Vocabularies of motives in the education of deaf students

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Abstract
Communication is a foundational step for more elaborated constructions of society such as education or institution. A reverse impact is also present in different forms among which the vocabularies of motives. In specific conditions such as the one of deaf students, this reverse direction gains an increased role, especially in conditions when an appropriate mode of communication has not been developed, as it is the case with the Albanian sign language. This paper tries to identify how vocabularies of motives are constructed among Albanian deaf students while in the process of education. It argues that among other factors, the independence of the process from other social contexts seems to be of importance in the efficiency of the vocabularies of motives constructed for the purpose.

Keywords
Motivation vocabularies, deaf, language, education, institution

Communicating is difficult. An intentional exchange of information is pursued through several approaches with a multiplicity of means. Word language[2] is the most rich and elaborated of this means. Apart from being a primary tool for communication, language is also one of the few tools that implement these exchanges' intentionality. In this context of implementing the intentionality, personal and collective varieties of lingual engagement tend the informative, the persuasive and the inspirational.

Founding categories have been sought and proclaimed within languages since very long time ago. Motivation is one of the categories that in various philosophical elaborations has been mentioned as a very dignified category whose traces are found in

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[2] Word language as different from sign language, body language, violence, music or visual arts, mathematics, etc. Here is needed to be taken in consideration even control of word language on the culture because of its effectiveness in reaching multiple different people.

every personal and collective achievement or at least the narrative of it. Motive is required by rationality of communication.

Language is believed to provide the necessary abundance to the cultural, economic, psychological and creative needs of a people or otherwise it is in some kind of explorative specialisation which will become public domain in the future. This abundance can get lost in the contextual and the comparative. Race, class, gender, personal attributes, educational possibilities, etc., can affect ones' access in this abundance. Studies from Basil Bernstein and others have shown the impact of class, educability on the mastery of language. Impact of race or gender on lingual competency has also been investigated.

Being deaf is one of the personal attributes that very radically affects and defines ones relation with language. In the case of deaf people the eye becomes the primary communicative 'channel', but the eye is much more subject to variety and therefore not very efficient in receiving communicatively relevant information. This constrain has an important impact in fundamental processes for the social individual such as the socialisation, identity creation, etc., and also affects other peoples' will and modalities in engaging in communication with the deaf.

Objective of this paper is to explore how being deaf is reflected in the process of education; more specifically in the motivation while in the process of scholarly education. It tends to be part of the discussion about the motive and about the vocabularies of motives that follows C.W. Mills explanation of them in his seminal 1960s paper "Situated actions and vocabularies of motives."

Mills in his article states that, "…, motives are circumscribed by the vocabulary of the actor" to follow just few lines below with "imputation of motives may be controlled by reference to the typical constellation of motives which are observed to be societally linked with classes of situated actions." (1960, p.910) These two statements engage personal and collective dimensions of the language whose overlapping is the ground for this article.

Education as a knowledge-sharing process nowadays is mainly implemented through the institution and has a special relation with language. Institutions, generally, intentionally lose dimensions of the diversity of the entrusted individuals, affecting their identities with the intention of creating a systemic and systematic source of motivation and a need for it, creating new possibilities for distinction among the individuals, but with a unified model, designed 'ad hoc' for the targeted activities and objectives.

Among other things, education involves giving a partially pre-prepared perception on the process of education itself, its meaning in society, and its involvements with personal and social fortunes which can be seen as a motivational discourse of the educative institution. This process includes in the same time the expansion of the individuals' lingual vocabulary that will sustain this 'motivation vocabularies'. On the other side, language relates education with other social realms like the parent supervision, the job market and so on.

When impaired in the capacity to access the 'required lingual abundance'[3] for sustaining the 'motivation vocabularies' how is the actors' needs for motivation addressed? And then, how the product of this differently constructed motivation is affected? What's the impact of an identity created with different communicative means on specific social operations of an individual? How communication evolves when impoverished mastering of language creates deficits for established vocabularies of motives? Is a 'vocabulary of motives' also a gate for non-lingual entities in the realm of motivation? These are the questions that this research has raised for itself although without the pretention of answering all of them or in an exhaustive manner.

