existing bias towards spoken language over sign language, and it reflects in class requirements like debates and presentations. Given these biases, the researcher is offended whenever colleges and universities require all students to enroll in speech classes that contain phonetics and phonology in its course syllabus. School administrations rarely grant class exemptions on the basis of “incompatibility” or “unrelatability” so students with deafness are usually forced to enlist a speech class to satisfy the requirements of their degree programs. An related to discrimination against sign language communicators manifests in grading systems. Students with deafness who prepare weeks in advance receive a grade of three (or minimum passing) while Non-PWDs receive relatively higher grades on crammed requirements such as one point twenty-five or even two point seventy-five.

If the school was going to accept applicants with deafness then they should have revised the curriculum first such that students with deafness are able to make the most out of their education. Since the bias towards spoken language is widespread, other students with deafness would just write their speeches and have their interpreters read it for them. School faculties of mainstream colleges and universities argued on this matter for some believed that instructors might grade the performance of the interpreter when students with deafness should be in front, performing their texts. Then again, it boils back to the bias towards spoken language, many Professors do not even conceive sign language as a type of speech. The researcher redefines speech as an agency of communication, and communication is not necessarily the oral delivery of messages but the harmonization of a structured language to the instinctual display of non-verbal elements. If spoken and written languages are the sole essence of speech then human beings might as well judge a person's speech based on the script or its voicing rather than how they are intermeshed with non-verbal delivery. The perception of speech being an oral mode of communication only is what proves that society does not give credence to persons with deafness who are outspoken and qualified to defend themselves. It pains the researcher that "speech" is associated with dialogue, alliance, and potency, but the Deaf Community would not receive this recognition; society would only affiliate these attributes to hearing and speaking communities.

Khoury (n.d.) described effective public communication speakers as people with confidence, can memorize a speech by heart, knows how to be themselves, and is passionate about what they are delivering onstage. Sign language communicators are more than capable of exhibiting these qualities, so why should society still doubt the abilities of persons with deafness? The researcher understands that speeches are traditionally spoken in some

communities, but other communities in many parts of the world communicate non-verbally since time immemorial. There is no point in battling for the “supreme” community title because society should be directing its agenda towards a culture of inclusivity. Evolving towards the humanistic facet of speech communication is what happens when everyone accommodates another’s communication styles and needs for the betterment of this world. Once students with deafness find the audacity to communicatively fight against social injustice can schools like UP be called ‘inclusive’ and not just ‘mainstream.’

Interpretation of Findings

The findings share some commonalities and deviations from the review of related literature. Alongside comparing the published works with the results, the researcher would like to state her positionality in favour of the students over the system, and the student with deafness (Krista) over the Non-PWD classmates (Mimi and Divina).

Empowerment VS Exposure

Krista is glorified for being one of the few students with deafness in the University of the Philippines. She has written on the school’s history that PWDs have a place on campus. However, her status rebuts that she is not actually empowered but conditioned to feel like she is. Krista has mistaken her exposure to mainstream schools like De La Salle College of Saint Benilde and the University of the Philippines for empowerment when it is purely exposure to Non-PWD Communities. The researcher argues that if the Philippine society thinks persons with deafness are empowered enough, Filipinos have to look at the Deaf Community in several countries and states abroad. Persons with deafness in the European Union and North America own a driver’s license (World Federation of the Deaf, 2016), lead mass demonstrations (BBC

News, 2018), work in professional industries (Booth, n.d.), and study in reputable schools because authorities apportion budget to special education (Harvard University, 2020). Persons with deafness in the Philippines are far from becoming as liberated as the way PWDs are in North America and the European Union. Multiple companies in the Philippines even fail to honor the menial privileges of owning a PWD card (i.e. car parking, 20-peso grocery discounts, and priority lanes) which, by the way, is abused by Non-PWD family members and peers. Not all PWDs drive a vehicle to need a PWD parking lot, the maximum 20-peso discounts do not make considerable differences, and there would not be a need for PWD priority lanes if the lines were not long in the first place. What persons with deafness (like other PWD sectors) deserve are free checkups, free communication technologies and repair services, free public transport services, health insurance, and other monthly allowances or incapacity benefits (Penketh et al., 2015). If the Philippines were to imitate the aforementioned beneficiary projects, the Philippines should be imitating verified pro-disability rights countries like France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, etc.

For most part of the rapport-building procedure to the interview itself, there were no allusions of Krista's significant affiliations or movements in the campus. She admits that what she learned in school was to be intelligent and behaved, two qualities that are malleable disciplinary apparatuses. A person can know a handful of things but shut one's eyes to what must be done, in the same analogy that a person can obey and behave but turn out to be a blind follower. Students who are not imposed by school classism (i.e. imitating the popular culture to feel accepted) and the grade myth (i.e. outstanding remarks as the equation to future success) are the kind of students that are not trapped by disciplinary apparatuses. Empowerment, the intimation of inclusivity must be reflected in one's communication development, albeit begin

with public exposure. An empowered communicator is an individual who is attentive and sensitive to the needs of others.

The researcher has not found a literature specifically on the contrast of empowerment from exposure, but published materials under the persons with deafness and non-verbal communication review of related literature can throw light on the order of exposure and empowerment. Persons with deafness are already exposed to the world as they have accumulated an approximate of 62,153 cases. The literature review recounts that the taxing part is not bringing the student with deafness into contact with Non-PWD students but to bolster the skills of students with deafness. Teachers were initially bemused when handling learners with deafness due to the shortage of facilities and services. Everything had to be done manually. This was experienced by Krista's group members when she wrote her ideas on a piece of paper and someone had to read it aloud. In reality, Krista does not need anyone in the group to present her part of the report, someone just needed to understand sign language. The researcher believes that had UP been equipped with the proper communication technologies, Krista can prepare her report through a device that will read her text with its audio function. The same can be applied for Krista's social interactions outside of class. She does not need to go through the painstaking trouble of paying an interpreter or following the mind-numbing "phone communication" and "notebook communication" just to communicate with Non-PWDs. It is a relief that the UP community discontinued its promotion of hearing aid supplies or face-reading practice. A study by Hearing Link claims that students with deafness can analyze only up to 30% of the Non-PWD's message. For members of the UP community to know that they can improvise communication and that learning sign language is an achievement in itself, it means they had

been observing Krista's non-verbal behavior. It would also be trouble-free had educators been trained and incentivized with a higher paycheck to communicate in sign language.

This is where non-verbal communication as an instrument for Deaf empowerment comes in. Sign language, a type of non-verbal communication should be treated as a tool to enlighten Non-PWDs about the social reality, cultural heritage, and artistic perspectives of students with deafness. In Filipino Sign Language, there are hand movements for places like Marikina City, the Ifugao Rice Terraces, and even signs for the Philippines national heroes, Jose Rizal and Andres Bonifacio. Now it is crucial to ask: Why are Filipino Non-PWDs mocking the semantic steepness of sign language when it is used to promote the cultural wealth of the country? Non-PWDs have no right to tear persons with deafness away from their agency for empowerment, communicating in sign language. Judging through the lens of social identity theory, it is already given that the in-groups are the Non-PWDs while the out-groups are the students with deafness. Krista most certainly categorizes herself as a member of the UP community because she feels that it is imperative to fit in the Non-PWD Community to be "accepted" as a member of the UP community. Krista was torn between being herself to broach the subject on Deaf empowerment, or silently blending with her peers to survive schooling. The intrapersonal conflict, her wearisome adjustments, and all these communication improvements would prove that Krista was expected to converge because she is the out-group. The irony is that to officially be an in-group, Krista must socially identify and adopt the characteristics shared among members of the in-group community. Krista can identify with Non-PWDs but she cannot be one of them because she is not satisfied with the resources, the classroom setup and curriculum needs to be revamped for her, and Krista knows that she does not have to improvise

her means of communication when Non-PWDs (with sufficient training) can perform sign language. If Krista were to compare the concept of empowerment in the University of the Philippines versus De La Salle College of Saint Benilde, the latter school has already established a community, set of facilities, inclusive services, and communication technologies for students with deafness while the former depends on the taxpayers' money and the government's distribution of funds. The UP system is still new to the PWD population because all these years, the institution has been known for prioritizing the education of resilient Non-PWD applicants from impoverished families over applicants with special needs that are linked with serious learning disabilities. Krista should be exposed and willing to fight for her rights if she wants to be equal with her Non-PWD peers. After all, the point of exposure is to unveil one's experiences to the public. No one is capable of empowering the Deaf Community besides its own members.

The Middle Ground

The relationship and interactions of Krista, Mimi and Divina have proven that students with deafness communicate in a reversed pattern. It has been observed by the researcher that students with deafness verbally communicate in written but never spoken, while Non-PWDs traditionally communicate formally when written and informally when spoken. Non-verbal communication is also the primary mode of communication for students with deafness, whereas it is 'supplementary' for Non-PWD communicators. The researcher suspects that the differing communication patterns of students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers might be the strain of delineating who should adjust and how much should one or either be adjusting. The literature under the section of "Non-Verbal Communication and the PWD Community" says that it is best for schools and other work industries to encourage integrative communication. Luft (2000)

suggests that students and employees should try communicating in sign language, otherwise the hiring company or institution would have to shell out for interpreters which raises a concern for communication dependence. The researcher finds that Krista's communication dependence is supported by Ringo's (2013) article which mentions that persons with deafness are being forced to hear and speak. Since the protestors disagreed, they had to employ outstanding interpreters until their rights are recognized by the authorities. Rahmat et al (2019) would see it as a win-win situation to communicate with anyone because positive and negative interactions still produce learned accommodation. This substantiates the researcher's point of view which is to overcome the reversed communication pattern since it only expands the labor force and scholar population.

The researcher would like to debunk the common misconception about adjustment. It does not mean that one person must let go of their communication habits to accommodate another person's communication style. The objective is to integrate each other's communication patterns to have a fair share of understanding. A concrete example to depict this is how the researcher and Krista communicated during the interview. The researcher has a background of sign language (SEE) but the researcher also brought a sign language dictionary with directions to execute some unfamiliar words in sign language. A commonly used word in the interview was "communicate." The researcher used two C's of the sign language alphabet (one for each hand) and positioned both in front of her lips, then alternated their forward and backward movements. Krista understood what the researcher was signing and it would not have happened if the researcher did not integrate Krista's communication style. The researcher would like to sort out that SEE and FSL are similar but they use different signs. For example, the "P" in SEE is an upside down 'peace' sign with the thumb pointing in between the vertex of the index and middle

finger, while the “P” of FSL is the same except the ‘peace’ sign points sideways. Not all sign language communicators understand each other. There is French Sign Language, American Sign Language, German Sign Language, Signing Exact English, Filipino Sign Language, etc. Krista reciprocated the integrative communication strategy as she responded to the interview questions. Like most languages, the general rule is that one must memorize the alphabet before performing basic to more advanced signs. When Krista delivered some unrecognizable hand movements, she divided her sentences into words and slowly spelled each of them. One word which Krista kept on repeating was the word “technology.” She flatted one hand sideways to her chest and another hand quickly poked a bent middle finger on the top of the sideward hand. Krista constantly checks if the researcher can follow until the response is completed. The researcher did the same when Krista did not understand some SEE signs in the questionnaire (i.e. facilities, struggles, etc.) since Krista is an FSL communicator.

Luft’s (2000) research reveals that not only would Krista be delighted to meet a person who can communicate in sign language, working around integrative communication has led to long-term success rates in coexistence and production quality. With that, the researcher sees a darker side to Divina’s assumption of Krista belonging in UP because “she can meet the demands of an inclusive school.” They expect that Krista should survive at all cost even without support from the UP system and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The researcher argues using Luft’s (2000) journal article that the PWD dropout rates within “inclusive schools” is not a result of the PWD’s under qualification. It is the system’s failure to implement essential facilities or services and apply integrative communication in the UP community. One cannot

prosper in an academic institution without academic and social participation due to communication and attitudinal barriers.

Mimi and Divina problematized how to establish the communication between them and Krista by improvising communication styles and incorporating modern-day technologies like smartphones and laptops. They deserve to take credit for shattering the stigma of communicating with PWDs, but the improvisation strategy is not exactly liberating. It does not eradicate the communication barrier obstructing persons with deafness because it is not a type of integrative communication. Finding the most compatible and common communication between persons with deafness and Non-PWDs does not mean inventing a language. When a nonspecialist invents a language, they tend to mix verbal and non-verbal elements of PWDs and Non-PWDs. Improvising communication only leads to more confusion. What the researcher wants to be informed of is how much Mimi and Divina know about Krista's non-verbal qualities. Sadly, what PWDs have that most Non-PWDs do not is the non-verbal consciousness. Persons with deafness are sensitive to what they see and feel more than the average person, hence why there is such a thing as disability sensitivity (Woodward, 2017).

It is already given that Non-PWDs should not be shouting at students with deafness, so the researcher inspects what Non-PWDs should do after discovering how they non-verbally converge or diverge with students who have deafness. In the presentation and analysis of non-verbal convergence, the non-verbal branches that were enumerated are space, facial expressions, body language, and sign language. Mimi and Divina have to backtrack the way all these elements have helped them include Krista during their classroom discussions and out-of-class interactions. The researcher suggests that for space, Mimi and Divina could further

exercise the ideals of a “safe space” with the help of their class instructor or school administration. The tip is to transform the class into a 21st century learning environment where diversity is respected, decision-making skills are encouraged, and the needs of students with deafness are provided in the form of universal facilities and curriculum adjustments (Tribe, 2019). Besides being accompanied by a trusted Non-PWD classmate, Tribe (2019) believes that safe space can be further practiced through dialogue circles. The researcher finds this as an effective method because in class recitations, Krista may talk about the class lecture alone, whereas in dialogue circles, a type of open communication, would let small groups of students gather to express their opinions and personal experiences. The topics range from chummy storytelling to issues that are sensitive in nature and may cause discomfort among peers. Having a dialogue circle cultivates active listening, empathy, conflict resolution, and a sense of belongingness. All of these are essential in community-building and social inclusivity. The researcher also finds it crucial for Mimi and Divina to locate their boundaries with Krista. They have to maintain a certain physical distance depending on their emotional closeness. Their boundaries can be measured based on the four types of spaces as pictured by Edward T. Hall’s personal reaction bubbles: Intimate Space (45-centimeter distance), Personal Space (1,200 m distance), Social Space (3,700-meter distance), and Public Space (7,600-meter distance). Using Hall’s diagram, the researcher sees a connection between physical distance and emotional closeness in relationships. The intimate distance is reserved for family members and lovers, while the personal distance, social distance, and public distance are respectively for friends, strangers, and public relations (Nishihara & Okubo, 2015). Mimi and Divina’s relationship with

Krista remains unclear as they declare that they are friends, but not close enough. To map out their distance, they might just be between the personal distance and social distance.

