

Being my parents' eyes: A study of the language identity of a sighted child of blind parents in *Sunshine of My Life* (2022)

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Abstract

*Sighted Infant of Blind Parents (SIBP) grow up in a distinctive linguistic environment as they receive language input from parents who rely on the collaboration of tactile and auditory senses, compelling them to adapt similarly in their communication and interaction. To address this underexplored area, the present study aimed to investigate the construction of language identity in a SIBP through psycholinguistic framework. This qualitative research study used the Hong Kong semi-autobiographical film *Sunshine of My Life* (2022) as a qualitative descriptive design and analyzed the protagonist, Chu Tsz-yan as a SIBP. This study applied six thematic analysis steps to investigate: (1) how are the practices of language brokering and visual mediation strategies (transforming visual information into spoken language) manifested in the linguistic interaction with her blind parents, and (2) how her the dual role as the mediator and as an individual construct her language identity. The findings revealed four crucial themes that portrayed the development of her language identity which are visual mediation as a fundamental communicative practice, the structural tension of her dual role as a child and caregiver, the psychological crisis of role conflict arising from the duality, and lastly, reconciliation where these conflicting roles were integrated into unified identity through creative expression. This study concluded that the SIBP's language identity emerged as a multifaceted and integrated self-concept shaped by adaptation and struggle. Future research is encouraged to investigate the parental perspective on how they negotiate and manage the visual linguistic responsibilities often assumed by their sighted children.*

Keywords: Dual role; language identity; role conflict; Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP); visual mediation.

INTRODUCTION

Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP) raised within unique linguistic environment as their parents are not depended on visual cues for communication, but on the collaboration of tactile and auditory senses which much different from sighted family. This live experience makes them a compelling subject for research in psycholinguistics field as it can significantly influence their language development, identity formation, and the

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communicative roles they carry within the family. "I am your daughter, but I am not your white cane," This line powerfully conveys personal conflict, reflecting the expression of exhaustion of individual situated between two worlds. While people with disabilities frequently encounter significant societal difficulties, such as discrimination and exclusion (Rohwerder, 2018), the negative effects are not only affected them alone. People who live within their surroundings, especially family members are often face courtesy stigma or stigma by association, similar to the negative stigma or labelling towards those with disabilities (Corrigan & Shapiro, 2010; Lanfer et al., 2025). This relational dynamic may put the individual in confusing situations, questioning themselves or even their identity in which community they really belong to, the sighted or the blind, for Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP).

Living in these two worlds, with a family where parents are visually impaired and being the daughter of the Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP), is frequently responsible for a crucial and complex role that goes beyond what a typical child would do. Specifically, these children serve as involuntary linguistic mediators or interpreters of the visual world, bridging the sensory connection between their visually impaired parents and the surrounding (Crafter & Iqbal, 2022; Moroe & De Andrade, 2018; Senju et al., 2013). This psycholinguistic phenomenon is closely related to language brokering, as it typically refers to the act of translating spoken or written language from one linguistic code to another (García-Sánchez, 2018; Melander & Gréen, 2023). However, the role played by sighted children of blind parents goes beyond conventional language brokering and incorporates visual mediation, as the process involves translating visual information into verbal descriptions that their parents can clearly understand, such as traffic signals, street signs, or art-pictures (Chheda-Kothary et al., 2024; Jung et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2026). As a result, this creates a unique familial linguistic ecology in which the infant must establish and maintain a distinct communication identity while navigating and translating between two different ways of sensing the world.

Language identity, however, is not static but an evolving process. The construction of one's identity is acknowledged as a negotiated, dynamic, and continuous social process shaped by the various narratives and roles adopted throughout one's life (Cameron & Larsen-Freeman, 2007). For the sighted child of blind parents, the constant duality of their position, as both a child and a required mediator can lead to significant role conflict and identity tension (Armaini et al., 2022; Lanfer et al., 2025). Moreover, the emotional and cognitive weight of being the parents' eyes, forcing the children to adopt on adult-like responsibilities early in life. This continuous conflict might challenge the stability of their language identity and sense of agency, creating them to question their position within the family and the society.

To dig deeper into how the language and conflict of this identity occurred, one alternative that can be used is observation through narrative media such as film. Film itself offers a rich and real setting for analyzing lived experiences and self-narratives that show how complicated it is to build an identity (Bruner, 1990). The film to be analyzed is *Sunshine of My Life* (2022), a Hong Kong film directed by Judy Chu about a sighted young woman, Chu Tsz-yan, who lived

with her blind parents (being Sighted Infants of Blind Parent, SIBP) and the struggles with her desire for being independent and her duty to her family. This film is also categorized as a semi-autobiographical story, since it is based on the director's own experiences as SIBP. Furthermore, from this movie, it provides an in depth portrayal of the main character who internalizes and negotiates her role and linguistic responsibilities towards her visually impaired parents. By analyzing how the character talk and act within the specific story structure, it can get a detailed psycholinguistic exploration of how her identity is constructed and maintained through language.

