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Unsettling Languages, Unruly Bodyminds: A Crip Linguistics Manifesto

Jon Henner*
University of North Carolina – Greensboro

Octavian Robinson
Gallaudet University

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Abstract

We introduce Crip Linguistics as a theoretical and abolitionist framework. People use languages in different ways. Some people use language to help find other people like themselves. Many people use language in specific ways because of how their body and mind work. Sometimes a person's material conditions, and environment forces them to use language in a certain way. When someone languages outside of what people think is normal, others can think they are bad with language, or are not as smart as someone else. No one is actually 'bad with language.' We want to help people understand that no language is bad. It is okay to want to change your language use if it will make you feel better. No one should make you feel badly about your language. We need a bigger and more flexible understanding of what language is.

Keywords

Crip Linguistics, disability, languaging, multi–modality

Positionality Statements

Positionality statements can be found at the end of the article.

Authors' Note

The linearity of written English determines the order of authorship that suggests that someone must come first to be listed either from left to right or from top to bottom, which belies the collaborative nature and processes of knowledge production. Cite us in whichever order you wish. In the spirit of this paper, we point out that publishing in signed languages or multimodal mediums affords us opportunities to elide underlying unspoken hegemonies, reinforced by the print medium that one person must be recognized above others in terms of either intellectual and/or financial contributions.

* Correspondence: j_henner@uncg.edu

This article/manifesto is an attempt to create a mandate for change in linguistics and related fields such as specialized education and speech and language therapies. This mandate requires that we deploy a Crip Linguistics lens on how we approach the study of languaging (i.e., meaning making). In short, we argue that no way of languaging is bad; it is okay to change your own use of language but no way of using language should be described as atypical, disordered, or defective. We need a more expansive attitude about what involves language and what our attitudes about languaging communicates about a person's capacity. *Crip Linguistics* means to *critique* language and language scholarship through the lens of disability, *include* disabled perspectives, *elevate* disabled scholars, *center* disabled voices in conversations about disabled languaging, *dismantle* the use of disorder and deficit rhetorics, and finally, *welcome* disabled languaging as a celebration of the infinite potential of the bodymind. The Crip in Crip Linguistics is used in a variety of ways. For some, it is a slur. For us and in disability activism, and in activist-oriented disability studies, *crip* is a verb (Sandahl, 2003). To crip is to disrupt the stable, transform the familiar, subvert the order of things, unsettle entrenched beliefs, and to make anew. In action, cripping linguistics is to uncloak "mainstream representations or practices to reveal able–bodied assumptions and exclusionary effects" and "expose the arbitrary delineation between normal and defective and the negative social ramifications of attempts to homogenize humanity" (Sandahl, p. 37). The goal is not to study language and disability but analyze how disability or perceptions of embodied deficits cause people to make assumptions about languaging, and to also focus on how people prioritize speech at the expense of everything else. This is evident in Speech Language Therapy for example: *Speech* and Language. Why that and not just language? The articulation is given focus because it is the ideal articulation of language—other articulations are not considered.

To be clear, we do not separate ideas like language and communication into separate categories. Language is communication; communication is language. Binning, or separating language and communication creates hierarchies of languaging wherein specific kinds of languaging is devalued because they are seen as communication rather than languaging. Speech and language therapy emphasizes speech as the ideal mode of languaging. Other modes are disordered. The speech-sign hierarchy emerged with the development of speech pathology as discipline under the experimentation by Dr. Jean Marc Itard at the Institut National de Jeunes Sourds de Paris. Itard classified deaf children based on language use, marking those who signed as more deficient than those who could partially hear and emulate speech (Lane, 1976). Part of this tendency to view non–speech languages as disordered is reflected in introductory linguistic textbooks such as Berko–Gleason (and later Ratner)'s long revised book, *The Development of Language* (2017). Deaf people, in *The Development of Language*, are discussed in the contexts of "atypical" language acquisition (p. 5), primate language (more specifically that primate language studies had to fail for abled researchers to be interested in studying signed languages) (p. 12), deaf voices sounding "funny" (p. 54), and "low" print literacy rates (p. 42). So signed languages are positioned as unnatural, disabled ways of languaging with no intrinsic

merit for study; and, moreover, voices marked by accents or speech dysfluency are sources of humor and further marginalization, and low print literacy rates do not merit interrogation of the reasons for the low rates. Further, while the book provides details about deaf people and signed language structures, phonology of language is defined as "all the important speech sounds it uses…" (p. 7). Language, then, is reduced to speech sounds and written systems representing speech sounds. Limited thinking about what language is and is not often excludes different ways of languaging such as touch, drawing, and gesture. Hodge and Ferrara (2022) expand on the idea of language as infinitely flexible by focusing on the concept of biosemiotics, or how meaning is enmeshed in the body and how the body interacts with the world to create iconic symbols. Language as iconic, and language as interaction with the physical world and those that inhabit it both living and not are embedded concepts in Cripped Linguistics. Such variation in languaging exists, in part, because of disability.

In this paper, we use definitions of disability used by Annamma et al. (2013), wherein disability is a state of existence where the possession of a trait is interpreted as a deficit that needs fixing or elimination. Deafness is a disability because abled and hearing people wish for the deaf to be hearing. Speech dysfluency is a disability because abled people want everyone to talk with the same degree of fluency unmarked by difference. Sometimes this difference is marked by race and ethnicity, which is then interpreted as disabled. Annamma et al. describe negative racialization as a disability in some contexts because of the desire of white supremacy to fix or eliminate Blackness. Understanding disability logics and their relationship with racist logics reveals ableism is, as Talila TL Lewis (in Schalk, 2022) describes, a system rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. The mutually constitutive relationship between ableism and racism, and in particular anti-blackness, means that an anti-ableist framework is not possible without an anti-racist stance. Their entanglements means that Crip Linguistics and raciolinguistics must be close partners in unpacking deficit attitudes about languaging because of embodied difference. Language has long been tied to judgments of a person's capacity and intelligence, and by extension their humanity (Bauman 2004; Berger 2014; Clare 2017; Edwards 2012; St. Pierre 2015). Language is also interpreted through a racialized lens to measure people's intelligence (Flores & Rosa 2015; Leonardo & Broderick 2011; Rosa & Flores 2017), which uses rhetorics of disability, such as diminished capacities, to rationalize such framing. But as Flores and Rosa's combined research demonstrates, language itself is racialized and through those racialized lenses, the people who use racialized language are viewed as lesser. For example, Rosa (2019) focuses on how people with Spanish repertoires are viewed as less intelligent. As he writes, "Earlier that year, a self–identified White, monolingual English–speaking teacher explained to me that, among other signs of her stupidity, Dr. Baez's English language skills are 'horrible, and from what I hear, her Spanish isn't that good either'" (p. 126). The Dr. Baez mentioned in that passage had multiple degrees and was the principal of a bilingual school. Signed languages, as languages, are also racialized by who uses them, much in the same way that spoken languages are racialized (Hill, 2012). Crip Linguistics has long been present across multiple disciplines, explicit conversations about those entanglements across disciplines and between Crip and raciolinguistics will enrich other areas of linguistics.