There has been a lot of talk about facial expressions and its ties with deception and lying. This is because facial expressions can be easily manipulated. Professor Patnaik, an online course instructor at Alison, discussed three types of facial expressions in his “Perception and Non-Verbal Communication Module.” The three types of facial expressions are squelched expressions, genuine expressions, and micro-expressions. He stated that squelched expressions are facial movements triggered by surprise, while micro-expressions refer to the leak of emotions in a social space that can only be controlled for about 1.04 to 1.15 seconds. Lastly, Professor Patnaik identifies genuine expressions based on the differing features of each person’s face. Not all smiles look the same, and the fact that they do not is a sign of sincerity. Genuine expressions are also classified under symmetrical expressions, meaning, both sides of the face are matching. In the online short course, Professor Patnaik educates online takers that emotions can either be masked (e.g. concealing grudges against a person by smiling) or substituted (e.g. laughing instead of crying to cope during a stressful situation). It is easy to catch a bad liar, says Eaves and Leathers in their textbook entitled “Successful Nonverbal Communication: Principles and Applications.” Bad liars have the propensity to leak the truth when they are provoked. They either exaggerate their act or accidentally go off-character. A set of players that are engaging in a game of poker could set as an example: On one side of the table, the player could be smiling, frowning, or crying to have the opponents perfectly fooled of the player’s cards in hand (Eaves & Leathers, 2015). Same thing works in the interpersonal context, but it does not always have to involve deceiving another person. The researcher believes that Krista substitutes her emotions.

She complains about the system's and her Non-PWD peers' shortcomings but instead of showing an exasperated facial expression, she smiles in gratitude that people are trying. When Krista cried in front of Divina, the researcher sees this as a manifestation of trust because she was triggered by her academic load. She was pretending that she was okay when she had pent-up frustrations about studying in UP. Krista had micro-expressions throughout the interview while sharing her experiences as a student with deafness in the Philippines. It was only a matter of time until subjects such as discrimination and school relationships spontaneously evoke genuine facial expressions. She began showing her hate towards discrimination and she laughed boisterously as she thought of her classmates' shenanigans. This side of Krista is connected to Mimi and Divina's revelation that Krista is a talkative person. Though it is factual that three months is not enough to get to know a person, the future goal that Mimi and Divina should have is to uncover and doubt the sincerity of other people's facial expressions. This includes checking on their classmates with deafness. Not everything that people simply look at is authentic, and society will promulgate that students with deafness are 'fine' based on photographs and not interviews. It takes more than hearing people declare that they are okay to know if they really are alright.

The researcher regards it as true that there are many unspoken struggles of students with deafness that do not even reach the awareness of the general student population in UP. Four semesters ago, the researcher recalls bumping into a student who helplessly sat on the stairs of a UP College building. This student shall go by the alias of "Jenny" for privacy concerns. A passerby said that Jenny is known for her deafness and that she has been sitting on the stairs for more than two hours. The researcher paused to communicate with Jenny in SEE to see if she understands. Jenny recovered some consciousness to communicate. Apparently, she missed the

whole registration week to enroll for her remaining subject since she was rushed to the hospital. She was advised to write a letter containing her medical condition and personal plight. Jenny addressed the letter to the concerned office and to the Professor who offers her remaining subject, but she was not accommodated. The student with deafness blinked with a sorrowful expression until she finally wept, and the researcher guessed why correctly. She was humiliated when she did a prerog. Jenny's narration was that the Professor glanced at her letter in front of the class and shoved it back to her as he shook his head. Jenny said that as she took out a notebook to know what the Professor's decision was, but he drove her out of the classroom and slammed the door shut. The researcher promised to file a complaint on that very day to punish the Professor's act of unprofessionalism and discrimination against persons with disabilities, but Jenny stopped the researcher. She straightforwardly exclaimed: "Who would believe me? I cannot talk! People find me funny even when I am serious. I am a joke! Who would understand me? Nobody!" The researcher thought deeply about all the unreported and dismissed cases of rape involving women with deafness; 65-70% of which experience molestation (Martinez, 2020). The researcher knows that Jenny was telling the truth because her pale and dejected facial expression shows that she has been grieving. She was humiliated and hurt, and none of these could be faked. Jenny told the researcher that her piece of consolation for that day is to be heard by a Non-PWD. The researcher connects this experience to the professional account regarding the health benefits of crying in the presentation and analysis of data under non-verbal convergence. Jenny's facial expressions allowed the researcher to determine that she needs help. Aside from the recent crying appearance, Jenny's pale skin, messed up hair, and frozen gaze

were telling that she is disoriented. It is true that people should never be judged by their cover but when something seems offbeat by its cover, it should warrant some attention.

Mimi and the members of her group incorporated body language in their role play project so that Krista would not be left behind. Earlier suggested school projects include mime productions and ballet performances, but the researcher would like to point out other alternatives. By adapting Kolewa Foundation's communication strategy for parents, Krista's Non-PWD classmates should also be provided with sign language books and kits (Kolewa Foundation, 2019). Body language cannot be compared with having some knowledge of sign language to communicate with persons with deafness. Applying sign language in project proposals will prevent Non-PWDs and their group members with deafness from feeling like their project options are limited. Sign language can be applied in other performing arts like dancing, storyboard acting, puppeteering, and fashion runway. The researcher believes that applying sign language in these art platforms of body language serve as outlets for Krista to describe places, events, species, and objects. It is also a way for persons with deafness to be immersed in the Philippine art industry. There are no recognized Filipino artists with deafness as of the moment, so many of these artists just look up to those who are being supported in the North America and European Union. Marlee Matlin is an actress and activist from the United States. She is critically acclaimed for being a performer, and made her first debut in *The Wizard of Oz* at the age of seven (Biography Editors, 2019). Perhaps when the Philippine society chooses to develop an inclusive education system, there would be more identified Filipino artists with deafness.

The researcher foretells this possibility if schools such as the University of the Philippines could educate Non-PWDs from the various fields how to communicate in sign

language. Once the Non-PWDs are formally trained to communicate in sign language, they can start teaching their fields to students with deafness after UP decides to open slots for applicants with deafness. There are very few courses that are offered to students with deafness, and the researcher sees the number of Non-PWD sign language communicators as one of the reasons why the top degree programs are IT, culinary, and other vocational courses. Tutors do not have to communicate in sign language, all they have to do is demonstrate how the lesson is done. Mimi and Divina are fully aware of Krista's comfort when communicating in sign language. It should all the more motivate them to learn sign language sooner. They do not have to overthink other means to communicate because they can study sign language remotely. Here are a few tips to learn sign language without perceiving it as a time-consuming activity. The first is to memorize the alphabet (which Mimi has completed and Divina has not yet). After getting the alphabet by heart, Mimi and Divina could check on the following recourse: Hiring a private tutor, taking seasonal sign language classes, participating in a hearing loss community, purchasing a sign language dictionary, taking a sign language online course, watching sign language video tutorials, consulting a friend who already knows how to communicate in sign language, downloading sign language mobile apps or computer softwares, or self-learning sign language (HearingLife, 2019). The researcher believes that the essence of learning sign language is not to be instantaneously deft in communicating with it but to understand where students with deafness are coming from.

Mimi and Divina had some progress for the abovementioned non-verbal convergence elements (i.e. space, facial expressions, body language, and sign language). For non-verbal divergence, the qualities that they must enhance are time, silence, and haptics. Mimi and Divina

would have to check on how improving these characteristics could help them incorporate Krista's non-verbal languages so that she would be fully integrated in their classroom discussions and out-of-class interactions. Dr. Mike Clayton of BitDegree would say that conducting a meeting requires effective resource management and communication skills. There could be many reasons as to why the meeting was poorly handled. It may range from the meeting room layout, rapport-building skills, questioning or listening skills, to the time allotment for briefing, discussion, and simplification of ideas (Clayton, 2019). When Krista complained about the group meeting that she had with Mimi, the researcher believes that the group should have planned an extension to explain and hear from Krista. A better option that the researcher suggests is to change the setup of the group meeting. Instead of coming together to brainstorm, they can administer Clayton's staff-focused meeting which is more organized and objectives-based. The meeting consists of five parts: an informal ice breaker to build rapport, presentation of group expectations that will set the grounds and limitations of the project, delivering the questions for the main conversation (to be handled by the group leader or meeting secretary), member response turn-taking, and then the summary of group responses (to be read by the group leader or meeting secretary). To get the most out of a staff-focused meeting, the meeting duration should be set for a maximum of one hour and thirty minutes or a minimum of forty five minutes (Clayton, 2019).

Mimi and Divina agree that the best way to overcome the communication barrier between them and Krista is to learn sign language. However, they are trying to reconcile with the fact that learning sign language takes a longer time than most other spoken languages; 2-3 years to learn basic American Sign Language and another 2 years to learn the intermediate level (Lapiak, n.d.).

An article on learning American Sign Language (ASL) in the digital age claims that with the help of internet access, it should be easier for users to learn sign language faster than the average person who learns in a classroom. Online sources of learning ASL could be obtained from YouTube videos by subscribing to the pages of Dr. Bill Vicars, Expert Village, Laura Berg Life; for internet browser fans, they can check web sources such as ASL Pro, Start ASL, SignASL.org to kickstart their ASL learning; and for mobile application users, they may download ASL Coach, ASL: Fingerspelling, and Marlee Signs which is an app game inspired by the Oscar-winning Marlee Matlin (Desta, 2018). The researcher believes that these online software, applications and programs can educate Non-PWDs in sign language. Reviews showed that language apps like Duolingo, Memrise, and Babbel are effective, but many fail to see the point of learning a language: To use the knowledge to interact with real-life communicators of the learned language (Ravenscraft, 2019). A deeper issue that the researcher could see past the teaching speed of Krista's Professor or lecturer (which was resolved through one on one consultations) is what it means for Krista to have "no time" to interact with Non-PWD peers. A study from the American Psychological Association says that one of the causes of this is the awkward situation that is to be placed in an area with somebody unfamiliar. Another factor that has to be taken into consideration is that the person with deafness and Non-PWDs are uncertain of how to communicate (American Psychological Association, 2000). The awkward situation is that students with deafness cannot hear whereas Non-PWDs do not know how to communicate in sign language. When Krista said that she does not have time to interact with Non-PWD peers outside of school, it follows that she will be wasting time trying to interact with people who do

not know how to communicate in sign language (this is, of course, besides fulfilling her obligations as a parent).

The researcher still believes that it is the responsibility of Non-PWD classmates to reach out to students with deafness. This can be accomplished by annihilating hesitation and using silence when it is needed. Strategies that will work for that purpose include asking how the PWD wants to communicate, directly communicating with the PWD and not just the interpreter, communicating at a place that has reduced background noise, taking turns when communicating by using visual cues such as waving and tapping, and avoiding exaggerated lip movement (Villanova University College of Nursing, 2017). When relieving the tension to start a conversation (or to keep the conversation going), it is significant that the Non-PWD asks the person with deafness if he/she feels comfortable talking about a certain topic and what language does he/she feel most comfortable communicating in. The researcher finds it understandable that Krista shuts off her willingness to communicate with Non-PWDs since she was hurt by one in the past but she has to give it another chance. Krista must be eager to keep making noise to be heard. There is a certain extent to which it is no longer fine to remain quiet. Being robbed of justice, freedom, and equity are few of the many reasons to speak out. Having deafness does not make a person ignorant, feeble, or unworthy, but to consciously walk away from fellow victims of a dysfunctional system does. Mimi and Divina should stop setting Krista aside just to never get back to her. It is downright disrespectful to do that. If Mimi and Divina were in a rush to be somewhere urgent, they could have told Krista that they will contact her at a later time or date than to coldly walk past her. For the aspect of haptics, it is impossible to become touchy if the distance between the PWD and Non-PWD is beyond personal space. Extracting this sentence,

the researcher supposes that Krista and Mimi or Divina are not yet friends since they have only known each other for 3 months. Once they have established their relationship as friends then their use of haptics could be examined.

The researcher cannot point exactly as to what and how Mimi and Divina should non-verbally behave in front of Krista. Rethinking what they have non-verbally progressed with and what they still need to work on makes their goals more feasible. Mimi and Divina did a job well-done with their use of the physical and reimagined space, they confronted ambiguities related to facial expressions, used body language to their advantage for projects and discerning matters, and tried to learn sign language which is the most significant aspect of the Deaf Communication. Mimi and Divina should make thorough improvements when they manage their time with Krista, and when they hesitate or refuse to communicate with Krista. Their relationship is still undefined so there has been no examination of touch yet. Circling back to integrative communication, it is not a test of creativity but a challenge against the system to ameliorate its implementation and allocation of resources for special education. For this reason, the researcher is in favor of a systemic and Non-PWD behavioral improvement. Accommodating the communication style and needs of persons with deafness is more preferable than improvising communication because there is an existing non-verbal basis for accommodation. Improvising communication, on the other hand, is built from scratch and it does not have an expert's validation. Had communication technologies, inclusive services, and other universal facilities been provided, applied online or mediated communication would have been more reliable than improvising communication. Examples of communication technologies for students with deafness include devices to enhance listening for hearing loss cases like FM systems, infrared or

audio induction loop systems, and coupling accessories. For cases of total deafness, institutions should be providing devices to convey visual information such as visual alerting devices, captioning, real-time transcriptions, and telecommunication (Gallaudet University and Clerc Center, 2014). The data under the “Deaf Non-Verbal Needs and Communication Pattern” RRL heading complements this claim. A research material authored by Alasim (2018) states that students with deafness should be provided with digital facilities and other inclusive support programs like speech therapy, audiology, counseling, and a facilitator for the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Alasim (2018) additionally recognizes that all these assistive technologies and universal facilities work in the formal school setting, and the researcher sees that it could bridge the learning gap due to COVID-19. However, to teach the non-verbal communication skills like kinesics of students with deafness to Non-PWDs, they must practice it first.