Many studies have discussed the experiences of people living with disabilities and some studies focus on the communication development or interaction of SIBP (Chiesa et al., 2015; Collis & Bryant, 1981; Deshen & Deshen, 1989; Ganea et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2026; Pagliuca et al., 2009; Park et al., 2023; Senju et al., 2013; Storer & Branham, 2019; Szpiro & Keleynikov, 2025; Tören & Gökçearsan, 2024). However, research about language identity of the Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP) through narrative media such as film, particularly in psycholinguistic study still remains limited. Therefore, this new study aims to contribute to address this gap by conducting a psycholinguistic analysis of the language identity of the sighted daughter in the film, with a focus on how her role as a linguistic mediator impacts her self-concept and communicative role. Hence, this research seeks to answer these following questions: (1). How are the practices of language brokering and visual mediation strategies (transforming visual information into spoken language) manifested in the linguistic interaction of Tsz-yan with her blind parents in the film *Sunshine of My Life*? (2). How does the dual role as the mediator and as an individual construct Tsz-yan's language identity?

Thus, the findings of this research are expected to make contributions in which the research will enrich the limited literature on language identity in SIBP and also offer new valuable insights for counselors, educators, and the public to better understand the psycholinguistic on SIBP's perspective.

Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP)

Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP) is a term given to individuals or children with normal vision who are born and raised by one or both blind parents (Ganea et al., 2018). Unlike typical children, an SIBP has a rather unique life dynamic due to the demands of role adaptation outside the usual things that children do within their development. This occurs because the child is constantly involved in negotiations between two worlds: the sighted world and the blind world. Additionally, SIBP often plays a complex dual role within the family, as a child who is lovingly cared for and simultaneously as a caregiver, visual mediator, and navigator. This kind of responsibility even sticks with and becomes integrated into these children from an early age. Not only that, but a significant number of SIBP children also take on the functional or emotional roles of their parents, this phenomenon commonly referred to as parentification. Parentification itself means prematurely adopting or taking on adult roles, which is not a child's obligation but rather a parents' obligation (Dariotis et al., 2023; Hooper, 2008). In this SIBP case, parentification is evident when the child

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is required or in need of helping to care for physical needs and social needs, especially parental communication related to vision. With such a complex role, this triggers role conflict. This role conflict can hinder the development of her self-identity because of the psychological tension arising from the demands of her dual roles, as a child who wants freedom and as a child who fulfills her obligation to be her parents' "eyes" (Borchet et al., 2020).

Language brokering and visual mediation

Children of SIBP are already getting used to its role as a mediator or language broker. Language brokering refers to the situations where children become communicative translators or mediators for their families naturally without any formal training because they lack mastery of the dominant language used in society (Harris, 1977; Rubio-Carbonero et al., 2022). Rather than word-for-word translation, this process tends to be more complex because brokering involves contextual translation, in which the mediator must be wise and able to interpret the meaning, emotions, and context of the situation to ensure that the message is conveyed between both parties (Melander & Gréen, 2023). In this case, children also function as social interpreters. In the SIBP context, language brokering is expanded to encompass visual mediation. This is because the barrier for the visually impaired lies in sensory or visual differences, not language differences, so children instinctively mediate visual information into verbal information. Visual mediation is known as a unique psycholinguistic practice because children are required to be able to perform sensory transformation. Sensory transformation means translating visual or non-verbal input such as expressions, street signs, or artworks, into descriptive linguistic output that can be easily processed and understood by blind parents (Chheda-Kothary et al., 2024; Jung et al., 2021).

Language identity

The process of identity construction in an individual is commonly narrative in nature. According to Bruner (1990) and Hnit & Almanna (2025), narrative stories are an important tool for humans to structure experiences, give meaning, and understand themselves. In social interactions, self-narratives form identities because they are repeatedly narrated and negotiated. Therefore, to reveal the complexity of identity construction, the role played by SIBP and individual life experiences need to be analyzed. In addition, this also affects its relationship with language identity. Language identity is one of the extensions of identity construction, which naturally focuses on the role of language and communication practices. Language identity is defined as how individuals position themselves through language practice and communicative interaction (Rassokha, 2010). It is also an individual's recognition of who they are in relation to the language they use and the role they play within communication. In the context of this study, there are two things that need to be considered, the influence of the communicative role as a visual mediator and identity conflict as having a dual role, which directly affects the character's language identity.

Previous studies

Several studies have provided insights into SIBP in various aspects of life. To date, most of the literature available from previous researchers has focused on

family adaptation, social interaction, or communication development of an SIBP. For example, Ganea et al. (2018) found that SIBP uses different forms of communication when interacting with blind parents or with sighted adults. In this study, SIBP used more face-directed vocalization and responsiveness, indicating that contextually adapted communication is an important basis for understanding the process of visual mediation. In addition, a study by Tören & Gökçearslan (2024) shows that families with blind parents can still function positively through autonomy, adaptation, and social support. However, this study emphasizes family dynamics, so it does not provide information related to linguistic transformation or children's language identity. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Szpiro & Keleynikov (2025), it was found that the limitations of blind parents cause children to frequently take on more active and independent roles in daily activities, for example when playing. This shows that children adaptively fill perpetual gaps, which is the basis of visual-to-verbal mediation.