As seen in the preceding paragraph all the articulated questions can be taken out of the context of dealing with deaf people in the process of education and raised for different groups of people in various circumstances. Merging these two components in a singular argument has been a major challenge for me in this paper.

My scientific interest revolves around the efficiency of institutions in generating and maintaining collective communications within a certain society. More specifically on how the forced involvement of citizens in collective communication during the communist regime in Albania was transformed in a social capital that was inherited through regime changes. The present paper bears traces from a very different field of interest.

This research sprung from my work with a number of young deaf students participating in a process of intensive education where among typography, other professions and computer use they also followed a short introduction in sociology that I was entrusted to give, although not having any previous experience in the work with deaf students. Observations in the class and communications with the deaf students out of the classroom are the foundations for the following reflections. Later I took a number of interviews, made some participant observation during the weekly deaf youth meetings at the Albanian National Association of the Deaf (ANAD) and took few interviews with teachers and students at the school of deaf people in Tirana.

The work was initially done with the idea of preparing a short presentation to share with colleagues at my department and later grew to a wider presentation given at a national conference on education held in Albania[4]. Both this activities presented lesser obligations than the ones faced by the wish to be part of this publication, but the increased ambitions have not been accompanied by further fieldwork to gather data, but only with efforts to bring the already accumulated findings in a new context, that of the 'vocabulary of motives' as articulated by Mills.

In discussing about deaf students as of interest in terms of production and use of 'vocabularies of motives' I don't mean to place borders for sign language, but the Albanian sign language, which was by far the most abundant mean of communication for deaf students was still of a young age when I got to know it, in 2010, when this research

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[3] I understand that it is difficult to define what a 'required lingual abundance' is

[4] The international conference "Challenges of education in a global world", organized by the University "Aleksander Moisiu", Durres, Albania on 14 May 2010

was done. Lip reading on the other side is very hard to master and not enabling for a cultivated discourse even for the fact that the mastering of the technique is difficult and time consuming.

Albania itself represents its own particularity on this context. The impressions of the communist past tell about a state controlled society with much more sensitivity toward the needy, but the state had scarce resources and the society also, came from a past of deep underdevelopment. Specialisation in this field of special needs education was late to come. The years after the fall of the communism were ones of lesser sensitivity because of new stronger appeals from previously forbidden personal and social objectives and continuance of scarcity of resources. A very small number of students follow the high school or the university. Only lately things have started to change. Last month Albanian Government started the process for the official recognition of the sign language. Still, the deaf frequently are isolated in their communities and much time is spent in condition of reduced communication. Discussions on a Deaf Culture that are present internationally and beginning to be present in Albania as well are faced with this problematic. Deaf people community is sparse and not very compact.

The timing of this research coincided with developments within the community of deaf people in Albania. The group I was working with was getting more and more involved with the Albanian organisation of deaf people. Since then the group has been able to advance the cause of the deaf people for better integration, promote the sign language, organise activities and involve more and more people. On the other side, social media has enabled a much more intensive communication among the young.

The motive

In the context of this paper, it is stressed an interpretation of the motive as a mean to influence attitude and action, or narrate about them, according some previously negotiated meanings. This use of the concept of 'motive' does face some difficulties regarding the character of the motive and also its whereabouts in the 'previously negotiated intentions.' Dealing with these difficulties is not a primary focus of this paper. Its objective is to understand the mechanism of the motive on modelling behaviour, or narratives about it, in cases when sources to arrange for a 'motive' are scarce.

The concepts of motive and motivation themselves are at the centre of a discussion among different authors in the field. Different efforts to confine the use of the term 'motive' within certain contexts have sprung from the need to add clarity to it as an operational concept in sociology. Berard (1998) contributes in this discourse by saying that a discussion on motivation has to be initiated only in cases when the action under observation attracts some attention in terms of its nonconformity or unacceptability from the society. This interpretation underlies the treatment of motivation as a narrative on what has happened depriving the actor from certain attributes as receiver of the narrative. Other authors also see this interpretation of motive as more precise and one 'saved' from interpretations that might involve psychological or biological dimensions that make every boundary loose.