On the basis of Howard Giles’ theory, Krista is converging to the Non-PWD Community by doing something about their flipped communication styles even if it means sustaining an interpreter. Krista wants to be understood by her Non-PWD classmates, and she also wants to understand them. She feels like she belongs to the UP community if she belongs to the Non-PWD Community. Mimi and Divina are on the side of divergence not because they have not been trying but because their differences are too accentuated by the school system. They are barred from accommodating Krista’s non-verbal behavior due to the abovementioned systemic constraints. Failure to embody non-verbal accommodation is still non-verbal divergence. Attitudinal barriers eventually manifested in Mimi and Divina’s excuses not to learn sign language despite confessing that it is a ‘life skill.’ The cognitive function of convergence or divergence, and the affective function of convergence or divergence were discussed in the

theoretical framework. Krista exhibits the affective function of convergence because she is matching her communication style with Mimi and Divina's to seem likable and alike to them. Mimi displays more of the affective function of divergence because she sees Krista's belongingness to the UP community based on what the Non-PWD Community fights for. Lastly, Divina exhibits a cognitive function of divergence because of her improvisation strategies. She asserts that she and Krista have a lot of qualities that they cannot compromise so they must improvise a communication style that works for both of them. The researcher believes that the best resolution is the cognitive function of convergence because Krista should be able to rationalize her non-verbal communication style and defend sign language to the UP community. She has to persuade the UP administration and Commission on Higher Education or Department of Education that training Non-PWDs how to communicate in sign language will empower the Deaf Community. The researcher has confidence in the positive transforming difference of sign language when it becomes an accredited subject like foreign language in the UP system. Only persons with deafness like Krista can surely provide a rationale for implementing sign language electives and if she cannot, then who else will?

Inclusivity and Coexistence

There is a fine line between accommodating someone and tolerating someone just like how different social inclusivity and coexistence are, but were used incorrectly. Coexistence or diversity refers to the "what" aspect or the demographics of individuals, whereas inclusivity refers to the "why" aspect or the policies that allows communities to prosper in a given environment or situation (Spark Team, 2019). The researcher believes that the UP community is diverse but the system is not inclusive to the many sectors of society such as the Deaf

Community. An example of an inclusive school is the renowned International Community School of Singapore (ICS) for the basic to secondary education division (kindergarten to grade twelve). They garnered an average of 85% qualified graduates for admissions in the top-performing colleges including the Ivy League universities. Despite being an established Christian school, their recommendation is to surpass the restrictions of traditional curriculum. They started providing universal facilities and training pupils through a community care project on how to interact with fellow students with diverse backgrounds (Study International Staff, 2017).

It is rather distressing to compare the progress of ICS with the state of special education in the Philippines. During the rapport-building procedure, Krista made mention of her elementary to high school background. She was enrolled in this notorious school for the Deaf that has been known for charging tuition fees amounting to almost a hundred and fifty thousand pesos annually. The academic institution offered old-fashioned teaching methods and had minimal to no exposure with Non-PWD students. Krista and another unnamed student with deafness from the same academic institution paid for the school's promise to integrate Filipino Sign Language but up to this day, the program has not been implemented. Krista divulges that they were initially enticed to enroll in the same school for promises such as the college scholarship grant offered to the class valedictorian (only). When they were presented with the college course offerings, they were made to choose among the following vocational and certificate courses: information technology, baking, sewing, and general education courses. The unnamed student of the same academic institution further describes the college life of her batchmates who stayed in the same school for tertiary education as "suffocating" and

“unconducive to learning.” She said that they were confined to a separate room away from their Non-PWD classmates, and they were required to wear hearing aids or learn lip-reading (face-reading). Due to these conditions, they dropped out of college and refused to leave their homes. Dehumanized by these testimonies, which are all priced higher than a hundred thousand pesos, students with deafness like Krista pursued their undergraduate track in other schools.

DLS-CSB, for instance, scholarships for applicants with deafness who are also introduced with universal facilities, and a wide array of applied Deaf Studies in degree programs like business management, entrepreneurship, social work, graphic design, multimedia arts, hotel and restaurant management, etc (Visit Benilde, n.d.). There is no question why persons with deafness are now sent to mainstream-inclusive colleges and universities in the Philippines. Segregated classrooms are unreasonably expensive and have yielded poor opportunities for graduates with deafness. The UP community is still new to accommodating students with deafness, and the special education department does not receive their funding directly from the school's tuition fee collection. This is why UP and DLS-CSB cannot be compared. The financing system runs differently for a public school and a private school. The researcher justifies that Divina was wrong when she assumed that Krista is in UP because she can meet the demands to survive. Krista is in UP because she can do something exceptional for PWDs in the Philippines. The researcher believes that the social identity of the UP community should stem from the core values of honor and excellence, both of which Krista had in the beginning. To say that Krista belongs because she has fully adjusted to the academic demands of UP already defeats the concept of school diversity.

Filipinos technically do not have to be enrolled in UP to be called a “scholar” or “hope of this nation.” UP may seem far from fully integrating students with deafness, but there is still a chance

that the members can develop the principle of inclusivity to the school's system. The current generation's objective is to build a compassionate society, and the communication discipline can fill the space between Non-PWDs and the deafness sector of the PWD Community. The researcher is appealing to the higher education unit that if our education system is shifting towards an inclusive system, then the country can adopt Gallaudet University's (GU) strategy of accommodating students with deafness. GU is the first and currently the only school around the world that designs their college degree programs and services specifically for students with deafness. If the Philippines offers TESDA courses and a few programs from selected schools such as Angelicum College, Mapua Institute of Technology, and Philippine Normal University (Dandee, 2013), GU is a whole package for applicants with deafness. They have four to five-year bachelor courses with academic benefits from the different clusters of natural sciences (BS Biology, BS Chemistry, BS Mathematics, etc.), social sciences (BA History, BA Sociology, BA Philosophy, etc.), and humanities (e.g. BA Theatre Arts, BA English Studies, BA Art and Media Design, etc.). GU envisions PWDs who get the most out of their education to work across different industries and institutions (Gallaudet University, 2020). A piece of evidence that persons with deafness can be great communicators could be observed by GU's BA Communication Studies enrollees. Communication students with deafness in GU have theoretical knowledge and practical communication skills since they are educated with topics on rhetoric and argumentation, gender communication, political communication, family communication, and even a separate communication elective on non-verbal communication (Gallaudet University, 2020). They can compete alongside regular Non-PWDs in the Philippines if society just supports them. Moreover, if they can compete with Non-PWDs then that means

they can also communicate with Non-PWDs. The researcher disproves inclusion being the blending or toleration of cultures because it is the empowerment of communities to be their own cultural vehicle for social change.

There has been a growing popularity for “Deaf Cafes” and in the archives of Los Angeles Times, the first Deaf Cafe in the Philippines was established near Rizal Park in 1971 (Abbugao, 1989). While it does seem charming to have establishments that educate customers how to communicate in sign language, the researcher sees that many Filipinos romanticize the social reality of people who have deafness with this trend. They think that coffee preparation is all that persons with deafness can do, when some earned a college degree that was discarded by numerous employers in the Philippines. The researcher has spoken to an employee with deafness who works in an admired fast food corporation in the Philippines. Her parents spent over millions of pesos for her basic and tertiary education combined until she completed a vocational degree in hotel and restaurant services. Though her job is not exactly what she dreamed of, she is thankful that the company hired her as a fry cook for over four years.

The researcher could not ignore how Filipinos correlate disability to incapacity. Why is there an existing notion that deafness means that one cannot think for themselves, handle managerial positions, or lobby for social equity? The Council of Ontario Universities explain that this is an exhibition of attitudinal barriers. Aside from the earlier stated definition of attitudinal barriers which prevent effective communication, attitudinal barriers also take the shape of superiority complex, stereotyping, thinking respect means doing PWDs a special favor, and having false assumptions of a person’s disability due to ignorance (Council of Ontario Universities, 2013). The researcher concludes that since attitudinal barriers affect how

Non-PWDs treat persons with deafness, society must abolish the attitudinal barriers which may lessen the pervasiveness of communication barriers.

Synthesis

The communication between students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers is limited because the Philippines is only beginning to transition from special education to inclusive education. Despite the absence of school-provided universal facilities, inclusive services, and communication technologies to interact with Non-PWDs, students with deafness still choose to enroll in mainstream colleges and universities like UP. Krista stated that mainstream colleges and universities provide rare opportunities like public exposure and centralized theoretical and practical skills, both of which are not taught in segregated special education schools. As ideal as it sounds, the UP community is diverse in nature but it is still far from becoming inclusive to students with deafness. Only when the Philippine society develops its inclusive education system can the country adopt the teaching and communication strategies of Gallaudet University (GU), a school that has taught persons with deafness to communicate and compete with Non-PWDs.

In summary, students with deafness and Non-PWDs are unable to communicate effectively as a result of attitudinal and communication barriers. These barriers manifest in their disengagement to address their reversed communication pattern: Persons with deafness depend on non-verbal language to communicate most of the time, they never use spoken language [unless compelled by ideologies like oralism] and they only apply written language as an alternative to sign language, while Non-PWDs use spoken language to communicate most of the time, and they traditionally apply written language as a formality and regard non-verbal communication as a supplement to spoken language. In a mainstream university or college,

Non-PWDs who intend to communicate with a student who has deafness must find what the researcher calls “the middle ground.” Finding the middle ground means knowing how to utilize integrative communication. In the case of cultivating disability sensitivity amongst Non-PWD peers, the key is to have a sense of non-verbal consciousness.

The observed non-verbal code systems employed by both students with deafness and Non-PWD peers are space, facial expressions, body language, and sign language. Space was applied as an abstraction of safety and companionship by Mimi and Divina. The researcher has also observed that persons with deafness easily show their emotions and understand others’ feelings through their facial expressions. Krista has been using micro-expressions as she acted as though she is fine when she is troubled by the academic load and pressure to succeed. She also substituted her emotions when she complained about the system's shortcomings, but she immediately took her words back. Body language was also incorporated by Mimi and Divina in their project proposals and added conversation expressions, but it is still insufficient considering that the most culturally appropriate and comprehensible body language for persons with deafness is sign language. Mimi and Divina tried to learn sign language but only went as far as the alphabet and basic salutation gestures.

It can be seen in the study that Mimi and Divina diverge when it comes to their non-verbal use of time, silence, and haptics. The participants are busy people so their schedule is booked such that they have too little time to interact with Krista. Time is an issue since it has affected the period which should be devoted to listening to Krista, and it is also a relevant element when a person considers learning sign language. For silence, Mimi and Divina did not actively use it to listen to Krista. It was an effect of not knowing what to tell her because of the

low motivation to communicate with her. Mimi and Divina's relationship with Krista remains unclear today since they are given only three months to interact due to COVID-19, so haptics cannot be examined in their interpersonal interactions yet.

Students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers are able to employ non-verbal accommodation strategies by means of integrative communication instead of improvising communication (i.e. notebook communication or phone communication). Integrative communication has a non-verbal basis, while improvising communication does not have one hence the former is better than the latter. Krista's non-verbal attitude represents convergence because she wants to understand and be understood by her Non-PWD peers to feel like she belongs in the UP community, whereas Mimi and Divina's non-verbal attitude is leaning towards divergence since their differences are apparent and aggravated by the system. Mimi and Divina are non-verbally diverging because they (especially Divina) are persistent about improvising communication when they should adapt to Krista's non-verbal communication style. Failure to non-verbally accommodate someone is still non-verbal divergence. The researcher sees that the cognitive function of convergence is the solution for the Non-PWD Community to accommodate the communication style and needs of persons with deafness. Only the Deaf Community can rationalize and persuade the UP community to teach sign language as a means to uphold integrative communication and disability sensitivity.

The participants in this study are able to employ non-verbal accommodation in their use of space, facial expressions, body language, and sign language but they could still use some training. They can improve their overall execution of non-verbal accommodation by being more conscious of their non-verbal behavior. For instance, space can be improved by cultivating the

safe spaces movement, body language can be improved by blending it with sign language, facial expressions can be improved by being more sincere and critical in its delivery [since persons with deafness analyze the face which convey emotions to them], and sign language can be improved by forming dialogue circles. The Philippine society should be supporting sign language for its promotion of the Philippine cultural heritage. In the lens of social identity theory, persons with deafness are the out-groups while the Non-PWD classmates are the in-groups. Krista thinks belonging in the UP community means she must first fit in the Non-PWD Community when she cannot and should never try to assimilate the Non-PWD Community. She has to be herself if she wants to empower the Deaf Community.

A lot also has to be corrected in Mimi and Divina's divergence of time and silence. For the aspect of time, handling group meetings can be addressed by giving extensions or changing the setup into a staff-focused meeting upon the recommendation of Dr. Clayton. As for the lecturer's teaching pace, consultations suffice, and for the duration to learn sign language, Mimi and Divina can learn faster with the help of internet access. A study from the American Psychological association contend that Krista may not have time to socialize with Non-PWD peers because it puts her in an awkward situation [other than fulfilling her obligation as a parent]. Since Non-PWDs do not know how to communicate in sign language, Krista does not see a purpose to interact with them. The researcher believes that Non-PWDs should be more liable in annihilating hesitation and use silence when it is needed. They could ask about Krista's comfortable language, use more visual cues, and be considerate of the site where they are communicating.

Non-verbal communication can impact inclusivity depending on the middle ground between persons with deafness and their Non-PWD peers. Persons with deafness cannot talk about the injustices they experienced if they cannot tell their most immediate Non-PWD friends and relatives about it. In the Philippines, persons with deafness are just taught to behave, earn outstanding grades, and feel grateful that they are enrolled or hired in a mainstream institution as a result of the notion that nobody else would care. These, alone, are non-verbal behaviors which negatively impact the comprehension of persons with deafness about themselves and their community. Krista gets her comfort from her analysis of non-verbal behavior such as that time when she cried and Divina was exhibiting positive facial expressions, and the other incident when Mimi encouraged Krista to stay in class since she believed Krista can perform well without an interpreter. It cannot be denied that non-verbal communication is what helped Krista remember events for what they felt like back then and not exclusively what was said at the time.

Students with deafness cannot be called “empowered” in the Philippines for as long as they refuse to realize that they need to start communicating with Non-PWDs. They need to share their grievances, their dreams, and their everyday strife against society that diminishes their worth. Krista strongly believes that her empowerment is rooted in her representation of the Deaf Community through her ability to communicate in sign language. Social change would be more impactful had Filipino Sign Language been supported. Persons with deafness would identify as both a member of the PWD Community and the Filipino Community. Furthermore, people would recognize the rights and welfare of persons with deafness if they could understand what persons with deafness are signing. Accommodating the communication style of students with deafness is another conduct of respecting the Deaf Community.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendation

Summary of Findings

Enrolling in a mainstream college and university is a trend among PWD communities like the deafness sector due to the impracticality and scarcity of special education schools. The Philippines is still transitioning to an inclusive education system, so students with deafness have to deal with general education policies which do not help them overcome their schooling and communication difficulties (Britto, 2020). The facilities of mainstream schools are inadequate hence why students with deafness are compelled to hire their own sign language interpreters. In this study, Krista is the student with deafness while Mimi and Divina are the Non-PWD peers.