Considering the existing studies from previous research, there are several gaps that have not been filled and can be used as a basis for development in this latest study. For example, there are few specific studies on SIBP. There is almost no empirical research that specifically examines sighted children of blind parents in the context of language identity, as well as in the field of psycholinguistic studies. In addition, most of the literature related to language brokering generally relates to bilingual or immigrant contexts, not to sensory or visual mediation (visual to verbal mediation) as experienced in SIBP. The last important point is that there has been almost no psycholinguistic research using narrative media from films to study SIBP because it has been studied extensively through observational ethnography, experimental, or psychological.

METHOD

Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive design within the framework of psycholinguistics. This qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth study of complex and subjective phenomena such as language identity in Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP) (Sandelowski, 2000). In addition, this study applied qualitative content analysis by Schreier (2012) in collecting data from the film *Sunshine of My Life* (2022) and the six thematic analysis steps approach by Braun & Clarke (2006), which was suitable for identifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in narrative data because it provides a systematic yet flexible method. Furthermore, this design is particularly suitable for analyzing films because narratives are a source of life experiences and identity formation.

Research subject

This study focused on Chu Tsz-yan, the protagonist in the film *Sunshine of My Life* (2022), a semi-autobiographical film by Judy Chu. Tsz-yan is a sighted daughter of blind parents, making her a representative character of Sighted Infants of Blind Parents (SIBP). Moreover, she was accompanied her parents since she was a kid in order to be their eyes or the mediator. Despite those conditions, her parents continued to carry out their work while devoting much

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love to Tsz-yan and doing their utmost to fulfil her needs. In addition, her complex linguistic and identity roles as a child and a mediator between her visually impaired parents and the visual world became the reason why her character was selected. The study investigated how her communicative practices such as language brokering and visual mediation, constructed and influenced her language identity within familial and social contexts.

Procedures

The author used qualitative content analysis by Schreier (2012) for collecting the data from the film *Sunshine of My Life* (2022). It began by determining the focus of the material by selecting relevant data to the research focus, language identity. Although this film used Cantonese with English subtitles, the author processed the data and presented the excerpts in English to facilitate analysis. Following this, the data was segmented by dividing it into smaller units of meaning such as per scene or per line of dialogue. Next, sampling was conducted by determining which scenes involve the main character and followed by documenting the data by neatly storing all data, including codes, times, and dialogue texts, for ease of use. Finally, the data corpus was compiled for further analysis using thematic analysis.

Data analysis

In analyzing the data for this research, the author used six thematic analysis steps by Braun & Clarke (2006). First, the author started to get in depth with all the data by familiarizing with the character's lines by watching the film several times and highlighting the important lines. Second, to better understand the data as well, the author transcribed the highlighted lines into written data or text and read the transcription multiple times. Third, read the film transcription more and try to grouped all the lines that relevant to Language Identity's aspects code. Fourth, in reviewing the theme, it can be done by checking and re-checking those grouped line datas whether it makes sense. Then, it can still be improved if there were some datas that need to be observed more. Fifth, defined the themes with those group datas and gave a name that reflected the theme. Last, produced the report by concluding the codes into themes: visual mediation, dual role, role conflict, and reconciliation.

The themes, *visual mediation*, *dual role*, *role conflict*, and *reconciliation*, are representative of the analysis of language identity. In the *visual mediation* theme, Tsz-yan frequently involved in sensory translation, turning the visual information into verbal information which forms a crucial linguistic practice that shapes her identity. In the *dual role* theme, Tsz-yan was situated between both as a daughter that lovingly cared for and as a living time visual mediator for her parents. This showed how much dual expectation that she carried. In the *role conflict* theme, her emotional struggles emerged when she tried to balance her personal things with her obligation as being the eyes of her parents, which leads to psychological tension. Last, in the *reconciliation* theme, it showed how Tsz-yan integrated the conflicting roles into unified identity and her acceptance of what she has gone through with a graceful embrace.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This present study investigates how Chu Tsz-yan constructs her language identity in a situation where she is the sighted daughter of blind parents. Based on her character in the film *Sunshine of My Life* (2022), there are four themes that can identify her language identity: visual mediation, dual role, role conflict, and reconciliation. These four themes are also related to the theory of language identity which is how individuals position themselves through language practice and communicative interaction. For Tsz-yan, this is within the context of SIBP or sighted infant of blind parents.

Visual mediation

Tsz-yan has always been a cheerful and energetic person since childhood. Although her parents are blind, she always tries to make them smile by acting as an intermediary or translating what they see so that they can imagine it too. In addition, she has also become a mediator, especially as a visual mediator, where she translates the visual information around her into verbal information for her blind parents. This is not just a word-for-word translation, but a sensory transformation that shapes the way she communicates and views her role. This translation also provides context-related information, so that her parents understand the meaning and emotions in the situation.