We argue that the field of linguistics and its subfields (e.g., applied linguistics) requires broadening to account for how typically marginalized groups use language through a critical disability lens. This does not mean simply studying how bodies marked as impaired use language (e.g. the entirety of signed language linguistics or applied linguistics via deaf education), but also understanding how linguists deploy the category of disability as a domain of power to *mark* bodies *as disabled* through the ways those bodies produce language or to mark bodies as languageless because their ways of languaging is not recognized as language (e.g., Moriarty Harrelson, 2017). The relationship between disability and language also contributes to the institutionalization of deaf and disabled people, markedly impacting non–white deaf and disabled people. Institutionalization also locked away disabled people in institutes and prisons, often for life, as was the case for Junius Wilson, a black deaf man (Burch & Joyner, 2007). Given his prior education at a segregated school for the deaf, it is likely that Wilson used a form of Black ASL (review Hill, 2017, for a description). When Wilson was brought in for questioning and criminal proceedings, he was found incompetent to stand trial because he was perceived as a languageless person. One of his interviewers was the jailer Carl Cook who claimed he knew sign language; the problem was that he did not know Black ASL or even that such a dialect existed. He then read Wilson's black and deaf body as languageless, or in his words, incapable of *coherent* or *intelligent* answers. This determination led to a series of events that included sterilization and seven decades in an institution; his imprisonment continued even after social workers discerned he was able to communicate in what would later be called Black ASL.

Kusters and Hou (2020) point out that the overall [problematic] pattern in linguistics is for linguists to treat language as separate from the people that produce language. This is the core argument of Charity-Hudley's essay, "The Lung" (in press). In that essay, Charity-Hudley examines how losing a portion of her lung to cancer forced her to examine the role of *bodies* in languaging and perception of languaging. The expansive linguistic potential of the human body and mind ("bodymind") is best understood through a critical disability lens. The term bodymind marks the inseparable relationship between the body and mind. Although the body and mind are interconnected, different effects may emerge depending upon how people's disabilities interact with their other identities and social categories (Schalk, 2018). Recognizing the bodymind is pivotal to understanding human linguistic potential because language is an embodied action or an expression of the interconnected relationship between mind and body (Bergen, 2012).

Our goals with this missive are twofold:

1. Provide a unified framework for researchers, scholars, and activists across linguistics and language related fields who work on languaging through a critical disability lens (e.g., We are *cripped linguists, we do cripped linguistics*); and
2. Provide a theoretical framework for researchers, scholars, and activists to recognize ableism in their field and identify ways to envision liberatory languaging from a disability standpoint, which recognizes the relationship between racism and ableism. Simply put, linguistic and communicative differences are not deficient.

Some will wonder how Crip Linguistics goes beyond Critical Applied Linguistics

(Pennycook, 2021). In the chapter that focuses on the politics of difference, Pennycook writes, "... forms of difference– typically along lines of class, race, gender, and sexuality– and why they matter for any critical applied linguistics project" (p. 84). However, no frame of disability is used. Similarly, Pillar's (2020) recommendations on overcoming linguistic injustice does not consider multimodality, nor how disability alters our concepts of language justice. We argue that there can be *no* Critical Applied Linguistics, nor linguistic justice, or any sort of linguistics, without analysis of disability. As Pennycook (2010) himself wrote, "...we cannot take language, the body, the environment, space as given entities with evident meanings...all these emerging orientations locate language as something done in a particular time and space" (p. 168). What is disability if not the interaction of language, the bodymind, and the environment as something done in a particular time and space?

Beyond providing lenses to study how disability shapes language use, the theoretical framework of Crip Linguistics directly challenges stigmas surrounding language that rely on deficit views of embodied difference. The cripped linguist highlights the linguistic adaptions used by disabled people, including their relations and world–making, and illuminates structures of ableism that govern how we perceive *language.* As Hudley (2008) reminds us, activism is embedded in the field of linguistics. Without critical interrogation, linguists will continue to reify existing structures of ableism and with it, other structures of oppression by reinforcing modality (and by extension, other forms of linguistic) chauvinism. Disability justice, an expansive concept that recognizes the interrelationships of structural oppression with disability requiring collective solidarity, demands linguistic justice. Disability justice asks us to "bring flexibility and creative nuance… to be in community with each other" (Berne, 2018, p. 228). A Crip Linguistics requires flexibility and creativity about how we define, describe, and discuss language and the bodies that use it.

The contours of our paper are as follows. After setting the groundwork for understanding the chauvinism in linguistics that privileges some modes of languaging above others, we then explain the importance of and the critical framework for addressing this chauvinism. In order to disrupt linguistic chauvinism, we offer brief explanations as to the roots of such chauvinism grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and disability. Then we explain what we might understand as language if we abandoned modality chauvinism by embracing the multimodal nature of languaging. Finally, we draw connections to Critical Disability Studies to help us understand linguistic phenomena.

Modality Chauvinism

Modality chauvinism, or beliefs and actions that support the superiority of one modality over others, is embedded in scholarly and practitioner fields that support the study, teaching, and remediation of language.

For example, at the time of writing, the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), the pre–eminent professional organization of linguists in the United States, describes linguistics as, "In a nutshell: Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Linguists apply the scientific method to conduct formal studies of speech sounds, grammatical structures, and meaning across the world's 6,000+ languages" (LSA 2021, p1). If the LSA cannot identify that linguistics is the study of language, and not

necessarily speech, then what does that say about linguists themselves and the status of non-spoken languaging in the *science of language*? While there are linguistic anthropologists who have contributed to understanding disability and language, revealing remarkable discoveries about cognition and human nature, this information has been siloed from the work of many theoretical and applied linguists.