Other complaints include the teaching strategies being outdated, the absence of orientations concerning how to interact with students who have deafness, and the lack of training amongst class instructors to handle cases of deafness. Alasim (2018) said that for as long as society cannot deploy assistance and distribute universal services to persons with deafness, the number of unsupported PWDs would exponentially increase over the years. Mpofu & Chimhenga (2013) states that there are different degrees of deafness so the facilities will vary. Additionally, the researcher believes that these facilities could also depend on what the school values. For example, oral schools would provide hearing technologies but prohibit sign language classes or interpreters because of the oralism ideology. Alasim (2018) enumerates that an inclusive education system has co-enrollment programs, support programs like sign language training and study spaces, speech therapy, counselling, and a facilitator for the individualized education program.

Since these are not available in the Philippines, students with deafness depend on what resources they have to participate in school. It has been observed by the researcher that Krista asks for help from her interpreter and that the interpreter does most of the work. Krista shamelessly admitted that she would rather go home than waste time in school, not learning anything without an interpreter. The researcher believes that Krista learns more when directly communicating with Non-PWD peers. This is supported by Urpi (2013) who claimed that it is better to communicate nonverbally than to communicate through an interpreter. Completely relying on the interpreter indicates a tendency for Krista to isolate herself, and a guarantee that she will excel with the help of her interpreter. Having an interpreter means society prefers spoken language over sign language, and it is not the interpreter's job to intervene in the private life of students with deafness.

Krista's communication dependence is deeply rooted in other communication difficulties such as bad reading comprehension, disinterest to lead tasks, and the fast pacing of Non-PWD communication. She said that she does not want to be misinterpreted so she chooses not to talk to anyone else except the people around her. Schick et al (2002) says that persons with deafness are cognitively and linguistically delayed which is why many of them show disinterest and are severely challenged by their school requirements (Schick et al., 2002). Lutfiyya (1997), on the other hand, explains that persons with deafness make too little friends because of factors that they fall short in such as the opportunity, support, and continuity. The researcher believes that Krista can overcome these obstacles with everyone's help and by means of inclusive education. When the system is inclusive and when Non-PWDs show that they are accommodating persons

with deafness, they could even establish their friendships. This strategy works especially in the Philippines where friendships can enlighten Filipinos citizens of others' social reality.

People do not have to be friends to show a few gestures of encouragement. Krista was able to manage being in a predominantly Non-PWD classroom which she equally described as “funny, cooperative, and helpful.” She was not wrong with her impression since Divina motivated her to recite more and ask questions, while Mimi was successful in persuading her to report in class despite the interpreter's absence. It was evident throughout the interview and FGD that Krista feels acknowledged when Mimi and Divina communicate with her. It has been delineated by the researcher that Mimi's comprehension of adjustment comes from the “us” (Non-PWDs) whereas Divina's interpretation of adjustment is directed towards the “them” (PWDs). According to the review of related literature, Lutfiyya (1997) would view peer encouragement as part of emotional learning since it pertains to the exploration of friendships. AIPC (2009) recommends in their study that keeping the conversation going works best when one performs the role of an “encourager” that shall require intentional listening skills. Peer encouragement functions constructively because supportive communication partners contribute to the eradication of communication and attitudinal barriers (Brunner, 2018).

Krista's communication behavior improved because of her Non-PWD peers' encouragement and her own continuous effort to communicate with them. Her success included reciting in front of thirty or more students, articulating her thoughts better (she usually answers in less than five words), and applying her experiences to the class lectures. Unfortunately, Krista's Non-PWD peers stopped learning sign language after familiarizing themselves with the sign language alphabet. The researcher believes that Krista is conditioned to feel as though she is

empowered through her admissions in UP and not through the opportunities that she gets in UP to uplift the Deaf Community. When the researcher asked Krista if she had a voice in class, her response was 'yes' and that it was a result of her chance to represent the Deaf Community in the form of sign language. The researcher feels that Krista's purpose is defeated because Non-PWDs are not even educated or introduced to sign language. Krista seems to be improving because it is the opinion of her Non-PWD peers and not her own. Sari's (2005) study claimed that communicating in sign language is the most effective mode of communication with students who have deafness. Learning how to communicate in sign language reinforces communication flexibility or the effective shifting of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies among Non-PWDs. As of today, Mimi and Divina have not yet progressed in their plans to improve their sign language and non-verbal communication skills.

Mimi and Divina nonverbally converge with Krista's usage of space because they reimagined the concept. They were talking among themselves, and they were consulting with a professor for the first time together. As for the quality of facial expressions, the non-verbal convergence is transparent in the incidents when Krista wept in front of Divina, when Krista can differentiate her peers' emotional and default facial expressions, and when Mimi and Divina were challenged to convey their emotions through their faces. Body language was under non-verbal convergence because all the participants were able to use it in their project planning, and they were able to blend it with other non-verbal elements like space and facial expressions to accentuate their feelings. Lastly, sign language is a kind of non-verbal convergence simply because Krista is most comfortable communicating with it. The researcher believes that non-verbal qualities can be manipulated and are socially indicative behaviors. For instance,

Krista's crying is significant to the mental-emotional status of a person, while body language contributes to the vocabulary depth and second language acquisition of a person (Ismail, 2014). All these can relieve the linguistic and cognitive delay of persons with deafness. Luft (2000) says that persons with deafness are reliant on sign language to communicate with Non-PWDs. It is no question why Berke (2005) strongly believes that persons with deafness do not expect PWDs to be an expert in sign language. They are already delighted when a Non-PWD is trying to accurately demonstrate the language. As Sari (2005) would put it, persons with deafness feel respected when Non-PWDs communicate in sign language.

In the perspective of non-verbal divergence, the Mimi and Divina's use of time, space, and haptics were not accommodating Krista's communication style and needs. Time was a problem because Krista prefers to go home than interact with her friends. The reason for this could be explained by her Non-PWD peers' speedy communication pacing, their choice not to learn sign language [because it consumes a lot of time to them], and the utter disregard of Krista's participation [by giving her only two minutes of the group meeting]. Silence was another non-verbal issue because Krista's Non-PWD peers attribute persons with deafness as "mute," and they said that there are no common grounds to communicate with her. There is no wondering why Krista avoids communicating with Non-PWDs; she does not want to be misinterpreted. For haptics, this cannot be examined because Krista and Mimi or Divina are neither physically nor emotionally intimate. The researcher justifies that there is a way to nonverbally converge with Krista using time, silence, and haptics. For time management, Mimi and Divina could plan a group meeting based on Dr. Clayton's staff-focused meeting, they could accompany Krista when setting a consultation with a Professor, and they could ask Krista if she

is catching up. Persons with deafness may not hear due to their medical condition but they could still produce a sound, which is why it is politically incorrect and derogatory to call persons with deafness “mute.” Students with deafness are quiet because they do not find any reason to make a sound. It does not mean that they do not want to communicate with Non-PWDs. In terms of haptics, the researcher assumes that Non-PWD peers have not achieved a personal level of intimacy for them to be touchy with people who have deafness. Mandal (2014) said that space and time can be controlled but not exactly how one pleases them to become and whenever they want. With advanced preparation and planning, however, space, time, and even silence can be utilized effectively.

The researcher has observed the sign language perspectives of the research participants, and have found that it is not Krista’s job to teach sign language but to explain what she said in sign language. Mimi and Divina are both keen on learning sign language since it is a rare opportunity to meet a person with deafness, but they have not made efforts to learn beyond the sign language alphabet. The researcher believes that this insinuates an inferior mindset towards sign language communicators. Perhaps Mimi and Divina are surprised to know that the non-verbal behavior of persons with deafness is abundant in kinesics because they assumed more than they interacted with Krista. Ringo (2013) states that having numerous assumptions of sign language is a result of the marginalization among persons with deafness. Instead of trying to fix persons with deafness (Ringo, 2013), Non-PWDs should be applying integrative communication (non-verbal convergence) to their interactions with people who have deafness (Rahmat et al., 2019). Adopting integrative communication strategies can be achieved via inclusive education.

The researcher has observed that Krista is able to get by with an improvised version of communication. She uses her lecture notes for class recitations, smartphone to show pictures, laptop for school presentations, and a clearbook designed for words to describe, directions or places to go and terms to use in a given situation. Divina also devised a “notebook communication” whenever they feel like conversing in school, and a “phone communication” as a means to communicate while on the way home since they cannot write on a notebook in a moving vehicle. The researcher believes that a better solution was to ask what Krista’s signs meant and to remember what they were instead of inventing a communication style. Mimi and Divina should not be improvising but lobbying for the rights of persons with deafness by first learning who they truly are with their language. Shigri (2018) debates that promoting a culture of inclusivity would warrant a degree of disability awareness or the knowledge on how to effectively interact and communicate with a person of a particular disability. There are communication and attitudinal barriers in society because there are rarely any efforts to get to know PWDs through interaction (Luft, 2000).

Krista is more responsive online than she is in person, especially ever since the outbreak of COVID-19. Despite her frequent telecommunications usage, the researcher debunks the myth that persons with deafness will be noticed by their Non-PWD peers. There are online filtration systems and it takes less than a few minutes to stop receiving online information from a connected social media user. According to the RRL, Krista is relatively privileged because numerous PWDs do not have access to modern-day devices like smartphones or laptops and internet connectivity (Jack, 2017). Gugenheimer et al (2017) concludes that assistive technologies do not necessarily empower persons with deafness because the quality of

communication between them and their Non-PWD peers decreased. This aligns to Sourbati's (2012) findings which claimed that ICTs are temporary inclusive programs because they are supposed to be an extension program of physical libraries and transportation assistance. They are not instruments that persons with deafness should depend on to communicate with Non-PWDs.

Unlike the common conception of deaf identities, the researcher has witnessed a totally different description of the Deaf Community. Krista illustrates the Deaf Community as talkative, complete, and regular people. According to Sari (2005), students with deafness associate themselves with the bicultural or dual identity because they relate to both the qualities of a culturally hearing identity and a culturally deaf identity. The researcher ties the bicultural identity of students with deafness to the global trend of sending students with deafness to mainstream colleges and universities. Mainstream schools are influencing the bicultural identity of students with deafness, thus why society should put an end to miseducating Non-PWDs of the social conditions of persons with deafness. What mainstream schools should be doing is constructing a type of education that cultivates inclusivity and acceptance towards persons with deafness.

Discrimination against the Deaf Community is still rampant. Based on the researcher's observation, UP students did not discriminate Krista but the outsiders of her elementary school did. The researcher believes that the reason why this non-verbal mockery never happened again to her in the UP Community was because the school comprises attitudinally progressive scholars. UP does not pressure persons with deafness to hear or speak, there is an apparent intention to communicate with Krista. The researcher shares the same convulsion as Jordan with regard to oral schools because forcing students with deafness to talk when they could not is an act of

discrimination. Hearing Link (2018) has corrected the “lip reading” terminology and changed it to “face reading” because students with deafness match the lip movement with the facial expressions. They have found that this communication strategy is ineffective because it lets persons with deafness analyze only 30% of the message correctly. The absence of discrimination in UP can be explained by Bergen’s (2012) study in which there are no significant disability-specific norms to conclude that Non-PWDs are discriminating persons with deafness. It can also be suspected that this is the conclusion due to the sparse quantity of students with deafness in mainstream schools. PWDs are considered “digital underclasses” because they have a deficit in media literacy and they do not have their own equipment (Sourbati, 2012). The digital divide only worsens the social inequality between persons with deafness and Non-PWDs, so the only way to resolve the gap is by means of eradicating the communication and attitudinal barriers. The researcher is persistent that Non-PWDs should be encouraged to communicate in sign language rather than expecting persons with deafness to adjust.

Implications of the Study

Comprehending inclusive non-verbal communication strategies between students with deafness and their Non-PWD peers affects the social and political economy of the country. This study will impact Filipino students with deafness first and foremost because the agenda is to empower their social group. The researcher highlights disability awareness which shall benefit not just persons with deafness but everyone. Non-PWDs would be educated of non-verbal consciousness and disability sensitivity. What regular people think is normal such as playing with hand movements to imitate sign language would be corrected; Non-PWDs would realize what is offensive and what is politically appropriate. By means of disability awareness,

Non-PWDs shall realize that it is normal to ask for professional help and that people are ‘disabled’ because of communication, attitudinal, and systemic barriers. They will be taught that disability awareness can manifest in the form of requirement reconsiderations, academic freedom, and even student-led movements or protests. Having learning difficulties still makes one a PWD, so several terms like communication accommodation and social integration shall be redefined as an outcome of social inclusivity. This study would also affect the financing and resource distribution of the Commission on Higher Education and UP system. Students with deafness would stop searching for their own and overpriced interpreters, class lecturers may be provided with additional benefits if they are teaching learners with deafness, and there could be employment of professionals in the areas of inclusive education faculty [that will teach incorporate principles of inclusive education and inclusive communication], universal facilities staff (e.g. communication technologies technicians, real-time captionists, etc.), and support program facilitators (e.g. sign language training, IEP, etc.).

Studying inclusive non-verbal communication strategies would also imply understanding Deaf Communication or how the non-verbal elements of space, facial expressions, body language, sign language, time, silence, and haptics are analyzed or expressed by persons with deafness. Filipinos would be more sensitive about their non-verbal behavior around persons with deafness because they can be misinterpreted. Society will realize that it is not enough to know how to read or write to communicate with people who have deafness. They must learn sign language and also be nonverbally conscious to persons with deafness. Society should be educated with regard to integrative communication, a process of inclusive communication, because one of the objectives of communication is to understand what, why, and how people

behave in a certain mannerism. Unlocking inclusive non-verbal communication strategies between persons with deafness and their Non-PWD peers would also open doors for persons with deafness to interact with [and eventually befriend] students who are from relatively diverse backgrounds as well. Students with deafness shall benefit from this study because their communication struggles such as poor reading comprehension, cognitive and linguistic delay, and socialization issues are given the attention they deserve.

It has been disclosed that there are lapses in the Philippine education system that need to be addressed, which is why the researcher urges for systemic change. Special education schools are permanently closing, while mainstream general education colleges and universities are quite outdated. Persons with deafness would prefer enrolling in mainstream colleges or universities because of the employment opportunities and standard-quality of education. This may pressure academic institutions to make the necessary curriculum revisions and service provisions. Inclusive education is a prime structure when teaching integrative communication, a communication process of inclusive communication. The Philippines is falling behind parts of North America and the European Union when it comes to implementing inclusive education, and the country is paying the price amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. These countries have already shifted to electronic inclusion (e-inclusion) which can already accommodate the needs students with deafness. With this study, the researcher expects a clash against Philippine oral schools because the researcher does not favor its practices which dates back to the 1860s. The advantage, however, is that readers are challenged to scrutinize their principles. Parents will be sending their children in oral schools, mainstream schools, or segregated special education schools because they are conscious and confident that the school's values will reinforce their children's abilities.