As Yan grew up with words or verbally which required her to interpret what her parents could not see, it became a habit that grew naturally to connect and share joy with them ever since her childhood. In one moment, when they were happily chatting on a bus heading home, Yan unabashedly expressed her admiration for what she saw in the sky and imagined it to her parents even though they could not see it. From this, it is clear that Yan is very open and enjoys two-way conversations. After that, when Yan's mom asked her to describe more, Yan constructing it by giving clear understanding to them immediately. As she visualized the sky, where the clouds looked like a big whale, fishes that swim, and floating seaweed. This situation showed that Yan had an abstract and creative imagination, yet it was as fun as a child her age who often interpreted inanimate things as alive and moving. The same goes for when she described the metaphor of a castle on the whale's back. She did not just describe a shape, but Yan created and provided a sensory experience and a sense of funny wonder at the same time from the raw visuals she saw. This situation became one of the purest forms of her mediation, such a loving artistic act of constructing a mental landscape that her parents could inhabit. From this, it can also be confirmed how Yan became a family storyteller who recounted what she saw as something that her parents could feel and inhabit.

Excerpt 1:

Yan: "Wow, there's a big bird in the sky!"

Yan's Father: "Silly girl, it's a little birdy right?"

Yan's Mom: "Yan, what else do you see?"

Yan: "I also see a lot of clouds, and one of them looks like a big whale with a big castle on its back. There are lots of fish swimming around it, and there's seaweed floating underneath." (05.37 - 06.37)

Similar to the previous excerpt, but in the second excerpt, Yan shows off her drawing skills because she really liked drawing at that time. As seen in the scene which she is drawing on the wall and drawing paper on the sofa. It turns

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out that what Yan had imagined and visualized in excerpt 1, she drew it later on her wall which are a big whale, a castle on its back, and seaweed. In addition, that night in the living room. Yan showed her parents the picture she had just finished, pointing it out with happiness and a smile on her face. Knowing and having a habit of using sensory things to explain things to her parents, Yan quickly grabbed one of her parents' hands and directed it to the elements of the picture she had created. For example, she built the picture element by element rather than simply saying "this is a family portrait". This reflects the collaborative nature of communication within families with different visual abilities as children can play an active role in leading and managing interactions (Storer & Branham, 2019; Szpiro & Keleynikov, 2025).

In addition, Yan also gave special and imaginative attributes by depicting her family as heroic and cosmic characters as a child fantasizes. For instance, her mother wearing a superwoman costume, her father wearing a space suit, and they sitting on a flying banana boat. Thus, it can be seen that Yan describes her drawing in detail so that her parents can understand because this is very important in visual mediation as it gradually builds a mental image for listeners with visual impairments. It applies to Yan's parents too. In addition, in this portrait, Yan creating her own ideal world for them to live in together. However, as Yan's mom said that she could not see whether it was there or here when Yan kept saying here and there, it shows that no matter how Yan explained or described what she showed to her mother and father, her parents still did not fully understand what she meant due to their limitations. This reveals the inevitable breakdowns in communication that cannot be avoided. Then, her mother did not dwell on the matter and instead praised her by saying that Yan's voice was very beautiful. This aligns with the findings of Park et al. (2023), that blind family members are motivated by a desire to emotionally connect and bond, even if there are limitation on their visual understanding which also shows that visual mediation transcends functional needs and enters the realm of emotional bonds and creative expression. Thus, her identity as a mediator includes the role of creator of shared happiness.

Excerpt 2:

(Yan grabbed her parents' hands and directed them to the picture she had drawn)

Yan: "This is mommy in a superwoman suit. This is daddy in a space suit. I'm in the middle, with hearts on my shirt. We're sitting on a flying banana boat. There are one-eyed stars. Here... and there... Isn't that beautiful?"

Yan's Mom: "You keep saying "here" and "there", but we can't see it. But honey, you have a beautiful voice." (06.25 - 06.49)

Besides of being a storyteller and creator of shared happiness, Yan has also been accustomed for being a translator in the practical language of everyday life since childhood. This reflects to the same experience of hearing children born to deaf parents who often describe themselves as "parents' ears and mouths" and they take that roles involuntarily from an early age (Moroe & De Andrade, 2018). However, this phenomenon aligns with the concept of visual mediation that involves her to become the visual mediator as a family care practice (Chheda-Kothary et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2026). For example, when at a restaurant or food stall, Yan's language shifts from descriptive to categorical

by reading the menu or simple list that has been presented. Simply as a carefully presented lunch option package with implied context such as the type of sausages, type of eggs, type of pork, and so on. Her voice becomes a bridge between parents and visible life (Deshen & Deshen, 1989). At this moment, her identity subtly shifts from storyteller to executive assistant which is a role that grants her a subtle and premature authority over the family's daily activities (Dariotis et al., 2023; Hooper, 2008). This becomes a deeply practical form of care by embedding her intermediary function into the most ordinary routines, making independence possible through her deliberate speech.

Excerpt 3:

"Lunch menu... sausage, spam, red sausage, fried egg, scrambled eggs, sunny-side up, pork with pickled vegetables, twice-cooked pork, spiced pork cubes, satay beef, choose two of the above. Along with macaroni, rice noodles, or instant noodles for 24 dollars." (07.01 - 07.25)

From childhood until Yan was in high school, she remained being the bridge connecting her family's lives. In this busy morning scene, Yan had no choice but to multitask between her urgent school preparations and her mandatory role as her parents' eyes. From a position not too far away and due to her haste, Yan tried to direct her mother to the fork her mother had accidentally dropped, with brief verbal and spatial cues such as next, behind, and closer, avoiding the physical guidance she usually provided. Furthermore, from this scene, Yan appears to belittle the incident because dropping a fork is a common occurrence and not something that requires such assistance. This moment also illustrates the limitations and friction that arise when Yan is under pressure, causing her assistance to become half-hearted. As a result, Yan only gives vague verbal instructions rather than actually helping directly. This does not work well and makes her seem more like a frustrated and distracted navigator than an engaged visual interpreter.