The artificial limitation of linguistics to speech is an extension of the cultural belief that the most or only valid languaging is speech. This belief shows up in many linguistics-based media. For example, see the below meme (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Tuxedo Winnie the Pooh Meme

Note: The "Tuxedo Winnie the Pooh" meme is used to illustrate the difference in sophistication between "linguistics" and "tongueology." Imgflip "Tuxedo Winnie the Pooh" meme generator available at https://imgflip.com/memegenerator/Tuxedo-Winnie-The-Pooh.

The Tuxedo Pooh structure meme progresses through multiple layers of sophistication, where the associated sophistication is matched with an equally sophisticated Pooh. The t-shirt Pooh represents the less sophisticated idea, and the tuxedo represents the more sophisticated idea. The idea associated with the Tuxedo Pooh may not appear more sophisticated on the surface (e.g., the sophistication of linguistics is not tongueology), but can be abstracted in ways where the surface humor provides layered meaning a-la semiotics (Merrell, 2016). For example, if one believes that languages can only come from the tongue, then linguistics would be the study of tongues (e.g., mother tongues, or here, tongueology).

Limited thinking about the expansive possibilities of languages also limits the linguist by imagining that languages in other modalities (e.g., signed languages) only exist in opposition to spoken languages—that is, people use one or the other, rather than a combination of semiotic tools; that languaging can exist outside of conventional spoken and signed languages (e.g., using interaction and language games to co–construct meaning). Limited approaches to language suggest people either have language or do not have language and thus are languageless (see Moriarty Harrelson, 2017, for a discussion).

We have previously argued that part of the reason that scholars tend to avoid talking about signed languages, gestures, and other non-speech languaging is that the communities that use them as a primary form of languaging are *disabled* (Henner & Robinson, 2021) or that individuals are deficient, removing them from their environments and interlocutors (Goodwin, 2004). Ignorance of and erasure of such forms of languaging is ableism, as is ignoring how some forms of languaging become marginalized. This disabling effect is also observed in how people separate language users from their semiotic matrixes: their environments, their interlocutors, and the linguistic resources available (Goodwin, 2004). The social and relational models of languaging (e.g., Goodwin, 1995; Goodwin, 2004; Kusters, 2015) suggest instead that signed languages and other forms of languaging across modalities and the semiotic matrix are influenced by our environments and material conditions, as well as social attitudes and relationships. Languaging cannot be decontextualized from local understandings of disability and debility/impairment (Grech & Solidatic, 2015; Livingston, 2006). So, language is either modeled as deficient through pathologized views of the body, negative racialized views of the body (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017), or viewed as a relational act, influenced by semiotic matrixes.

Coming to Claim Crip Linguistics

The clear relationship between language, linguistics, and disability necessitated the introduction of a disabled lens through which languaging can be analyzed. To do this, we claim *Crip* Linguistics and propose a framework of Crip Linguistics. Crip Linguistics is not novel nor new. Disability has long been a part of linguistic analysis. But a Crip Linguistics intervenes in mainstream linguistics discussions to destigmatize, yet center, disability in conversation.

As for disabled ways of languaging, we seek not only extraordinary examples of the normative, like signed languages, but also the more quotidian and local forms of disability, such as stuttering (e.g., Dumas, 2012), lisping, and as Friedner and Block (2017) highlight, “attend[ing] to other forms of communication and meaning making that are not linguistic” (p. 290). We heed Friedner and Block’s caution that foregrounding signed languages need not result in not engaging with other ranges of communicative repertoires or the more daily forms of

disabled languaging. Friedner and Block posited questions about disability frameworks of languaging at the intersections of Deaf and Autism Studies, encouraging us to expand definitions and understandings of human language as well as how our discourses surrounding disabled languaging contributes to hierarchies of disability (e.g., the speaking deaf person who can perform hearingness, see Henner & Robinson, 2021) and the verbose autistic person (Friedner & Block, 2017). How might a disability framework of language teach us about ways of dismantling toward more just relations? That is, disabled languaging is not just about the individual but also their linguistic ecologies and semiotic matrixes. One illumination of this is Moriarty and Kusters (2021) who wrote about the morality infused translingual practices among deaf people who come together using different signed languages and possessing different semiotic repertoires.

To promote Crip Linguistics, we offer some grounding statements that guide our discussion and the framework itself. They are:

1. A Crip Linguistics is necessary for analyzing human languaging, lest we reproduce inequities.
2. A Crip Linguistics recognizes that languaging is multimodal.
3. A Crip Linguistics embraces disabled ways of being in producing language, including: sensory orientations, interdependence, mutual-aid and world-building, care work, and the ways that time interacts with the bodymind and language.

We next discuss those grounding statements in further detail.

A Crip Linguistics is Necessary for Analyzing Human Languaging

An Introduction and Some Caveats

A Crip Linguistics holds three essential truths: a) language is not inherently disordered although impairments may exist, b) social perceptions on disability disorders language use, and c) disability in languaging cannot be separated from normative expectations of language use. Crip Linguistics is a natural extension of the idea that *all* language variation is acceptable (e.g., Labov, 1972). We expect that most readers will take easily to the second and third stipulations of Crip Linguistics. The first may be a bit more difficult to digest because the idea that language as disordered is fundamental to many fields (e.g., specialized education). One thing we want to stress is that no theory is perfect, including ours. For example, what of deaf children who are deprived of language either through malice, or through ignorance (as described in Hall et al., 2020) Is their resulting language not disordered? Here is where threading the needle on this very real question could have consequences. Their language was *impaired by their material conditions and environmental factors*, but their language is *not* disordered because they are deaf children that would naturally gravitate to signed language and

multimodal avenues of communication. Language deprivation results in language that then must be accommodated to encounter the ableist structures that generated such conditions in the first place.

If people misunderstand our argument that the language manifested from language deprivation or other inequities generated by material conditions is not inherently disordered, then there is a non-zero chance that schools and early intervention specialists attempting to save money would use our theories as justifications for not providing support. We exist in a world where identification of disabilities for educational support services is fraught with bias, and racial and gender-based discrimination (see Fisher et al., 2020, for further discussion). Yet, in the United States, identification is necessary to acquire the support that many disabled children need to manage the ableist, racist, and sexist institution that is the American school system (Annamma & Morrison, 2018).

Also, there is a possibility that people opposed to non-spoken modalities would use our theories as justifications for enforcing their monomodal frameworks. This has happened before when advocates of fluent signed language environments for deaf children found that monomodal opponents were using those arguments to claim that since hearing parents of deaf children could never be fluent in signed languages, they should just use monomodal approaches to education (e.g., Geers et al., 2017). Although the difficulty of learning ASL has been refuted in peer reviewed publications (e.g., Lieberman et al., 2022), the myths persist and have been used to attempt to overcome parental choice legislation (Sharp, 2022).