This topic would raise a red flag against Non-PWDs, most especially corporations and authorities who excuse themselves or Non-PWDs from the consequences of discriminating persons with deafness. Philippine laws like the RA 7277 or “An Act Providing For The Rehabilitation, Self-Development and Self-Reliance of Disabled Persons and Their Integration Into The Mainstream of Society and For Other Purposes” states that violators could be fined, imprisoned, or deported depending on the characteristics of the perpetrator and the crime. The law should be observed, otherwise perpetrators would freely discriminate persons with deafness since they can get away from the liability.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The researcher recommends an improvement in the research scope and limitations, and in the implementation challenges. Studies on the relationship between students with deafness and their personal interpreters could have been reviewed to check on their specific communication difficulties, disagreements, and conflicts. How persons with deafness interact with Non-PWDs through an interpreter, why persons with deafness interact with Non-PWDs through an interpreter, and do persons with deafness depend on the communication skills of sign language interpreters would be clearer. In a more medical and natural scientific approach, the researcher may have tackled the functions of universal facilities, communication technologies, and services like consultations and communication skills assessment. The future study may also delve deeper into Deaf Communication since this branch of communication discusses the non-verbal characteristics of persons with deafness in detail. Deaf Communication can also be studied in the lens of mediated communication during the COVID-19 pandemic, their use of non-verbal elements in class performances, or how they could use persuasion to rally for their rights. The

researcher would also appreciate it if Disability Communication was discussed because each person plus the nature per disability has its unique set of non-verbal communication characteristics. Studying Disability Communication would be value-adding to future research materials on the non-verbal behavior of persons with mental, emotional, cognitive, and physical disabilities. Furthermore, studying how persons with blindness non-verbally behave will complete the examination of communication with people who have sensory disabilities. Another facet of communication that needs to be discussed is the power relations of persons with deafness and their Non-PWD peers. It will divulge the communication experiences of persons with deafness with their Non-PWD friends and not just peers.

Broader studies may concern inclusive communication or the communication amongst people from diverse backgrounds. The researcher may observe how social inclusion as an ideology can introduce politeness through communication. For example, how can a person with deafness, an LGBT senior citizen, and an atheist communicate without violating or offending one person or more? Who is expected to adjust and how frequent should it be done? Inclusive communication is a crucial component of social inclusivity that must be further studied because what may accommodate one person may exclude other members of a group. Had there been contact tracing and mass testing to resolve COVID-19 sooner, this study would have included a field observation of the participants' interactions and non-verbal communication usage.

Witnessing the employment of non-verbal communication strategies would have been adequate on its own than recollecting additional information from the researcher's past interactions with students who have deafness. The original plan was to conduct a non-participant observation for at least two months and triangulate the data with a one-on-one interview for Krista and an FGD

for Mimi and Divina. A non-participant observation was originally more preferred than a participant observation because the researcher covertly witnesses the culture and communication style of students with deafness without interrupting them. The difference between this modified version of non-participant observation and the conventional non-participant observation is that the researcher gets to build rapport first instead of strangely appearing to watch the participants. All the participants should be informed at the start that the researcher will initially be observing them for three days per week especially during their major class meetings (not regular class lectures).

What the researcher could have specifically done in this method was, first, to examine everything in the surroundings. The researcher must be capable of separating information that seems irrelevant from those that could help the researcher acquire an overview of the participants' personalities and non-verbal behavior (Macfarlan, 2017). This part may be achieved in less than a week just by observing their initial classroom discussions. Two, the researcher must focus on a more comprehensive observation which is the PWD and Non-PWD's application of non-verbal communication strategies to perform collaborative work. In this part of the procedure, the researcher gets to see questionable non-verbal gestures and may begin constructing the interview questionnaire. It may take approximately four weeks to accomplish this stage since it stresses participant familiarity and non-verbal progression. Third, the researcher should check if there are present or absent cues of non-verbal communication accommodation by delineating the non-verbal similarities and differences. In this last part of the observation, the researcher should give full attention to the PWD and Non-PWD's non-verbal mannerisms during informal conversations. If it is possible to conduct an ethnography (which is

traditionally at least two years), the researcher would use James Spradley's *Three-Stage Observation Funnel* which has an attached copy of fieldwork reports in the appendix. It shall contain sketches and detailed descriptions of observed non-verbal behaviors.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

1. The interview must introduce him/herself and/or the accompanied sign language instructor to the interviewee.
2. The following instructions should be explained to the PWD and assistant (if any) before the interview begins, the researcher should answer the participant's question/s so as to avoid confusion.
3. Turn off all other devices to minimize possible distraction then proceed when the connection and reception are stable.
4. The researcher must ask for a copy of the consent form signed by the interviewee before the session begins. The consent shall consist of the interviewee's approval of video recording and that the documentation would be used for academic purposes only.
5. Should the PWD interviewee request to be accompanied by an interpreter or translator, the researcher should avoid communicating only to the PWD's interpreter or translator.
6. Interviewees are allowed to give feedback regarding the way the interview was handled only at the end of the session.
7. There will be five (5) parts to this interview guide so please be guided accordingly:
 1. Interviewee Demographics
 2. Status of Persons with Deafness in School
 3. Struggles of Students with Deafness in School
 4. Non-Verbal Accommodation,
 5. Social Inclusion in School

Interview Guide Questions

For the Student with Deafness

1. Interviewee Demographics

- a. Age:
- b. Sex:
- c. College or University:
- d. Course in College:
- e. Class Enrolled In [With Non-PWD's Name]:
- f. High School Type:

2. Status of Persons with Deafness in School

- a. Facilities
 - i. Are the facilities provided by the school enough for you to interact/communicate more with your classmates? Why or why not?
 - ii. Are there professionals (e.g. teachers, counsellor, speech therapists, etc.) in your class who can assist you with your needs as a student with deafness? Why or why not?
 - iii. Have you found any facility in school that aided you to communicate with hearing individuals? Why or why not?
- b. Communication
 - i. Group Aspect: With the Class
 - 1. Can you describe your class?
 - 2. Can you describe how your classmates treat you?

3. What kind of tasks or work are you often assigned to with your classmates

4. Have you received opportunities to lead these tasks?

ii. Interpersonal Aspect: With the Selected Non-PWD

1. How did you meet (Non-PWD's Name)?

2. How would you describe (Non-PWD's Name)?

3. Have you ever worked with (Non-PWD's Name)?

a. Can you describe the experience?

4. Have you been outside of school with (Non-PWD's Name)?

a. Can you describe the experience?

5. How close are you to (Non-PWD's Name)?

6. What do you usually talk about with (Non-PWD's Name)?

7. How well do you think (Non-PWD's Name) knows you?

8. Was (Non-PWD's Name) the first Non-PWD you met in school?

3. Struggles of Students with Deafness

a. What are your biggest struggles as someone who has deafness?

i. Were there times that you were discriminated against for your disability?

ii. In what ways do you think your classmates can help you overcome these challenges?

b. How do you describe the Deaf Community?

c. Can you describe your communication experience with hearing communities?

d. How about without an interpreter?

4. Non-Verbal Accommodation

- a. Can you describe the kind of work that you and (Non-PWD's Name) have done recently or in the past?
- b. What languages do you know?
- c. How do you usually communicate your needs or contribution in the work with (Non-PWD's Name)?
 - i. Does (Non-PWD's Name) know how to communicate in sign language?
- d. Are there times when you felt that (Non-PWD's Name) did or did not accommodate you in your school work with him/her?

5. Social Inclusion in School

- a. Do you feel like you belong in the class? Why or why not?
- b. Do you think your classmate/s treats you fairly? Why or why not ?
- c. Do you think you have an opportunity to communicate with hearing students in school? Why or why not?
- d. Do you think your class provides the resources that you need? Why or why not?
- e. Do you think you can make your own decisions in the class? Why or why not?
- f. Do you feel like your culture is respected in the class? Why or why not?
- g. Do you feel like you have a voice in your class? Why or why not?
- h. Do you think you can contribute anything in your class? Why or why not?

Focus Group Discussion Guide Questions

For the Non-PWD Classmates

1. Interviewee Demographics
 - a. Age:
 - b. Sex:
 - c. Degree Program in College:
 - d. Class Enrolled In [With PWD]:
 - e. Senior High School Type:
2. Status of Persons with Deafness in School
 - a. Facilities
 - i. Are the facilities provided by the school are sufficient for students with deafness to interact more with you and other members of the hearing community?
 - ii. Are there professionals in your class who can assist persons with deafness with their needs?
 - iii. Have you noticed any facilities in school that seem helpful for persons with deafness to communicate with hearing individuals?
 - b. Communication
 - i. Group Aspect: With the Class
 1. Can you describe your class?
 2. Has the Professor given you tasks that allowed you to interact more with PWDs? What kind of tasks are these?

3. Has (PWD's Name) received opportunities to lead tasks in the class?

ii. Interpersonal Aspect: With the Selected PWD

1. How did you meet (PWD's Name)?
2. How would you describe (PWD's Name)?
3. Have you been outside of school with (PWD's Name)?
 - a. Can you describe the experience?
4. How close are you to (PWD's Name)?
5. What do you usually talk about with (PWD's Name)?
6. How well do you think (PWD's Name) knows you?
7. Was (PWD's Name) the first student with deafness who you met in school?

3. Struggles of Students with Deafness

- a. What do you think are the biggest struggles of someone who has deafness?
 - i. Were there instances when you noticed (PWD's Name) was discriminated against?
 - ii. In what ways do you think you could help (PWD's Name) overcome these challenges?
 - iii. Do you have any struggles when communicating to (PWD's Name)?
- b. How would you describe communicating with people who have deafness?

4. Non-Verbal Accommodation

- a. How do you communicate your feelings to (PWD's Name)?

- i. How about Ate Nina? How does she communicate her feelings to you?
 - b. Do you know how to communicate in sign language?
 - i. Are you willing to learn sign language in the future?
 - ii. What are the reasons as to why you are not trained to communicate in sign language?
 - c. Were there times when you felt that you did or did not accommodate (PWD's Name) in your school work with him/her?
5. Social Inclusion in School
- a. Do you feel like (PWD's Name) belongs in the class? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you think (PWD's Name) is treated fairly in the class? Why or why not?
 - c. Do you think (PWD's Name) has an opportunity to communicate with other hearing individuals like you in the class? Why or why not?
 - d. Do you think (PWD's Name) is provided with the resources that he/she needs to communicate with hearing individuals like you in the class? Why or why not?
 - e. Do you think (PWD's Name) can make his/her own decisions in the class? Why or why not?
 - f. Do you feel like (PWD's Name) culture is respected in class? Why or why not?
 - g. Do you feel like (PWD's Name) has a voice in class? Why or why not?
 - h. Do you think (PWD's Name) can contribute anything in your class? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B

Consent Forms

Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts
College of Arts and Letters
University of the Philippines Diliman
981-8500 loc. 2133 | cal_dscta.updiliman@up.edu.ph

CONSENT FORM FOR SPEECH 200 (Undergraduate Thesis)

Title of the Thesis: Analyzing Inclusive Non-Verbal Communication Strategies
Between Students with Deafness and Their Non-PWD Peers

I agree to participate in the implementation and data gathering of an undergraduate thesis conducted by **TAGUIBULOS, ZOE SOPHIA BERENICE** from the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts, College of Arts and Letters in the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research and I understand the purpose of my participation as an **interviewee** in this study, as well as the future management of my data, have been explained to me.
2. My participation in this study is voluntary. There was no explicit or implicit coercion to participate.
3. I have the right not to answer questions and if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the session, I have the right to withdraw my participation and my data from the study at any time.
4. I have been given the explicit guarantee that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this session, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. The gathered data will only be used for academic purposes.

I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Wednesday, 27th May 2020

Signature over Full Name of the Participant
/ Date Signed

Taguibulos, Zoe Sophia Berenice / 26-05-2020
zaninesses@gmail.com

Full Name of the Researcher / Date Signed
E-mail Address of the Researcher

A copy of this form should be given to the participant/s.

Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts

College of Arts and Letters

University of the Philippines Diliman

981-8500 loc. 2133 | cal_dscta.updiliman@up.edu.ph

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4. I have been given the explicit guarantee that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this session, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. The gathered data will only be used for academic purposes.

I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

June 1, 2020

Signature over Full Name of the Participant
/ Date Signed

Taguibulos, Zoe Sophia Berenice / 26-05-2020
zaninesses@gmail.com

Full Name of the Researcher / Date Signed
E-mail Address of the Researcher

A copy of this form should be given to the participant/s.

Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts
College of Arts and Letters
University of the Philippines Diliman
981-8500 loc. 2133 | cal_dscta.updiliman@up.edu.ph

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Title of the Thesis: Analyzing Inclusive Non-Verbal Communication Strategies
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4. I have been given the explicit guarantee that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this session, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. The gathered data will only be used for academic purposes.

I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

May 27, 2020
Signature over Full Name of the Participant
/ Date Signed

Taguibulos, Zoe Sophia Berenice / 26-05-2020
zaninesses@gmail.com
Full Name of the Researcher / Date Signed
E-mail Address of the Researcher

A copy of this form should be given to the participant/s.

APPENDIX C

Transcript of Interview with Student with Deafness

Interviewee: Krista

Date of Interview: [22 May 2020]

Time of Interview: [8:15 pm]

Location of Interview: [Google Meeting]

Transcribed and Checked by Translator: [24 May 2020]

INTERVIEWER:

How old are you?

KRISTA:

33 years old.

INTERVIEWER:

What is your gender or sex?

KRISTA:

I am female.

INTERVIEWER:

Where do you study?

KRISTA:

I study in UP College of Education.

INTERVIEWER:

What is your course?

KRISTA:

I am studying for a Certificate in Professional Education.

INTERVIEWER:

What class are you enrolled in with Mimi?

KRISTA:

We are classmates in EDFD 116 or Educational Psychology.

INTERVIEWER:

What high school did you enroll in? Public? Private?

KRISTA:

Private.

INTERVIEWER:

Are the facilities provided by the school enough for you to interact or communicate more with your classmates? Why or why not?

KRISTA:

Which one? For High School?