Excerpt 4

"It's next to your feet, behind you, closer to your body" (17.41)

As well as when they were in nature, Yan remained a daughter who bridged their communication (Deshen & Deshen, 1989). Yan became a guide in describing what they were going through. For example, when they were happily joking around near a tree. This interaction illustrates visual mediation as an active and multisensory process, in which she acts as a physical guide and verbal translator. Yan began to tactically mediate the gap in perception by directing her father's hand to the tree and supplementing the touch with essential visual data which is the height of the tree that could not be accessed or seen directly. This pattern of tactile guidance functions as a compensatory strategy which substitute for the lack of visual access in communication (Chiesa et al., 2015; Szpiro & Keleynikov, 2025). Yan's role then shifts to that of a facilitator which enables her parents to actively interact with their environment, while remaining ready to intervene and explain further when asked, such as when she physically guides her mother's hand to hold the leaves on the tree which she can only feel. Thus, Yan's mediation seamlessly combines action, description, and responsive correction to build a simultaneous and understandable visual experience for her parents.

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Excerpt 5:

Yan: "Dad, come and feel this. (guiding her father's hand towards the tree) This tree is 6 meters tall."

Yan's Mom: "Where is it? Let me touch it."

Yan: "Right here, mom." (while holding her mother's hand and pointing it to the leaves) (01.02.15 - 01.02.25)

Thus, as a mediator and visual interpreter who bridges the seen and unseen worlds for her parents from childhood to adolescence (Deshen & Deshen, 1989; Wang et al., 2026), Yan's role as a mediator flows between two poles. On one side, it is a creative and loving act, where Yan transforms the visualization of inanimate objects into living beings and images into their shared dreams. On the other hand, it is a routine but demanding task. However, from this visual mediation theme, it can be seen that although Yan is an in-charge storyteller and an important guide, it is undeniable that this role is also burdensome and has limitations that she cannot fully overcome. This duality also reflects to the concept of parentification which encompasses both resilience such as thriving and vulnerability such as burden (Dariotis et al., 2023; Hooper, 2008).

Dual role

Living as the only sighted daughter in a blind family is not easy for Yan. Yan must be alert and willing to help and be there for her parents. One example is when Yan is faced with a difficult choice. The dual role conflict in this context is quite challenging because Yan must choose the urgent one and leave behind what she dreams of. On one side, Yan is a high school student with dreams of pursuing a London Art School scholarship abroad, for which she was supposed to have just entered the scholarship interview stage. However, on the other hand, Yan is her parents' main helper, especially in urgent situations. So, at this moment, Yan had to reluctantly leave her role as a prospective student to fulfill her role as a caregiver.

Excerpt 1:

Yan's Teacher: "Chu Tsz-yan your mom just called and asked for you to go home."

Yan: "Now?"

Yan's Teacher: "Yes, she said she's bleeding, hurry up" (33.59)

In addition, Yan also played a dual role during the demonstration scene to achieve a public and political dimension. Other than being the visual bridge for her family, she also became the spokesperson and advocate for the blind community represented by her parents. Yan and her mother created a support pamphlet to voice the rights of blind masseurs, adding braille to make it easier for the community to read. The creation of these pamphlets was not merely technical assistance, but an act of alliance and co-creation, where Yan's visual knowledge and her mother's life experience came together to create an accessible tool of resistance. Together with her mother, who also delivered a speech fighting for the rights of blind masseurs, Yan also acted as a public amplifier for the injustice experienced by her father and his colleagues. Through her speech, what was she delivered became a string connecting her father's

experience of being unfairly fired, with the collective narrative of exploitation. Thus, it can be seen and emphasized that in addition to Yan acting as the eyes for her parents, Yan can also be the voice for blind masseurs in the public space, fighting for the rights of a community that is often invisible.

Excerpt 2:

"All of these workers have been certified as personal blind masseurs, but their bosses are not paying them fair wages, my dad wanted to fight for their rights, but he was unjustly fired, so we need to hold these employers responsible, condemn unscrupulous employers," (01.18.45)

Yan reached a tragic climax, where she voluntarily sacrificed her personal identity as an artist in order to fully take on the role of family support. The short statement Yan made to her art teacher, Ms. Chan, served as a sad expression of the heavy burden she carried and her resignation to her situation. Fully aware of her current life circumstances, Yan chose to prioritize her role as caregiver and remained a source of support for her parents rather than pursuing her own development. This decision becomes a structural life choice that affirms Yan's crucial role in her family. As Yan believes that she must fulfill her responsibilities as a child and set aside her role as a free individual.