Max Weber defines motive as 'a complex of meaning, which appears to the actor himself or to the observer to be an adequate ground for his conduct'. (Weber, cited in Mills 907) Mills also stresses the importance of the actor when says that "a motive tends to be one which is to the actor and to the other members of a situation an unquestioned answer to questions concerning social and lingual conduct (908.)"

Mills makes the relation of the actor with the motive a lifelong process when he states that "Not only does the child learn what to do, what not to do, but he is given standardized motives which promote prescribed actions and dissuade those proscribed. Along with rules and norms of action for various situations, we learn vocabularies of motives appropriate to them. These are the motives we shall use, since they are a part of our language and components of our behaviour (909.)" This presence in the process of socialisation represents one of the main contexts that create vocabularies as socially shared assembles of significances. Integration in any social group is accompanied by need to make reference to the applicable vocabulary.

Education, in these terms, represents a complex process. Participation is long-lasting and not voluntary; performance is constantly negotiated, while the identity and communicative capabilities of the actor are in creation while other actors also have a motivational stand (teachers, parents, etc.) An account in this context is not directly approachable. This research tries to draw a vocabulary of motives for educational use from accounts on perceived experiences while in the process of education and not on accounts of acts or programs.

The research

Teaching deaf students was a new experience for me. I was challenged to undertake this assignment mainly by the possibility to add a comparative perspective to my experience of teaching students at a private university in Tirana. Classes were held twice a week and the teaching process lasted for 6 weeks, the first four in November – December 2009 and another two weeks in February 2010. The course was organized as part of a project that aimed to contribute in the integration of hearing impaired young people giving them knowledge and abilities in different fields, but focusing mainly in computer use and typography as a possible profession for them.

In building the program for the course I followed the traditional structure of an introductory course in sociology: some information on sociology as a science, its methods and then presented different factors that shape human relations in modern societies. Information on history, culture, religion, politics, class and race was given while we were trying to follow the transformations these elements undergo to reach and affect the individual and the collective behaviour. This occupied the first part of the course, while in the second, following my decision to write this paper, it was built around the concepts of language, thought and education.

The information gained while teaching the course was completed by interviews and regular visits at the office of ANAD the Albanian association of deaf people and at

the institute of deaf students which offers education for pupils from the first to the 9th grade (aged between 6 and 14 years old).

My teaching was interpreted by a trained user of sign language while I myself engaged in gaining some basic knowledge on the language. Interpreter's role in the teaching process was very important, as she was not only interpreting but also guiding me in choosing the appropriate level of elaborateness for my speech and the appropriate examples to illustrate the ideas.

The examples you choose in explaining a concept rely for their usefulness on the ability of the participants to generalize. But, difficulties in abstracting of deaf students made the choice of examples a very peculiar issue in the teaching process. I was discovering the language as I was bringing new inputs to it for the participating students. An example of this fact is the case of when after discussing for three or four weeks the concepts of class, role, gender, race, revolutions, etc., in the introductory course of sociology I was faced with the question "what is the relationship?" You expect to have the idea of relationship at the foundation of all the above mentioned concepts. It was difficult for me to understand if it was the case of just a new word that comes up and you explain or translate till you find its equivalent in the other language or you are in front of a new linguistic construction that makes possible a non-contextual existence of concepts.

It was difficult for me to directly communicate with the deaf students to the end of this research. This was reflected in a limited quantity of gathered information. The difficulties in communication with deaf students were especially felt during the personal interviews were my difficulties in mastering the sign language were confronted with poor reading and writing skills of the students, which made the application of a written questionnaire impossible. Anyhow, I had to decide to make the interviews personally, without an interpreter. There were several reasons for this decision, apart from the fact that I could not pay for one. Very important in this decision was the fact that the relation of the interpreter with the deaf easily develops in an independent relation which affects the quality of the gathered information.