INTERVIEWER:

For college, in UPD.

KRISTA:

[Thinking] They have some good opportunities for the Deaf.

INTERVIEWER:

Does it help you communicate with your classmates?

KRISTA:

[Squinting her eyes] Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

What are these specific facilities in the College of Education that helps you communicate with your classmates?

KRISTA:

Yes we can communicate through [Thinking] I'm not sure.

INTERVIEWER:

Are there counselors? Speech Therapists?

Or Professionals who can help you?

KRISTA:

[Scratches head] for me, I met, I saw a counsellor but I do not go to counselling. Not yet.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you found anything that helps you communicate with others? Like a speech therapist?

KRISTA:

None.

INTERVIEWER:

How about communication technologies?

What kind of communication technologies have you seen in Eduk?

KRISTA:

One, they let me have an interpreter in UP, and two, UP has volunteers for the Deaf. For example, I enrolled but I thought "How can I enroll? The people here are all hearing? I do not have an interpreter now." What I did, I wrote on a paper and showed it so that I

can communicate with the hearing volunteers.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe your class?

KRISTA:

Funny, cooperative, and helpful. For example, I do not understand the lesson in class, my classmates explain it to me. Really good.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe how your classmates treat you?

KRISTA:

[Tilting her head] They are okay.

INTERVIEWER:

So you never had a misunderstanding or problem with them?

KRISTA:

None yet. They try to know a little sign language to talk to me.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you have friends in class?

KRISTA:

I have only one. Her name is Divina.

INTERVIEWER:

Divina?

KRISTA:

Yes, we are really good friends.

INTERVIEWER:

Is she from College of Education?

KRISTA:

Yes, Eduk. She also knows your friend who referred me to you.

INTERVIEWER:

Does Divina have deafness?

KRISTA:

No, she is hearing like you..

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe her?

KRISTA:

She is always happy and encouraging to me. She is always smiling. Was that a lot to remember?

[Laughing]

INTERVIEWER:

No, of course not! [Laughing] How does she encourage you?

KRISTA:

Here is an example. I am the only one not yet done with my final requirements. Divina keeps encouraging me. She tells me “Do not give up!” I get so touched and I tell her “Thank you”. I keep typing and typing even if the requirement is difficult. Divina said I can overcome it with hard work and that I should not compare myself with others. She said “Who cares?” I keep saying “Thank you, Thank you, Thank you” while tears are streaming down my face because UP

is hard. Now I feel like crying [Rubbing eyes] Still, I realized I have to keep fighting. In Eduk, learning became my life.

INTERVIEWER:

What kind of tasks are you often assigned to with your classmates?

KRISTA:

For group work, only 1 subject while 3 subjects are only for individual work. My duties in group work are like researching and bringing school materials.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you received opportunities to lead these tasks? Have you ever been a group leader?

KRISTA:

There was a leader in our group but not me.

INTERVIEWER:

Why?

KRISTA:

I do not want to lead, I want to discuss and follow. How can I lead if I need someone to explain the instructions to me first? So it is better if the leader can already interpret and analyze the instructions for me. I am okay about being a leader but I cannot be one when I hardly communicate and fix my own problems.

INTERVIEWER:

How did you meet Mimi?

KRISTA:

We said 'hi' to each other in our EDFD 116 class and we became groupmates.

INTERVIEWER:

How would you describe Mimi?

KRISTA:

Smart, kind and understandable.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe the experience when working with Mimi?

KRISTA:

She is very serious. She is always thinking: Why? What? How? Though she is always serious, she never looks mad or expresses anger. She always has new ideas to share and she judges which ideas are good or bad. She keeps reflecting.

INTERVIEWER:

Was it hard understanding her?

KRISTA:

No, because I have an interpreter who tells me what Mimi is saying. We communicate like this. Left side is Mimi, the interpreter is in the middle, and I am on the right side. Mimi talks first to my interpreter and then I observe Mimi, the interpreter tells me what Mimi is saying and I reply to my interpreter who tells Mimi what I think. This is not as hard as you think because my interpreter does most of the work.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you communicate to Divina like this too?

KRISTA:

Yes but she remembers the signs that I show to my interpreter and because of that, she knows some sign language.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you ever been outside of school with Mimi?

KRISTA:

No. We have different schedules and I go home afterwards. I don't have time to go out with friends. I don't go out to malls or anywhere with friends.

INTERVIEWER:

How so?

KRISTA:

I don't feel like it.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok, I see. How close do you think are you to Mimi?

KRISTA:

We're just groupmates. We only chat, nothing personal.

INTERVIEWER:

What do you talk about with Mimi?

KRISTA:

[Thinking] Sorry, I do not talk to people that much.

INTERVIEWER:

How well do you think Mimi knows you?

KRISTA:

She knew about my deafness before we became groupmates. I know about her life in Cebu.

INTERVIEWER:

Was Mimi the first Non-PWD you met in school?

KRISTA:

No, of course not. I see hearing people everyday and I only talk to hearing people in class.

INTERVIEWER:

What are your biggest struggles as someone who has deafness?

KRISTA:

In elementary, I had a difficult time reading, and now I am experiencing difficulty when communicating with hearing people because they have a better reading comprehension than me.

INTERVIEWER:

Were there times that you were discriminated against for your disability?

KRISTA:

Students did not discriminate me but the outsiders did [Breathing deeply] When they saw me communicating in sign language, they said “See that crazy-looking doing this?” [Showing random finger flicking] I felt discriminated [Grabs a coffee mug to drink]

INTERVIEWER:

I am so sorry that happened.

KRISTA:

I am ok. It happened in elementary. What is the next question?

INTERVIEWER:

In what ways do you think your classmates can help you overcome these challenges?

KRISTA:

I think, I think, I think [Sighs] they need to teach hearing people to incorporate respect when communicating with someone who has a disability.

INTERVIEWER:

Alright. How would you describe the Deaf Community?

KRISTA:

First, we are a talkative community. Second, we understand things like regular hearing people. Third, we are complete.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe your communication experience/s with hearing communities?

KRISTA:

I describe my communication experience with hearing communities as difficult. Not only do they don't know sign language, they need to write or discuss slowly. They communicate too fast.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe your communication experience/s without an interpreter?

KRISTA:

If there is no interpreter then I cannot go to class, I will go home or stay home. The teacher talks too fast and switches the slides too fast. What am I supposed to do? [Demonstrates her frustration by staring blankly upwards] Guess what is happening? So I just go home. I ask my classmates for announcements anyway.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe the kind of work that you and Mimi have done recently or in the past?

KRISTA:

Mimi does work on mental health while I focus on special education. I think they are related.

INTERVIEWER:

What languages do you know?

KRISTA:

I focus on Filipino Sign Language (FSL), some English, and I knew Bicolano but I forgot it now since I am here in Pasig City.

INTERVIEWER:

How do you usually communicate your needs or contribution in your school work with Mimi?

KRISTA:

I ask for help from my interpreter to inform me about what is going on or we discuss online. I adjust because the school is built for hearing communities.

INTERVIEWER:

Does Mimi know how to communicate in sign language?

KRISTA:

She only knows basic sign language because she saw me using certain signs again and again. She is something like Divina but Mimi can do some fingerspelling. We talk to achieve our needs in our group work.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you thought about teaching your language to the people around you?

KRISTA:

It is not my job to teach people sign language especially if they do not want to, but I can explain what my signs mean--- what my language means so they do not misunderstand me. I respect that our culture is different and we grew up differently that is why I have an interpreter to translate my language to them. My classmates told me that my grammar is bad and that I need to think if sign language is causing it, I said “No it is not. It is part of my culture. You cannot tell me how it affects my life.”

INTERVIEWER:

Are there times when you felt that Mimi did or did not accommodate you in your work with her?

KRISTA:

[Squinting her eyes] not all the time. For example, after class she just goes out of the classroom and tells me that she will explain her ideas or the instructions later. I understand that she has her own life but I am not fully informed because of it. We only get to discuss thoroughly in group meetings but there are times when the group talks too fast and not to me. When I checked the time, they only had 2 mins to tell me everything that they remember in the 58 minutes. I don't think I was included in the discussion then.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel like you belong in the class? Why?

KRISTA:

[Shaking her head] It's hard to say for sure without an interpreter because with one, I am sure that I am part of the class.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think your classmates treat you fairly? Why?

KRISTA:

I think so. We are equal because even the hearing students do not get special treatment.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think you have an opportunity to communicate with hearing students? Why?

KRISTA:

In UP, yes I have the opportunity to communicate with hearing students because the students are aware and sensitive towards students with disabilities. My classmates know about my deafness and they accept me despite this.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think your class provides the resources that you need? Why?

KRISTA:

Not always but there is potential among the students and faculty who are willing to help me. The consultations, for example, work for me because I get to ask questions and the Professor gets to see if our group work is correct or not.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think you can make your own decisions in the class? Why?

KRISTA:

Yes, I think so. If not recitations, during consultations I can easily share my thoughts. My problem is not if I could make a decision but how could I share my decisions without an interpreter?

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel like your culture is respected in the class? Why?

KRISTA:

Yes, we are respected in UP. Why? Because even the teachers in class remind everyone about this handbook which states that we must learn to respect each other. The teacher even used fingerspelling such that I understood her. This handbook has now become a part of my life.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel like you have a voice in your class? Why?

KRISTA:

Yes, of course. Being able to communicate in sign language is having a voice to me, and being in this classroom gives me my own voice too.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think you can contribute anything in your class? Why?

KRISTA:

Yes, I can because I can answer many things that only people in the Deaf Community could and people in class respect that.

INTERVIEWER:

I understand. Do you have anything else to add for discussion?

KRISTA:

No. I am good.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you for participating in this interview, I had a splendid time learning more about you.

Thank you for being patient with me and allowing me to have my sister (translator) here!

Transcript of FGD with Non-PWD Classmates**Interviewees:** Mimi & Divina**Date of Interview:** [26 May 2020]**Time of Interview:** [9:00 pm]**Location of Interview:** [Google Meeting]**Transcribed:** [31 May 2020]**INTERVIEWER:**

How old are you po?

MIMI:

I am 30 years old.

DIVINA:

I am 33 years old.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you both identify as female?

MIMI:

Female.

DIVINA:

Yes, female.

INTERVIEWER:

What is your degree program right now?

MIMI:

I am currently enrolled at College of Education, taking a Certificate of Professional Education.

DIVINA:

Same with Ms. Mimi, I am also taking up a Certification of Professional Education.

INTERVIEWER:

Is this your last semester?

DIVINA:

No, first semester. This is how I met Ms. Krista.

MIMI:

Same, same. This is also my first sem but ‘yung second sem ako kumuha ng subjects because I wasn’t able to enroll sa first semester talaga.

DIVINA:

So Ms. Mimi, are you also a friend of Ms. Krista?

MIMI:

Yeah. She’s my classmate sa EDFD 116, educational psychology.

DIVINA:

Ahhh this sem?

MIMI:

Yeah. This sem.

DIVINA:

Classmate ko siya (Krista) every Monday sa Teaching Early Grades.

INTERVIEWER:

EdTEG?

DIVINA:

Yes!

INTERVIEWER:

Since you already mentioned the classes that you are enrolled in with Krista, in your high school, did you enroll in a public school? Private school? Or home school?

MIMI:

Private.

DIVINA:

Same here. Private.

INTERVIEWER:

That is all for interviewee demographics. Let us proceed to the status of students with deafness in school. Do you think that the facilities provided by the school are sufficient for students with deafness to interact more with you and the other members of the hearing community?

DIVINA:

So your question is if the facilities can be a means to provide communication for students with deafness?

INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

DIVINA:

For me, the facilities might be enough but not enough to cater the deafness needs. The College of Education does not have the capacity to cater to that kind of situation. In fact, I was surprised because I had to rely on Krista's interpreter to be able to speak with her, although later in the class, we managed to find another way to communicate with each other. Pero ayun, walang

means for me to speak with her community. I know with my experience in another university, we have the means to cater to diverse students.

MIMI:

Well, in my case, same lang with Divina. I don't know, I can't say much kasi I haven't been in the university for that long. Since January lang ako nag-start na mag-aral sa Diliman, so I don't know if they do have programs or something to address that. Pero what I heard is that through her interpreter na may group sila or set of interpreters whom we can inquire para tumulong agad. I wasn't able to do that kasi ang timely ng COVID [Chuckles] Basically, to communicate with Krista, I rely sa interpreter niya.

INTERVIEWER:

Are there professionals in your class who can assist persons with deafness with their needs?

MIMI:

Hmm... hindi ako sure because for example, yung Prof namin sa EDFD 116, she is having a hard time for sure and she mentioned in class na if only she knows how to sign... sign language, it would be helpful for her to understand and communicate. She would want to know kung ito talaga ang sinasabi ni Krista kunwari kung wala siyang interpreter ganun. We assume that there are no professionals right now.

DIVINA:

Umm Miss ... I would like to clarify that I am not an expert in understanding learners with disabilities. I have been in the university for one month and a half. During the orientation, wala namang nagsabi how to deal with deafness. When Krista was there, ok lang din. I cannot say how Eduk could do but this was my experience in that one and a half month, sabihin natin 2

months, was that. Regarding naman sa who are the best people in position to aid the communication, yung number 1 talaga is the college itself because the college has a special education division. It's the responsibility of this division to address how we could get the presence of PWDs sa mga consciousness ng tao, like yung sa orientation, dapat sinabi sa amin na if you need or if you happen to be in a class na diverse in nature, you can ask for help in this, this, this, this. Sa orientation dapat ganun. The next siguro is to have a student leadership, pwede ring counselling, and of course action from the special education department kasi they are the best in position to extend their expertise. It is important that students with deafness are able to socialize. I don't know, maybe other colleges in UP like your college can coordinate and collaborate with the special education division on how we can go about this and bring it to our consciousness. Everyone must be involved because this is our community.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you noticed any facilities in school that seem helpful for persons with deafness to communicate with hearing individuals?

DIVINA:

Can you give an example?

INTERVIEWER:

Communication technologies and helpdesks. Ones that are present in Eduk po.

MIMI:

Going back to what I mentioned earlier, Krista's interpreter said they are a team of interpreters, pero I'm not sure if available sila for purposes in UP. Kasi for me parang limited nga ang

resources sa Eduk, pero again parang factor din na I haven't been in campus for long so baka merong facility na hindi ko napapansin sa campus.

DIVINA:

Hindi ko sure kasi hindi ko na-eexplore masyado ang campus. Besides the interpreters, yung teacher sa class namin ni Krista, pala-gamit ng present at available technology like the classroom TV na nakakatulong naman sa aming mga presentations.