Excerpt 3:

Yan: "Ms. Chan, there's been some complications with my parents... Forget it... I won't participate, thank you." (01.15.08)

Her dual role also occurred at an unexpected moment when Ms. Chan invited Yan to the running club where, without her knowing, her mother was a member. So, when it was about to start, Ms. Chan switched roles with Yan and she was now the guide runner for her mother. In this situation, Yan played two roles, as daughter and guide runner. As a guide runner, Yan had to listen to her mother's breathing, and her mother had to listen to Yan's footsteps. This was necessary because blind people run differently from most people. It also created a comfortable running experience for them by connecting activities that rely on sensory perception. As a daughter, Yan served as a visual mediator when her mother asked her what she saw in the current situation. Yan responded by describing the scenery around her. This time, her visual mediation was no longer a one-way burden, but rather part of a smooth and participative dialogue in a moment of togetherness. In addition, as a daughter, Yan also received feedback from her mother regarding the scholarship offer she had rejected. Her mother emphasized that Yan should not worry about her parents because she knew that Yan had loved drawing since she was a kid and should pursue that dream wholeheartedly. Thus, Yan's dual roles were no longer in conflict, but merged as a guide runner, visual mediator, and daughter who was enjoying togetherness with her mom in an equal and understanding space.

Excerpt 4:

Yan's Mom: "Running is different from how you usually do it. You have to listen to my breathing, I have to listen to your footsteps, you understand? (01.24.09)

Yan's Mom: "Yan, what do you see?"

Yan: "There's a group of people running, lots of trees by the side, and someone walking his dog." (01.24.34)

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Yan's Mom: "Yan, I know that you've loved drawing since you were little, if that's your dream, don't give up. Are you worried about us?" (01.24.55)

Yan's dual role has changed over time. At first, she felt trapped between helping her parents and pursuing her own dreams, often having to sacrifice her own desires. Gradually, this role evolved into a broader form of support such as when she became the family spokesperson in public to fight for the rights of the blind masseurs community. Ultimately, Yan found balance through collaborative activities that transformed one-way responsibilities into equal and supportive interactions.

Role conflict

Often, the role conflict that occurs is based on the dual roles that Yan plays in her daily life. In the scene where Yan painfully vocalizes the inner struggle between her obligations as a responsible child and her rights as a free individual, this role conflict reaches its climax. The metaphor of the white cane used as a weapon in their argument is not just a navigation aid for blind people, but a symbol of the identity that Yan feels because it seems to function only as a service. So, when she says, "I'm your daughter, but I'm not your white cane," Yan wants to assert her identity as a child and an individual. In addition, Yan also wants to state that she is a human being who has her own personal life and her own urgencies, not just an existence that serves her parents' needs. Her anger is also mixed with the feeling that her mother's blindness has been used as a trump card to lock her into the role of caregiver, thereby limiting and even sacrificing her own desires. The rhetorical question Yan asks at the end reveals or implies her fear that this role conflict will continue to haunt her and bury her personal identity as an individual.

Excerpt 1:

Yan's Mom: "Too bad your mom is blind."

Yan: "You can't say that every time we argue, being blind is not the trump card."

Yan's Mom: "I don't want to bother you either, but am I supposed to ask an outsider for help? people know that I have a daughter, if they ask where my daughter is, how would I answer them?" (36.50)

Yan: "I'm your daughter but I'm not your white cane, I can't just show up on demand, mom, I'm all grown up, I have things that I want to do, okay?... and spend the rest of my life with you? Is that really what you want?" (37.12)

Not only verbally, Yan also expresses her inner conflict which she can no longer hold back through art by scribbling on her own paintings which she had not finished a few days ago. Yan's act of scribbling on the canvas is a physical manifestation of the confusion, anger, and despair she felt as a result of tension between the two roles imposed on her by her parents. In addition, as Yan has no one to talk to, so she takes it out on the canvas.

Excerpt 2:

Context: Yan scribbling on her canvas at school. (39.13)

In this intense scene, Yan explodes as she loudly voices her frustration. This becomes an open rebellion that completely rejects the reduction of her identity to merely a volunteer who is called upon or a tool for her parents. Yan

also openly rejects the role of caregiver that is forced upon her because, according to her, that is the only reason for her existence in her mother's eyes. These explosive emotions arise from the accumulation of feelings that their relationship has become one of boss and volunteer, when it should be a family with warmth and affection. It should not be an imposed obligation. In addition, Yan's act of messing up the audio tape symbolizes the resistance against the pager (given by her friend) that was smashed and destroyed by her mother. Yan wants to show that she also has power over herself. After that, the climax is when Yan rebels by running away from home to prove that she is an individual with desires, privacy, and the right to choose, not just a source of help for her parents' needs and desires.

Excerpt 3:

Yan's Mom: "Are you ashamed of me?"

Yan: "Why were you waiting for me at my school?"

Yan's Mom: "Can't a mother pick her daughter up from school? Do you know that you're insufferable?" (gift pager from Ryan ringing) (47.41)

Yan: "Why are you controlling me?"