The interviews were developed at ANAD offices where deaf people, mainly from Tirana, met once a week to keep in touch and communicate. These meetings were also used for coordinating activities of the organization. I used time before the meetings started or after they had finished for making the interviews. The interviews, lasted about one hour and were mainly individual and were limited at gathering accounts about the family they came from, focusing on questions about the parents' employment, number of members in family, presence of other deaf persons within the family, with who was communication more common, etc. Another group of questions aimed at gathering information about their interests and future prospect (family, profession, etc.,) and about the time spent and interests in following TV programs. The last group of questions required information about the school time including questions like "what were your grades?", "did you live in the dormitory of the school?", "did you like it?', "what was it like?" etc.

I also visited the institute of the deaf in Tirana, entered classes and spoke with teachers and pupils. The institute, were I spoke with the directress some teachers and also with some students, had underwent lately a process of reformation. Until 5 years ago the pupils during the 8 years at school underwent the educational program of the first 4 years of the regular program of education. My students had undergone mainly through this program. In the institute for deaf people, since the late 60s, around 2000 students have finished their studies and are being taught subjects like mathematics, language, geography, physical education, etc.

The informative, the inspirational and the persuasive have been identified at the beginning of this paper as means that allow the implementation of intention in communication. In the following sections I try to present a picture of what is meant by each of them and how it is present in the deaf students' communications in the context of educational processes.

The following subdivisions try to present bits of information on the three "intersection" were I believe that the lingual motive gains access to non-lingual content and were the personal and collective dimensions of language create space for new approaches to motivation. In the conclusions section I try to elaborate some findings based on these bits of information.

The informative

Impairments in the hearing ability have a series of consequences in the perception of the events that happen to the actor, individually or collectively. Consequences that can be found in identity formation, ability to cultivate interests, fantasies, interest in political or religious narratives, and more generally capacity to engage and make sense to happenings that do not trigger an instinctual response. All this are strongly related to the information received, and a change in quantity, variety and quality of information is followed by changes in the above mentioned areas.

Albanian deaf' schools till recently were focused on enabling deaf pupils to grasp the spoken and written language of the non-deaf, oralism. All the interviewed young told that during the first 5 years of their education they were only taught the spoken and written language. Persistence required to master this technique has a cost on the variety and the quantity of the information given to the deaf student. Lack pre-school institutions and competency from parents to teach language to their deaf children plays an important role in the difficulties that are encountered during the school. This is completed by the fact that deaf children cannot passively learn like hearing children do by listening to people talking around them, listening to the TV or radio, listening to family discussion, or other similar activities.

Most of the interviewed students that had received their education during the period 1990 – 2005, reported that during their 5 first years at school they had learned only lips reading. Sign language and a more visual approach toward education came only much later in the educative process, although very soon it was this form of communication to become dominant as their mean of communication.

There are about 300 words catalogued and included in the visual dictionaries and manuals of Albanian sign language, while many more are invented and used by deaf people in their daily life. The number of the catalogued words although doesn't represent the richness of the Albanian sign language is mentioned here to illustrate my perception that the vocabulary is very limited.

Many of the interviewed youngsters reported that they were alone with the hearing problem in their family although in some cases more than one member was deaf. From interviews was seen that a brother or a sister was generally the one assigned by the family with the duty to communicate with the deaf family member.

Parental social status and presence of another deaf person in the family had a significant impact on the advancement of the young, professionally and socially. In the case of a deaf brother and sister whose mother was a teacher at the institute for the deaf, their progress was remarkable. The sister had finished the arts high school, while the brother was working at a graphic design studio in Tirana. The very limited number of deaf siblings in the sample of this survey does not allow for much discussion on the possibilities that communication within a 'very small group' creates for developing vocabularies of motive.

Many of the interviewees reported of having an interest in following the television, mainly movies and soap operas. The Albanian state television which in the past has offered a news edition where a sign interpreter is present has ceased to do so. There are no other programs to offer sign interpretation of their content among Albanian TV channels.

The persuasive

Persuasion is an important component of motivation. As Mills (1960, 910) puts it "What is reason for one man is rationalization for another. The variable is the accepted vocabulary of motives, the ultimates of discourse, of each man's dominant group about whose opinion he cares. Determination of such groups, their location and character, would enable delimitation and methodological control of assignment of motives for specific acts."