MIMI:

Buti pa kayo, nagagamit ang TV, sa class namin never 'yan ginagamit [Chuckles]

INTERVIEWER:

Why?

MIMI:

Wala talaga ... we have this Facebook group where we post all of the discussions and topics that we will discuss for the day. Kaya kami magkasama ni Krista palagi is because we're groupmates. So for example, may topic na ipopost ni teacher na ididiscuss namin for the day, she's going to post it the night before or early morning ng araw na yun, and then pagdating sa class dun namin icheck. She discusses it then and there. Nagbibigay naman siya ng handouts pero most of the time, she does this powerpoint presentations in PDF file that she uploads. So I thought, let's just read it while discussing. So most of us ay either nagla-laptop or nagce-cellphone para lang may reference.

DIVINA:

In our EdTEG class, we received a syllabus that contains our assigned topics. We are full of reporting kaso na-cancel dahil sa covid ang plans namin.

MIMI:

Same rin sa amin except when the Prof gives our topics may time para magdiscuss kami sa class at nagkakaroon ng interaction kasi tinatanong ideas namin. Sa part ni Krista, there was one time where she had a difficulty explaining kasi na-late yung interpreter niya so what we did is she wrote it down on a piece of paper--- kung ano yung gusto niya i-share pero it took her some time to write, everyone was patient naman. Ito yung time rin na nagsabi yung Prof na “I wish I can interpret what she’s saying” something like that so it could help you (Krista) and the class.

DIVINA:

Facility din siguro yung mga notebooks niya because during discussion, she always refers to her notes, sometimes she refers to her phone for the photos if she is going to describe something.

Kasi in our class naghahandle kami ng mga bata so she has to describe. I’m not sure if we can consider that as ‘facility’ pero kasama yun sa mga means na nag-aaid sa communication niya sa amin. Ayun, TV, laptop niya, notebook niya, phone niya, at yung nasa [Describing an object with her hands] meron siyang dalang plastic sheets? Parang binder or something?

INTERVIEWER:

Clearbook?

MIMI:

Yeah, that.

DIVINA:

Yun, clearbook. Dala niya yun for directions, then yung phone niya for objects to describe, words to spell, words to translate, mga ganun. Kasi busy talaga ang teaching early grades,

napaka-hectic talaga niyan. Second week pa lang, ang daming mga reporting, discussions, hectic talaga ang TEG, Mimi [Laughs]

MIMI:

My god...

DIVINA:

Saved by COVID talaga kami as in yung syllabus strict talaga yan, kung magsastart ng 5 pm, magsastart yan ng 5 pm hanggang 9 pm. My god. Grabe ang hectic pala 'to. Nangyari ang COVID, yung malaking paper na we're supposed to work on naging one-page reflection na lang! [Laughs]

MIMI:

We're supposed to present kasi. We were assigned to this particular topic and then we were planning the method of our report, syempre we need to think of how to deliver the report so that time, Krista was asking for our help ... for her to communicate properly. She asked us if we can include ourselves sa roleplay na gusto niyang gawin ganun but everything was [Makes an exploding sound] as in nawala dahil sa COVID.

DIVINA:

Grabe alam mo ba twice ang reporting namin. In the end, we managed to establish a communication process with Krista kasi hindi naman all the time nandiyan si Teacher. So nagreressort kami sa phone niya (Krista) where she explains herself, eh diba may note sa phone? Nagrerereply ako sa phone niya or sa phone ko kasi wala, palaging may requirements, may projects, group discussions and all. At saka kasi si Krista ay kapitbahay ko.

MIMI:

Talaga? Sa Pasig lang?

DIVINA:

Yes! So sometimes tuwing uuwi, sasama. Although we want to talk while on the way home, wala talaga kasi there's no way. So ayun, may phone.

MIMI:

Sorry ang daldal namin [Laughs candidly]

INTERVIEWER:

No, it's ok! As long as you're willing to extend then it's fine for me!

MIMI:

Ok lang sakin.

DIVINA:

Ok din para sa akin.

INTERVIEWER:

Is anyone going to add anything?

DIVINA:

Nope.

MIMI:

None.

INTERVIEWER:

We will go to the group aspect under communication. The question is: "Can you describe your class?"

MIMI:

I don't know sa ibang class pero sa amin parang walang pakialam ang mga tao. Although wala kaming common ground to talk to each other about things. Another factor siguro is that I'm older than everyone. They're considerate naman about Krista especially kapag masyadong mabilis ang discussion, hirap na hirap yung interpreter at nagcacatch-up din siya kasi diba ang hirap for the interpreter to look at the teacher and then back to sign at Krista? Our Prof is considerate with everyone. When it comes to my groupmates, everyone is helpful. Confident ang lahat and may inclusion talaga to understand Krista. Ok din kasi magaling ang interpreter. Yun so far ang naiisip ko.

DIVINA:

Sa class namin, very lively and exciting ang topics kasi puro bata ang hawak namin, 0 to 8 years old. Maganda palagi discussion namin lalo na si Ms. Krista has the experience kasi--- sa klase, I am the oldest. I am 33 tapos yung iba, younger. But Krista is 30.

MIMI:

Yeah she is.

DIVINA:

She has a daughter so she finds the class relatable like pano maghandle ng bata, pano makipag-usap sa bata, of course according to how her community handles it. Our teacher is recognisant so sinasabi niya tama ang ginagawa ni Krista. At saka for me, I think it's my first time to experience an inclusive education classroom like this. Parang first time rin ng mga iba. I really think our TEG teacher is handling the class so smoothly, the best way she can ... we know that it is challenging since at first we made many adjustments for Krista but with the help of camaraderie naging ok na ang class requirements, ayun. Alam niyo ba ang daldal ko tas itong si

Krista told me through her interpreter na if I want to keep talking to her, matututo nako mag-sign language [Laughs boisterously]. This is how we came up with the “phone communication” with the note. Masaya kasama si Krista. Sometimes she comes to me to verify a few details.

Inencourage ko siya, sabi ko there’s nothing wrong about asking questions--- that she can approach the teacher, walang mali sa pagtatanong. I guess that was the first time na natuto siyang magpaconsult or pumunta tuwing consultation hours. Yung pangamba niya siguro kaya hindi siya nagtatanong is the communication side, sabi ko sige lang just think of the teacher as me when you ask something. I noticed na tuwang tuwa siya every time na-eencourage siyang magparticipate at magtanong. In return, tinuturuan niya kami paano maging patient sa community niya. Happy ang class namin.

MIMI:

Kami naman sakto lang, hindi gaano ka-interactive kasi most of my classmates are from CHK. Mga tahimik lang sila sa class. Our Prof naman is very approachable kasi talkative siya like she shares stories about her life. We also encourage her din within our group to recite kasi during the first few weeks, hesitant siya kasi takot siyang ma-misinterpret pero ngayon madalas na siyang nagrerecite kasi naging mas confident siya. We tell her din na the class is a safe space so she can freely express herself.

DIVINA:

Diba last sem niya ngayon? Baka siguro mas quiet siya noong first semester niya.

MIMI:

Baka hindi rin kasi siya nagkaroon masyado ng friends kaya ang tahimik niya. I also think na ang tahimik niya kasi walang nakikipag-usap sa kanya. I would admit na, ako, medyo hesitant kasi as

much as I want to communicate with her or talk to her, ayoko kasi isipin niya na parang kinakausap ko siya kasi mag-isa lang ako. Alam mo yun? I want to talk to her kasi first time kong magkaroon ng classmate like her. I'm also very much keen on learning sign language. With that experience, parang gusto ko matuto. I remember before covid, dun ko lang siya nakausap nang matagal. Nagshare siya ng experience sa La Salle University, she mentioned that the hearing students did not have a hard time talking to her. Sabi nga ni Krista na parang mas na-aacknowledge silang Deaf Community kapag nakikipag-usap with other people who are not part of the Deaf Community, coexistence ika nga. Dito ko natutunan na kahit iba ang communication styles namin, nahahanapan namin yung meaning ng message namin sa isa't isa. Hindi imposible ang communication kung susubukan mong kausapin yung tao--- siya mismo nagsabi nito.

DIVINA:

Sabi sakín ni Krista na noong nasa DLS-CSB siya, 50% yung scholarship para sa mga students with deafness, ang laking bagay nun. Ito pa, napansin ko na magaling talaga si Ms. Krista, pero that's the purpose of inclusive education diba? For her to adapt to the university's standards and environment, ang galing niya. I think yung problem was naging hesitant siya to socialize and that is not the problem, we just have to be more understanding. I know she just wants to have a friend, that's why she's shy. Yun lang.

INTERVIEWER:

Has the Professor given you tasks that allowed you to interact more with PWDs? What kind of tasks are these?

DIVINA:

Ay oo. Our activities are heavy on bondings so we do not just interact with the children but also among ourselves, among each other.

MIMI:

Sa amin naman yes kasi puro group discussions or debate. Kailangan talaga ng teamwork.

INTERVIEWER:

Has Krista received opportunities to lead tasks in the class?

DIVINA:

Oo tuwing nagpepresent kami.

MIMI:

Yes, yes. Sa aming topic, dinissect namin siya. Our topic is something like teachers who deal with students who are different, and then under it ay topic tungkol sa mga Deaf. Yung topic na yun ay inassign ng Prof for Krista kasi para firsthand yung claims. Sayang kasi hindi marerealize yung presentation dahil sa COVID. Naging paper na lang yung sanang presentation niya.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Let's shift our perspective to the interpersonal aspect. How did you meet Krista?

DIVINA:

I said 'hi' [Laughs aloud]

INTERVIEWER:

[Laughs] Perhaps with some details?

DIVINA:

We talked through her interpreter at first then syempre nagkaroon ng maraming requirements agad-agad so talagang nagkikita kami palagi sa library. Sabi ko ayan, eto na talaga.

MIMI:

Kami naman dun sa EDFD class. She was my seatmate. At first I didn't know that she has deafness until may sinabi yung Prof na we have a classmate with deafness. Actually, I vaguely remember what we talked about for the first time. I think nangyari lang yun though nung nandun ang interpreter niya. She was also the type of person na hindi nakikipag-usap sa classmates at kami lang nakikipag-usap kasi kami yung magkatabi.

INTERVIEWER:

How would you describe Krista?

MIMI:

How do I say this?

DIVINA:

I find Krista hardworking! Because she's able to overcome her fears and hesitations like asking questions and socializing with other people. Mabait siya at nakaka-open up siya. Magaling talaga siya that's why she's in an inclusive school like UP. Natutuwa ako sa kanya, ang bait niya sobra.

MIMI:

Medyo shy siya at first pero nabigyan siya ng chance to communicate and interact kasi inassure namin siya that UP, especially Eduk, is a safe space. Tapos diligent din siya na student. Last time na nakausap ko siya, she shared about her family, mga struggles niya in school and in the community so parang dun ko rin nakita na she's trying her best to be someone her parents and family could be proud of.

DIVINA:

Yes, her parents and her daughter! Objective talaga niya to help her community. Magtetake na lang siya ng LET after ng CPE.

INTERVIEWER:

Is there anything that you want to add? Shall we move to the next question?

DIVINA:

None, Yes.

MIMI:

Nothing to add, and yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Have you been outside of school with Krista? And can you describe the experience?

DIVINA:

Pag umuuwi lang. Ayun puro ako chismis.

MIMI:

Ako naman walang chance kasi I go straight home. I have work.

DIVINA:

Where do you work, Ms. Mimi?

[Mimi's connection was cut off so we waited for her to reconnect]

MIMI:

Hi, sorry. Ni-restart lang ng kapatid ko yung WiFi namin.

DIVINA:

Ano undergrad mo, Ms. Mimi?

MIMI:

Mass Comm.

INTERVIEWER:

Journalism? Broadcast Communication? Film?

MIMI:

BA Mass Communication sa UP Cebu. Napakabroad ng pinag-aralan namin [Giggles]

INTERVIEWER:

Is everyone ready?

MIMI:

Yes.

DIVINA:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok, my question now is: “How close are you to Krista?”

MIMI:

On a scale of 1-10, 10 being really close, I would say ... 6? Because she shares about private matters like her family.

DIVINA:

Around 7 or baka 8 kasi sabi niya magmemeet pa kami after quarantine. Malay natin baka maging 10 [Laughs]

INTERVIEWER:

What do you usually talk about with Krista? Besides academics of course.

DIVINA:

Family, yung daughter niya, tapos lately kasi neighbors kami sa Pasig, we talk about Vico Sotto [Shrieks] and situation namin dito sa city.

MIMI:

Kami more of her daughter and family, pati na backgrounds namin.

INTERVIEWER:

How well do you think Krista knows you?

DIVINA:

Sa school lang.

MIMI:

Yes, as a classmate lang.

INTERVIEWER:

Alright. Was Krista the first student with deafness who you met in school?

DIVINA:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

How about students with other disabilities?

DIVINA:

For deafness, yes. For other disabilities, no. When I enrolled sa NCPAG, I had a classmate with a different type of disability.

INTERVIEWER:

How about you, Mimi?

MIMI:

In UP, yes, Krista is the first student with deafness and PWD who I know. Outside of UP, I know other PWD students.

INTERVIEWER:

We are now on the third part of the FGD, the struggles of students with deafness. I want to know “What do you think are the biggest struggles of someone who has deafness?” Anyone can share first.

DIVINA:

I mentioned yung recitation niya sa school tapos kung dadagdagan, yung means ng college mismo para tulungan siya. At saka I noticed pala ah, sa akin ‘to, I thought that [Stammering] once na nasa system at nag-identify yung student na siya ay may disability, I thought that the College of Education through SpEd would offer services pero I’m not sure kung ano iyong capability ng SpEd. I learned through Ms. Krista na she had to go through the hiring process which can be costly. I was thinking na the whole UP system, with the help of the SpEd division should cater to the needs of all PWDs, like the case of Ms. Krista, there should already be an interpreter provided for her because it is her right.

[Mimi got disconnected again]

DIVINA:

Hala. So ok ba yung idea ko?

INTERVIEWER:

Yes po.

DIVINA:

Kasi UP is a state university, if they know that a student in the campus has a disability then they should be providing adequate sources. It's part of their right to education.

[Mimi reconnects to the meeting]

DIVINA:

I really think it should be like this kasi the right to education should be socially inclusive and socially acknowledged, but if we do not have resources that will cater to diversity then ayun na nga mahihirapan. Doon ako nabigla, akala ko na yung interpreter ni Ms. Krista ay hired by the SpEd department tapos si Krista lang pala ang ... ang ...

INTERVIEWER:

She had to hire.

