A Lens on Deaf Identities

Ronald Jiu
Culture Defined

• “The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning.”

• “Culture is the conscious and unconscious content that a group learns, shares and transmits from generation to generation that organizes life and helps interpret existence.”

• “Culture is the distinctive life...way of a people who are united by a common language.”

• “Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, rituals, institutions and art from one generation to next.”
Five Hallmarks of a Culture

• Language
• Heritage
• Customs
• Arts
• Family or “cultural players”
Community

• Community is typically perceived as a group of people who happen to reside in similar geographical location.

• A sense of community could also be formed by individuals who share similar goals and/or common interests. This does not necessarily require community members to live in the same geographical location.
Common Labels Part 1

• deaf
• Deaf
deaf

• Refers to the physiological condition of not hearing regardless of whether or not they choose to identify with the Deaf community (Holcomb 2013, p.38)

• Refers to the condition of deafness, or the larger group of individuals with hearing loss without reference to this particular culture. (Padden & Humphries 2005, p. 1)

• Refers to the audiological condition of not hearing (Padden & Humphries 1988, p. 7)
Deaf

• Is used to characterize deaf individuals who use sign language as their primary mode of communication, identify with Deaf Culture, and participate in Deaf Community. (Holcomb 2013, p. 38)

• Refers to particular group of deaf people who share a language and a culture. (Padden & Humphries 1988, p. 2)
deaf vs. Deaf

• Every Deaf person is also deaf
• Not every deaf person can be considered Deaf.
• Late deafened person who lost his or her hearing in his or her 50’s or 60’s would probably not identify with Deaf Culture nor participate in the Deaf community.

(Holcomb 2013, p. 38)
Common Labels Part 2

- Hearing Impaired
- Hard of Hearing
Hearing Impaired

• Indeed, most professionals’ preferred term for the child is hearing impaired.

• The professional reasons: a child with a loss of a bodily function has an impairment; the impairment gives rise to a disability, a severe restriction in a normal human activity, namely, communication; and the disability handicaps the child, preventing him or her from fulfilling various social roles.

  (Lane, Hoffmeister, Bahan 1996, p. 34)
Hearing Impaired

• Deaf people refer themselves as not hearing, and not that they have an impairment in hearing.
• Hearing impaired refers to those who do not hear, but are not ASL signers.
• “Hearing impaired” includes people who do not want to be considered signers and are not Deaf.

(Padden & Humphries 2005, p. 159)
Hard of Hearing

- People have some use of their residual hearing.
- People can hear some. (Padden & Humphries 2005, p. 159)
Hard of Hearing

• Deaf people’s view
  – Hard of hearing people’s experiences are closer to those of hearing people
  – Consider that they hear almost as well as hearing people

• Hearing people’s view
  – Hard of hearing is more related to Deaf people’s experience
  – Hard of hearing individuals are being almost deaf
“HEARING-BUT”

• Hearing people have exhibited an extraordinarily positive attitude toward Deaf people and a deep respect for Deaf culture in general.

• Hearing people who have been culturally assimilated into the deaf community - informed and sensitive
“HEARING-BUT”

• These individuals are:
  – CODA
  – Hearing spouses
  – Hearing parents and siblings
  – Interpreters
Acceptable

• Deaf
• Hard of Hearing
• Late-Deafened

• Linguistic minority
Not Acceptable

• Deaf and Dumb
• Deaf mute
• Hearing Impaired*
• Individual with deafness
• Hearing Handicapped

• People with disabilities
• Hearing Impaired*
• Hearing Loss
Avenues to Membership in the Deaf Community
(Baker-Shenk and Cokey’s model)
Four avenues to membership in the Deaf community

Deaf people must satisfy in order to achieve a comfortable place in the Deaf community.

1.) **Audiological** refers to actual loss of hearing ability.

2.) **Political** refers to the potential ability to exert influence on matters, which directly affect the Deaf community on a local, provincial, or national level.

3.) **Linguistic** refers to the ability to understand and use sign language fluently.

4.) **Social** refers to the ability to participate in social events of the Deaf community.
Membership in the Deaf Community

Hearing people, e.g. parents, relatives, professionals or friends, can be accepted as members of the Deaf community only if they have an appropriate attitude towards the Deaf community via three avenues: political, linguistic, and social.
Identity
2 Basic Perspectives

• Primordialism or Essentialism
• Constructivist or Nonessentialism
Labels

• Labels are a form of stereotyping based on one’s perceived identification or similarity between the self and members of a specific category or group as contrasted with perceived differences between the self and outside group members.
Deaf Labels

• Hearing impaired
• Hard of hearing
• Oral deaf
• Late deafened
• Deaf
• deaf
• Hearing loss
Disability and Deaf

- **Examples of Disability**

- **Types of Disabilities**
Medical & Functional Frames of Hearing Differences

- Hearing aids
- Assistive listening devices
- Cochlear implants
- Intensive auditory and speech training
Correct Labels

• Linguistic Minority Group
• Language Minority Group