Based on the teaching experience it can be said that, despite difficulties, deaf students were attentive and participation was an easily reachable task. This was in contrast with my other teaching experiences were attention of the students is a much more problematic task and the non-attentive more difficult to discover. Eyes quite differently from the ears, which receive signals from more than one source simultaneously, need to be focused at one source of information. But interruptions were more frequent as every happening gained complete attention and could not be ignored. This fact brought rhythm of communication in class at a very low level and affected the quantity of the given information. (If someone asked for attention and he had it, the attention of those engaged with him was at a much higher degree than with hearing people, and if the communication resulted not appropriate the time required for going back at the interrupted point was longer). The fact was particularly problematic because

even when invited to discuss the presented information students brought examples that tended to be only vivid repetitions of what was said earlier without much new input.

But a crucial fact that made attention an easier task was an increased discipline. Lack of attention is much easier to detect and efficiency in interrupting it is much easier. In cases when it was difficult to receive the attention from all the participants the physical invasion of the visual' contact space or switching off the light was enough to regain it.

The role of the interpreter in these cases deserved a particular attention. The girl making the interpreter, which was the sister of a deaf boy and had learned the language to communicate with him but later engaged more systematically, was very quick to enter in an authority relation with the students. To my repeated protests for her tactless interventions the standard answer was that 'I did not know how disorganised they could get if left unsupervised'. We had repeated discussions on the issue but no conclusive solution was found to the end.

Violence is a recurring motive in almost all the interviews I had. Interviewees reported use of violence in family and school. While visiting one of the classes at the school at the institute of deaf students the teacher joked with them by saying that I was the new teacher and that she was going to be replaced as she didn't feel very welcomed. Although it was understood that it was a joke, one of the pupils of this third level class said that he didn't want this to be true as I was a male and might beat them.

Violence was reported to have been wide spread among students and from the teachers during the education process in the past. One of the young participating in the course while we were entering together the environments of the deaf institute told me about the frequent fights that he had had with the porter as a pupil in the institute. "He doesn't dare any longer," - the student told me about the ageing porter. Fighting with pupils from the neighbouring school for the blind was also a problem.

Placing this level of violence in context of Albanian society in general is difficult. The authority (meaning also allowance to use physical punishments) of the teacher in schools for hearing students has eroded thoroughly during the early 90-s as the society abandoned efforts to seek the "new man" of the socialist project. But violence in general, within and out of the school, increased.

Institution is an important mean of persuasion. Goffman (1959) in speaking on 'instrumental formal organizations', which he defines as a system of purposely coordinated activities designed to produce some over-all explicit ends, lists the following as conditions for its functioning: granting to participants some 'standards of welfare', joint interests of members and the organization, ability of the organization to grant incentives that appeal to the individual as someone whose ultimate interests are not those of the organization and possibility to induce participants in cooperation by threats of punishment and penalty. The institutions can be very limited in their impact on the individual or can go closer to the form of the 'total institution', where society and institution for the individual tend to become the same thing. In our case this gains new importance as related to the volume of communication that takes place in and out of the institution. The whereabouts of the observed institution in this scale of institutional

impact, as well as cultural and personal characteristics of those involved in it, can have an impact on the efficiency of the institution in motivation. Mills acknowledge the impact of the institution on the motivation when he states that. "Working vocabularies of motive have careers that are woven through changing institutional fabrics." (909)

In all personal communications interviews or other open discussions the students find the space to discuss the fact that they are in that condition because a high temperature in early childhood or some other diseases, making it clear that the condition is not hereditary. This information is considered sensitive as it might influence their prospect of creating a family in the future.

The inspirational

To inspire has been a target set for teachers in a number of quotes from different thinkers. To motivate, animate, enthuse, arouse are some of the synonyms of the word inspire but it remains difficult to clarify the meaning of the word in the context of this paper.

In my efforts to present this research and its objective to the students, I discussed the concept of motivation as related to social relations in general following later by the motivation in education. Work performance and reward, mother-child relationship as well as grades and pupils performance were among examples used to illustrate the idea of motivation.