Because of disabling legal and cultural systems, disabled languagers often exist in the borderlands between disordered and non-disordered. The dichotomy between disordered and non-disordered is rendered in Moriarty Harrelson (2017). The deaf Cambodians described in her research are classically language-disordered (i.e., no language is inherently disordered) in that they are deprived of language by their environment. However, via competence they create systems of languaging that "expand as they enter new spaces, resulting in the flexible accumulation of languaging practices and modalities" (p. 1). Moriarty Harrelson concludes her point by reminding us that we cannot dismiss how deaf Cambodians language just because they do not use a formally recognized Cambodian signed language.

We also explicitly reject those people who would use our arguments to confer harm upon disabled children via language deprivation. Crip Linguistics is fundamentally a resistance against monomodal, spoken language only policies, and the belief that there is one *right* way to language. As Goodwin (1995) urged with Rob, an aphasic man, "deal with his talk and gesture as an effort to say something meaningful, rather than the random movements of" a disabled man (p. 24-25). Rob's capacity to communicate demonstrates the importance of assuming all people are competent co-participants in

constructing meaning (see Goodwin, 1995, for a more detailed discussion). However, just because deaf children can build a communicative repertoire using systems, cues, and incomplete access to spoken language does not mean that we should argue that deaf people should not have access to natural signed languages. Part of this is because non-deaf children automatically have access to natural languages whereas for most deaf children (i.e., approximately 95%) this choice must be made, and the reasons for these choices are often rooted in ableist, anti-signed language rhetoric (Scott & Henner, 2020).

We also reject the use of Crip Linguistics to discriminate against or to diminish the desires of people who want their language to be identified as disordered. We acknowledge that our world is constructed as such that sometimes pathologizing language as disordered is the only way that one can receive the accommodations and legal protections one requires as a non-normative language user. This stance does present an odd contradiction to our point that language cannot be disordered. Yet, like with language deprivation, recognizing the complexities between environmental disordering of language, justifying that all languaging is valid, and self-perception of languaging is valid! On this point, we recognize that Crip Linguistics is not universal across all contexts. As Robert McRuer (2010) explains, disabled people experience uneven biopolitical incorporation. What that means is that disabled people and by extension, disabled ways of languaging, are not treated the same socially or politically across the globe. Disability, as a category, is fluid, dependent upon context and material conditions (Schalk, 2013; Livingston, 2006; Grech & Soldatic, 2015). However, a critical disability lens on language offers important insights on how we judge capacity, humanity, and belonging (or the worthiness of belonging) and how those logics support the logics of exclusion, disempowerment, and violence. To Crip Linguistics is to examine practices, attitudes, and rhetorics surrounding language through a critical disability lens to reveal ableist assumptions and its exclusionary effects.

There are certainly cases where the application of Crip Linguistics is fundamentally flawed. We also go back to our assertion that no theory is perfect and cannot be pertinent in every single case. People are intricate beings with desires and thoughts that vary from minute to minute, and these thoughts often contradict each other! As Whitman (1892) writes in *Songs of Myself,* “Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes.)” (Section 51). Understanding how these contradictions can exist but also not invalidate our claims requires that we use both disability studies and trans studies. The former is evidenced in both Liz Crow’s (1996) work and also Margaret Price’s (2015) work on pain disorders, and the latter in work from trans theorists such as Florence Ashley (2020). We do not spend a lot of time on them in this paper. Suffice to say, the desire to have release from pain

does not negate disability theories; the desire to transform one's body to align with gender identity does not negate queer theories. Similarly, the desire to work on ones' languaging to make it feel less disordered does not negate Crip Linguistics.

With these caveats in place, we next explain both the stipulations of Crip Linguistics, that language cannot be disordered and that the environment disorders language.

Language Use Cannot be Disordered

The idea that language use cannot be disordered is admittedly an unusual one in the world of speech and language pathologists, specialized education teachers, among others who have worked their entire lives on the question of how to un-disorder language. For us, to accept that some kinds of languages are disordered, we need to accept that there are ways of languaging that are wrong. Disordered language has multiple definitions depending on the field. Such language can be defined via expressive language (i.e., difficulties communicating in ways that others can understand), receptive language (i.e., difficulties understanding other peoples' communication), or even developmental (i.e., difficulty acquiring language) (Paul et al., 2018). We accept that deciding that a kind of languaging is wrong has many different perspectives. First, people do feel that languaging is wrong when the languager uses dialectical variations that vary from what privileged groups decided is the best possible way to language (e.g., raciolinguistics) (e.g., Cioe–Pena, 2020). Second, people feel that languaging is wrong when a child languages in different ways to the people in the house that they live in (e.g., deaf children in hearing families) (Hall et al., 2016). While language is not disordered, language is disordered by people with investments in maintaining structures of power such as white supremacy and racism.

Racism in Language Disordering and Pathologizing Language

Pathological perspectives of expressive and receptive language are often wrapped up in racist assumptions about what the appropriate way to express and receive language is. As many researchers and community activists point out, Black children are often identified as having deficits in their expressive and receptive languaging related to the fact that racist systems are integrated into the educational experience (e.g., Baker–Bell 2019). Here is where we identify that ableist systems are anti-Black and anti-negatively racialized minorities, thereby demonstrating how racism and ableism are twined. Some of this is demonstrated in the political fracas of the late 20th century Oakland, California Ebonics controversy. The controversy demonstrated that people are willing to discard evidence-based research when the evidence does not match their agenda (Wolfram, 1998). At the time, the Oakland school board had passed a resolution allowing the use of Ebonics as a language of instruction and assessment. The school board later discarded the resolution and its possibly

revolutionary changes in pedagogy after sustained protest from various people because they felt that the Ebonics based curriculum would reduce the intelligence of the Black children studying it. Understanding the Ebonics controversy is critical because children whose home language may differ from the school language are often assumed to be language disordered (Yamasaki & Luk, 2018; Cioe–Pena, 2020). As Yamasaki and Luk point out, multilingual and multimodal children are often assessed using language assessments that do not consider the myriad ways that they language. Depressed scores on these assessments, coupled with racist and ableist biases of the assessors, means that multilingual and multimodal children are often considered language disordered.