DIVINA:

Yes, look and hire. Mahirap talaga kasi maghire kasi dapat susunod sa time niya and she has to pay.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think these services should be subsidized by UP?

DIVINA:

Krista should be allowed to make an arrangement with the management. This is something that the student shouldn't be worried about.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. What about you, Mimi? Do you have a different answer?

MIMI:

(Inaudible) mahihirapan siya sa (inaudible) meeting namin mas (inaudible) nakaka-interact siya and nagbibigay ng ideas to the group (inaudible)

[Mimi was disconnected from the meeting and then reconnects after 5 minutes]

MIMI:

Hi, sorry. Yung struggle talaga ni Krista ay yung learning through the interpreter and considering the time of the interpreter. Naging maayos naman because she settled her schedule with the interpreter, yun lang.

INTERVIEWER:

Were there times when you noticed that Krista was discriminated by anyone in school?

MIMI:

No, parang wala naman, at least wala pang nakakarating sa amin na may discrimination against her dito sa Eduk.

DIVINA:

I'm not sure but in our class, nobody has ever dared to discriminate her.

INTERVIEWER:

In what ways do you think you could help Krista overcome these challenges that you mentioned?

DIVINA:

Well, in my case, I keep supporting her and reassuring her that there is no harm in trying to communicate with people. I keep pushing her not to hesitate like when she has questions or a thought that she wants to share, she can directly approach people to talk about it. I think of it like a moral support, and it's a good motivation for cases like Ms. Krista. Parang I saw her becoming confident at naa-articulate na niya ang mga gusto niyang sabihin, kapag may parts siyang hindi

naiintindihan sabi ko “Ok, go. Put it out. When you are comfortable, we can ask the teacher together din naman.” I think the support means a lot to them.

MIMI:

I try to assist her to the best I can. I give visual cues and I try to learn some basic sign language. Minsan mas comfortable talaga siyang makipag-usap in her language. Of course, give her motivation to communicate with everyone in class. Siya nga mismo nagsabi na she wants to establish a connection with hearing people like us pero nafefeel niya na hindi nakikipagsalita ang mga tao sa kanya kasi nga alam niyang mahihirapan sila makipag-usap sa kanya. What I do is I empathize with her kasi if we say na her situation is fine, tayo rin mahihirapan, at the same time if we admit na her situation is hard, kawawa naman. Ang solusyon talaga ay maghanap ng adjustment kasi mayroon talagang paraan kung gusto mo ng paraan.

DIVINA:

We will find a way actually because as we communicate, na-eestablish naman ang way of communication ng dalawa. Like sa amin naging means of communication ang notebook at phone. Hindi nga ‘to normal pero at least may another option for communicating with hearing communities. Gumagana yung notebook kapag nagchichismis kami sa hallway o kaya nagchichikahan kami sa library. Oh diba hindi kami sasawayin kasi walang ingay [Laughs]

MIMI:

What I don’t get is kakausapin mo lang, simple ‘hi’ nga eh. She feels acknowledged when her presence is acknowledged. Menial nga lang yung papansinin mo siya, kahit kanino naman.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you have any struggles when communicating to Krista?

DIVINA:

As in today?

INTERVIEWER:

It can be in the present or in the past.

DIVINA:

Dati mahirap kasi you're trying to make that connection happen until eventually maging friends kayo. Right now, with Facebook Messenger, I find it easier to communicate with Krista.

MIMI:

True. Dahil sa phone, ang daming way para magcommunicate. Sabi ng interpreter na mas nagchachat si Krista kaysa nakikipag-usap at saka hindi marunong mag-Tagalog si Krista kasi English pa rin ang basehan ng SL.

DIVINA:

Magiging problem din ni Krista yung Tagalog part sa LET hala. Apart from the communication, hindi natin alam ano ang gagawin ng PRC sa mga Deaf. I'm sure and I hope na may gagawing orientation about that, pero yun na nga yung Filipino, hirap si Krista dun.

INTERVIEWER:

How would you describe communicating with people who have deafness?

DIVINA:

I would say difficult kasi we're improvising how to make the communication between us, the hearing and the Deaf happen when we could be assisted by the school. Yung dating kasi ng UP regarding this case is "Bahala kayo!"

MIMI:

It's challenging because we are communicating with an unfamiliar community.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you for that. For the fourth part, we will be talking about Non-Verbal Accommodation.

May I ask how you communicate your feelings to Krista?

DIVINA:

Emoticons! [Laughs] Syempre ngayon lang 'to kasi nagka-COVID na pero before nito, may actions naman, movements, at way to act out our emotions. Krista can feel what we meant kasi she does them.

MIMI:

Well, sa class kapag nagrerecitate siya in sign language, kasabay ng hand movements niya yung facial expressions niya. I don't remember sharing anything with regards to my feelings. Yung facial expressions niya may hawig din sa online emojis at saka nagsasabi siya ng updates like "I am sad" or "I am happy" ganun. I learned that sign language uses other body parts din pala. Besides her interpreter, this is how she communicates.

DIVINA:

Krista acts out what she feels. She's not just moving her hands but every muscle in her body. At saka she's not difficult to understand, in fact, she is very expressive. She shows her emotions to everyone whom she is communicating with, she is easy to communicate with by looking at her reactions. She is quick to also get the message with my emotions. Hindi niya pinapahirapan ang mga kinakausap niya, otherwise strictly sign language lang ang mode of communication namin. Ayun, kalma lang siya.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok so this is not only how you communicate with her but also how she communicates with you both?

DIVINA:

Yes.

MIMI:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you know how to communicate in sign language?

DIVINA:

No.

MIMI:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

Even basic fingerspelling?

MIMI:

Yes, alam ko yung fingerspelling at saka basic greetings like 'thank you' and 'welcome.' Basta yung mga ginagamit niya halos palagi.

DIVINA:

Ako rin. Alam ko yung 'thank you', 'welcome' at 'CPE'.

INTERVIEWER:

But are you willing to learn sign language in the future?

DIVINA:

Yes, oo naman.

MIMI:

Yes, actually. It is a life skill.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, so what are your reasons as of the moment as to why you are not trained to communicate in sign language?

MIMI:

Before kasi hindi kami masyadong aware about it. With the social media and everything, na-entice ako pero, still, hindi siya naging priority kasi wala naman akong kakausapin in sign language. Hindi siya naging urgent need pero hindi ko sinasabing binabalewala ko siya ha. I mean, hindi 'to excuse pero dahilan kung bakit hindi ako fluent sa sign language. If I want to learn, sana may offered at credited sign language classes sa curriculum ng UP.

DIVINA:

I would love to learn sign language, however, the opportunity hasn't presented itself yet. Like, I am interested but I have to consider the time, because communicating in sign language is a skill, it's a commitment that you need to exhaust a lot of your time in. A language is not rushed, I mean for me, I am learning 3 other languages like English, Filipino, and Arabic. I have not mastered these languages. Am I open to sign language? Of course! Tapusin ko lang 'tong CPE [Laughs] and then ipasa ko ang LET and let's see what happens next! So after LET kapag nakapasa ako then AMEN and let's check if there's a chance to learn sign language while working. Diba why not?

INTERVIEWER:

Last question for Non-Verbal Accommodation, were there times when you felt that you did or did not accommodate Krista in your school work with her?

MIMI:

I'm not sure if she is satisfied pero I try to accommodate her as much as I can.

DIVINA:

Ako naman, I am open to always helping people. I am confident that I always accommodate Krista with what few resources we have in the college. I always acknowledge her problems and everyone's diversity sa class kasi I am a 'different' person, myself. This is how we show respect to the community. If she asks for any kind of help, she can rely on my aid.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok so we are on the last part of the FGD, Social Inclusion in School. Do you feel like Krista belongs in the class? Why or why not? Even just 1-2 sentences, that would be fine.

MIMI:

Yes, because she is accommodated and her problems are deemed valid by the class.

DIVINA:

She belongs to the class because she earned her spot in the class, she qualifies, and we see her as an intellectual. She is equally intelligent that's why she's here.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think Krista is treated fairly in the class? Why or why not?

MIMI:

Yes naman in our class because we all care about her welfare. Basically, everyone is trying their best to make her feel like somebody.

INTERVIEWER:

So there were no conflicts? Biases? Or disputes in class?

MIMI:

Absolutely none.

INTERVIEWER:

How about you, Divina?

DIVINA:

She is treated fairly by everyone, actually. Not just by the class. I only hope lang that the system gets improved so that there would be more people like her in UP at para less yung burden sa mga PWDs. Dapat by then free na ang mga services like interpreters and other technologies.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think Krista has an opportunity to communicate with other hearing individuals like you in the class? Why or why not?

DIVINA:

Always!

MIMI:

Yes! Especially when we ask if she's coping with the requirements. She tells us what she knows and what she feels, this is how we gauge her capacity. She is doing great.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think Krista is provided with the resources that she needs to communicate with hearing individuals like you in the class? Why or why not?

DIVINA:

She has her own resources pero talking about the school mismo, hindi sila nagpoprovide ng mga kailanganin ng mga learners with disabilities. Sana lang maimprove pa yung sistema ng UP.

INTERVIEWER:

What do you think does the school or your college lack? Or what else has to be improved?

DIVINA:

Ang dami tulad ng infrastructure. Isipin mo, kahit ramps o elevator, wala sa eduk tapos ang SpEd department nasa pinaka 3rd floor pa. Ako nga humihingal kapag umaakyat, paano pa kaya yung mga ibang PWDs? Having an accessible facility is a right for PWDs. At saka yung Dilnet, ang bagal wala ring signal at kulang yung mga comm technologies. Yung library namin puro computer na strictly for searching books.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, so you mentioned infrastructure, internet/signal, and equipment. What about the curriculum? Is it inclusive?

DIVINA:

Siguro problem na yan ng SpEd? Kasi yung problem namin ay kung ano ang mga readily available resources.

MIMI:

I'm not aware rin kung may classes that will expose students to PWDs like GE classes para mas malawak ang scope ng inclusivity. Parang wala pa.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think Krista can make her own decisions in the class? Why or why not?

DIVINA:

Ay oo. May one time na may requirement kami. Pipili kami ng journal article, tapos we are free to choose which topic. Yung palaging kinukuha ni Krista is about Special Education, pinapayagan siya ng mga teacher kasi yun ang gusto ni Krista. Walang kokontra.

MIMI:

I agree. She's able to share her thoughts that most of the time, astonishes the interpreter.

INTERVIEWER:

Can she make her own decisions without being coached by the class or without receiving help from the interpreter?

MIMI:

Yeah! Yes, she can. Kasi there were times na wala yung interpreter niya. She needed to make a decision on what she will do sa recitation. She thought about writing her responses tapos kunwari ako yung magbabasa ng sinulat niya for her.

INTERVIEWER:

Is it true that if Krista does not have an interpreter, she goes straight home?

MIMI:

She thought about going home nga kapag walang interpreter and she was stressed about it, pero we convinced her to stay in class and that we will find a way such that she can present her part of the group report.

INTERVIEWER:

So was she ever absent in class?

MIMI:

Never.

DIVINA:

Yeah, never.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel like Krista's culture is respected in the class? Why or why not?

DIVINA:

Yung community niya?

INTERVIEWER:

Yes.

MIMI:

In what context?

INTERVIEWER:

Is she able to represent her community through her behavior or by the way she communicates in class?

DIVINA:

Oo naman. I told her it is her freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

MIMI:

She actually shares about why she behaves in certain ways pero malaking factor na either ako or yung 4 na ibang groupmates namin ang nakakausap lang niya about it.

DIVINA:

Miss Mimi, ilan ba kayo sa klase?

MIMI:

Mga 30 to 35?

DIVINA:

Ah talaga? Kaya pala. Kami kasi mga 8 lang.

MIMI:

Konti niyo pala! Tinanggap kasi ng Prof namin yung mga nagpaprerog na taga-CHK sa class kaya ganito kami kadami.

DIVINA:

Ano 'to? Undergrad?

MIMI:

Oo.

INTERVIEWER:

Is this an elective?

MIMI:

Hindi siya elective kasi may prerequisite siya. EdFD 116.

DIVINA:

Ang konti ng mga students sa class namin kaya iniisa-isa kami sa recitation at mas tutok yung teacher sa individual needs namin.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel like Krista has a voice in your class? Why or why not?

MIMI:

Yes because the fact na alam namin yung circumstances niya sa buhay at nagrerecitate siya sa harap ng 30+ people ay malaking bagay na yun.

DIVINA:

Sa amin oo kasi yung nature ng class ay participative at expertise talaga ng mga teachers ang mga cases tulad ng kay Krista. Mga taga-FLCD ang humahawak sa class namin.

INTERVIEWER:

Alright, if there's nothing more to add, my last question is: Do you think Krista can contribute anything in your class? Why or why not?

MIMI:

Yes, of course she can especially when it comes to the Deaf Community. I think there's a lot to discuss about it lalo na sa awareness ng mga tao.

DIVINA:

I agree with Mimi that Krista can compete and add to the discussion regarding the Deaf Community. Kung sign language pa lang ay wala tayong alam, how can we think that we have the consciousness? The Deaf Community is one out of many other branches of the PWD Community. So Krista can diversify the discussion about the PWD sector. Krista told me that her dream is to achieve social inclusivity kaya nga kung saan-saan nag-aral para ma-expose ang mga tao sa isang student with deafness--- sa Miriam, sa La Salle, tapos ngayon sa UP. She is doing her best to give back to her community. Good faith, diba? It's a good dream kasi we need that.

INTERVIEWER:

I have a follow-up question. How do you distribute tasks to her during group works?

MIMI:

Sa amin, may mga assigned or fixed topics na binibigay ng teacher specifically for us. Yung problem namin as a group is how to execute it so ayun, we came up with the roleplay because we all know how to act and it does not exclude Krista.

DIVINA:

On a volunteer basis ang mga trabaho namin, kung ano ang gustong gawin ni Krista, sa kanya na yung trabaho na yun. May it be writing, bringing of materials, or preparing the presentation.

Ayaw namin na gawing komplikado pa 'to.

INTERVIEWER:

Alright. Do you have any other responses or questions before we close this FGD?

MIMI:

None.

DIVINA:

Did you interview Krista with an interpreter?

INTERVIEWER:

No, because I have some knowledge of sign language.

DIVINA:

[Astonished gasp] talaga? Paano?

INTERVIEWER:

I have a sister with deafness, she taught me a lot of signing. She was on standby if I needed some help. Thank you so much for participating in this FGD, and of course for extending your time just to give me more details about your communication experiences with Krista. I will turn off my recording now!