Yan's Mom: "You're my daughter, why can't I control you?" (throwing the pager). (Yan entered her parents room and messed up her mom's audio tapes containing Yan's voice from childhood) (48.13)

Yan: "How are we even? I didn't ask to be born, you gave birth to me just so you could have a volunteer on demand. You think I wanted to be born into this family? Have you asked me? Did I have a choice? (Yan runs away from home) (49.24)

Within Yan's conversation with Ms. Chan regarding her decision to pull her-self out of the art competition, it is clear that Yan has internalized the role of caregiver within herself, believing that her parents' existence depends entirely on her. This deeply rooted and mistaken belief that prevents Yan from realizing her true identity as an individual. She also suspects that this is destiny and an unquestionable truth that cannot be changed. This pattern of thinking and psychological burden also causes Yan to be trapped within herself, making her view her dreams and potential as pointless or meaningless. Thus, the role conflict in this scene is no longer just about time or energy, but has become a narrative of stagnant identity. This means that Yan sees herself solely as the source of support for her parents and closes her eyes to the possibility that she could be more than what she dreams of.

Excerpt 4:

Ms. Chan: "You gave up your competition because of your parents?"

Yan: "So, what even if I win? It's pointless, I can't leave. They can't live without me." (01.22.00)

Reconciliation

In this emotional final scene, Yan achieves a beautiful reconciliation between the three dimensions of her identity which are the conflict of roles finds resolution, dual roles achieve integration, and visual mediation transforms into an expression of inclusive love. Through her special hand-painted artwork with braille dot textures, Yan is no longer trapped in the realm between personal dreams and family obligations. Instead, she creates a masterpiece that truly blends both worlds, an artistic expression that is also a medium of communication and a declaration of love for her parents. Her dual roles as a

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loving child and mediator come together perfectly when she happily guides her parents' hands to see the artwork through touch, as a participative sensory-tactile experience. The message "Father and Mother I love you" in Braille is not merely a dedication, but a final statement that she has accepted and embraced these roles as an integral part of her identity. No longer as a burden of conflict, but as a source of inspiration and love that enables her to be both a creator and a connector for the world she inhabits with her parents.

Excerpt 1:

(She showed off her painting to her parents and they began to touch the canvas.)

Yan: "Here, Dad"

Yan: "That's our family on the banana boat. That's mom, this one is you."

Yan's Mom: "Why can't I feel the boat?"

Yan: "It's here, mom."

Yan's Mom: "Is that you raising your arms? you're reaching for the stars, this is also a star, the sky is filled with stars. our little Yan is such a talented girl, this is such a bright idea. There's something written underneath, is that the theme of this art piece?"

Yan: "Yes" (01.28.09). *(in braille, "Father and Mother I love you")*

How the practices of language brokering and visual mediation strategies are manifested in the linguistic interaction of Tsz-yan with her blind parents

The present analysis revealed that Yan's linguistic interaction with her parents was clearly portrayed through the practice of language brokering and visual mediation, which was not as simple as ordinary translation. In-depth analysis of Tsz-yan's character showed that sensory transformation was also necessary to optimize the visual mediation she performed and made it more helpful. This aligns with what Chheda-Kothary et al. (2024) have said, that visual mediation requires the help of sensory transformation. This transformation involved converting non-verbal visual input into descriptive linguistic output that can be processed cognitively and emotionally by her visually impaired parents. In Excerpts 1 and 2, when Yan described clouds as living things and guided tactile exploration of her drawings were crucial examples. This is also related to Melander & Gréen (2023) because Yan interpreted the things around her to her parents by combining meaning, emotion, and appropriate situations so that they understand correctly. This was also what made it complex. In addition, this analysis showed that Tsz-yan's mediation strategy involves a fairly broad range because it was related to creative and loving actions as well as routine and burdensome activities. Instead of only reporting visual data, Yan also built a shared mental landscape. This was beyond a functional translation because Yan had created a shared narrative and emotional bond. Thus, this is in line with the concept of sensory transformation, where Yan brings static visuals to life with movement, stories, and family fantasies, creating a shared life in Excerpt 2. This creative medium was one of the core parts of her original identity as a family storyteller and creator of shared happiness. In contrast, Excerpts 3 and 4 reveal more practical and sometimes tense aspects of visual mediation. Yan's language and identity subtly shift from storyteller to executive assistant and frustrated navigator. This can be seen when Yan read a quite long lunch menu and when she hurriedly directed her mother to a fallen fork with brief verbal instructions. These interactions also highlight the demanding and contextual

nature of language mediation, which must adapt to any context such as a relaxed moment or a fairly busy and stressful morning routine (Melander & Gréen, 2023). Furthermore, Excerpt 2, “*here, there, but we can’t see it,*” also highlights Yan’s limitations and emotional burden due to communication difficulties. It was evident that even her most careful sensory transformations cannot completely bridged the perception gap, leading to moments of disputation and highlighting her burden of responsibility. Additionally, in Excerpt 5, Yan acts as a facilitator who combines three crucial elements such as action, description, and correction. This clearly showed visual mediation as an active and multisensory process that integrates verbal description with physical guidance. This strategy provided her parents with the experience of actively interacting with their environment. Through these diverse manifestations which is from creative narratives to practical or physical guidance, it can be seen that Tsz-yan’s role as a language broker and visual mediator is revealed as a dynamic and adaptive tool. Thus, these practices being major activities that connected Tsz-yan’s relationship with her parents and the formation of her initial role identity.