Pathologizing Accentism and Language

As mentioned before, our definition of *disordered* is broad and refers to any languaging that is believed as in need of correction or fixing through various therapies. The association of disordered language with racism means that *accents* need to be discussed via the Crip Linguistics lens. Therefore, if there is a goal of accent reduction, then this is understood as disordering language because the accent does not sound appropriate for *non-disordered* listeners. Ramjattan (2020) interviewed seven international Engineering teaching assistants in Ontario, Canada to detail their experiences being perceived as disordered speakers because of their accents. This population was chosen because, as Ramjattan points out, accented international teaching assistants are considered to be deficient. Deficient, of course, can be interpreted as *disabled.* While Ramjattan analyzes the data using a prism of racism, the language used to describe the accents and interpretation of the accents by “native” speakers requires a disability analysis. And that includes signed language research. DeafBlind and DeafDisabled people who use signed languages may be subjected to accentism on the basis of how their language is impacted by bodymind differences (e.g., those with cerebral palsy and those who use pro/tactile sign languages, see Burke, 2018). Accented people are marked as deviants, deficient, and require therapy and adjusting to fit into the expected norms of presumed *native* (abled) speakers. Ramjattan’s participants, for example, spoke about being laughed at (abled gaze), about people and their students and peers refusing to understand what they were saying (refusing accommodations). Divergent ways of speaking challenges linguistic homogeneity and by extension, social homogeneity. Social homogeneity might be well understood as an aspect of McRuer’s (2010) compulsory (hetero)normativity. Often subject to such compulsory normativity is the performance of gender. Perception of gendered language is like perception of racialized accented language because how people interpret your gender also extends to how they interpret your language. People expect others to language as their perceived gender and respond violently if this is not the case.

Pathologizing Gender in Language

Perceptions of disordered language can also be attributed to rigidly enforced gender roles. In the United States at least, language from people who are perceived to be femmes is often policed by both masculine and feminine people. This often manifests in the form of negative feedback from audience members about structures that are perceived as feminine, such as tag questions, or quotative like, or vocal fry. Like Figueroa and Gillion (2018) explain in the *Vocal Fries* podcast, once a structure is identified as femme, it does not matter that people who are masc also use it, the structure is considered deficient. Some readers may be confused about why we are including this in the concept of disordered language. We assume that if language is interpreted as being wrongly produced, then it is in the mind of the perceiver fundamentally disordered and in need of fixing. Indeed, fixing femme identifying language is a commercial product in the United States where individuals can pay money to train out of using these language elements. Accordingly, femme identifying languaging is also a good example of how the environment disorders language because feminist spaces do not disorder femme identifying language.

The expectation that gender sounds a specific way extends to the pathologization of trans identifying people. McNeill (2006), for example, writes that gender euphoria comes when trans women sound like what they believe women should sound like, and trans men sound like what they believe men should sound like. Yet, under a Crip Linguistics framework, there should be no obligation to sound a certain way to present gender(s).

Disordering Sexuality and Language

In 2009, van Borsel et al. (2009) published a study that indicated that gay men were more likely to be identified as lisping. While van Borsel et al. explain that lisping, or “a speech pattern in which alveolar consonants are pronounced with the tongue either on or between the front teeth” (p. 100) is not necessarily perceived as disordered speech in young children, it is recognized as one in adults. Notably, van Borsel et al. argued that lisping was likely acquired in childhood to identify with femininity. The adults who lisped; however, did not view their lisping as a deficiency, but rather, a marker of identification with a community. Although the population in van Borsel et al. found their lisp to be a positive identification with a marginalized group of people, Holmes (2019) seems to argue that in the hetero gaze, that while the lisp is used to identify with femininity, the user attracts fetishization and infantilization which means that people outside marginalized groups may use this positive identification in negative ways. The emphasis on infantilization mirrors van Borstel et al.’s assertion that lisping is seen as fine for children, but not much for adults. More recently, Calder (2020) points out that how we perceive sounds (or signing) cannot be entirely separated from how we perceive the person. More specifically, if we assume someone to be

feminine, then we are more likely to assume that they are lisping too. That is, disability, infantilization, and queer femininity are intractably linked.

Crip Speech

The focus on speech as the modality means an unnecessary focus on the aesthetics of so-called proper speech. This of course is a driver of racism and sexism in languaging, as discussed previously. A pre-natural focus on aesthetics also allows for business models for those who sell products that masculine-up or reduce accents in speech with the goal of making *pleasing to the ear*. Pleasing to the ear is intertwined with layers of gendered expectations—beautiful voices, sexually attractive voices, and binary notions of masculine and feminine voices. Pleasing to the ear also is racialized, with sexy accents often regulated to specific European accents (e.g., Irish) or white colonizers in non–European countries (e.g., Australian) (Moore, 2002). Pleasing to the ear is often described as *natural* or imagined as what *should be natural*. For example, people perceived as women are expected to sound a particular way; to have masculine or rough speech (e.g., creaky voice) would be described as unnatural, ergo, and/or abnormal. Notions of naturalness extend to the sound of what one expects human speech to sound like.

What happens when speech sounds different because of disability? Stuttering, lisping, mumbling, stammering, slurring, or non-speaking are all markers of difference. Those markers signify not only disability but are also interpreted as lack of intelligence, capacity, and agency. Those markers are subsequently used as a rationale for exclusion. As QuietBob, a participant in Marshall's (2014) study, who uses alaryngeal technology to speak says, his speech is not disabled; yet, people who have normative hearing interpret it as disabled. Assumptions that a speaker is competent only if fully endowed with abilities is *disabling* and more so in a society where the cognitive life of the individual is its primary focus. In a society that values intelligence and ties that with linguistic competence, assumptions about a speaker's competence takes on significance (Goodwin, 2004).

The subordination of divergent languages works toward compulsory ablebodiedness, described by McRuer (2006) as expectations for people to assimilate to standard ways of being. To sum, the emphasis on speech and speaking as the sole language modality perpetuates not only ableism, but sexism, racism, and cisheteronormative ideologies. To move past these ideologies, an emphasis on linguistic multimodality is not only needed, but essential.

A Crip Linguistics Recognizes that Languaging is Multimodal

Friedner and Block (2017) once asked, "how might current research on multimodality and the use of expansive communicative repertoires in language and communication create new pathways for understanding deaf and autistic peoples' language and communication practices?" (p. 295). They ask us to perceive more

creatively. We extend this question to more broadly ask this of linguistics and all relevant fields: How does research on disabled languaging and critical disability studies work toward better understanding language at large and its relationship to structural exclusions? Perhaps we begin with language being multimodal. The resistance to multimodal languaging may be located in nineteenth century racist and anti-indigenous attitudes that perceived gestures, signs, and non-European ways of languaging to be inferior and therefore not-language (Baynton, 1996). Suppression of signed languages also took place as a form of imperial control amid attitudes of local languages being inferior to European colonial languages (Nair, 2020).

