

Oral Deaf

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SL 361

Micro-Culturalism Deaf Minorities

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We will be looking at what Oral Deaf is, what they might have gone through, how they communicate, and their history.

What is Oral Deaf?

A person who has been “focused on speech and lip-reading” (Christensen, D.). This is a person who is d/Deaf but can read lips and use their voice. ““Oral deaf” identifies people who are born deaf or became deaf before learning to speak, but are taught to speak and may not typically use American Sign Language.” (Toronto District School Board.).

Communication as Oral Deaf

“Tips: Attract the person’s attention before speaking with a gentle touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of your hand. Don’t shout. Move to a well-lit area where the person can see your face, as some people read lips. If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (i.e. a pen and paper). Look at, speak, and directly address the person, not the interpreter or support person. Be clear and precise when giving directions. Don’t assume that the person knows sign language or reads lips.” (Toronto District School Board.), this is how to talk to anyone who is deaf, Oral means they know how to use their voice, but that doesn’t always mean that’s the method they prefer. “There is no “one size fits all” approach to communication, nor is there a “typical” deaf person. Each individual is unique and brings their own set of communication needs and preferences, based upon the setting and the purpose of the interaction.” (National Deaf Center.). “ Auditory communication includes utilizing residual hearing and spoken English received through the ear, often augmented with a hearing aid or cochlear

implant to enhance the ability to interpret sound.” (National Deaf Center.). Each d/Deaf person's way of communicating is different, Oral Deaf could use sign language or voice. Depending on the generation, person, or even who they are talking with can change which they use. “About 40% of the sounds in the English language can be seen on the lips of a speaker in good conditions — such as a well-lit room where the child can see the speaker’s face. But some words can’t be read. For example: “bop”, “mop”, and “pop” look exactly alike when spoken. (You can see this for yourself in a mirror). A good speech reader might be able to see only 4 to 5 words in a 12-word sentence.” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.). “Sometimes, when talking with a person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing, people will exaggerate their mouth movements or talk very loudly. Exaggerated mouth movements and a loud voice can make speech reading very hard. It is important to talk in a normal way and look directly at your child’s face and make sure he or she is watching you.” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.). “It is estimated that only 30% to 40% of speech sounds can be lip-read even under the best conditions and extra information is usually required to understand what is being said.” (National Deaf Children's Society.). “Lip-reading unfamiliar accents can be very challenging” (National Deaf Children's Society.). The way you want to talk is normal and facing the person, speak clearly, don’t mumble, and don’t cover your mouth or turn away. Another thing that is common is that hearing people will stop trying to communicate if the deaf person “inconveniences” them by not understanding, communicating is a two-way street that many hearing people seem to struggle with when there is a misinterpretation. Hearing people have what is called hearing privilege

that they don't even recognize and take for granted, and even between two hearing people there can be incomprehension.

History

Originally the history of Oralism wasn't tainted but that changed when "oralism's ascendance in the late 19th century came with a campaign to eliminate sign language or other methods that combined signing and oral speech." (Christensen, D.). "Oralism was a tool — if successfully mastered — and oralists hoped it would normalize deaf people and remake them in the image of hearing, speaking Americans," Greenwald said. "The main goal was to ensure that deaf students integrated with hearing children, while minimizing contact between deaf people. By blocking this contact, it was thought that [sign language] would peter out." (Christensen, D.). Hearing people were trying to eliminate deafness by making them seem hearing, making their own (hearing people) lives more manageable. "By the 1920s, oralism had become the de facto educational model for most deaf students in the United States, and the vast majority of deaf teachers had been replaced with hearing teachers" (Christensen, D.). Hearing teachers took the place of deaf teachers so sign language stopped getting taught. "Speech was perceived as a step up on the evolutionary ladder, and sign language came to be viewed as inferior, closer to monkey gestures," Greenwald said." (Christensen, D.). Even now people still have an audism perception. "Greenwald said that oralism as a philosophy never completely went away. And the debate about how to educate deaf students still continues today." (Christensen, D.). The way they are taught is "Speech reading (or lip reading) is a building block that helps a child with hearing loss understand speech. The child watches the movements of a speaker's mouth and face,

and understands what the speaker is saying.” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.). In the dark times, that sign language was trying to get annihilated and exchanged for oralism hands would get slapped with a ruler or tied to stop the signing. Signing became less frequent and was done in secret, sometimes even making their own type of sign language to communicate easier between deaf students. The world is becoming more accepting of the d/Deaf community and sign language, but oralism is still forced on children born into hearing families along with hearing aids and cochlear implants. The hearing community expects the d/Deaf community to fit into “our” societal fit of someone's worth, people are ableist about hearing and that being hearing or appearing hearing you are worth more. The hearing community still believes people who don't fit the societal mold are less than, less human, and more worthless, and that couldn't be further from the truth.

Conclusion

We looked at what Oral Deaf is, what they might have gone through, how they communicate, and their history.

References

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