I found it difficult to illustrate the ambition for a certain profession as a motivation to perform well in learning. This might be considered a very important tool in other conditions. Being a pilot, engineer, medical doctor, or else is an important part of narratives on the need to study. But in every example I brought in class I was faced with a list of factors that might make it impossible for deaf students to engage with. The doctor has to use a stethoscope, the driver has to listen, and the engineer has to communicate. Asked about what they had hoped for a profession, many of the interrogated students mentioned that of a tailor, a shoemaker or a hairdresser. No dreams were present.

One of the teachers at the institute who taught practical skills (shoe repairing) while we were discussing the program I was part of, told me that what we were doing was wrong as it was creating false expectations among the student. When asked about the means of motivation available to him in the educative process, he stressed the giving of awareness on the importance of the practical use of the skills he taught. Stressing the idea that money could be gained by the correct application of what he taught was an efficient enough motivation. The age of the pupils he was teaching I believe makes this motive not very reliable but on his opinion it worked well.

The evaluation system in the school of deaf people is not related to the evaluation system that applies for the other public schools of the same level in our society. In interviews with deaf students, a student that had continued the education in the high school for hearing people told me that she was confronted with the surprise of her teachers and friends on her very basic writing ability, while her grades in the previous

education had been optimal. This is something to be expected, as till three years earlier the educational program for deaf people offered only the educational program of the first four elementary classes during the 8 years of education. But it is also an indicator of how the evaluation system gets an exclusively institutional meaning, while its primary intention generally is to have a much broader significance.

There was a high sensitivity toward distribution of attention. In a case when I partially privileged a girl to another in giving the right to give her opinion, I think that my relation with the other girl was irreversibly harmed. The girl skipped the following lecture and I suppose she lost interest in the course. Their relation with one another didn't change. I believe that the girls were competing for a similar position in the hierarchy of the group. Hierarchy is very important and quick to be created within the group.

Exclusion from the group is also very strong and respected from all the members once it is proclaimed. The youngsters with some hearing and speaking ability are the ones most exposed to this risk. One of the guys present in the course was excluded from the group for his close communication with the supervisor of the project which might have included sharing of the 'secrets' of the group. In one of the individual interviews the issue of exclusion was also brought up by a girl who has limited hearing and speaking capacity. She told me that only under strong influence from her sister, who has no hearing problems, she decided to interrupt the preferential relation with the teachers to try and reintegrate in the group. She reported this as an important event of the school time.

Discussing religiosity during the course it was made clear that some information on religion is present, but it is limited and most of the students did not believe in god. Information is limited in the religion which the family belongs to, but not more. Similar was the discussion about race and class. Based on my observations, origin from another community had no particular impact on the relations among students. Even gender seems to represent no such a big difference. While discussing violence with one of the interviewees he mentioned that he had had an older sister in the school that protected him in fights or other troubles.

In the day of one of my visits at the institute a small 'rebellion' against the daily menu was led by the usual troublemaking girl. Although no particular attention is paid to above mentioned characteristics the group is strongly hierarchical and risk of expulsion is high.

Conclusion

Motives are lingual and ones relation to language is reflected in the relation with motives or vocabularies of motives. The relation that the vocabularies of motives establish between particular situations and actions with particular motives create certain routines that erode the need for articulation of the motive or conditions that allow for motive's replacement with non-lingual communicative means.

Institutions in general, family and school included, tend an increased 'vocabularisation' of motive therefore opening more space for routines and efficient non-

lingual motivation. This can partially compensate for ones' access to the abundance of language.

The quantity of information available to the deaf is very limited although it is substantially increased during the education process. An important problem remains with the fact that the school and the 'out of school world' represent two distant realities. The inspirational dimension is highly dependent on the out-of school world therefore not very efficient. Persuasion seems to play a more important role in the process of education compared to other forms of motivation. This is made possible mainly because of its independence from the general social context.

An opposite conclusion is that a bad mastery of language has brought a lack of motivation that joined other problems to make for a poor performance of deaf people in the educative process. The motives are not replaced by anything.

The right conclusion is somewhere between these two opposing alternatives. The small number of the students involved in the program, the non-rigorous use of research methodologies as well as the particularities of the group and of the Albanian education system for the deaf makes it difficult to be more decided on any particular conclusion.

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