That language is multimodal is not a new idea in linguistics. Bolinger, in 1946, wrote:

> For some reason, the very insistence upon language as a spoken phenomenon, i.e., as behavior, has been accompanied by a close concentration upon a limited number of behavior patterns, the latter suggestively reminiscent, in their selection for ease of recordability of the 'written forms; from which we were supposed to have been emancipated. It is only by a return once more to the whole of communicative-behaviors with energies of linguists more evenly distributed, that we shall avoid the over-growth and premature refinement of one or two component parts. (p.92)

Here, Bolinger suggests the focus on language as unimodal, or speech alone, was done because it is convenient. Most linguists use spoken language. Many linguists use languages that use spoken phonemes as the basis for coding into written modalities. Bolinger correctly recognized that this limited linguistic analysis to what can be recorded and analyzed via "written forms". However, Bolinger's suggestion ignores the underlying racial and ability logics of compulsory normativity that drive such ideas about convenience.

The challenge of reliance on written forms and written modalities for linguistic analysis means that 1) languages without easily accessible or standardized written forms tend to be left out of linguistic analysis (e.g., signed languages), and 2) the bulk of language analysis is done on languages and language materials from dominant languages and cultures (see Bender et al., 2021, for an explanation). An example of point one can be found in Thompson et al. (2020) description of cultural influences on word meanings. Thompson et al. sought to find to what extent word meanings in spoken languages are aligned. As they explain it, words that reflect common, everyday experiences outside of the boundaries of geography and culture (e.g., eat) should be aligned, or used similarly, in similar contexts. In the fields of deaf education or signed language interpreting, we would claim that semantically aligned terms would have one-to-one mapping. However, the data they used came from the NorthEuraLex dataset (Delbert et al., 2012)

which has no signed languages contained in it. That means the Thompson et al. claim that they have data from 41 languages is not entirely accurate. They have data from 41 *spoken* languages, and accordingly, their conclusions about semantic alignment says nothing about language specifically. Rather their conclusions can only be applied to spoken language.

The limitations of NorthEuraLex are due to the lack of a standardized printed form for many signed languages (Grushkin, 2017). No printed form, means no inclusion in the database and no analysis that can be generalized to languages per se, and the field remains focused on spoken languages alone because spoken languages via orthographies are easier to analyze.

That languages need written forms to be analyzed is a recursive problem. To analyze languages abstracted from the speaker, they need to be written. If a language is not written, it cannot be abstracted from the speaker. Historically, the response to this recursive problem has been to develop written forms for these languages (Grushkin, 2017). In the case of deaf children and signed languages, this requires that schools who teach those children pick and use a written form. But that will not happen because there are many competing systems, and the usual complaints about teaching a written language that is not the printed form of the spoken language will arise. But also, it encourages the belief that the only way for a language to be valid, is for it to have a written language.

In this section, we briefly examine three aspects of multi–modal language that linguists need to consider when analyzing language. Although linguistic ethnographers and theorists like Pennycook (2010) have included expansive modes of languaging in their work, we believe that theoretical linguistics continues to ignore the semiotic repertoire (Kusters et al., 2017) in its stubborn adherence to modality chauvinism. Here, we outline a few aspects of languaging that theoretical linguists should include in their work. They are: a) visual language (e.g., signed languages, gestures), b) graphemic languages (e.g., sequential art, iconicity, and alternative and augmentative communication (AAC)), and c) tactile languages. We recognize more modalities exist (e.g., written). Our exclusion of them is not meant to marginalize. We have selected these three as possible areas of focus, but if more can be done then it should be done.

Visual Language

Of the three aspects of multimodality discussed in this article, the visual language modality has had the most focus by linguists. Our discussion therefore is not on what parts of visual language can be analyzed by linguists, but rather, to what extent should focus on visual language be embedded in all linguistic analyses and in the linguistics teaching curriculum. In visual language, we do not distinguish signed languages and gestures, except to point out that previous essentialism on what is gesture and what is signed language was necessary to

promote the idea that signed languages are true languages. Even today, researchers conflate gesture and signed languages to make the claim that signed languages are inferior or not real languages compared to speech (see Crowe et al., 2017, for examples). Our perspective is very clear. At no point in the curriculum should spoken languages be mentioned without visual languages.

More to the point, all human languaging is multimodal (Perniss, 2018). Any teaching or analysis of language which does not consider multimodality therefore does not compose language itself, but rather a specific modality in languaging. To be clear, if an analysis of a language only considers the spoken modality, then it is not an analysis of language; rather, it is an analysis of speech.

Even signed language researchers are not immune to challenges in discussing how disabled people use language. As Hou and Kusters (2020) point out, signed language researchers tend to classify visual languages among gesture-homesign-communal-village-national-urban groupings. These groupings can divide users among disability and racial lines. Whose language is gesture? Whose is homesign? Whose is urban? These categories need to be analyzed within a Crip Linguistic framework. Lillo–Martin and Hochgesang (2022) explain that studying more varieties of signed language use has the capacity to expand our understanding of languaging in the visual modality. They point to Lina Hou and Kristian Ali's work on signed language inclusion as a good starting point for the field. Hou and Ali at the time of this writing were seeking out discourses exploring signed language research in the Global South.

Graphemic Language

Graphemic languages as used here includes a wide range of pictorial based communication, such as icons, signs, drawings, computer graphics, memes, emojis, and sequential art. Semiotic analysis is not unknown among linguists (e.g., Merrell 2016), and recent internet linguists such as McCulloch (2020) have brought analysis of graphemic language to general populations. However, linguistic analysis of how people use graphemic languages as a primary form of languaging seems limited, except in domains of specialized education (e.g., Soto & Olmstead, 1993). Works such as von Tetzchner (2015) demonstrate the semiotic potential of Assistive and Alternative Communication (AAC). Many kinds of AAC exist (see, Ganz, 2015). The most recognizable forms are icons that are used via technology (e.g., an iPad) or a communication board. AAC users point to or press the icons. Some complex AAC device will associate a sentence with an icon such that the AAC user can press an icon and the device will speak or write the associated sentence. Although ableist perceptions of AAC as inferior to speech an even signed languages mean that many young, disabled children do not have access to a workable AAC system for years (see Moorcraft et al., 2020, for a discussion), adult AAC users show the same love for their AAC as many

marginalized users of a language. TuttleTurtle (2020) for example, points out that AAC is a necessary part of their gender presentation, evidencing that as a language, AAC has the same indexicality of disability, gender, race, and sexuality, among others as other kinds of languaging. People who follow AAC users on social media, such as @semispeaking, can witness the immense intertextual knowledge required amongst AAC users for using and developing new iconicity. However, even von Tetzchner frames AAC users as being deficient; the users have "failed" to develop speech.