How the dual role as the mediator and as an individual construct Tsz-yan’s language identity

This present analysis revealed that Tsz-yan’s language identity is fundamentally constructed through tension and the eventual integration of her role conflict and dual roles as mediator and as an individual. In addition, Yan’s visual mediation actions were also acts of identity placement because she constantly negotiated her position between herself and her family. According to the analysis of narrative story by Bruner (1990) and Hnit & Almanna (2025), Tsz-yan’s life was a story of role conflict that sought resolution. Excerpts 1, 3, and 4 (role conflict) from her beginning story were full of contradictions and burdens that also captured the climax of this conflict. One of her explosive statements was “*I am your daughter, but I am not your white cane,*” when Yan had to cancel her scholarship interview in order to help her mother in the hospital (excerpt 1, dual role and excerpt 1, role conflict). This was a crucial moment in the narrative break because Yan verbally rejected the change of her identity to being solely a mediation tool. The white cane symbolized the identity of service that was forced upon her, thereby suppressing her personal identity as an independent and dream-filled individual. Furthermore, this conflict was also conveyed through her actions, when Yan scribbled her painting (excerpt 2, role conflict) and ran away from home (excerpt 3, role conflict). This was a physical manifestation of her struggle to reclaimed her self-identity beyond the role of on-demand volunteer.

This role conflict also directly shaped her language identity. This can be seen in her brief and impatient instructions (excerpt 4, visual mediation), where Yan internalized her role as a caregiver with her communication practices filled with resentment and exhaustion. Furthermore, her belief that “*They can’t live without me*” (excerpt 4, role conflict) shaped a language identity rooted in necessity and self-sacrifice, limiting her communicative role to that of her parents’ saviour. This was also in line with Rassokha's (2010) view that language identity is formed through interaction. In this conflictual interaction, Yan positioned

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herself as a mediator who was trapped and full of disappointment. Instead of being static, Yan's identity construction is dynamic, in line with what Cameron & Larsen-Freeman (2007) stated. Hence, when her dual roles are integrated, that is where the turning point occurs. This can be seen in Excerpt 4 (dual role) or in the outdoor running club scene. It was transformative, where the activities of the guide runner and visual mediation became a collaborative and participative dialogue. As such, this mediation was rather became a shared and mutually beneficial exchange. In addition, her mother's encouragement to actively pursue her dreams actively changed the family narrative and allowed Tsz-yan to imagine a self-narrative that included her self-love and her personal ambition.

Ultimately, the final and definitive construction of language identity is achieved at the climax of the film, in Reconciliation. Tsz-yan did not abandon her role as mediator, but transformed and integrated it into her true self. Yan unified her identity as an individual who wanted to be an artist and her role as a family bridge and mediator by creating a painting that combined Braille. This artwork then transformed through the senses. As Yan guided her parents' hands to see the painting through touch which was also the ultimate visual mediation, but this time it became more meaningful because it was an expression of inclusive love. Therefore, her language identity is constructed through a narrative of conflict to integration in line with Rassokha (2010). Tsz-yan ultimately positioned herself as someone whose language practice is not a binding chain, but a tool to express a complex, loving, and multifaceted identity. Thus, her final act of mediation, filled with personal artistic expression, signifies that Tsz-yan's language identity has evolved to a stage where her obligations and her true self transformed into elements that mutually shape her identity.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study identified that Tsz-yan's language identity as a Sighted Infant of Blind Parents (SIBP) is constructed and negotiated through four crucial themes which are visual mediation, dual role, role conflict, and reconciliation. In the visual mediation theme, it showed that this theme became a primary communicational practice that shaped Tsz-yan's identity. From her early childhood up to high school, Yan had already taken on the roles of visual mediator, sensory translator, and tactile description. These practices defined her primary mode of interaction and positioned her as a storyteller, guide, and creator of shared happiness for her parents. In the dual role, this theme captured the essential structural tension of her identity as Tsz-yan was perpetually in between the roles of cared-for daughter and obligated caregiver. This duality vividly shaped her communicative functions which demanded constant negotiation between personal desires and familial responsibilities, and also expanded her identity across private and public spaces. In the theme of role conflict, this was the result of psychological pressure from her dual roles which was marked by a crisis point in her identity formation. The internal conflict between her self-identity and her perceived obligations caused communication breakdowns, emotional explosions, and rejection of her role as represented by the white cane. This conflict became crucial in strengthening her identity and her resistance against the role assigned to her. Ultimately, this

theme of reconciliation became the resolution of her identity struggle. Instead of discarding her role, Tsz-yan transformed and integrated it by incorporating visual mediation into her personal artwork that combines braille. Yan sincerely united her identity as an artist and daughter with her role as a family bridge. This action indeed resolved her role conflict and redefined her dual role as an integrated and empowering identity rooted in love and togetherness. In summary, Tsz-yan's language identity evolved from its role defined by the practice in visual mediation, through a stage of structural tension in dual roles and psychological crisis in role conflict, towards a state of acceptance with sincerity in reconciliation. Tsz-yan's journey demonstrated that the language identity of a SIBP is a dynamic narrative involving adaptation, struggle, and the ultimate integration of multifaceted responsibilities into a whole concept of self-identity.

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

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