Sequential art can also be linguistic (Cohn, 2020). Cohn shows that sequential art can be broken down into constituent parts, much like other languages. For example, a series of sequential images can be clustered into an Arc. The Arc is broken into Establisher, Initial, Prolongation, Peak, and Release sections. Each section can add complexity via clauses. Cohn's theories have repeatedly been supported by analyses of brain waves via Event Related Potential (ERP) (2019), which provide evidence that the brain sees and processes sequential art linguistically. The sequential art as linguistic is further supported by the research which indicates that seeing sequential art as linguistic requires exposure and training (Cohn, 2020). Yet, once a skill is viewed as normative, people apply normative expectations to having the skill and children who do not conform to these normative expectations are labeled as deviant. Manfredi et al. (2020) studied the visual narrative processing of autistic children and compared them to abled children. They found differences in how the autistic children perceived the visual narratives. This, according to Manfredi et al., was a deficit. In explaining the results, Manfredi et al. point to the lower IQs of the autistic children as one explanation for the differences in perceiving narratives, thus contributing to the idea of language, intelligence, and disability being linked.

Tactile Language

DeafBlind people have recently introduced the notion of ProTactile, a philosophy of communication that embraces the use of touch as a sensory pathway to language and cognition (Bradbury, et al. 2019; Clark & Nucci, 2020; Edwards, 2018). During conversation, DeafBlind people use the senses of touch, movement, heaviness and lightness to receive language from interlocutors. The interlocutors lend their hands, arms, bodies to the DeafBlind signer, allowing their bodies to be manipulated to co–construct meaning. Touch can be used to communicate environmental information, not only what is uttered, but to also give the DeafBlind person a sense of space, surroundings, and audience responses. In a show of the expansive potentiality of crip language, John Lee Clark, a DeafBlind poet and artist, prepared a presentation where he co–created content in clusters with attendees. Each group experienced and understood the message in different ways, depending on shared knowledge and with the expectation to respond in collaborative ways. Clark rejects the premise that it is

possible for audience members to get the same message. Instead, the audience co-constructs the speech, inserting their perceptions and worked toward mutual understanding. The attendees did not experience the speech in the same order, they received the speech in different parts at different times with meanings that shifted with each group.

Adaption of Critical Disability Studies to Theoretical and Applied Linguistics

In disability studies, there are conversations about how disability shapes our relationship with time. As Disability Studies scholar Ellen Samuels (2017) outlines in "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time," disability stretches, bends, contracts, and explodes time. Crip Linguistics exists within Crip Time. We recognize time as a factor that generates deficit perspectives about language and contributes to the disordering of language through attitudes and expectations. What happens when we have *crip departures* from normative time?

Abled people expect language acquisition to take place on a very specific timeline, with limited investment from themselves. Children are expected to achieve linguistic benchmarks by certain ages (e.g., critical periods), and often these benchmarks are facilitated by co-development of physical traits among similar checkpoints. For example, Walle and Campos (2014) argue that language development is related to the acquisition of walking. Does that mean children who do not walk do not acquire language or that their language is in deficit? They do not study non-walking children. However, children who use mobility augmentation and technologies such as wheelchairs can and do learn language.

Any failure to meet benchmarks on time reinforces deficit views of the language produced by disabled children. The normal timeline is determined by ideals and averages as imagined by academics, medical professionals, and educators. This does not take into account how different bodyminds take time to process and acquire language. Then when those children fail to meet those temporal linguistic benchmarks, they are labeled with disordered language. For example, Hoff et al. (2021) seem to imply that children who are not English dominant bilinguals by 5 years of age may be intellectually disabled. A raciolinguistic analysis of Hoff et al. recognizes that the children studied were Spanish speakers. In the United States, the relationship between Spanish speaking and racialized bodies is problematic (Rosa, 2019). The Crip Linguistics perspective identifies how racialized bodies are seen as disabled because their English language development is perceived as disordered. Those timelines create and reinforce deficit ideas about children's intelligence and agency. Criticisms of temporal linguistic benchmarks do exist (e.g., Burman, 2016), but these appear to be the exception rather than commonplace. Crip Linguistics urges us to think about the fluidity of time and the capacity of the bodymind to develop language, achieve understanding and communication.

Abled people expect communication to be quick, efficient, and spoken. As Samuels and Freeman (2021) point out:

> What is nearly always true, however, is that using a different form of technology for access reasons means everything takes longer. And this is true not just for users of complex technologies like screen readers: differences such as having only limited fingers available for typing, or using one's mouth to hold a pen, or being able to look at screens for only an hour per day, or processing written information better than aural or the other way around––all of those differences from the presumed norm mean that...the work is done in different temporalities. (p. 247)

A common complaint is that those using AAC wished for more time in conversations so that the discourse could accommodate their voices (Ashby & Causton-Theoharis, 2012).

Abled people do not realize nor do they consider what normative expectations cost people in terms of language learning, building relationships, and self-actualization amongst disabled people. Disabled people manifest this loss as collective grief. They grieve language they did not have access to and could not learn or struggled with people's impatience with us and reluctance to go slow, to repeat, to gesture, and the costs of impatience with communications (Brueggemann, 1997).

What expansive potentialities might we discover in the stretch of patience in languaging with each other? Like Kusters (2017) demonstrates in her study of translanguaging in India, people invested in mutual understanding (e.g., through gesture-based conversation) would be willing to repeat their utterances or the other person's utterances. Several repetitions might be required to achieve understanding. Sometimes repetition is accompanied by guesswork, search sequences, language games, and listening for multimodal cues, which can stretch out seemingly brief language exchanges (Goodwin, 1995). And, as artist Christine Sun Kim (2020) puts it, crip time and language is "punctuated by writing/scrawling questions, in reading, and the creativity in ad–lib responding," (p. 280). But the labor in co–constructing meaning, in listening actively, through waiting for interpreters or scrawled words, impatience and instance upon normative language time imposes limits on an interlocutor's agency. Crip language *insists* that crip time in languaging is vital for a person's agency, be it through interpretation, translation, delayed speech, repetition, gesture, movements in gaze, and prosodic changes. Language is multimodal, interdependent, and both the user and the listener cannot be separated from the semiotic environment (Goodwin, 2004).

Some forms of crip languaging, like signed languages, can convey multiple layers of information at the same time, bending and contracting time simultaneously, able to communicate information about the past and the future reaching both backward and forward in time. Here crip time relies on the intrinsic

multimodality of languaging, which goes beyond what is possible via speech alone. This simultaneous bending and contraction and explosion of time is best observed in signed language literature (Bauman et al., 2006; Bauman & Murray, 2014). This investment of time, the stretching of time to accommodate communication and understanding, and the ability to transcend national and linguistic boundaries in translanguaging across multiple modalities (Moriarty & Kusters 2021) offers only small glimpses of the potency of crip languaging.

But as some scholars have reminded us, crip time can also be full of potential, joy, resistance, and agency. The ways disability interacts with time and language can reveal the potency of communication. For example, the benefits of text-based or solely text-based communications, as demonstrated by DeafBlind people, shows that written language can serve as a stand-alone modality for some while offering a full range of benefits. Among those benefits are greater flexibility in how and when to communicate and the ability to slow the speed of communication in real time, which offers opportunities to reflect on what is being said.

Crip Linguistics shows us what is possible in language brokering and mutual meaning making. One aspect of language brokering is the emphasis on relationship building as a part of the languaging process between disabled people. Like Kusters (2017) writes, once acquaintance was made, “the time and effort communication required diminished: they know what they can expect and a certain schema is in place” (p.299).

One lesson from *crip languaging* is the idea of interdependence and forms of access intimacy through the discourse process. And, there is evidence that deaf people’s communication is driven by an intrinsic moral value to actively understand and be understood using a wide range of semiotic tools across languages (Moriarty & Kusters, 2021).

What is care work in languaging? Care work in languaging is not similar to traditional caregiving but visioned through the framework developed by disability justice activist and author Leah Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018). Linguistic care work is the time taken in being patient, in supporting and providing semiotic resources, in seeking, expanding, and claiming our own semiotic resources, in calibrating to each other in seeking mutual understanding. This is not only language work but care work through languaging in being invested in collective access and belonging (e.g., Conrod 2022 on pronoun usage for trans belonging). Linguistic care work in the context of disability justice is to work together to create and provide optimal environments and material conditions for language (and mutual understanding) to take place.

Crip Linguistics is therefore about putting the *people* back in languaging and recognizing that analyzing languaging without considering the languagers separates the language from the work that people put into producing them, especially via disabled bodies. Relationships, as an extension of interdependence, emphasizes

that crip languaging is more valued by disabled people because of the effort and work involved (Green, 2014). This is also a form of access intimacy. Mia Mingus in Hamraie and Fritsch (2019) describe access intimacy as a "crip relational practice produced when interdependence informs the making of access" (p.14). As such, interdependent ways of languaging, like augmented speech, do not appeal to many abled people. For example, as Mackay's (2003) work with aphasia patients showed, the patients were viewed as incompetent because of their voicelessness. Given an acceptance of interdependence and care work in languaging via crip time, the patients would be viewed as competent (Rossetti et al., 2008).

Conclusion

Hamraie (2013) asks us to think about the politics of access through the framework of interdependence. Languaging, as an important site of access—to the world, to politics, to belonging, to citizenship—thus demands that we think about this through the lens of collective access and care. Rejecting monolingualism and mono-modality are two beginning steps. Embracing time, space, and material environments in meaning-making are also preliminary steps. Interdependence also asks us to think about our built environments and how that impacts access (Hamraie, 2013), and in our case, language. Hamraie (2017) also instigates us to consider how discrimination is built into the structures around us, the buildings, the foundations, the frameworks, and theories, and so on. When in the process of crippling linguistics, we question how modality chauvinism has been built into the various language focused fields and the perspectives of what language is and what is *good* languaging. Hamraie and Fritsch's (2019) practices of "interdependence, access intimacy, and collective access can be understood as alternative political technologies through Crip technoscience" (p.13). Crip technoscience is "critique, alteration, and reinvention" (p.2). It is how disabled people alter and reinvent the world in order to make access happen. The relationship between science, technology, and language is such that the dismissal of disabled ways of languaging has resulted in inaccessible technologies.

What's next, then? We invite theoretical and applied linguists to use Crip Linguistics, in some cases, via disidentification.

Disidentification describes identifying with but not as a member of another marginalized group (Schalk, 2013). In identifying *with* but not as, one recognizes that they are "implicated by the culture and politics of another group and seek to better understand this link." Schalk urges us to think of disidentification as a "careful, conscious joining—a standing/sitting among rather than by or behind a group." We invite linguists across socio, queer, trans, and raciolinguistics to seek ways to identify with Crip Linguistics. What are our similarities and overlaps? What do we bring *to* each other in our interrogations and frameworks? In the

places where those disidentification occur across/between/among minoritized subjects, how might we develop coalitional theories that are attentive to a variety of marginalized groups? We want to think about how the logics that uphold ideas about disordered languaging is rooted in racism, accentism, in sounding a certain way, and in communicating and languaging in certain ways; and, how those logics are similar and overlapping. In disidentification within linguistics—as queer, trans, gendered, disabled, and racialized languaging—can we seek the ways in which they overlap in terms of being characterized as disordered; and, we thus seek to consider how languages characterized as disordered are marginalized, belittled, and disregarded.

Contemporary DeafBlind poet and essayist John Lee Clark's (personal correspondence with author, June 14, 2021) description of meetings of DeafBlind people reveals a world of co-constructed meaning and mutual misunderstanding as Pennycook (2018) describes. Meetings in ProTactile bent and stretched and manipulated time. They highlight sensory orientations and translanguaging, while grounded in the morality of language calibration and mutual understanding as care work for access. Crip languaging incorporates practices of access intimacy, adaptions of technology, and relationality. To sum up, disabled people do really cool things with language if people would pay attention.

Positionality Statements

Octavian Robinson
Octavian is a deafdisabled queer trans white man. His deafness is shaped by multiple forms of neurodivergence and nerve neuropathy. Despite not possessing speaking privilege, he possesses language capital and print literacy privileges.

Jon Henner
Jon is a deafdisabled, chronically ill, self-identified autistic person, and an Ashkenazi Jewish white man. He has speech and print literacy privileges, and benefits from being able to interact with hearing people using their ways of communicating.

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